



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

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

Date of inspection: January 2012

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:

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

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

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Context

Victoria Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Wrexham and is maintained by Wrexham local authority. It was established as a new school in September 2010 after the amalgamation of the infants and junior schools.

The school has 430 pupils aged three to 11 years old. This includes 56 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Pupils begin school full time after their fourth birthday.

English is the predominant language spoken at home, but around 17% of pupils are from minority-ethnic backgrounds. English is the main language of communication in the school and Welsh is taught as a second language.

Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds, which the school describes as being neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is lower than the local authority and all-Wales average. Thirteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having additional learning needs. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

The individual school budget per pupil for Victoria Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £2,965 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Wrexham is £8,569 and the minimum is £2,903. Victoria Primary School is 56th out of the 60 primary schools in Wrexham in terms of its school budget per pupil.

The headteacher has been in post since the amalgamation of the schools in 2010 and was previously headteacher of the former junior school since 2000.

The infants' school was previously inspected during the autumn term 2009 and the junior school during the summer term 2005.

Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

This school is good because:

- most pupils make good progress and achieve well by the end of key stage 2;
- standards of, and provision for, Welsh language are very good;
- pupils achieve high levels of wellbeing and their behaviour and attitude to work is very good; and
- the standard of teaching in many classes is good and effective support is provided by the teaching assistants.

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a strong vision and leadership;
- staff contribute well to the effective ethos of continuous improvement;
- the school is very clear about its strengths and short comings; and
- governors provide effective support and robust challenge.

Recommendations

In order to improve, there is a need to:

- R1 raise standards of pupils' reading and writing in the Foundation Phase;
- R2 ensure that the best practice in teaching is shared amongst all staff; and
- R3 focus clearly on pupil outcomes in self-evaluation and target setting procedures.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

Pupils enter the school with skills that are normally expected for pupils of a similar age. Many pupils make suitable progress throughout the Foundation Phase in each of the learning areas.

The verified data on pupils' attainment in National Curriculum assessment in 2011 indicates that pupils performed at a relatively good level in mathematics and science at the end of key stage 1 compared to pupils in other schools in the authority and in Wales. However pupils' attainment in English is not as good. The percentage attaining the expected level in all subjects was below the average for schools within the family of similar schools. There has been a slight downward trend in the results in recent years.

The data results for 2011 in key stage 2 for English and mathematics place the school above the average for the family of schools and for schools in Wales. The data shows that all subjects have improved steadily since 2007. The greatest gain was in mathematics, which places the school amongst the 25% highest in Wales in 2011.

Nearly all pupils with special educational needs achieve well against prior attainment and personal targets and make good progress relative to their ability. Pupils entitled to free school meals and those with English as an additional language also make good progress and achieve their targets. Overall, boys do not achieve as well as girls, particularly in writing.

The achievement and progress of pupils in most lessons is good for their age and abilities. Almost all pupils across the school work diligently, complete their work well and remain on task, showing interest and pride in their achievements. Almost all have good recall of previous learning and work well with others.

The current work in pupils' books and other relevant evidence show that pupils' literacy and communication skills are generally good across the school. There is a measurable increase in the standard of skills across the curriculum by the end of key stage 2.

During lessons nearly all pupils listen attentively and respond well to adults and to other pupils' contributions. By the end of key stage 2, nearly all are articulate and are able to communicate confidently, to contribute successfully to group and class discussions and to respond to the teachers' questioning effectively.

Although many of the pupils within the Foundation Phase read regularly, the majority lack fluency in their reading. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils show understanding of a wide range of texts and can use their reading skills confidently to access other areas of the curriculum independently.

In the nursery and reception classes, nearly all children make good progress in their early writing skills. By the end of the Foundation Phase, nearly all are producing a reasonably wide range of written work. However, not all pupils attain the expected levels as their ability to write independently is underdeveloped. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils write clearly in a wide range of forms and for a variety of purposes with fluency and at length.

Pupils' ability to apply their thinking skills is highly developed throughout the school and is one of the school's main strengths.

Pupils' progress in Welsh as a second language is very good throughout the school. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read and write in Welsh to a high standard.

Wellbeing: Good

Almost every pupil has a good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and of taking regular exercise. Almost all pupils are happy and feel safe in school and they know whom to turn to if they have a problem. They state that very little bullying occurs and staff deal with any issues promptly.

The behaviour of almost all pupils is of a very high standard and they show respect and consideration to each other and to adults.

Nearly all pupils enjoy their work and show very high levels of motivation and engagement in lessons. Pupils work very well together in groups and teams.

Pupils' attendance has been consistently in the lowest 25% of that for similar schools for the past two years but has improved over the last two terms.

The school council and the Eco council meet regularly and make a significant contribution to the school's activities. They have been successful in developing improvements within the school such as developing the school garden. They have also participated in learning walks which has enabled them to successfully contribute to the school's self-evaluation process.

