



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

A report on

**Victoria Primary School
Poyser Street
Wrexham
LL13 7RR**

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by

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

About Victoria Primary School

Victoria Primary School is in Wrexham. There are around 470 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11, including 60 nursery pupils who attend part-time. There are 16 single-age classes in the school.

The rolling average for the past three years means that about 17% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is slightly below the national average of 18%. Around 70% of pupils are of white British ethnicity. Other pupils are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and around 26% have English as a second language. Of these, many are either new to English or are at an early stage of acquisition. Very few pupils speak Welsh at home.

The school identifies around 16% of pupils as having additional learning needs. This is below the national average of 21%.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2014 and the school's last inspection was in January 2012.

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, including those with additional learning needs or who have English as an additional language, make good progress while at the school. The school provides a safe and caring environment and nearly pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers provide interesting and appropriately challenging activities that encourage pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills well, often in imaginative and stimulating contexts. The school's arrangements for care, support and guidance promote pupils' development as rounded and resilient individuals effectively. The headteacher has established a strong ethos of teamwork where all staff share good practice and curricular innovation. A well-informed governing body supports the school 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 the school's provision for promoting pupils' spiritual development
- R2 Extend across the school the existing best practice in developing pupils' skills through a discovery approach to learning

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

A majority of pupils begin school with levels of language skills that are broadly in line with those expected of pupils of that age, while most others have lower skill levels. While at school, most pupils make good progress and achieve well. A minority of pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards. Nearly all pupils who have additional learning needs generally make good progress from their individual starting points and most pupils who have English as a second language make rapid progress.

Through the school, most pupils listen attentively in classes. In the foundation phase, many pupils listen carefully to instructions. In key stage 2, talking partners listen respectfully to one another's ideas and settle differences of opinion amicably. Many older pupils discuss their learning articulately. For example, they use specialist terminology correctly to describe their roles as polar research scientists.

Most pupils in the foundation phase read fluently and expressively. They decode unfamiliar words competently and deduce their meaning from their context, with help from picture cues. However, they use only a limited range of strategies to help them with difficult words. In key stage 2, most pupils progress well in developing their reading skills. Most read aloud fluently and without hesitation. They add interest to their reading by varying their tone expressively. Most pupils use context to help them to make sense of their reading and many are beginning to use inference to support their understanding by reading between the lines.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop a clear handwriting style and write legibly for a broad range of purposes. For example, they write newspaper reports on the gunpowder plot and report on their investigation into which material will keep porridge hot for longest. Their spelling of common words is generally accurate and they make phonetically plausible attempts at more challenging words.

Most pupils develop their skills in mathematics well as they progress through the school. They build a firm grasp of basic principles in number, measure, shape and data handling. Through the school, many pupils apply their numeracy skills well in a range of contexts across the curriculum. For example, in the foundation phase, they use their measuring skills to investigate whether tallest people jump highest. In Year 4, pupils draw accurate graphs that show the strength of different magnets. Older pupils show concern for the environment by researching traffic flow outside the school and, using the mean and mode, they estimate the varying pollution levels during the day.

In the foundation phase, most pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately. For example, they use child-friendly search engines successfully to research the life of Hans Christian Andersen and create a presentation about his stories. Most pupils frequently use a video-based app to record their work and access it through quick response codes. In key stage 2, pupils develop their skills in ICT well for a range of purposes, using a variety of devices. They use word processing software effectively to report their investigation into conductors and

insulators. Many present data effectively in a range of forms, such as line graphs and pie charts. Older pupils use green screen technology effectively to provide appropriate settings for pupils' presentations. For example, they enable pupils to act out conversations in a Welsh café setting. They capture many examples of their work effectively using a digital video platform.

Many pupils in the foundation phase use simple Welsh phrases to greet one another and to make simple requests. They build a useful vocabulary about foods, pastimes and the weather. Many pupils read and understand simple Welsh books, although their pronunciation is not consistently accurate. Many older pupils make good progress in developing their Welsh writing. By Year 6, many write extended descriptions of themselves and their families. They apply their skills well in writing letters home as wartime evacuees. Many pupils in key stage 2 engage in simple dialogues, such as when they set up a Welsh gift shop. A minority of pupils are beginning to have the confidence and fluency to improvise beyond the set patterns that they rehearse regularly in classes.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school and most know who to talk to if they are worried or upset. They use the 'buddy drop in' to speak to staff about issues that are affecting them. Many pupils with sensory needs co-operate well in the lunchtime construction club. Nearly all pupils take part in the buddy system responsibly, such as in a 'playmaker' role, engaging well with their peers to ensure pupils are included in playground games and have enjoyable break times.

