



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Ladywell Green Infants School
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1EG**

Date of inspection: June 2019

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Ladywell Green Infants School

Ladywell Green Infants School is in Newtown, Powys. There are 98 pupils aged four to seven years at the school. Pupils are taught in two ordinary and two mixed age classes. There are three full-time and three part-time teachers, including headteacher. Around 26% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 18%.

Nearly all pupils are white British and come from homes where English is the main language. A few children are learning English as an additional language and a very few children speak Welsh at home. The school identifies that around 20% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is close to the national average of 21%. Currently, a very few children are looked after by the local authority and no children have a statement of special educational needs.

Estyn inspected the school last in February 2011. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2016.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

Most pupils at Ladywell Green Infants School make good progress in developing a full range of skills from relatively low starting points.

A well-developed and consistently applied approach to behaviour management creates a productive working environment in the school. Teachers ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to learn through active involvement, both indoors and outside. They support pupils' personal and emotional development and their engagement in learning particularly successfully.

The headteacher communicates effectively with all staff and stakeholders, and they work together successfully as a strong team. Leaders, including governors, know the school's strengths and areas for development well. The school acts on improvement plans purposefully. Staff benefit from worthwhile opportunities for professional development that have helped the school move forward effectively.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' ability to write accurately and at length
- R2 Ensure that resources in the learning environment meet pupils' needs effectively and support them to develop their skills progressively as they move through the school
- R3 Refine the school's monitoring processes and procedures

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main findings

Standards: Good

Many pupils start school with skills and understanding below the level expected for their age. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Specific groups of pupils progress effectively in intervention groups and through receiving additional support. For example, vulnerable pupils make particularly good progress with developing their personal and social skills in the nurture groups. However, a very few more able pupils do not always progress well enough in lessons.

As they move through the school, most pupils make good progress with developing their speaking skills and develop their vocabulary well. Many younger pupils answer questions during whole group activities confidently and communicate their needs effectively. By the end of Year 2, many pupils adapt their speech appropriately according to the situation. For example, they speak courteously to visitors when they talk about their work. Most pupils learn to listen effectively. For example, they listen carefully to instructions and follow them successfully, such as to dribble the football to the goal, kick the ball into the net, and then dribble it back to the starting point. They listen attentively and with understanding to stories read to them.

Most pupils see themselves as writers. Younger pupils have a go at expressing themselves in writing confidently and use their developing phonetic knowledge successfully to begin to spell out words. By Year 1, many know to use capital letters and full stops to make sentences and form many letters appropriately. By Year 2, many progress to write for a useful variety of purposes, adopting a suitable style, such as using different sentence openers to create interest. They begin to write at appropriate length, such as to create newspaper reports. However, more able pupils do not extend their use of interesting language and punctuation well enough and, in general, pupils' grasp of grammar is not consistently secure. Most pupils do not develop their ability to write at length well enough.

Younger pupils generally make good progress in developing early reading skills, and enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Most older pupils use their reading skills effectively in class, such as to read instructions and to research topics using the internet. They read a range of fiction and non-fiction books expressively and with understanding.

Most pupils develop a range of mathematical skills well and apply them in different contexts effectively. Younger pupils develop a sound understanding of number, measure and weight. For example, they use a balance successfully to identify which items are light enough for Grandpa Pig to carry. By Year 2, most pupils progress well with developing their mathematical skills in most respects. However, overall, their understanding of division is less secure. Many pupils apply their numeracy skills particularly well in their topic work. For example, they collect and interpret data for different purposes well, such as to record which different birds they see in the nearby park accurately. They use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to record their findings successfully in bar graphs, and analyse the information effectively to identify which birds they see most and least frequently.

Most pupils develop and use ICT skills successfully. Younger pupils use tablet computers confidently to access quick response codes and to record their work by photographing what they have done competently. Pupils in Year 1 use green screen technology effectively to depict the different seasons. By Year 2, most pupils use their computer skills regularly and effectively to support their learning. For example, they search for information on the internet skilfully and create basic animations.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh. Across the school, they use and respond to simple greetings, phrases and instructions regularly throughout the day. Younger pupils join in with simple Welsh songs and rhymes enthusiastically and recall vocabulary related to their minibeast topic well. Older pupils begin to use simple phrases independently, such as to request and serve food in their café. They read familiar stories confidently and begin to write simple phrases appropriately.