Pupils regularly participate in concerts, services and eisteddfodau. Almost all pupils take advantage of these opportunities and develop confidence as a result.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

The school provides a very rich curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils, including those with additional needs or for whom English is not their first language. Staff plan together to ensure that learning experiences build progressively on previously acquired knowledge and understanding. The development of pupils' key skills is carefully planned and all pupils receive the full range of experiences stipulated by the national curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by a very large number of visitors to the school and stimulating visits to local places of interest and further afield. For example, Year 6 pupils speak knowledgeably of the lives of pupils

in Victorian times, following visits to Iron Bridge industrial museum. There are many well-attended after school clubs which enrich pupils' experiences.

Provision for Welsh language development is very effective and pupils' use of Welsh, together with the ways in which Welsh culture is promoted, is a strength of the school.

Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is very good. It is promoted effectively through a wide range of activities within school, in the community and beyond.

Teaching: Good

Overall, teaching is good. In many classes, teachers plan stimulating and effective lessons that build on pupils' previous work. Staff have good subject knowledge and use a range of teaching methods effectively, which require pupils to work creatively and independently to meet the challenges set for them. Many teachers have high expectations of their pupils. However, in a small number of classes, teachers' expectations are insufficiently high and pupils are set targets that present insufficient challenge. In all classes, teachers and other adults have developed very good relationships with the pupils. A good number of very effective teaching assistants give valuable support to teachers. Teachers use a range of resources effectively, including notebook computers and interactive whiteboards.

In many classes, teachers set appropriately challenging targets for individual pupils. During lessons, teachers and pupils regularly review progress towards the lesson's objective and to pupils' targets. Pupils' involvement in assessment, and in deciding what should be their next steps in learning, is a very strong characteristic of many classes. However, in a small number of classes in the Foundation Phase there are shortcomings in the quality of teachers' feedback and the extent of pupils' involvement in assessing their work.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a caring and very well-ordered community. The calm and secure atmosphere that characterises the school, and the mutual respect between adults and pupils provides a very good basis for effective teaching and learning.

Pupils are extremely well behaved and courteous towards adults and each other. The school has set up a wide range of initiatives that promote pupils' health and wellbeing, such as circle time and regular sessions for personal and social education. Buddies, playground pals and worry boxes help to ensure that bullying does not become a problem. Parents appreciate the ease of communication with the school and are confident that the school will take prompt and appropriate action should a problem occur. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

In most cases, provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. An effective range of tests is used to support teachers' observations and additional support is provided for those children who are not achieving as well as most pupils of the same age. The progress of these pupils is regularly reviewed with parents. The school makes very effective use of a range of specialist external agencies.

Pupils who are identified as more able and talented are given additional work to broaden and extend their learning.

Learning environment: Good

The school is fully inclusive and values all pupils equally. No pupils are denied access to any aspect of school life through gender, race, religion or impairment. Many pupils relish their responsibilities as buddies, playground pals, monitors and councillors and make a significant contribution to the school's ethos.

The school has a good stock of books and equipment that are in good condition, readily accessible and which are used well. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained and provide stimulating learning areas.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very effectively together and provide strong leadership for the school. They have managed the recent amalgamation of the separate junior and infant schools well. They have a clear vision for the school which they share successfully with staff, governors, parents and pupils. Other staff with leadership roles have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and support school management well.

The school has a culture of improvement. Leaders use data well to monitor the school's performance and to challenge everyone to improve through, for example, effective performance management systems for all staff.

Governors support the school very effectively. They are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for improvement and provide robust challenge for the standards it achieves. They take an effective part in setting the school's vision and strategic direction and in the development of improvement planning. Many governors attend training events that enable them to be more aware and informed about their role.

The school meets national and local priorities well. It has established evening classes for Welsh for adults and pupils and regular meetings encourage parental involvement to support their children's learning.

Improving quality: Good

The school is very clear about its strengths and shortcomings. Almost all teachers provide useful contributions to the school's regular wide range of self-evaluation

procedures. Teachers regularly look at first-hand evidence and report back effectively to colleagues and governors on their findings. Leaders use the information well to inform the school improvement plan. However, most of the evidence gathered looks at provision and leadership with limited evidence of effective scrutiny of pupil standards.

The school improvement plan addresses a large number of issues. It links clearly to expenditure on resources, training and development, and staff responsibilities. Although success criteria do not always focus upon pupil outcomes, the plan contains sound strategies that are likely to bring about expected improvements. Staff are aware of and act upon these. Leaders regularly review the plan and its impact on targeted areas.

The school is involved in two networks of professional practice. These are well established but have not yet measured any impact on pupil attainment.

Partnership working: Good

The school has a range of effective partnerships that enhance the ethos of the school and the lives of the pupils. They make a good contribution to raising standards and supporting pupils' wellbeing. Boys have joined the local library and more now enjoy reading following the work done with Wrexham Football Club. More able pupils have developed their writing skills through work with local authors. Partnerships with local businesses have provided funding for the outdoor areas for the Foundation Phase classes. Local clergy and churches support the taught curriculum and help raise standards of pupils' spiritual development.

