



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

**A report on**

**St Mary The Virgin C.I.W. Primary School  
North Church Street  
Butetown  
Cardiff  
CF10 5HB**

**Date of inspection: April 2019**

**by**

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

## About St Mary The Virgin C.I.W. Primary School

St. Mary the Virgin Church in Wales Primary School is in the Butetown area of Cardiff in the City and County of Cardiff local authority. There are 230 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years. There are nine classes at the school.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free schools meals is around 45%, which is well above the national average of 18%. The school identifies around 33% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is above the national average of 21%. Around 95% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background and 74% have English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.

The school's previous inspection was in November, 2012 and the current headteacher took up her post in September, 2013.

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

The wellbeing of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and all staff work hard to ensure that there is a very caring and inclusive ethos. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress, their attitudes to learning and their behaviour. Many pupils take on roles and responsibilities enthusiastically and contribute well to the life and work of the school.

Many pupils begin school with skills that are below those expected of pupils of a similar age. However, many, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points.

Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of learning experiences and promote their knowledge of Welsh culture and heritage well. The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides purposeful leadership. Together with a committed senior leadership team and dedicated members of staff, they work successfully to improve pupils' outcomes and raise their aspirations.

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

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Raise standards of pupils' Welsh language skills
- R2 Provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in a variety of subjects across the curriculum
- R3 Improve the presentation of a minority of pupils' written work

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

Many pupils enter the school with skills that are below those expected for their age. As they move through the school, many make good progress from their starting points, including those with additional learning needs and pupils with English as an additional language.

Many pupils develop their speaking and listening skills successfully in the foundation phase. They respond to questions appropriately and follow instructions quickly. Many talk readily about the activities they are completing. In key stage 2, many pupils listen attentively during lessons and in assemblies. Many discuss their ideas with partners enthusiastically, for example, pupils in Year 4 eagerly share their interesting phrase containing three words that end in 'ed' such as 'Excited, amazed and elated, she went into the bright caravan'.

Many pupils develop their reading skills effectively as they move through the school. By Year 2, many pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds well to read an increasing range of unfamiliar words successfully. The majority of pupils understand when to use a variety of punctuation such as exclamations and speech marks. Many pupils make good progress in building on their reading skills throughout key stage 2. They express an opinion about books and describe the main characters and sequence of events in stories meaningfully. By Year 6, many pupils read correctly and a few begin to understand various writers' techniques, for example, when they discuss the works of Roald Dahl.

Many pupils across the school produce writing of a good standard. By Year 2, many write at increasing length. For example, they produce interesting pieces of writing based on Little Red Riding Hood, the Gruffalo, and the history of toy cars. In key stage 2, many pupils write for a variety of purposes and develop a growing understanding of the appropriate style to use. Most write frequently to practise various aspects of grammar. Many research and plan interesting biographies of Lewis Carroll, Florence Nightingale and Queen Victoria. Many pupils practise their handwriting regularly. However, a minority of pupils do not always present their written work well enough.

Across the school, pupils develop a useful understanding of basic Welsh words and phrases. A few read simple Welsh texts suitably and recognise a few common words. Pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. However, most pupils lack the confidence to speak Welsh outside of designated Welsh lessons.

Many pupils develop their mathematical skills well across the school. By the end of the foundation phase, most identify simple fractions such as halves, thirds and quarters correctly. Nearly all pupils add, halve and double a variety of 2-digit numbers correctly. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop their data-handling skills well, for example, when using a Carroll diagram to organise shapes. By Year 6, many pupils use a wide range of methods successfully to calculate mathematical problems. For example, they calculate the mean, mode, range and median of a set of data effectively. Most pupils are beginning to use their mathematical skills suitably in real-life situations. For example, during a Dragon's Den activity they apply their data-

handling skills skilfully to maximise the profit made. However, across the school, pupils do not always develop their numeracy skills sufficiently in other areas of the curriculum.

