



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

**A report on**

**Plasmarl Primary School**

**Britannia Road  
Plasmarl  
SA6 8LH**

**Date of inspection: February 2024**

**by**

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

## About Plasmarl Primary School

Name of provider	Plasmarl Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	216
Pupils of statutory school age	145
Number in nursery classes	45
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 23.7%)	48.5%
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 13.2%)	24.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	17.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2008
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/10/2015
Start date of inspection	26/02/2024

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](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

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

## Overview

Plasmarl is a highly inclusive school where pupils thrive. The headteacher is an inspirational and compassionate leader and along with her leadership team, teachers, and support staff she provides outstanding well-being and learning opportunities for pupils. The school community values each child for their individuality and the contributions that they make to the Plasmarl family.

Staff create a warm and welcoming environment where pupils feel valued and safe. School leaders know their families well and work sensitively with them to understand the challenges they face and provide appropriate support. There is a strong sense of belonging within the school. School leaders ensure that a rich and purposeful curriculum and high-quality teaching lead to all pupils, including those from low-income families, making strong progress.

The school's holistic approach to well-being is outstanding. Staff in the nurture classes provide exceptionally high levels of care and support for vulnerable pupils and their families. They plan relevant and bespoke workshops and visitors to school to support pupils and their families. Staff constantly adapt and adjust their practice to improve pupil outcomes. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and social and emotional needs make strong progress as a result of the individualised and expert support they receive from highly skilled and motivated teachers and support staff. This thoughtful and highly effective practice has impacted significantly on pupil attendance and parental engagement,

Teachers use purposeful research and enquiry to improve their practice. They reflect on what works well for Plasmarl pupils and skilfully plan exciting and stimulating lessons alongside the pupils. Senior leaders work with teachers to develop highly effective assessment strategies throughout the school. This results in high levels of pupil engagement and strong teaching and learning experiences. There is a shared understanding of what good learning looks like across the school. This enables pupils to develop well as reflective and independent learners. The well-designed curriculum reflects the context of the school. It provides valuable opportunities for pupils to make sense of their learning and to relate what they learn to their own life experiences.

Across the school, nearly all pupils achieve well. They develop literacy, mathematical and numeracy skills systematically. Nearly all pupils apply their skills across other areas of the curriculum effectively. The rich and engaging curriculum enables pupils to develop their creativity, thinking and problem-solving skills in purposeful and real-life contexts. Younger pupils' Welsh language skills develop well. However, older pupils' use of Welsh language does not develop well enough.

## **Recommendations**

R1 Continue to improve pupils' Welsh speaking skills

## **What happens next**

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to

1. Raising the attendance of the most vulnerable pupils with the implementation of highly effective individualised wellbeing support
2. Improving pupil outcomes, engagement and understanding of how they learn through the use of purposeful assessment strategies

for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

During their time in the school, nearly all pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make strong progress and use their knowledge and skills in their work across the curriculum effectively.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills are strong. Nearly all pupils listen well, pay close attention to each other's point of view and make effective contributions to conversations. Nearly all older pupils develop their speaking and listening skills highly effectively through discussions, debates and the systematic development of their vocabulary and an understanding of language. A notable strength of the school is the way most pupils talk articulately about their learning. They explain the tasks they are doing and the contributions they have made to their learning through pupil voice and co-constructed 'missions'. Nearly all pupils explain how marking and feedback that they receive from teachers helps their learning.

The youngest pupils handle books appropriately. Reception pupils develop a good understanding of letters and sounds and use this knowledge to begin to build simple words. By Year 2, most pupils develop effective reading skills and read with increasing independence. Most older pupils develop into confident readers who use a range of reading skills, such as skimming and scanning texts to locate and extract information. Across the school most pupils have a love of reading and express their reading preferences with enthusiasm.

Most pupils' writing progresses well. The youngest pupils develop their early writing skills effectively when mark making using a variety of tools. Reception pupils use an appropriate pencil grip when writing emergently. As they get older, most pupils write using good sentence structures and use a range of appropriate punctuation accurately. By Year 6, most pupils write for a variety of purposes successfully, matching their writing effectively to their audience. Many older pupils write at length and edit their work to improve content. For example, older pupils write persuasive letters encouraging their teachers to take them on trips to the beach. Most pupils apply their writing skills across the curriculum effectively. For example, older pupils write a thoughtful discussion text when considering and comparing different faiths.

