



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on:**

**Agincourt School  
Dixton Lane  
Monmouth  
Monmouthshire  
NP25 3SY**

**Date of inspection: January 2013**

**by**

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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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## Context

Haberdashers' Agincourt School is an independent pre-preparatory school for boys and girls aged three to seven years. The school is in the town of Monmouth. The school opened in 1992 and has been owned by the Worshipful Company of Haberdashers since 1997. The school is housed in a listed building, which over time has been renovated and extended and the outdoor area improved.

There are 111 pupils on roll in the main school and three pupils in the nursery class. In the nursery class, there are an additional 30 pupils, all of whom are partly funded by Monmouthshire, Herefordshire or Gloucestershire local authorities to provide part-time early years education places. Most pupils come from the surrounding rural areas of Monmouth, Abergavenny, Ross-on-Wye and Chepstow. A few pupils travel from Newport, Cardiff and the Welsh valleys. The school does not select its pupils by ability.

English is the predominant language of all pupils. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language or speak other languages at home. A very few children are from minority ethnic groups.

The school reports that none of its pupils is socially disadvantaged. Approximately 8% of pupils have additional learning needs. No pupils have statements of special educational needs.

At seven years of age, most pupils continue their education at one of the Haberdashers' Monmouth preparatory schools, which are academically selective. A few pupils transfer to maintained schools.

The current headteacher has been in post since September 2003. Since the last inspection in 2006, a deputy headteacher has been appointed and a senior management team established.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

Haberdashers' Agincourt School is a good school because:

- most pupils make at least good progress as they move through the school;
- almost all pupils have a very positive attitude to their work;
- the excellent range of extra-curricular activities impacts positively on pupils' learning, confidence and social skills;
- teaching is good;
- the strong, caring ethos ensures that pupils feel safe and secure and ready to learn; and
- behaviour and attendance are good.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are strongly committed to raising standards;
- teaching staff are reflective practitioners and are constantly seeking ways to improve their work;
- building improvements and the development of the outdoors have significantly improved the learning environment;
- the school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection; and
- recent initiatives, such as regular group reading for more able pupils and a more systematic approach to teaching phonics, have brought about improvements in pupils' reading and spelling.

## **Compliance with the regulations for registration**

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

### **The quality of education provided by the school**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The suitability of proprietors and staff**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The provision of information**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

### **The manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Improve pupils' numeracy and information and communication technology skills
- R2 Strengthen the school's performance management processes
- R3 Use data and the findings of self-evaluation more effectively to identify and prioritise actions for school improvement and to evaluate their success

### **What happens next?**

Estyn advises the governors to amend the current improvement plan to show what action the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate the plan, or a summary of it, to all parents at the school.

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Standards: Good**

Most pupils make at least good progress in acquiring new skills and knowledge as they move through the school. They generally have a good recall of previous learning and apply this successfully to new situations.

Most pupils' literacy skills are developing well. They speak clearly and listen attentively to stories and class discussions. For example, Year 2 pupils express their opinions confidently about a character in a story, while reception-aged pupils explain carefully how to sort objects into sets. Most pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. They use an appropriate range of strategies, including phonic skills, to read unfamiliar words. At seven years of age, most pupils read accurately with suitable degree of expression, and show pleasure in what they read. More able pupils discuss storylines and characters confidently and with a secure understanding. Many pupils are competent writers and write well for a variety of purposes. In the nursery class, for example, pupils label their bean pots and in Year 1, pupils write interesting accounts of their visit to the museum. As they move through the school, pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting improve in line with their age and ability.

Pupils apply their numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills reasonably well. For example, pupils in Year 2 use the internet appropriately to support their work in geography and use numeracy skills accurately in science to measure their height. Many pupils show good thinking skills when matching covered objects to historical artefacts or in suggesting ideas for making a Venn diagram.

Pupils in the nursery class are beginning to use a few Welsh words and phrases with increasing confidence, for example when answering their names.

The school's data shows that many pupils read and spell above their chronological age with a majority of seven-year-old pupils attaining above average scores in standardised tests in mathematics and English. A few more able pupils read and spell particularly well when compared to what is expected for their age.

Pupils with additional learning needs make expected and often good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills.

There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Over the last three years, all pupils who wished to continue their education in one of the academically selective Haberdashers' preparatory schools have done so.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Pupils have high levels of wellbeing. Nearly all pupils are highly motivated and have positive attitudes to learning. They are polite, respectful and friendly towards staff

and visitors and are kind and caring towards each other. Pupils feel safe, have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and enjoy the many opportunities the school provides for regular exercise.

Pupils behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. Most pupils are confident in expressing their views and in making choices, for example about which of the many out-of-school clubs to attend during lunchtime and after school. They take pride in their school and in their work.

Pupils accept responsibility enthusiastically and this has a positive effect on the life of the school. For example, 'Eco Warriors' make sure that lights are turned off in classes when empty. The head boy and head girl take pride in representing the school when visiting the local community centre with food from the harvest festival. Pupils know who the prefects are and feel able to talk to them if they are unhappy or upset. However, pupils make few decisions about their learning or school life in general.

