



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

**A report on**

**Newton Primary School**

**Slade Road  
Newton  
Swansea  
SA3 4UE**

**Date of inspection: March 2022**

**by**

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

## About Newton Primary School

Name of provider	Newton Primary School
Local authority	Swansea
Language of the provider	English Medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	221
Pupils of statutory school age	172
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	19
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average  <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 21.3%)</i>	2.9%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a)  <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 20.6%)</i>	18%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	June 2007
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	24-06-2014
Start date of inspection	14-03-2022
Additional information	

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

Many Newton Primary School pupils make strong progress in their learning and develop as motivated and enthusiastic learners. They enjoy learning in a safe and caring environment and appreciate the many opportunities they have to influence what they learn and how they behave. Leaders and staff work hard to ensure that pupils feel valued, are listened to and behave well.

The school's provision for the development of pupils' spiritual and moral development is a strength. Pupils benefit from meaningful opportunities for personal reflection through daily assemblies, and they take part in worthwhile activities with the local community. This helps them to develop a strong sense of understanding, care and compassion for others.

The school has a strong focus on developing staff expertise that has led to improvements over time. This includes a wide range of rich professional learning opportunities that helps staff to reflect on their teaching and work together to improve their practice. Many pupils benefit from the specialist expertise of teachers and develop a thirst for knowledge. Most make effective progress in their digital and mathematical skills. They respond well to challenge and work with confidence and resilience. Teachers model a broad vocabulary and this helps pupils to use language skilfully. They read fluently and communicate well with other pupils and adults.

Staff are encouraged to try new approaches to teaching and to develop the range of learning experiences they offer pupils. High-quality outdoor provision is having a strong impact on the development of pupils' learning and well-being, particularly their physical and problem-solving skills. Pupils enjoy plenty of opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Although pupils are busy with these independent tasks, the activities do not always challenge them to practise and improve their skills at a high enough level.

The headteacher and governors provide efficient and supportive leadership. This has been particularly important during the pandemic. Leaders have high expectations of themselves and everyone within the school community to do their best for pupils. At times, however, the school's improvement processes do not identify precisely, or prioritise in a timely enough manner, the aspects of teaching and learning most in need of improvement. This includes the development of older pupils' writing skills and their use of feedback to move their learning on.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 Focus improvement processes precisely on the aspects of teaching and learning that are most in need of improvement
- R2 Ensure that older pupils develop their writing skills progressively to an appropriately high level
- R3 Improve the quality of feedback to pupils so they understand their next steps and use this feedback to move their learning forward

## **What happens next**

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils make strong progress during their time in Newton Primary School. This includes those with additional learning needs. Following the disruption to pupils' learning because of the pandemic, pupils are now making good headway in consolidating and building upon their skills in many aspects of literacy and numeracy. Most develop their knowledge and understanding well within areas of learning and experience, demonstrating an enthusiasm for, and interest in learning about concepts, such as viscosity in science and technology.

Most pupils joining the nursery have skills at the expected level or higher. A few have less well-developed speech, language and communication skills and benefit from individualised support. Nearly all pupils settle quickly into routines and engage purposefully in the wide range of hands-on experiences and practical learning activities that the school provides. During their time in the nursery and reception classes, pupils learn to listen attentively and become confident in making themselves understood. They show interest in language, and many extend their vocabulary, learning from the adults who interact with them during play and more structured learning times. Pupils ask questions readily and are curious to explore their surroundings. By Year 4, most pupils are confident, articulate speakers and use a broad vocabulary to discuss their learning. They contribute purposefully to collaborative tasks, express ideas clearly and respond to others with relevant questions and comments.

Nursery and reception pupils show an interest in books and other reading materials. They enjoy sharing books and handling them as a reader. Typically, most reception pupils become familiar with the relationship between letters and sounds quickly. In Year 2, pupils use strategies successfully to help them read unfamiliar words in stories, and their lively expression when reading aloud engages an audience well. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers by the time they leave the primary school. Many choose to read for pleasure, selecting books from the school library's wide and stimulating collection of fiction and non-fiction texts. In general, older pupils' advanced reading skills, such as learning to appreciate an author's style, or developing strategies to find information efficiently, are less well honed.

Most nursery pupils enjoy experimenting with mark-making. They develop an appropriate writing grip and progress rapidly to forming letters. In the reception class, pupils write lists independently, with many demonstrating a sound grasp of phonological knowledge. For a few of the younger children, sustained periods away from school during the pandemic caused their progress in reading and writing to slow.