Nearly all younger pupils respond appropriately to simple Welsh phrases and vocabulary. They sing Welsh songs enthusiastically and they respond to the Helpwr Heddiw using familiar words and phrases to give details of what they want for lunch. However, older pupils do not develop their Welsh oracy skills well enough.

Nearly all pupils develop a strong understanding of number and mathematical concepts and apply their skills across the curriculum successfully. Younger pupils work confidently with numbers up to 20 and, by Year 2, most pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers with confidence. As they progress through the school, pupils build on their early number skills effectively. The oldest pupils' understanding of complex number concepts develops well. Many older pupils problem solve and develop their mathematical reasoning successfully. They use mental recall and physical resources well where appropriate. For example, older pupils calculate the area of footprints and

fingerprints left at a crime scene to eliminate suspects and solve the case of the stolen coal.

Most pupils develop a range of digital skills well. The youngest pupils use programmable toys to plan a route. By Year 6, nearly all pupils confidently code to create games, move images across a screen and make small circuit boards with a thermometer and compass function.

Pupils develop their creative skills across a range of genres, including art, poetry and performing arts. Many pupils use a variety of media appropriately when experimenting with line, shape, tone and colour. For example, older pupils use charcoal to sketch self-portraits. Many younger pupils experiment with natural materials in the outdoor area, for example making cupcakes and potions in the mud kitchen.

Across the school, pupils' physical skills develop well. The youngest pupils develop their skills rapidly through a range of purposeful activities including riding trikes and climbing on large apparatus. Year 2 pupils build on these skills suitably during physical activities where they develop their coordination and control when bouncing and catching balls. Older pupils move quickly, change direction, and control their balance and movements during games and gymnastics.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Staff create a warm, caring and supportive environment for pupils to learn. Nearly all pupils feel safe, secure and well supported in school. As a Trauma Informed School, well-being is at the heart of all its work, which impacts significantly on the social and emotional needs of its pupils. Pupils value the care and support they receive from staff highly. For example, pupils express their love of the school and describe it as their 'cynefin'.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Most pupils play together well at breaktimes. A few pupils who find unstructured times challenging access the nurture room for quiet playtime sessions. Nearly all pupils are kind and considerate towards each other and adults within the school. They forge positive relationships with each other and provide appropriate support or help to those in need.

Pupils are curious and respectful to learn about each other's cultures, ethnicity, and religious backgrounds. They have a strong understanding of fairness and equity. For example, many pupils develop empathy for others when learning about other cultures and the rights of the child.

Pupils who are new to the school community, including those who have experienced trauma, or are seeking asylum, settle well into school life and thrive. Pupils benefit from bespoke admission processes, which ensure a smooth transition by meeting their specific needs.

Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils are confident and resilient, for example in the way they interact with adults and persevere with their work. They enjoy their work and talk confidently and enthusiastically about school

life. Pupils make beneficial and valuable contributions to their learning and suggest ideas for future learning during pupil voice sessions held weekly.

Pupils use feedback effectively to identify their next steps in learning, for example when editing and re-drafting pieces of work. Nearly all pupils are developing as ambitious learners who challenge themselves to achieve the best they can, for example through their missions and choosing the level of challenge that takes them out of their 'comfort zone'.

Most pupils confidently express their views on teaching and the curriculum and appreciate how their views influence what and how they learn. Nearly all pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour during lessons, assemblies and as they move around the school. They settle quickly and are ready to learn when they arrive in class.

Pupils understand the importance of looking after their physical and mental health. They know what to do to stay safe online. For example, most older pupils know not to share their passwords or speak to strangers online.

Pupil voice is a strength of the school. Pupils, including those with ALN and those eligible for free school meals, value the opportunity to take on leadership roles and responsibilities. Most pupils understand the eco code. They know how to recycle and are aware of water wastage and general care for the environment. Pupils contribute to wider decision-making within the school and are involved in shaping the school's improvement priorities. They create an easy-to-read version of the school's development plan.

Many pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs including music, arts and crafts, ICT, hockey and netball. These clubs are well attended by all groups of pupils.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school has a strong shared vision for teaching and learning, which successfully links to a well-planned curriculum. This approach prioritises pupils' well-being and promotes effective learning for all groups of pupils. Staff have positive and caring relationships with pupils. There is an ethos of mutual respect within the school, which results in pupils' superb behaviour.