Many pupils know about the benefits of eating healthily and staying fit and take part in a good range of physical activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 learn about the impact of vigorous exercise on the heart. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy playing bowls and tennis at the local park, while older pupils enjoy weekly gym visits for coached fitness activities. Most pupils benefit from the balance of physical and creative activities that are on offer in the good range of well-attended extracurricular clubs that take place during lunchtimes and after school. Pupils make good use of the new scooter shed and free bike checks. These have helped to increase the number of pupils who walk or ride to school.

Pupils are confident that their opinions are listened to. For example, the eco committee and school council proposed to the governing body that plastic straws for milk orders be banned and, as a result, pupils use recyclable paper straws. Digital leaders helped to design the media suite and pupils feel ownership of this learning space. The school encourages pupils to take on responsibilities and play an active part in its life. For example, older pupils meet regularly to discuss school improvement. Most notably, the school council undertook a survey and identified ways to improve playtime by zoning the playground for different activities. Pupil groups are increasingly less reliant on adult involvement in their discussions.

Nearly all pupils are polite and courteous, and their positive behaviour is a notable feature in lessons and around the school. The pupil-led teaching and learning council has produced a series of informative videos to promote effective learning.

Many pupils demonstrate good levels of resilience when completing activities, for example when identifying and correcting errors in a set of instructions based on a map of the locality. Many are enthusiastic, show interest in their work and maintain concentration for extended periods. Nearly all demonstrate that they are ambitious, capable learners. They perform enthusiastically to their peers, for example when performing a Welsh version of a haka. Nearly all pupils speak confidently about the level of challenge in their learning. This enables pupils to give immediate feedback to their teacher when completing tasks.

The school council has undertaken an inspection of the school, identifying areas for improvement. The senior leadership team has incorporated feedback from this report in the school development plan. As a result, pupils' self and peer-assessment in class has improved. Pupil representatives also comment on the progress the school is making against the development plan.

Nearly all pupils respond positively to feedback from their teachers, which helps them to improve their work. In most classrooms, pupils discuss their learning maturely. Information from a recent pupil survey about written feedback provides teachers with constructive comments on how to improve their marking.

Nearly all pupils know how to stay safe, including when online. Rates of attendance are improving and now compare well with local and national averages. However, a small but significant number of pupils are persistently late for school, which has a negative effect on their progress.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The school provides an engaging and inclusive curriculum that is developing well in line with the four purposes of the new curriculum. There are many examples of imaginative and interesting activities across the year groups. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles, including whole-class, group and individual work. There are particular strengths in the discovery approach used at the end of key stage 2. For example, pupils carry out an in-depth study of the Gresford colliery disaster. Many pupils produce work of a very good standard as a result of these opportunities.

Lessons generally build well on pupils' previous learning and make effective links across subject areas. For example, pupils in Year 5 work effectively in groups to plan a television advertisement based on their visit to Glan-llyn.

Most lessons proceed at a good pace and support pupils of all abilities well. On the whole, teachers make regular and effective use of open-ended questions that encourage pupils to think and discuss their work. In a few classes, where teaching is most effective, this has an extremely positive impact on pupils' independent learning skills. For example, in lower key stage 2, effective questioning provides pupils with opportunities to develop their subject-specific vocabulary about potential and kinetic energy. This promotes pupils' higher-level thinking skills well.

Teachers share clear lesson intentions with pupils. Most discuss success criteria with pupils effectively. Pupils have useful opportunities to choose the level of work to challenge them appropriately and to evaluate their work individually or with peers. As a result, most pupils have a sound understanding of teachers' expectations in relation

to specific tasks. Nearly all teachers provide effective oral and written feedback. As a result, most pupils have a sound grasp of what they need to do to develop their work further.

Teachers and support staff help all groups of pupils purposefully with their work. This is particularly effective for pupils with English as an additional language. Extra language provision enables them to access their work successfully and, as a result, nearly all make good progress.

Throughout the school, working relationships between pupils and staff are strong with a positive climate for learning in nearly all classes. Nearly all staff implement the positive behaviour policy consistently and successfully.

Throughout the foundation phase, most teachers ensure a beneficial balance of teacher-led and child-led teaching and learning in line with the principles of the foundation phase, including purposeful use of the outdoors. In key stage 2, worthwhile outdoor provision is developing well. For example, pupils in Year 3 benefit from a project to promote art in the outdoors.

The school implements the literacy and numeracy framework effectively with carefully-planned activities across all areas of learning and experience. Teachers are making very good progress in developing the digital competence framework.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is progressing well. Pupils have valuable opportunities to learn about Welsh culture and heritage through visits to places, such as the Senedd and the locality, including the local church. Most teachers act as effective role models through their regular use of Welsh commands and phrases in their daily interactions with pupils. This has a positive impact on pupils' standards in Welsh.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Teachers track and monitor pupils' progress thoroughly. They make good use of online learning platforms to support and track pupils with specific needs, such as dyslexia. They ensure that intervention programs suit pupils' needs and help them to make progress. For example, teachers use structured phonics programmes effectively for pupils in key stage two who require additional support with reading. The school makes good use of outside agencies when required.