Many older pupils develop sound technical writing ability. They punctuate their work accurately and have a good grasp of spelling, applying knowledge of letter sounds and patterns appropriately for their age. Many pupils in Years 3 and 4 write suitably in different genres, linked to their topic work, but as pupils move on in the school they do not build on these writing skills well enough. As a result, their ability to structure

and extend their ideas, to use an appropriate style and tone, and to redraft their work to improve its quality, is not as well developed as it could be.

Across the school, pupils' Welsh language skills have been adversely affected by the pandemic. Nevertheless, reception pupils enjoy singing Welsh songs and copying the teacher's actions to reinforce key vocabulary. They describe the weather as part of their morning routine and use simple words naturally in their play. Older pupils are beginning to regain confidence in speaking Welsh, using the past tense to answer questions about how they spent their leisure time.

Most pupils develop strong mathematical skills and, when given the opportunity, apply these well to problem-solving in authentic contexts. For example, reception pupils make sensible estimates and create their own tools to measure objects in the classroom and outdoors. In Year 5, pupils design a planter for their class garden, record its dimensions and calculate the volume of compost necessary to fill it ready for planting. They use a sale list to calculate which seeds to buy within their budget. More able Year 6 pupils relish mathematical challenges that extend their learning successfully beyond that normally expected in the primary school.

Pupils develop their physical skills well. Young pupils develop their hand-to-eye co-ordination, fine motor skills and balance effectively. Year 1 and 2 pupils develop their football skills successfully, so they can stop and pass a ball with increasing control, while older pupils use a hockey stick competently to manoeuvre a ball around obstacles.

When given the opportunity to engage in projects where they work with specialist teachers, pupils produce work of high quality, for example in art and design. Similarly, they combine their thinking, problem-solving, creative and digital skills successfully in real-life contexts. An example of this is in Year 6 pupils' use of co-ordinates and scale to create a three-dimensional digital model of Newton in the Victorian era, including abstract patterns to represent paths created by horse and carriage travel.

Over the course of the pandemic, nearly all pupils have accelerated their digital skills and use them confidently to support their learning across the curriculum. Younger pupils use an online tool competently to make a branching database and, later in the school, pupils combine and edit still images to produce 'stop-motion' animations. However, when learning independently, pupils do not always apply their literacy and numeracy skills at a high enough level.

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

Pupils are proud of their school and feel safe, secure and valued by everyone in it. This helps them to develop as confident individuals, who are friendly, welcoming and courteous. They care for each other and show compassion for others, for instance through organising charity events.

Many pupils are outgoing in nature and enjoy socialising at break and lunchtimes. With very few exceptions, they share equipment harmoniously during physical activities, and take opportunities to help one another whenever they can. For example, the 'playground peacemakers' support other pupils to resolve any issues or

conflicts that arise. These older pupils are highly effective in their roles. They act as strong role models for younger children and contribute much to maintaining an orderly, co-operative spirit at playtimes.

Pupils value the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities and contribute to decision-making across the school, including through a range of leadership groups. For instance, recently, pupils collaborated with staff and parents to develop the school grounds. The school council and other leadership groups make termly presentations to the governing body, who ask them for their views and question them about their latest projects. This helps to develop their confidence and pupils feel that their thoughts and opinions are listened to and valued.

Pupils make helpful contributions to changes to the school's behaviour policy. They have a secure understanding of its value in supporting the school rules of 'ready, safe and respectful' and reflect on these when evaluating their own and others' conduct. They also learn helpful strategies to regulate their behaviour. In and around the school, pupils' behaviour is usually very good. This helps most pupils to engage well with their learning and stay on task when working independently.

The school's focus on supporting pupils' health and well-being means that most pupils identify and communicate their feelings clearly to adults and are confident that they will support them. In addition, pupils make good use of the school's innovative pupil website to help them manage their well-being. They value the online activities, which are helping them to regain confidence in social situations and to develop resilience.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about how their well-being and self-esteem are being enhanced through spending time in the recently developed forest school provision. They value this highly and nearly all pupils enjoy using the new outdoor play equipment. This encourages them to engage in physical activities that challenge their capabilities, for example when playing on the large climbing frame. They understand the value of physical activity in school and benefit from a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Most make healthy choices in their diet. Nearly all pupils understand, explain and follow the school's procedures to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, inspectors will not report on pupils' rates of attendance during the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Inspectors will, however, consider the school's provision for monitoring and improving attendance as part of inspection area 4 (care, support and guidance).