All staff have a sound understanding of the principles of Curriculum for Wales. They work collaboratively to design a reflective and relevant curriculum for the school. The school's curriculum focuses consistently on the needs, interests, and contributions of pupils. Carefully planned authentic learning experiences are highly engaging. Teachers skilfully support pupils to make relevant links between areas of the learning and their own experiences. The school takes full account of pupils' individual learning needs in the planning of the curriculum. The strong emphasis on pupil voice, when planning learning activities, has a significant impact on pupil engagement in lessons. For example, planning walls in all classrooms enable pupils to suggest what they would like to learn. As a result, nearly all pupils have a sense of ownership, they understand their learning and they participate purposefully in lessons.

Nearly all teachers are reflective and adapt their practice to meet the needs of the pupils. They use professional learning effectively to develop their skills and use research to deepen their own understanding of learning. The result of this invaluable practice is the development of highly effective assessment strategies across the school. Nearly all teachers provide high quality feedback to pupils throughout lessons. Teachers consistently use clear and concise language which enables pupils to develop positive learning behaviours. As a result, most pupils have well-developed skills in assessing their own work and that of others.

The school has a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Nearly all teachers provide well-planned activities that develop pupils' skills and knowledge well. Rich and engaging classroom environments support pupils to develop, practise and deepen their skills. Nearly all teachers ensure that skills are taught systematically, and links are made across the curriculum. This strong practice enables pupils to make good progress.

School staff have embedded digital skills effectively in most classes, giving pupils the opportunities to access a range of applications, including, coding, databases, and spreadsheets. Nearly all teachers provide valuable contexts for pupils to develop and practise skills.

Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to celebrate the culture and traditions that reflect life in Wales. They consider the stories, poetry and art that exemplify the landscape, industries, and people. Many teachers across the school are good models of spoken Welsh and many younger pupils develop suitable Welsh oracy skills. However, older pupils' Welsh language skills do not develop well enough.

Leaders and staff celebrate and embrace the school's diverse community alongside the diverse nature of Wales and the wider world. Pupils learn about the lived experiences of people from a range of backgrounds and develop their understanding of the need for empathy and respect. They extend their knowledge when exploring the lives of influential members of the global majority. For example, older pupils are proud of their written work detailing the life of Rosa Parks and understand how one person can make a difference.

Staff are improving approaches to developing pupils' understanding of relationships. They support pupils to develop their awareness of LGBTQ+ inclusivity and consider the range of people who form families and communities. Younger pupils express their emotions, ask questions, and share their experiences. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils identify the signs of unsafe relationships and know how to respond appropriately both in person and online.

The school helps pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to make healthy life choices, for example through educating pupils about what constitutes a healthy diet and a well-balanced meal.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is highly inclusive, with a warm and welcoming ethos. Well-being is a priority for everyone and a particular strength of the school. The shared vision permeates through the school and there is a strong sense of belonging where nearly

all pupils feel safe, respected and valued. The school has a holistic approach to meeting the needs of all its pupils. Individual pupil profiles are co-constructed by pupils and teachers and provide overviews of pupils personal and emotional needs. Staff know the pupils well.

The ALN Co-ordinator has a good understanding of national reform and uses her knowledge to train and develop staff. She effectively disseminates to school staff to ensure that plans are in place to meet the needs of ALN pupils. Provision for pupils with ALN is outstanding. Arrangements to identify pupils' ALN at an early stage are effective. A range of beneficial and well-planned interventions are implemented to address pupils' needs effectively. Teachers, support staff and senior leaders monitor the impact of interventions effectively. They strategically identify pupils whose progress is not in line with their ability or stage of development and measure the impact of interventions rigorously. The use of purposeful assessment ensures that pupils make progress and staff adapt and amend plans, if necessary. As a result of this strong practice, pupils with ALN make good progress from their starting points.

Over time, the school has made good use of grants to deploy staff to meet the varied and complex needs of the pupils. This has resulted in the development of two classes that support the social, emotional and the communication needs of pupils. Staff in both of the nurture classes are skilled in understanding and meeting the varied and complex needs of the pupils. They succeed in ensuring that pupils develop a sense of belonging to the school community and make strong progress towards their individual targets. The school's nurture provision is outstanding. Highly skilled staff monitor the well-being of pupils and carefully planned sessions meet the individual needs of vulnerable pupils effectively. Because of this, pupils deepen their understanding of emotions, form and maintain friendships and build their self-esteem effectively.