Attendance is good. Most pupils are punctual to school and lessons.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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### **Learning experiences: Good**

The school provides a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum that meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. In key stage 1, pupils study all National Curriculum subjects. Nursery-aged pupils follow a programme based primarily on the Foundation Phase areas of learning.

There are relevant schemes of work for each subject that ensures continuity and progression in pupils' learning. However, not all schemes of work provide enough information about pupils' skills development. Nursery planning for areas of learning is developing appropriately. Teachers' weekly planning generally builds suitably on pupils' previous learning. This is particularly the case for pupils requiring additional support.

An excellent range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, including chess, rugby, pottery and sewing enhance the curriculum well and have a positive impact upon pupils' learning, confidence and social skills. Pupils' learning experiences are enriched further by trips, visitors into school and special curriculum themed weeks.

There is good provision and regular opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. Planning to develop pupils' numeracy and ICT is less systematic.

In the nursery class, there is appropriate provision for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. The school does not include Welsh in the curriculum in key stage 1. Across the school, pupils gain an appreciation of Welsh culture and heritage through participation in the school's annual eisteddfod and visits to local places of interest.

The school promotes effectively pupils' understanding of sustainability and global citizenship.



## **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers plan, prepare, organise and deliver a suitable range of learning activities that motivate and engage most pupils well. Teachers use an appropriate variety of questioning techniques to strengthen pupils' understanding and encourage them to think carefully to solve problems. In the best practice, the pace of lessons is brisk and planned activities are purposeful and exciting. In most lessons, teachers adapt planning appropriately for less confident pupils. However, learning activities do not generally challenge more able pupils enough.

Working relationships between pupils and staff are particularly good. Classroom assistants generally make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils' learning and wellbeing. All staff manage pupils' behaviour well and treat pupils with care and respect.

Teachers and classroom assistants provide helpful oral feedback in lessons and mark pupils' work conscientiously. However, marking does not always provide pupils with clear advice about how to improve their work. Target-setting is developing appropriately and older pupils, in particular, use their targets well to remind them of what they need to do.

Teachers' self-evaluation logs contain detailed assessments of pupils' day-to-day progress. These are used effectively to plan future learning. Teachers make good use of standardised assessment data and reading and spelling tests to monitor and support the progress of individual pupils.

Parents are well informed about their children's progress.

## **Care, support and guidance: Good**

Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and respond to their needs in a positive and caring manner. There are effective arrangements to promote pupils' health and wellbeing and to encourage pupils to take responsibility.

An extensive range of learning experiences, inside and outside of the classroom, promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. School assemblies provide pupils with useful opportunities to reflect on their own and others' beliefs. The weekly 'red book' assembly promotes successfully specific values such as kindness, tolerance and respect.

The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective and most pupils make good progress. Teachers identify pupils' needs early and address these appropriately through individual plans and group withdrawal sessions. When needed, the school seeks advice from specialist services, such as speech and language therapists.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

## **Learning environment: Good**

There is a strong, caring community in the school, which successfully promotes an ethos of kindness and respect. As a result, pupils feel happy, secure and ready to learn. All pupils are treated fairly and have equal access to all areas of the curriculum, including extra-curricular clubs. The school promotes pupils' understanding of diversity well through special days to celebrate different cultures and through its support of a school in Zambia.

Although key stage 1 classrooms are small, teachers make good use of the available space. The accommodation is well maintained and secure. All classrooms have colourful displays to exhibit pupils' work and to support their learning. There is an ample supply of resources in classrooms. The library has an extensive range of levelled reading books and a small stock of additional books. However, the school does not use its limited ICT resources well enough. This hinders pupils' progress in developing their ICT skills.

The outdoor area is well resourced and good use is made of the outside space for gardening activities, conservation of wildlife and sports.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
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## **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school as a nurturing environment where pupils develop a love of learning and core values such as kindness. All staff share this vision, which is also clearly understood by governors, parents and pupils. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviours within the school.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and another teacher form the senior management team. They share key responsibilities, work well together as a team and provide clear leadership. This team promotes an ethos where staff are encouraged to reflect on their work and share good practice regularly. All teachers have responsibility for one or more subject areas. As part of this role, teachers observe lessons, promote best practice and offer advice and support to colleagues.

Governors are supportive and have a secure understanding of the school's key priorities. They provide critical advice to inform major developments such as the recent building improvements.

The headteacher undertakes regular classroom observations and has a good understanding of the quality of teaching. She provides useful feedback to staff and works well with them to identify individual and whole-school professional development opportunities. However, staff do not have individual targets for development which support whole-school priorities and are reviewed regularly. As a result, performance management arrangements are not linked well enough to raising pupils' standards.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

Since the last inspection, the school has improved its monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Staff complete useful weekly self-evaluation journals to review pupils' learning and plan further actions for individual pupils and the class. Subject leaders complete self-evaluations based on their lesson observations and scrutiny of work. All staff meet to moderate pupils' work and there is robust assessment data.