Nearly all pupils develop their physical skills well and enjoy creative activities. For example, older pupils make good progress with playing simple rhythmic patterns on percussion instruments and work co-operatively to take part in a Welsh folk dance.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel happy and safe, and are eager to learn. They benefit from very positive relationships with staff and are confident in knowing who they can turn to should they become worried or upset.

Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and drinking. A majority of pupils choose to eat fruit or vegetables as a break time snack and most pupils enjoy drinking milk. They bring their water bottles to school regularly and increasingly bring healthy foods such as salad, vegetables and fruit to school in their packed lunches. Most know that these choices help them to stay healthy.

Most pupils enjoy playing with their friends on the school playground and interact well with different age groups across the school. They understand that they should follow the school's 'golden rules' and are happy to share toys and playground equipment, or to invite others to join in their games. Many pupils respond positively to opportunities to be physically active and are aware that regular activity is good for them. For example, older pupils often choose to play football or traditional games such as skipping on the yard, while the youngest pupils improve their balance on stepping-stones. Most pupils enjoy taking part in their weekly physical development sessions. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. Nearly all understand that they should not share their password with others, or put personal information on the internet.

Most pupils are keen to take on leadership roles and fulfil responsibilities ably in the classroom. The Helpwr Heddiw and Criw Cymraeg pupils are proud to contribute to the development of the Welsh language across the school. School councillors and eco councillors begin to contribute to school life appropriately. For example, they make suggestions about ways to recycle waste at Christmas. The eco committee contributes purposefully to improving playtimes by helping to arrange for the school to buy new playground equipment, using money raised from recycling old clothes. Many older pupils respond in a mature way when teachers entrust them with specific

tasks, such as to fetch a tablet computer and demonstrate an aspect of their work to visitors. As a result, many pupils develop their confidence and self-esteem effectively, as well as their understanding of sustainability and their place in the wider world.

Most pupils are enthusiastic about their experiences in school. They behave well, follow school routines and move around the building and their classrooms sensibly. They are eager to learn and work together effectively in pairs and groups. For example, they collaborate well to identify and record items that an explorer would need to take when travelling by plane. Many pupils focus well to practise their skills independently in self-directed tasks. For example, they concentrate hard to cut out butterfly shapes neatly and to paint a picture of Rapunzel. They engage successfully in activities where they are actively involved, listen carefully to teachers and respond well to guidance and instructions.

Most pupils understand and apply the school's strategies to help them overcome difficulties successfully. For example, they encourage each other to persevere like the 'persevering penguin' and to talk to each other and share ideas purposefully. This has a positive impact on their approach to learning and on their progress in lessons.

Most pupils respond enthusiastically to opportunities to contribute to their learning at the beginning of topics and offer their ideas constructively. They develop their sense of curiosity successfully. For example, they think about what they would like to know about a new topic, and are eager to contribute suggestions. They wonder why explorers set off in the first place and about the best way to find bugs in the outdoors.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Nearly all teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well. They manage their behaviour consistently, sensitively and calmly. They create a warm and purposeful working atmosphere in the classroom. This is particularly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils to make good progress.

Teachers plan stimulating learning experiences that engage pupils successfully. These include interesting contexts for activities that develop pupils' ICT, literacy and numeracy skills in areas across the curriculum effectively. For example, older pupils are motivated to learn about measuring in metres when they try to identify the nearest island to the point where Amelia Earhart's plane crashed into the sea. Teachers and teaching assistants provide clear instructions and explanations that develop pupils' understanding well. They work together effectively to ensure that most pupils' individual needs are met. For example, teaching assistants support pupils learning English as an additional language to become familiar with specific vocabulary linked to their mini beast topic through an engaging activity in the outdoors. In general, staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and skills development. However, at times, adults provide too much support and direction. This restricts pupils' opportunities to develop and follow their interests independently and to make decisions, such as about how to present their work.

Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly both informally and formally. They use information from assessments increasingly effectively to recognise where individual

pupils need additional support or challenge, and to identify their next steps in learning. They provide useful spoken and written feedback that help pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This helps pupils begin to take on responsibility for their own learning. However, teachers do not provide sufficient well-developed opportunities for pupils to revisit learning through planned activities or independently in the learning environment.

The school takes good account of foundation phase pedagogy. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills through worthwhile practical activities both indoors and outside. This supports pupils' wellbeing and engagement in learning highly effectively. Teachers involve pupils well in their learning. For example, they encourage them to identify what they know already and what they would like to find out when they start new topics. In particular, this has improved boys' engagement and interest in writing. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to contribute suggestions for tasks that allow them to practise skills linked to their topics in the learning environment. However, teachers do not plan what resources to provide continuously indoors and outside carefully enough to meet all pupils' individual needs, and to ensure progression as they move through the school.

Teachers plan interesting opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom, linked to their themes and topics. For example, older pupils learn to identify landmarks and consider how to record these effectively when they make maps to track the journey from school to the local park.

There are flexible arrangements for grouping pupils across classes that support most pupils' progress successfully. This provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to work at an appropriate pace with others of similar ability in different subject areas. Teachers consider pupils' individual learning needs well in most respects when they plan individual lessons. However, they do not always challenge more able pupils well enough. In general, the school provides successfully for individuals and groups of pupils through carefully planned and structured intervention programmes. Teaching assistants understand pupils' targets and support them well in working towards these in intervention groups.

The school is benefiting from taking part in the lead creative school project. This has led teachers to begin to take a more creative approach to developing pupils' skills, such as using drama to develop pupils' understanding of topics and giving pupils more freedom to decide what and how to record while making their own maps.

There is an effective focus on developing pupils' awareness of the Welsh language and their sense of Welsh identity. Staff ensure that pupils hear instructions and simple Welsh words and phrases throughout the day, so that the language becomes a natural part of their daily lives. They support pupils to develop their skills appropriately in lessons and provide regular opportunities for them to practise through designated independent learning tasks. There are useful opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh traditions, such as when they learn a folk dance or make Welsh cakes.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school's support for pupils with additional learning needs is particularly effective. Staff deliver a good range of intervention programmes that include purposeful support for early speech and language development. Teachers prepare useful individual education plans that include worthwhile and achievable targets, and involve parents appropriately. The school has improved its tracking systems recently to enable it to monitor pupils' progress, wellbeing and attendance effectively as they move through the school. Leaders focus well on monitoring pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement and provide effective support for them. However, the school's systems for identifying and supporting more able pupils is not as well developed.

Support for pupils with emotional needs is a strength of the school. Staff lead highly effective small group sessions that raise pupils' self-esteem in a nurturing and caring environment. They provide pupils with effective strategies to manage their emotions, so that they can participate successfully in classroom learning. Across the school, pupils benefit from the positive and highly consistent approach to behaviour management. This has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and helps them develop strong attitudes to learning.

The school works hard to establish positive relationships with parents, and communicates with them effectively in a range of ways. Staff prepare informative curriculum leaflets that give parents a clear insight into what children learn at school, and share ideas that help parents support learning at home. For example, the school provides physical development bags that include resources for parents to try out with their child. The school offers worthwhile parent workshops that support continuity in pupils' learning, including a recent workshop to share the school's nurturing approach to managing behaviour.

The school promotes healthy lifestyle choices well. Staff encourage pupils to bring fruit for their snack and use opportunities in lessons to help pupils learn about healthy food choices. There are many valuable opportunities for pupils to take regular exercise and develop positive attitudes to being physically active. For example, the school invites sports ambassadors from the local authority to lead lessons, and provides interesting after school opportunities, such as a yoga club.

Opportunities for pupils to begin to contribute to decisions about the life and work of the school are developing appropriately. Teachers are beginning to involve pupils in decisions about what and how they learn. For example, they encourage pupils to suggest what they want to find out about new topics, and pupils contribute ideas for activities to support their learning. Following on from the school's participation in the lead creative schools project, teachers are beginning to provide suitable opportunities for pupils to take the lead in their learning, such as by choosing how to record their thoughts and ideas.