Dedicated and motivated staff work successfully to build relationships and offer bespoke support to both pupils and their families. The school works well with a wide range of external agencies, and they successfully facilitate parenting groups to advise parents on various issues to help them in supporting their children. Families demonstrate high levels of trust in the school. Across the school there are robust strategies in place for promoting pupils' attendance and punctuality. Staff work effectively with parents and outside agencies to address persistent absenteeism. The effective family engagement work and the targeting of specific families have impacted positively on attendance rates at the school, particularly for ALN pupils and those pupils eligible for free school meals. This is highly effective practice.

The school provides opportunities for all pupils to develop leadership roles. Pupil voice groups influence decision-making across the school. They create action plans for school improvement priorities, which link closely to the school development plan. They present their work and plans to the governing body and evaluate their work successfully.

Daily acts of collective worship are valuable opportunities for pupils to come together and reflect on important moral and social issues. Staff plan valuable and relevant opportunities to address important issues such as respect, diversity, honesty and kindness. Staff ensure that themes link with prior learning. Pupils are actively involved in collective worship.

There is a strong safeguarding culture, and all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for keeping learners safe. All staff use effective strategies to promote and support a culture of anti-bullying and positive attitudes to managing behaviour.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher is a highly successful leader who brings about strong improvement. She is passionate about raising pupils' aspirations, ensuring that they have the skills and learning behaviours to give them choices in their adult lives. At the heart of the school's ethos is a commitment to improving pupils' sense of their own self-worth and their ability to be responsible and respectful individuals who achieve highly. The school's well-being strategy has had an outstanding impact on pupils' engagement with, and enjoyment of, learning.

The headteacher has high expectations of her able leadership team and of all staff. Leaders model and promote professional values and behaviours successfully, nurturing an effective and engaged team of practitioners. Together, they create a strong sense of community focused sharply on developing skilful and knowledgeable pupils in a safe and stimulating environment. The school's vision and aims are well matched to the philosophy of Curriculum for Wales. Well-being is identified as being critical to developing pupils' sense of their own self-worth and their ability to be responsible and respectful individuals. Leadership at all levels is strong. They are a high-functioning and reflective team who work well to improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders have been successful in developing an effective and engaged team of practitioners whose own well-being is very good.

Leaders successfully balance the development of national priorities and the school's own needs successfully. They consider possible new developments carefully and make thoughtful, evidence-informed decisions about the strategic direction the school will take. Curriculum design has evolved through a reflective and balanced approach with a clear rationale focusing on what the Plasmarl pupils need. This has been effectively co-constructed with the whole school community, including pupils, parents and governors. The school's approaches to assessment are highly effective. Senior leaders work to create the Plasmarl assessment toolkit that provides a valuable model of assessment for all staff and effectively supports pupils in understanding their learning and the progress that they make.

The governing body is highly effective. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities conscientiously to ensure that there is a robust culture of safeguarding and appropriate arrangements for pupils' healthy eating and drinking. Governors have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They monitor the school's progress against its improvement priorities regularly, drawing on headteacher reports and their own first-hand evidence of learning and teaching. Governors talk knowledgeably about the progress of each cohort of pupils, and different pupil groups, as a result of the broad range of assessment information that leaders share with them. Link governors meet termly with curriculum leads to discuss action plans and progress toward targets.

The school's finances are managed well. Leaders and governors prioritise spending to ensure that pupils' needs are met and that school improvement priorities are

properly resourced, for example the use of grant funding to support the varied and increasing well-being needs of pupils across the school. This has resulted in work that has not only been significant in supporting vulnerable pupils and their families by providing advice and practical help but has impacted on attendance rates across the school. This is highly effective practice.

The school places considerable importance on equity and inclusion. It fosters strong relationships with parents, families and the community, and works closely with them to understand the socio-economic and health challenges. The school has used this information successfully to develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce the impact of poverty, through supporting the community and improving parental engagement in the life and work of the school. Parents are positive about the school's communication with them and how their views are valued as partners in their children's education.

Self-evaluation and improvement processes are embedded and effective. Leaders involve all staff and stakeholders in a well-considered range of self-evaluation activities that focus clearly on the impact of the school's actions on pupil progress and well-being. The school's self-evaluation processes link seamlessly with professional learning, school improvement and pupil outcomes. The school operates as a valuable and successful learning organisation. Staff explore and apply research-based approaches to their practice, and a reflective and collaborative culture of learning exists.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer 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

## 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))

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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