Staff meetings are a key forum for staff to raise issues, share ideas and agree future priorities. However, the school does not use assessment data, monitoring information or pupils' views systematically enough to identify whole-school priorities. The school's useful self-evaluation report identifies many strengths but does not indicate areas for development clearly enough.

The current school improvement plan is brief in content and is largely focused on improving provision. It does not include success criteria to measure expected outcomes for pupils. Where training supports a particular priority, the headteacher and subject leaders do not use the routine lesson observations well enough to evaluate the impact of this training on teaching and learning. However, staff know the school's priorities. All the actions in last year's improvement plan have been completed successfully and are starting to have a positive impact on outcomes. For example, regular group reading for more able pupils and a more systematic approach to teaching phonics has improved pupils' spelling and reading.

The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection. In particular, there is now a more effective leadership structure and more robust assessment arrangements. The school has also completed significant building works to enhance the school environment.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has a good range of effective partnerships that impact directly on the day-to-day life of the school and on pupils' standards and wellbeing.

The partnership with parents is particularly strong. Parents value not only the academic progress that their children make but also the significant contribution the school makes to develop their children's confidence and wellbeing. There is an active 'Friends of Agincourt' parent association, which raises large sums of money to fund resources such as the play castle in the grounds and to support the school's charitable work. The readiness of the headteacher and staff to listen to parents and respond to their concerns has created, over many years, a high level of mutual trust.

The school benefits from close links with its partner schools to which nearly all pupils transfer. The schools work together well to plan a smooth transition for pupils. The school makes good use of its partner schools' facilities, particularly for sport, drama and swimming, to enrich pupils' learning and wellbeing. For example, the regular use of the swimming pool in one partner school means that, by the end of Year 2, all pupils are able to swim 10 metres and about half of pupils can swim 50 metres.

The school has established many worthwhile partnerships with the local and international community and with the local authority. For example, charitable work with a school in Zambia has increased pupils' awareness of global citizenship. Similarly, a visit from a local car mechanic increased Year 2 pupils understanding of a design technology project around motor vehicles.

**Resource management: Good**

The school has an appropriate number of teachers and support staff. Staff are deployed effectively to make good use of their specialist skills and have access to a range of appropriate professional development opportunities.

The school manages its finances well. The headteacher, bursar and governors plan and monitor the school's spending carefully to ensure that it is in line with the agreed budget and priorities. For example, the school has invested in significant extensions and improvements to the buildings and accommodation in recent years.

The accommodation is appropriate and well maintained. Overall, there are enough learning resources to meet pupils' needs although ICT resources are limited.

The school makes effective use of its resources to provide a wide range of learning experiences and achieve good outcomes for pupils. It provides value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to discussions with learners

During the inspection discussions took place with a group of six and seven-year-old pupils and with the school's Eco Warriors, prefects and head boy and head girl. All pupils spoken to think that teachers and other adults help them to learn and make progress and nearly all know whom to talk to if they find their work hard. In addition, most pupils know who to talk to if they are worried or upset and feel that the school deals well with bullying. As a result, all pupils say that they feel safe in school and most state that they are doing well. All pupils feel the school teaches them how to keep healthy and most state they have lots of opportunities to get regular exercise.

#### Response to parent questionnaires

Estyn received 21 responses to the parent questionnaire, which represents close to 20% of the total number of parents. Of the parents that responded, most gave a positive or very positive response to many questions.

All parents consider that the school is well run. They say that their children like school and were helped to settle in well when they started school. Parents believe that children behave well, that they are encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise, become more mature and take on responsibility. They state that teaching is good, that staff expect their children to work hard and do their best and that homework builds on what children learn in school.

All parents say that staff treat children fairly and with respect, that their children receive appropriate additional support in relation to any particular need and are well prepared to move on to their next school. They say that the school provides a good range of activities including trips and visits.

Most parents are satisfied with the school. They say that their children feel safe and are making good progress. Most parents state that they are kept well informed and are comfortable about approaching the school, with questions, suggestions or a problem.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Bev Jenkins	Reporting Inspector
Jassa Scott	Team Inspector
Caroline Clint	Team Inspector
Linda Harmer	Peer Inspector
Paul Scudamore	Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003: 3 and 5
Mr M Wren (Deputy Headteacher)	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

## Glossary of terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.
Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh first language and mathematics	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh first language and mathematics
Level 2 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This represents a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at aged 16 or at aged 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at aged 16.
Proprietor	The term 'proprietor', as defined in the Education Act 1996, means the person or people responsible for managing an independent school and can include a sole proprietor, governing bodies, trustees or directors. The ways that independent schools are governed and owned varies a great deal. A proprietor or trust may own a school or the school may have a governing body that appoints a headteacher. Some schools have a combination of these.