



*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**

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

**Date of inspection: November 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:

<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 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.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

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

**© Crown Copyright 2013: 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: 25/01/2013**

## Context

St Mary the Virgin School is a Church in Wales Voluntary Aided primary school in the city and local authority of Cardiff. The school is in Butetown, the old docks area of the city. The community that the school serves was formerly known as Tiger Bay and it is one of the oldest multicultural areas in Britain. Despite substantial developments in the area since the 1960s, Butetown remains one of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales.

There are 181 pupils currently at the school, including 29 in the part time nursery. The majority of pupils have either a Somali or Yemini background. Ninety per cent of the pupils are from an ethnic minority background and 73% have English as an additional language. Many join the school each year with no English at all. No pupil comes from a home where Welsh is the first language.

There is a high turnover of pupils each year as families are re-housed to larger homes. There is also a significant number of pupils whose parents have come to Cardiff to study.

About 50% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, the sixth highest number in Cardiff. Many pupils join the school with weak speech and language skills in English and with social skills that are developing from a very low base. The school has identified about half the pupils as having additional learning needs, including a very few who have a statement of educational needs.

During the past year, there have been four fixed-term exclusions from the school.

The individual school budget per pupil for St Mary The Virgin C.I.W. Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,863 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Cardiff is £19,708 and the minimum is £2,828. St Mary The Virgin C.I.W. Primary School is 30th out of the 116 primary schools in Cardiff in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

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

### Current performance

Current performance is excellent because:

- improvement in performance at the end of key stage 2 and in the standards of literacy over the past three years is outstanding;
- the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional and has enabled the school to develop as a truly inclusive community;
- pupils make exemplary progress and, by the end of key stage 2, achieve at a level significantly higher than predicted by their earlier attainment;
- pupils use their literacy skills at a consistently high standard across all curriculum areas;
- most pupils can identify effectively how well they have completed tasks, and what they need to do to improve their work; and
- teaching is consistently good across the school.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are excellent because:

- the school has a proven track record of securing improvement in pupils' standards, for example in literacy and assessment for learning;
- the headteacher has ensured that the processes of leadership and change management are deeply embedded in the school's ethos;
- there is a strong collaborative approach to leadership throughout the school, supported by robust management structures;
- the self-evaluation process is thorough and involves a good range of stakeholders and sources of evidence; and
- improvement planning identifies appropriate priorities for action, based on first-hand evidence, including detailed analysis of performance data, and focuses securely on improving pupils' outcomes.

## Recommendations

- R1 Provide specific opportunities to develop pupils' confidence in using Welsh at an appropriate level in informal situations;
- R2 develop further the pupil tracking system as a tool to influence teachers' short-term planning; and
- R3 improve the governors' understanding of how well the school is performing and develop their ability to challenge the school robustly.

### What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how the school is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Excellent

#### Standards: Excellent

Pupils generally enter the school with skill levels that are considerably lower than average. As they progress through the school, pupils make excellent progress and, by the end of key stage 2, achieve at a level significantly higher than predicted by their earlier attainment.

Given the differing linguistic backgrounds of the pupils, the improvement of pupils' literacy skills over the past three years is an outstanding feature. As pupils move through key stage 2, their speaking and listening skills are strong. They respond positively to teachers' questions and engage effectively with each other. Most pupils offer thoughtful ideas in whole-class discussion. They can explain what they are doing and why, and they can recall and discuss their previous learning very well.

Pupils' reading skills develop at a very good rate from an early age. They apply their knowledge effectively to tackle new or unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are reading confidently. They discuss their favourite authors and types of books very well. Pupils make good use of the local community library and the city centre library to enhance their learning.

Pupils' writing skills develop extremely well. At all ages, they write effectively and at length in response to different contexts of learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils consistently produce excellent extended pieces of writing in a good range of styles across the curriculum. They spell most words correctly, and the standard of handwriting and presentation is generally high.

Pupils' oral, reading and writing skills develop well in Welsh lessons and many greet adults and visitors in Welsh. Throughout the school, pupils respond positively to instructions or guidance in Welsh from teachers and other adults. However, very few have the confidence to use Welsh outside familiar contexts and set phrases.