Throughout the school, most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. In the foundation phase, many combine pictures and texts successfully to create 'popplets' on what tigers eat and imaginary stories about princesses. Most use a suitable programme successfully to record an investigation on favourite foods and animals. In key stage 2, most pupils continue to make good progress and use ICT to present their work in interesting ways. For example, they use spreadsheets purposefully to plan and cost a party and create an effective database about a group of people they questioned in Cardiff Bay. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and know what to do if they encounter any inappropriate material.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

Most pupils feel safe in school and have a secure knowledge of how to stay safe online. They are able to explain the precautions needed to ensure that their information is secure, such as not revealing their passwords and personal details to others. Many display good behaviour in lessons and around the school. They are generally polite and well mannered, greet visitors happily and display courtesy to others. Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and know what to do if they are worried or upset. They know that adults will value their concerns and deal with them promptly.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, by eating a balanced diet and drinking plenty of water. For example, most take advantage of the snack shack at break times where they are able to buy a selection of fruit. Most understand the importance of keeping fit. They participate enthusiastically in regular physical exercise and during the broad range of extra-curricular activities available to them.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage fully in lessons. They settle quickly at the start of lessons and demonstrate sustained levels of concentration when completing the various tasks set by the teacher independently. Many pupils work together purposefully and enjoy discussing aspects of their learning as a whole class or in pairs, for example, when discussing which questions to ask a pupil in a role-play situation as a bus driver. Many listen carefully to their friends and teachers and respond to their ideas with consideration. Many support each other well and think carefully about how to tackle challenges. Nearly all have a good understanding of their rights, as a result of the class charters they create, and they display respect and understanding for the different viewpoints of others.

Many pupils take pride in the extensive opportunities they are given to represent the views of other pupils and they enthusiastically contribute ideas to the school's staff. Every pupil in key stage 2 has a role to play on the school council, Criw Cymraeg, as digital leaders or as members of the rotary group. The healthy schools group raises money for a local charity and the rotary group is actively developing the school garden. In the foundation phase, younger pupils contribute to their learning successfully and, as a result, their ability to work independently is developing well.

Many pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and respond positively to the frequent efforts the school makes to improve attendance rates. As a result, when compared with other schools, pupils' attendance has gradually improved over the last few years.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

There are strong working relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils very well and most manage their behaviour in classes and around the school effectively. Most teachers plan lessons carefully, building well on what pupils have learnt and taking good account of their interests. For instance, the school has recently started to provide more worthwhile opportunities for pupils to contribute to the areas of learning.

Teachers use stimulating strategies successfully to promote pupils' learning. For example, in many sessions they ask pupils to 'use what we know to find out what we do not know'. Pupils also have purposeful opportunities to learn in the school garden, where they are developing a 'reflection area'. The school supplements the curriculum well with educational visits to places such as Cardiff Bay and Cardiff Castle and by forging strong links with the local football team to enable pupils to take part in several football tournaments, for example.

Most teachers use questioning skilfully to promote pupils' learning and to enable them to explain their thinking purposefully. Throughout the school, teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively to lead exciting group activities and they make imaginative use of the learning environment. Teachers ensure that learning moves forward at a good pace and they use purposeful contexts to bring learning to life. For example, older pupils work in teams to plan and cost an end-of-term party. Most teachers provide pupils with helpful oral feedback which helps them to improve their work.

Teachers' plans take good account of the principles of foundation phase and there is an effective balance of child-led and adult-directed learning across classes. Teachers use their understanding of the new curriculum for Wales purposefully to shape the learning experiences they provide for pupils. For example, when planning, they consider very carefully how these experiences contribute to the four purposes of the curriculum. The school plans successfully for the development of pupils' literacy and ICT skills. For example, there are extensive opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in activities such as producing a filmed weather forecast and a film about the local area. In addition, they participate in a wide range of creative activities, for example, by creating ground art pictures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. However, planning to develop pupils' numeracy skills across subjects is less well developed.

The curriculum takes good account of the culture and heritage of Wales, for instance, through a range of visits to local places of interest, such as St Fagan's museum. The school holds its own annual Eisteddfod that includes a chairing of the bard competition. The school develops pupils' basic Welsh language skills appropriately, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and improve their Welsh skills, especially outside of designated Welsh lessons.

