

A report on
St Mary's Primary (Ruabon) School

**Park Street
Overton Road
Wrexham
LL14 6LE**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About St Mary's Primary (Ruabon) School

Name of provider	St Mary's Primary (Ruabon) School
Local authority	Wrexham County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales
Number of pupils on roll	204
Pupils of statutory school age	165
Number in nursery classes	18
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 22.9%)	16.4%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 11.1%)	3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2013

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	10/10/2016
Start date of inspection	23/06/2025

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

St Mary's Primary School provides a nurturing and stimulating learning environment that supports pupils' well-being and promotes curiosity and engagement effectively. Strong, respectful relationships between staff and pupils contribute to a calm, purposeful atmosphere where nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and behave exceptionally well.

The school's curriculum is carefully planned to build pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding over time. It is flexible and engaging, offering relevant and creative learning opportunities. Many teachers encourage pupils to reflect on their learning, and older pupils use success criteria skilfully to identify strengths and areas for improvement. In many lessons, questioning is used effectively to support and challenge pupils. However, in a few lessons, missed opportunities to deepen learning, and overuse of worksheets limit pupils' progress.

Most pupils develop strong speaking and listening skills and communicate confidently. They write effectively across a range of contexts, and by Year 6, most read fluently, using a range of strategies to support their learning. Most pupils make good progress in mathematics and apply numeracy skills well in authentic contexts. Digital skills are developed purposefully, with pupils using a range of software to present and organise their work independently.

Provision for the youngest pupils is a strength, with well-planned environments that promote creativity, cooperation and resilience. Across the school, leadership opportunities such as Criw Cymraeg and digital leaders help pupils develop confidence and a sense of agency. Most pupils show enthusiasm for learning Welsh, and pupils with additional learning needs are supported effectively to achieve their targets.

The headteacher provides strong, strategic leadership and fosters a supportive and inclusive ethos. Staff work well as a team and benefit from professional learning that supports school improvement. Governors and parents are actively involved in school life, and leaders manage resources well to ensure equity and positive outcomes for all pupils including those from low-income households.

Recommendations

We have made one recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1. Address the inconsistency in teaching to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Staff at St Mary's School Primary School create an engaging and stimulating learning environment that nurtures pupils' curiosity and supports their learning well. Strong relationships between adults and pupils are a strength of the school. Staff respond to pupils' individual well-being needs with sensitivity. The caring and respectful relationships formed, help pupils feel secure and valued. As a result, nearly all pupils are highly engaged, demonstrate positive attitudes and a readiness to learn. They behave exceptionally well, creating a calm and productive atmosphere that supports effective learning for all pupils in many aspects of the school's curriculum.

Spotlight 1: Nurturing young minds through creative environments

The learning environment for the youngest pupils is rich with opportunities that foster resilience, cooperation, and imaginative play. Well-planned areas such as the construction zone, messy play area, and reading corner support physical development, creativity, and social skills. Purposeful adult interactions further extend learning through questioning and playful engagement.

Across the school, pupils' personal interests are encouraged and celebrated, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose. From a young age, pupils confidently share their ideas with both peers and unfamiliar adults. As they progress through the school, they are encouraged to follow their own lines of inquiry and demonstrate perseverance when completing challenges. This emphasis on pupil-led learning promotes independence and self-motivation effectively. The school offers numerous opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles. For example, digital leaders contribute positively to school life, training governors in the use of new technology. These responsibilities help pupils develop confidence, teamwork, and a sense of pride in the school community.

The curriculum is carefully planned to build pupils' knowledge, skills, and understanding over time. It offers flexibility, allowing teachers to plan a broad range of interesting and relevant learning experiences that engage and motivate pupils. Many teachers encourage pupils to understand what and how they learn, and how to assess their own learning. Many pupils use the feedback they receive to make improvements to their work. Older pupils use success criteria skilfully to identify strengths and areas they need to improve. During lessons, many teachers use questioning effectively to support and challenge pupils. In a few lessons, teachers miss opportunities to deepen pupils' learning and challenge them to make the progress they could. On occasion the use of worksheets limits pupils' progress.

Most pupils develop sound speaking and listening skills. They speak fluently and confidently using a wide vocabulary. They listen attentively and contribute meaningfully

to class discussions. Older pupils adapt their language to suit different contexts and audiences, explaining their thinking clearly and justifying their opinions confidently. Teachers plan engaging opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their writing skills in a range of increasingly complex contexts and most pupils make good progress as they move through the school. A majority of pupils develop their early reading skills appropriately. They choose books voluntarily from the reading corner and discuss the content with practitioners. By Year 6, most pupils read fluently with expression and use punctuation to guide their reading. They locate and extract information from a variety of sources and use this information to support their learning effectively.

Teachers plan effectively to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. By Year 6 most pupils apply their numeracy skills well in authentic contexts. They make thoughtful decisions about how to organise their work when carrying out mathematical investigations.

Most pupils develop their digital skills well. Younger pupils learn through activities such as programming robots, recording data, and creating animations. As they progress, they become more independent and capable, planning tasks, saving files, and producing multimedia presentations. Real-life challenges support the purposeful development and application of digital skills. Older pupils confidently use software to research, create graphs, perform calculations, and design interactive stories.

Staff promote the advantages of learning Welsh effectively and most pupils show enthusiasm for learning the language. Younger pupils use basic commands and greetings, and by Year 2 pupils use simple Welsh phrases to describe their learning. Older pupils demonstrate good recall of vocabulary and sentence structures, contributing to the steady development of their oracy skills.

Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) are identified early, and tailored support is provided to help them achieve their targets. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants support pupils effectively, helping them make good progress towards their individual learning and well-being targets.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear strategic direction for school improvement. Together with the effective leadership team, she creates an inclusive culture where pupils feel safe and protected, showing care and respect for each other. The school vision is well embedded and visible in all aspects of school life. There is a strong team ethos among all staff, who believe that pupils' well-being is at the core of all that they do and is fundamental to their success. A robust cycle of monitoring and evaluation, including an effective menu of professional learning for staff, ensures that leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, focused on pupils' learning and the quality of teaching.

Parental and community engagement is a strength. The headteacher maintains a highly visible and approachable presence, and school events and initiatives have successfully increased parental involvement. This sense of partnership has a positive effect on improving attendance throughout the school.

Governors provide valuable support, have a good knowledge of the school's work, and contribute well to school life. They engage in the first-hand gathering of evidence and use this to hold the school to account appropriately. School leaders and governors manage the school's finances effectively. They use the pupil development grant purposefully to ensure that funding has a positive impact on pupils' lives and ensures equity.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern

The school's arrangements for site management give cause for concern and have been brought to the attention of the local authority

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

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

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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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