Teacher assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase shows that in 2012 pupils achieving the expected level (outcome 5 or above) performed better than the family average, in all learning areas but lower than the Wales average. Compared with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school was in the lower 50% in two out of the three areas, and in the lowest 25% in personal and social development.

At the higher than expected level of achievement (outcome 6 or above), the school was generally above the family average, but below the average for Wales.

Performance in teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2 at the expected level (level 4 or above) has improved greatly over the last three years. In 2012, the school achieved significantly above the family and Wales averages, and was the highest performing school within the family. Compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school was consistently in the top 25%.

Performance at the higher than expected level for key stage 2 (level 5 or above) is above the family average, but below the average for Wales. When compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school is in the lower 50% in all core subjects.

There is no pattern of difference in the attainment of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not. Pupils with additional learning needs make very good progress, as do pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those who have English as an additional language.

**Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and most are appreciative of the effort it makes to keep them free from physical and verbal abuse. They also have a good understanding of how to develop a healthy lifestyle and are appreciative of the amount of physical exercise they receive.

Pupils have several opportunities to take on responsibilities within the school, which they accept with enthusiasm. For example, pupils have established innovative research groups to improve pupils' playground experiences in terms of provision and behaviour. The impact of this work is excellent. Pupils also have extensive links with organisations and individuals within the local community. These develop their social skills and raise their aspirations well.

The behaviour of nearly all of the pupils in lessons and around the school is very good, and this helps to create an enjoyable and supportive learning environment. The pupils' voice within the school is given great prominence, particularly in setting and agreeing success criteria in lessons, which pupils do with maturity and understanding.

Nearly all pupils show a very high level of respect for each other and many pupils demonstrate empathy and care for one another. Nearly all pupils collaborate very well on a range of different tasks and demonstrate a high degree of sustained concentration and engagement in tasks.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
---	-------------

**Learning experiences: Good**

Learning experiences are good throughout the school. Nearly all teachers and support staff use a 'Teacher's Tool Kit', created by the school very effectively and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. This includes very effective use of lesson objectives and agreed success criteria.

Rigorous, skills-based planning alongside careful monitoring and evaluation of the pupil's literacy skills results in pupils making better than expected progress from the Foundation Phase to the end of key stage 2. Subject co-ordinators and the deputy headteacher audit the teachers' planning regularly to ensure a consistent approach and appropriate coverage of the curriculum overall.

Teachers plan well to develop Welsh second language skills in classes. Most teachers use incidental Welsh within their classes, although this is not consistent across the school. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their use of Welsh outside of the class. There is a clear Welsh dimension to many aspects of the curriculum.

The school ensures that global citizenship is developed effectively through in school activities and external links. It has established strong links with a school in Bangladesh, and the headteacher and chair of the governing body have visited the partner school. The school presents itself as an 'Ambassador School' in sharing Welsh culture with the Bangladeshi school and has an action plan in place to further develop this aspect.

The school has an active eco-committee, which has raised the whole school awareness of sustainable development well through a poster campaign and monitoring the use of energy and recycling activity in classrooms.

### **Teaching: Good**

Teaching across the school is consistently very good with some excellent features and very few shortcomings. Nearly all teachers use a range of approaches and techniques effectively.

In nearly all lessons, teachers and support staff plan well and they deliver lessons with a clear structure and appropriate learning objectives. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to develop their skills in all areas of the curriculum. In most lessons, the pace is brisk, and teachers ask open and challenging questions. In nearly all lessons, teachers adapt their questions and pupils' work carefully to meet the needs and abilities of the pupils. As a result, pupils of all abilities achieve highly in each lesson. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is good.

In a very few lessons, teachers demonstrate lack of pace, use closed questions too much and do not provide well enough for pupils of different abilities.

Teachers use assessment for learning very effectively throughout the school. Pupils agree their own success criteria and are aware of their own progress and how to improve. Teachers and pupils regularly refer to these criteria during lessons. Teachers' marking is consistently good throughout the school and provides pupils with clear feedback about what to do to improve.

The school uses a robust tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and to identify pupils who are not attaining as expected. The school has recently started to use an electronic assessment manager and this is beginning to have a more impact on informing teachers' short-term planning. All teachers carry out scrutiny of books collaboratively once per half-term and this supports consistent standards and marking of good quality across the school.