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

The school is a happy, caring and inclusive community where staff support pupils well. They create a nurturing ethos that results in pupils feeling that staff treat them with courtesy and respect. There are good opportunities to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, regular e-safety sessions help pupils to know how to stay safe online. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress as they move through the school are detailed and effective. Leaders analyse the assessment information well to provide specific support for any pupils who may be in danger of underachieving. The introduction of learner reviews, which provide very clear and helpful profiles of individual pupils, has reinforced this process well.

The school's provision to support pupils with additional learning needs and those with English as an additional language is strong. Staff identify these pupils at an early stage and ensure that they receive the necessary support to succeed in their work as they move through the school. A purposeful range of intervention programmes and strategies enables these pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Individual education targets for pupils with additional learning needs are specific and measurable, and pupils and parents play an important part in the process of reviewing them.

Leaders work hard to engage parents in the life of the school. For example, there are regular coffee mornings for parents and their young children and the school website provides useful information about termly activities. The school also engages successfully with a local college to offer specific learning programmes for parents in order to raise their knowledge and understanding of their children's learning.

The school has appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking, and effective systems to promote pupils' healthy lifestyles and to highlight the importance of taking regular exercise. There is a variety of extra-curricular and sports activities, such as the football and cookery clubs, which contribute successfully towards developing pupils' health and fitness. There are also valuable opportunities for older pupils, in particular, to participate in football tournaments at the local football stadium.

The school provides pupils with many opportunities to take on leadership roles that have a positive impact on their wellbeing and on the day-to-day life of the school. For example, all key stage 2 pupils belong to a wide range of pupil groups, such as the school council, wellbeing or creative groups. Each group makes a valuable contribution to school life and pupils' suggestions regularly help to improve the school's provision. For example, pupils have improved the garden area at the school entrance and ensured that there are colourful markings on the playground.

The school's provision for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's acts of collective worship successfully celebrate pupils' different beliefs well. The way in which it encourages pupils to understand issues relating to equality and diversity is central to the life of the school. As a result, most pupils are proud of their diverse community and heritage. This promotes pupils' understanding of their roles as global citizens successfully.



## **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher places pupils' wellbeing at the heart of her vision for the school, which she communicates effectively to pupils, staff, governors and parents. She is supported exceptionally well by the deputy headteacher, who contributes effectively to strategic planning. For example, the deputy headteacher has introduced many successful initiatives, such as improvements to the foundation phase and purposeful plans for introducing the new curriculum. The headteacher creates a strong team ethos in which all members of staff work together well to deliver the key priorities for improvement.

Leaders have high expectations of staff and provide them with good support and challenge to improve their performance. There are effective strategies to monitor the provision for pupils, which have contributed successfully to the good quality teaching in school. The self-evaluation process informs the school's priorities for improvement well and leaders use a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate its effectiveness. These include the careful analysis of assessment data, classroom observations and learning walks. All members of staff are involved fully in the self-evaluation process. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

The school focuses clearly on a manageable number of key development priorities to be achieved within a realistic timescale. Leaders ensure that financial planning links closely to these priorities, and lines of accountability are clear. Leaders and managers evaluate the progress towards achieving these targets carefully and include any areas they identify as needing further improvement in future plans. For example, the school has recognised the need to raise pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy further.

The school is a vibrant learning community. All members of staff are committed to various action research projects, for example, teachers in Years 5 and 6 explore the impact of questioning techniques on pupils' learning. The performance management process is rigorous and staff improvement targets link very closely to school priorities and the individual's professional learning needs. All members of staff have access to a range of relevant training opportunities to develop their expertise. These have a positive impact on their performance and on pupils' outcomes. For example, the training provided to improve their understanding of specific aspects of mathematics has had a beneficial impact on pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.

The school is well resourced with sufficient and well qualified teachers to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for individuals and groups of pupils, both in classes and in small withdrawal sessions. The headteacher and governors manage the budget effectively. Leaders make good use of the pupil development grant to support those pupils eligible for free school meals so as to ensure their wellbeing and develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and knows the school and the local community very well. The headteacher and staff regularly provide the governors with detailed reports of the work of the school. As a result, they have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and know the main areas for improvement.

## Copies of the report

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

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

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	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:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

© Crown Copyright 2019: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 03/07/2019