Pupils benefit from a range of activities and visitors to the school that help them develop their awareness of the world of work, their local community and the wider world appropriately. For example, pupils begin to develop an understanding of other cultures through curriculum themed days, such as their Chinese New Year celebrations.

Arrangements for pupils' spiritual and moral development are effective. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of right and wrong and the need for rules to support good behaviour in the community. For example, staff explore themes such as gentleness and kindness when they encourage pupils to follow the school's golden rules. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about their place in the community when they support initiatives, such as singing carols for elderly residents. The school promotes an emerging awareness of sustainability and respect for the natural world well. For example, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them effectively when they grow vegetables in the school conservatory, hunt for minibeasts and learn to identify different birds as part of their classwork. Initiatives such as 'welly Wednesday' encourage families to walk rather than drive to school and help pupils to consider how their choices affect the environment. Nurturing a suitable awareness of diversity and cultural tolerance is at a relatively early stage of development.

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and do not give cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision to involve all stakeholders in an inclusive school community, with pupils' wellbeing at its centre. She has succeeded in creating a culture of strong teamwork within the school and has empowered staff to work together skilfully and collaboratively to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders communicate the school's vision and ethos well through its 'pupil promise'. This helps create a happy and caring working environment with a strong focus on standards.

School leaders address national priorities effectively. They ensure a worthwhile emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills successfully and on supporting the effective implementation of the digital competency framework. There is a strong focus on developing a Welsh ethos. For example, leaders support staff to improve their language skills through purposeful professional development.

The headteacher sets high expectations for all staff and involves them fully in the school's work, delegating responsibilities successfully. She has established a senior leadership team with clear roles and responsibilities that supports the aims of the school well. Senior leaders have worked in partnership with another school to develop the school's understanding of how to distribute leadership among all teachers. This is strengthening teachers' capacity to lead on different aspects of the curriculum successfully in preparation for the new curriculum. The headteacher has high expectations of leaders at all levels. For example, she delegates responsibility for the running of intervention programmes to teaching assistants successfully, resulting in effective support that ensures that most pupils make good progress.

Leaders use a wide range of first-hand information to evaluate honestly the school's current performance and identify strengths and useful areas for development. This has led to many effective improvements in the school's work over the past three years. For example, leaders put in place new tracking systems to monitor the progress of individual and groups of pupils. As a result, teachers have a clearer understanding of any areas of weakness and plan more effectively to support pupils'

needs. Leaders prioritise areas for improvement effectively in the development plan. However, the school's processes and procedures for monitoring progress are not yet fully developed. They do not focus sufficiently on progress against the priorities in the school development plan and do not always give priority to the most important areas for improvement.

Nearly all staff benefit from highly effective professional learning opportunities that develop staff expertise at all levels and support school improvement effectively. For example, opportunities for nearly all staff to observe colleagues at work set the foundations for the school's consistent and successful approach to behaviour management. Through careful selection of other schools for staff to visit to view good practice, leaders extend staff understanding and skills successfully. This supports the school's focus on developing middle leadership skills, establishing and improving opportunities for pupils to contribute to their learning, and beginning to prepare for the new curriculum.

The governing body supports the school well. Many take part in learning walks and monitoring activities to develop their understanding of how well the school is working. They analyse a range of information provided by the headteacher, as well as information gathered from their own monitoring activities. As a result, they have a sound knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and often hold the school to account over its work. For example, governors challenged the school on how well it promoted the Welsh language, leading to an improvement in the use of Welsh on signs and displays throughout the learning environments.

Leaders manage the school's budget effectively. They link spending to school priorities appropriately to secure improvement in provision, standards and wellbeing. For example, pupils throughout the school benefit from the significant investment in ICT equipment over the last two years. Leaders understand the importance of outdoor learning for foundation phase pupils. They have invested in an additional hard play area that extends opportunities for pupils to use the outdoors in all weathers successfully. However, there is no clear strategic plan to ensure that the indoor and outdoor learning environments support pupils to make systematic progress as they move through the school. Overall, leaders do not monitor the quality of the learning environment well enough to ensure that resources meet all pupils' learning fully.

Leaders use development grants well to improve vulnerable pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and their emotional wellbeing.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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