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

The school has appropriate procedures for promoting healthy living among its pupils. There are also detailed arrangements for ensuring their wellbeing. The spiritual development of the whole school community is outstanding at the school. Collective



worship is held daily, combining Christian Bible stories and Islamic prayers with all pupils attending and participating. This assembly is fully inclusive, with Muslim pupils taking active roles in its production. There is a weekly Muslim Assembly led by Muslim members of staff and Mass at the parish church takes place weekly for Christian pupils. As a result, pupils' understanding and tolerance of each other's beliefs and cultures are strong.

The school has coherent and effective systems in place to support pupils and parents who require specialist and personal support. The curriculum meets the particular needs of specific groups and individuals and offers a personal programme for those, for example with behavioural problems, or pupils with English as an additional language.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs, and for more able pupils, is at least good. The additional needs teacher ensures that provision is targeted to secure maximum impact on progress, through a structured approach to language development. As a result, all pupils with additional learning needs have full access to the curriculum, and assessment data indicates that pupils with additional learning needs make good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

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

### **Learning environment: Excellent**

The school is very inclusive and it acknowledges and celebrates the diverse nature of pupils' backgrounds. It promotes tolerance and respect as part of its Christian ethos and it strives successfully to ensure that pupils of other faiths have space and time to practise their own religious beliefs. It succeeds in doing this in an exemplary way, especially in its inter-denominational assemblies. The school has good arrangements for challenging stereotyping in the views of pupils and for raising their aspirations. There is appropriate provision to ensure that pupils with disabilities take a full part in the life and work of the school.

There is a detailed four-year strategic equality plan focusing on ensuring that pupils do not suffer disadvantage due to EAL, extend engagement activities to maximise impact in the community and raise awareness of equality and diversity issues. This is supported by a detailed equalities action plan.

The well-maintained school meets the needs of pupils well. Classrooms are well furnished and organised and the high standard of wall and artefact displays creates a positive learning environment. The outdoor provision is particularly impressive with a large, well-resourced community garden and grassed playing areas. Overall, there is a good supply of learning resources that teachers and pupils use well.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
--	------------------

### **Leadership: Excellent**

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, built around the school motto, 'Learning and praying together; being kind, helpful and hardworking'. Through a thorough consultation with a 'Values Group', which was representative of all

stakeholders, the school has established twelve core values, which provide a focus for the life and work of the school.

Each member of the senior management team has clear responsibilities, and has developed a very strong understanding of leadership and change management processes, backed up by professional training undertaken by the headteacher. As a result, there is a very collaborative and highly effective approach to leadership throughout the school. Robust management structures and regular meetings ensure that all staff contribute very constructively to the school's priorities for development. Curriculum co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their role and monitor and evaluate of provision and standards effectively.

Performance management systems are clearly defined and apply to all staff who work at the school. Performance targets link closely to the school's improvement priorities.

The governing body knows the school well and has a range of committees that fulfil their statutory roles appropriately. Governors have a high level of commitment to the school and provide strong support when dealing with social issues. However, governors' knowledge of how well the school is performing compared with the family and other similar schools is limited and, as result, they do not challenge the school robustly enough.

The school is working well to meet local and national priorities. The Foundation Phase is fully implemented and assessment for learning is embedded well. Literacy has been a high priority for action and professional learning communities are having a significant, positive impact on provision.

### **Improving quality: Excellent**

The school has excellent procedures for self-evaluation. The process is an integral and regular part of the school's working life and is embedded in its strategic planning systems. Every member of staff contributes. It ensures that high standards and good quality provision are monitored, evaluated and maintained.

The self-evaluation report is a useful and comprehensive document, which focuses clearly on improving pupils' standards, particularly in literacy. It includes a thorough analysis of performance data, the monitoring of provision and a review of all aspects of the school's life and work. As a result of these strong, collaborative initiatives, the school has been very effective in ensuring continued improvement over recent years. The impact on standards and wellbeing is excellent.

The school has established highly effective networks of professional practice both within the school and with other schools and partners, particularly in improving literacy and developing assessment for learning. These have had a significant impact on pupils' standards. Members of staff take advantage of all opportunities to develop their expertise.

The school development plan is a clear and detailed document that contains an overview of priorities for the next three years. The self-evaluation report is also a very useful and precise document that, in most cases, provides good evidence for its statements. It has a clear focus on pupil outcomes.