The school benefits from a good relationship with its onsite pre-nursery and the local feeder playgroup. This helps staff to identify and monitor pupils with additional needs from an early stage and put suitable interventions in place promptly. Staff conduct a thorough baseline assessment when pupils start in the nursery class. This helps them to meet pupils' needs and to provide activities that are suitably challenging from an early stage.

The school has a very strong relationship with nearly all parents. Communications are clear and timely and provide parents with valuable information about forthcoming events and rates of pupils' attendance. The school listens to parents' opinions. For example, the school changed its homework policy following representations from parents. Parents have many different opportunities to engage with the school and

many attend school community events, such as parent day and the St David's Day parade. The 'families connect' group provides a variety of beneficial workshops delivered by health professionals as well as opportunities for parents to develop their digital and numeracy skills.

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

Staff use one-page profiles successfully to support pupils' transition within the school and into the main receiving secondary school. Teachers use an online platform well to create digital portfolios for learners. These portfolios support pupils effectively as they move from one class to the next. The school identifies pupils who are more able well, and individual plans ensure that these pupils make good progress.

The school supports pupils moral and social development well. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of fairness, honesty and right and wrong. Consequently, the school is a very well-ordered community. Many pupils have a good understanding of the needs and rights of others, both locally and globally. Pupils take part in considered discussions, for example on local issues of homelessness. School ambassadors play an important part in promoting respect and celebrating the twenty-five nationalities represented at the school by organising events such as an international food festival. However, the school's ethos and curriculum do not support pupils' spiritual development well enough.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking so that pupils know that a healthy diet and regular exercise is important.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has established a clear vision for the school, which is based on developing pupils to the best of their ability in a happy, supportive and exciting environment. School leaders have worked successfully with the whole school community to establish an effective learning environment for staff and pupils. Leaders at all levels have high expectations, which has a positive impact on improving pupils' attainment and wellbeing.

The highly motivated leadership team support the headteacher very well. Leaders share responsibilities suitably to maximise the skills and talents of staff successfully. They draw effectively on these skills to ensure a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and a shared understanding of professional values. For example, as part of their work as a Lead Creative School, staff enthusiastically share their own learning about media and digital technology with colleagues. This has led to notable improvements in pupil's presentations using digital media in all aspects of the curriculum successfully.

Leaders ensure that regular staff meetings are effective and address the school's priorities purposefully. They focus efficiently on improving pupils' attainment and provide valuable opportunities for staff to contribute to improving provision and raising standards. As a result, all members of staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders encourage staff to be innovative and a number of the school's practices, such as in teaching mathematics, have been adopted following action research by members of staff. They work well as a team and make valuable and effective contributions to improvement activities.

Self-evaluation procedures are comprehensive and based on a wide range of first hand evidence. Senior leaders plan monitoring activities well. They analyse a wide range of data rigorously and review pupils' work and share lesson observations with colleagues. This ensures consistency and accountability among staff for the quality of the provision and for improving progress. As a result, staff develop the necessary skills and confidence to take forward agreed priorities for improvement effectively. The school uses the information gathered from self-evaluation purposefully to develop effective improvement plans. They identify a manageable number of whole school improvement priorities and prioritise those that will have the greatest impact on outcomes for pupils. This ensures the priorities remain relevant for the pupils and focus on raising standards effectively.

Leaders take good account of local and national priorities. For example, teachers plan a range of interesting tasks and activities to support pupils' numeracy skills. This well-structured approach has been successful in engaging pupils and has improved their mathematical skills successfully.

Professional development activities link well to school priorities. Teachers work very closely together to share ideas and learn from each other. The school collaborates effectively with a wide range of external partners. Work with cluster schools and the sharing of good practice, has made a valuable contribution to staff knowledge and has had a positive impact on standards of attainment. The school has been diligent in sharing its good practice with local schools, including some farther afield and across Wales.

The governing body is effective and supports the school well. Governors understand the school's context, its strengths and areas for improvement. They contribute appropriately to the self-evaluation process. For example, they meet with leaders and regularly evaluate the impact of provision on pupils' outcomes. By working effectively with senior leaders, scrutinising books, and conducting learning walks around the school, they have first-hand experience of the quality of teaching and learning.

The school uses its pupil development grant purposefully. Through the delivery of a suitable range of worthwhile intervention programmes and working specifically with external agencies, the school focuses effectively on supporting pupils and their families. There are effective arrangements to manage the school's finances and resources.

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.

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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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