

A report on
Gwersyllt Community Primary School

**Dodds Lane
Gwersyllt
LL11 4NT**

Date of inspection: March 2025

by

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

About Gwersyllt Community Primary School

Name of provider	Gwersyllt Community Primary 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	None
Number of pupils on roll	248
Pupils of statutory school age	191
Number in nursery classes	26
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%)	19.9%
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%)	3.32%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.2%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	8.4%
Date of headteacher appointment	05/11/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/09/2016
Start date of inspection	24/03/2025

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

Gwersyllt Primary is a safe, happy and caring school with a strong community feel. Staff place a high importance on pupils' well-being. They build strong relationships with pupils and are very supportive.

Leaders and staff create an inclusive and community focussed school where pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. The headteacher leads by example and has established an effective culture of continuous improvement and reflection. His sensitive, resilient, and clear communication creates a happy and caring school environment. Governors have a good understanding of the school's context and the community they serve, ensuring that the school's resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being.

Most pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they value opportunities to take on responsibility through leadership roles. Nearly all pupils engage well in their learning. They benefit from the school's stimulating outdoor learning environment and demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. In most areas of learning resources are used effectively to engage and inspire learning although provision to develop pupils' creative skills is less well developed.

Overall teachers plan appropriate opportunities for most pupils to make suitable progress in their learning although, occasionally, teachers do not challenge pupils to make the progress they could, particularly in mathematics. In addition, at times, there is too much adult direction during learning experiences and not enough opportunity for pupils to develop their independence.

Provision to support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who need a little extra help with their learning is highly effective. Robust systems secure early identification and a skilled staff use a range of interventions to ensure that pupils with identified needs make good progress against their personal targets.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Ensure that pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop as independent learners
- R2. Ensure that all pupils are challenged to achieve their full potential
- R3. Improve opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The headteacher leads by example, fostering a culture of distributed leadership and shared accountability. His sensitive, clear communication creates a happy and caring school environment. This leads to exemplary pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning throughout the school. Relationships with families are strong and the school provides purposeful and sensitive support for parents and carers. This strong partnership benefits the entire school community and has a positive impact on attendance.

Spotlight 1: Building strong relationships with families to support well-being

The school places great importance on communicating and working with parents and carers as partners in their children's education. They have embedded a programme of activities that pupils and parents enjoy together, for example, 'Stay and Play' classes and 'Crafternoon' sessions provide opportunities for parents and carers to work alongside their children, helping to build strong relationships between the school and the wider community. These sessions are well attended, and nearly all parents feel comfortable to take part in social and learning experiences and feel valued by the school staff.

An effective culture of continuous improvement and reflection is established in the school. Staff take ownership of areas of the curriculum, reflecting openly and seeking improvement opportunities. Partnerships with other schools are purposeful and leaders welcome honest feedback from partner schools to secure improvements and enhance provision. A recent focus on reading progression resulted in improved reading outcomes for nearly all pupils. Professional learning supports the effective implementation of the school's development plan and valuable termly reviews enable leaders to monitor the impact of professional learning on pupils' learning experiences, progress and attitudes to learning.

Most teaching ensures that pupils build their skills, knowledge and understanding suitably as they progress through the school. Teachers design a curriculum that meets pupils' needs by offering a diverse range of learning opportunities. Engaging outdoor learning areas and community projects provide real-life learning contexts and promote social awareness successfully. Teachers use formative assessment effectively, and pupils respond well to verbal feedback. However, written feedback often lacks clear next steps and challenge, particularly in mathematics.

Adults are good language role models. However, at times, they provide too much direction for pupils' learning and miss valuable opportunities to nurture problem solving and independent skills. The school environment is neat and orderly, but there is a variance in the availability of resources across areas of learning. Well-equipped reading areas and outdoor spaces, especially the forest school area, have a positive impact on pupils' progress as readers and on their well-being. However, the lack of resources for creative activities limits pupils' creative skill development.

Younger pupils learn about three-dimensional shapes and numbers up to 20. As they get older, they develop a secure understanding of place value, addition, subtraction, money, fractions, and measurement. Older pupils measure accurately and solve mathematical problems confidently. Throughout the school, pupils develop relevant digital skills and apply these into other areas of the curriculum purposefully. They learn to code, produce imaginative animations, and use spreadsheets skilfully. They understand important issues such as online safety and pupil voice groups take a lead role in teaching their peers how to stay safe online.

Most pupils improve their English writing skills well, from simple mark making and writing simple words and sentences to more complex texts that engage the reader well. They apply their writing skills effectively in other areas of the curriculum. They develop strong speaking skills, with older pupils expressing their thoughts clearly and confidently. Younger pupils retell stories well, and older pupils contribute valuable ideas during discussions. Most pupils enjoy reading and read fluently, showing a sound understanding of texts. Provision to support pupils to learn to use the Welsh language is variable overall and pupils generally make appropriate progress.

Provision for nurture and support for the well-being of pupils and staff is a high priority at the school. All adults ensure that pupils' well-being needs are met effectively. The purposeful use of outdoor resources and playtime activities, including meditation and calming exercises in the forest school, supports pupils in developing kindness, acceptance, and empathy. As a result, pupils feel safe, secure, and happy to come to school. They work well with their peers and show kindness to one another. Nearly all know they can talk to any staff member if concerned or upset. Robust transition arrangements support nearly all pupils as they move to their next stage of learning. New starters quickly settle into school routines, and older pupils move on confidently.

Comprehensive systems ensure early identification of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Skilled staff use a range of strategies to support identified pupils, helping them make good progress against their personal targets. This early and tailored support contributes positively to developing resilience and perseverance, especially in younger pupils. Additional provision to support those pupils who need extra help with basic skills or to meet their emotional needs is effective. However, strategies to challenge more able pupils adversely affected by socio-economic disadvantage do not always support these pupils to make the progress they could.

Pupil voice is a significant feature of the school. Nearly all pupils, including those with ALN, have opportunities to take on leadership roles. Pupils make valuable contributions to school life.

Leaders manage resources effectively, working with the governing body to maintain appropriate financial oversight. National priorities are addressed suitably. Investments such as a recent Welsh sabbatical impact positively on pupil progress and staff confidence. Regular and planned opportunities for governors to work with school staff, engage in learning walks and talk to pupils about their work help to ensure that governors are well informed about pupils' progress. They are knowledgeable and supportive of the school and identify its strengths and areas for improvement well. They also hold leaders to account effectively. They understand their role in keeping pupils safe very well. They help to ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and well understood by the school community.

Additional information

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

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern

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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