Groups of pupils attending the Senedd and the school's involvement with European and African schools through the Comenius project, raise pupils' cultural and social Awareness.

The school has effective procedures for pupil assessments at the end of both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. It has developed assessment materials for both English and Welsh language that have been adopted for use by other schools in its local authority.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its finances well. Expenditure is carefully prioritised and monitored and the school's identified improvement targets are appropriately resourced. Teaching and support staff are deployed appropriately in order to meet the needs of all pupils. In particular, the school makes good use of staff expertise to raise standards in, for example, Welsh language and music. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils in all classes. There is effective management of teachers' planning, preparation and assessment time.

In view of the appropriate use the school makes of its funding and the good progress made by most pupils, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level (level 2) in oracy and reading in English in key stage 1 in 2011 was below the average for schools in Wales and below the average for the family of similar schools. The percentage who reached the expected level in writing was above the Wales average but below the average of the family of schools. The percentage of pupils who reached the expected level in mathematics and science was above the average for schools in Wales but slightly below the average for the family of schools.

In terms of the expected performance in English, mathematics and science combined, the school's results in key stage 1 were below the average for Wales and the family of schools. These results placed the school amongst the upper 50% of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school was in the lower 50% for English, mathematics and for science.

The percentage exceeding the expected level (level 3 or above) in 2011 in key stage 1 was below the family of schools and all-Wales averages in English and mathematics but above all-Wales average in science.

There is a significant difference in the results for boys and girls in some areas. Girls' results are significantly better than those of boys in writing English and in level 3 science and mathematics.

Over four years, key stage 1 pupils' results have fluctuated but show an overall slightly downward trend in all subjects. The results in English at level 2 were above the all-Wales and family averages in 2006-2007 and in 2008-2009. The results in mathematics and science from 2006-2007 were above the all-Wales and family averages until the slight dip in 2010-2011.

The school's results for level 3 in English and science have been below the averages for the family of schools and for Wales since 2006-2007, but above in mathematics for 2009-2010.

The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in all subjects and the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English, mathematics and science combined) in key stage 2 in 2011 was above the average for schools in Wales and above the average for the results of the family of similar schools.

The school compares favourably with similar schools in terms of being benchmarked against schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals in all subjects apart from science. The school is amongst the top 25% in mathematics, the upper 50% in English and the core subject indicator and amongst the lower 50% in science.

The percentage achieving beyond the expected level in 2011 in key stage 2 was above the family of schools and all-Wales averages in English and science and above the all-Wales average in mathematics.

The results for key stage 2 pupils in English and mathematics for the past four years have been fairly constant with the school's results, being consistently above family of schools and all-Wales averages since 2006. The science results have been below those of the family but above all-Wales averages since 2009-2010, having been above the family and Wales averages in 2008-2009.

The school's level 5 results in English and science have been consistently below the averages for the family of schools since 2006. However, the results at level 5 for 2010-2011 have seen a substantial improvement, with the school's results being above the average for the family of schools. Level 5 results in mathematics were above family averages in 2008-2009 but have been slightly lower since.

In 2011, there was a significant difference between the results for boys and girls in English reading and writing, with the boys' results substantially lower than the girls' results.

There are no obvious differences in the data at the end of both key stages associated with specific groups of pupils, such as pupils who are entitled to free school meals, pupils with additional learning needs, pupils in care or those for whom English is an additional language. On the whole, these pupils succeed in reaching levels that are commensurate with their ability.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Seventy-eight responses were received. All state that their children have had support to settle in well in the school and that they feel their children are safe and behave well.

Nearly all the parents that responded are satisfied with the school in general and are of the opinion that their children are making good progress. They also believe that the school is well run and that the standard of teaching is good.

In addition, almost all parents are of the opinion that the school provides a good range of activities and that the children are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise. Nearly all are happy with the information that they receive about pupils' progress and feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Ninety-nine pupils from key stage 2 completed the questionnaire and the team spoke to pupils during the inspection. All the pupils state that they are doing well in school.

Nearly all say that there are many opportunities for them to take physical exercise regularly and they are of the opinion that the teachers teach them effectively about the importance of knowing how to be healthy. They know where to turn for support when they are worried or are finding the work difficult. They state that teachers and other adults in the school help them to learn and make progress.

Approximately 80% of pupils responded through the questionnaire that behaviour is good in the school and that there is no bad behaviour that affects their ability to work. This is not the finding of the inspection team on the basis of observation and as a result of discussions with pupils. Behaviour was found to be very good.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Glyn Roberts HMI	Reporting Inspector
Richard Hawkley HMI	Team Inspector
Christopher Dolby	Team Inspector
Dylan Elfin Jones	Lay Inspector
David Edwards	Peer Inspector
Deborah Eccles	School Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (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 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 LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FPYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	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 four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	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 – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.