### **Partnership working: Good**

Partnerships with parents, the community, local faith groups and other schools are robust and contribute effectively to realising the school's aims. Links with organisations in the city and abroad are strong and have an impact on wellbeing and standards, especially in literacy and creative arts.

Pupils regularly visit various sites within the city and often welcome individuals from the community to speak to them in school. This makes a positive contribution to enriching their learning experiences and their awareness of their locality, Wales and the wider world.

The school has established constructive links with local businesses. A strength of the school is its links with creative arts organisations, such as the national music college. These links have had a very positive impact on standards and wellbeing. As a result, the school has achieved high standards in creative arts.

Links with the local authority and the Welsh Assembly are strong. The school's professional initiatives on assessment, in conjunction with a local school, have been shared with other schools in the local authority.

There is effective collaboration and planning for transition between the school and the local secondary school.

### **Resource management: Excellent**

The headteacher and other staff manage all resources very efficiently and effectively. They ensure an appropriate level of staffing so teachers can deliver the curriculum effectively and make the best use of their time, expertise and experience. The school's arrangements for preparation and planning time for teachers meet statutory requirements

Maintenance of the accommodation is a challenge due to the state of the old buildings. However, staff succeed in creating an attractive and stimulating learning environment in all classes and learning areas.

School expenditure decisions link well with priorities for improvement and pupils' wellbeing.

Many aspects of the school's provision are excellent and pupils very strong progress as they move through the school. As a result, the school provides excellent value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Teacher assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase in 2012 shows that the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected level (outcome 5 or above) was higher than the family average, but lower than the Wales average, in language, mathematical, and personal and social development. The school ranked slightly higher than expected within their family of schools in all areas. When compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school was in the lower 50% in two out of the three areas, and in the lowest 25% in personal and social development.

At the higher than expected level of achievement (outcome 6 or above) the school's performance in 2012 was generally above the family average, but below the average for Wales, particularly in personal and social development. When compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school is in the upper 50% in language development, the top 25% in mathematical development and in the lower 50% in personal and social development.

In teacher assessment at the end of key stage 2, the school has made very good progress over the past three years in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level (level 4 or above) in all core subject areas and in the core subject indicator (all subjects taken together). It performs significantly higher than the family average and above the Wales average. It is the best performing school within the family in the core subject indicator and in English, and is well above expectations in mathematics and science. In all subjects, it is in the top 25% of similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals.

Performance at the higher than expected level for key stage 2 (level 5 or above) is as expected within the family. The results fall above the family average, but well below the average for Wales. When compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school is in the lower 50% in all core subjects.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Pupil questionnaire

Eighty-two pupils responded to the questionnaire. The responses are generally positive and are similar to the average for primary schools across Wales in most aspects.

All pupils feel they are doing well in school.

Most, or nearly all, pupils feel that:

- they are safe at school;
- the school deals well with bullying;
- they know whom to talk to if worried or upset;
- the school teaches them how to keep healthy;
- there are many opportunities for regular exercise;
- the teachers help them to learn and make progress;
- they know what to do and whom to ask if the work is hard;
- homework helps them to understand and improve school work; and
- they have enough books, equipment and computers to do their work.

Many pupils believe that:

- other children behave well and that they can get their work done; and
- nearly all children behave well at playtime and lunchtime.

#### Parents' questionnaire

Twenty-seven parents responded to the questionnaire. The responses are generally very supportive and are much more positive than the average for primary schools across Wales in nearly all aspects.

All parents stated that:

- their children were happy at school;
- their children were helped to settle in well;
- their child is making good progress;
- pupils behave well in school;
- the homework builds well on school work;
- staff treat all pupils fairly;
- children are encouraged to be healthy and take regular exercise;
- children are safe at school;
- children receives appropriate support;
- parents are well informed on children's progress;
- they are comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem;

- the school helps children become more mature; and
- that there is a good range of activities.

Most parents state that:

- they are happy with the school overall;
- staff expect their children to work hard and do their best;
- they understand the procedure for dealing with complaints;
- children are well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their education; and
- that the school is well run.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

Terwyn Tomas	Reporting Inspector
Enir Rees Morgan	Team Inspector
Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector
John Tarran	Peer Inspector
Mrs Jackson	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 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. FYear 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