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

The school is taking appropriate steps to redesign its curriculum and long-term planning to align with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and the school's own vision for pupils' learning and well-being. This includes using specialist expertise to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills across areas of learning and experience, as well as providing opportunities for pupils to contribute to the direction of their learning. Recently, for example, younger pupils have drawn on adults' specialist knowledge of geology to explore their personal interests, in dinosaurs and the ocean.



Curriculum planning enables pupils to acquire and extend their knowledge and skills in listening and speaking in English, and their digital skills successfully. Currently, the school's provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum does not always ensure that teaching builds on pupils' previous learning. This means that there is not always sufficient progression in pupils' skills, particularly in writing, and when pupils are working independently.

The curriculum offers a range of engaging learning experiences for pupils and reflects the school's local context and that of Wales successfully. Teachers use resources from within the local area appropriately to extend learning opportunities. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 visit the Llanelli wetlands as part of their 'Spring Watch' topic, while in Years 3 and 4, pupils develop their understanding of the RMS Titanic disaster from the Mumbles lifeboat crew who visit the school.

The school's provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills builds on their existing knowledge and skills and takes good account of the impact of the pandemic on their communication skills. Teachers use daily Welsh language sessions to ensure that pupils are aware of the advantages of learning Welsh and being multilingual. These sessions help to develop fluency in language patterns and, where appropriate, link writing activities to pupils' topic work. In general, it is too early to see the impact of this work on pupils' standards.

Outdoor learning is developing successfully as an important feature of the school's curriculum and the whole school community has been involved in this. In a few instances, staff make particularly good use of the outdoor area to create authentic and engaging learning experiences. This includes pupils using their measuring and estimating skills to calculate the number of seeds needed to plant in garden areas outside their classrooms. Forest school provision contributes effectively to the development of pupils' problem-solving and physical skills, as well as their mental health and well-being.

Across the school, there are strong, respectful professional relationships between staff and pupils. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and in nearly all classes, they manage this successfully. Teachers and support staff are good language role models in English and in Welsh, and most use questioning effectively to extend pupils' responses and deepen their understanding. Most teachers explain tasks effectively and recap on previous learning purposefully. All teachers and support staff work together effectively to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs receive good support.

Teachers and support staff are exploring a common approach to teaching and learning. This builds upon their successful practice in the younger classes in the school and aims to develop older pupils as motivated, independent learners. This approach involves staff working with small groups of pupils, while other pupils engage in planned independent learning activities. When this is successful, activities focus precisely on developing pupils' skills at an appropriately high level and all groups of pupils are engaged and challenged. However, too often, these tasks are not sufficiently challenging and do not consolidate pupils' previous learning or extend their skills well enough. Consequently, a very few pupils lose focus and become distracted. In addition, when pupils choose the level of difficulty in tasks for themselves, teachers do not always monitor their choices carefully enough.

Teachers use a wide range of assessment data, such as personalised assessments, to identify pupils' strengths and areas for development. Across the school, staff provide pupils with verbal feedback that praises their efforts and tells them what they have done well. However, teachers' feedback does not always focus well enough on helping pupils to move forward in their learning. Opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback are not consistent from class to class and many pupils are unclear about their next steps in learning. There are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and to make improvements to their work.

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

The strong, caring ethos at Newton Primary School provides sensitive care, support and guidance for all pupils. This has been particularly important during the pandemic. Since the return to school, staff have prioritised the well-being of their pupils and supported them thoughtfully. There is a purposeful focus on helping pupils to keep themselves safe and healthy. They are taught how to make healthy food choices and provided with beneficial opportunities to develop their physical skills, for example by using playground equipment at break and lunch times. In addition, the school provides a range of opportunities to enrich many older pupils' learning and well-being through lunchtime and afternoon clubs, such as netball, gardening and chess.

The school supports the spiritual, moral and cultural development of all pupils well, using collective worship as a time for personal reflection. This is a strength of its provision. For example, a carefully thought-out celebration of the bravery of Grace Darling draws parallels with their seaside community and the work of the lifeboat service. Pupils listen to a performance of Benjamin Britten's composition, 'The Storm' and this is effective in developing pupils' appreciation and empathy for the people on board the Forfarshire paddle steamship who lost their lives.

The school meets the needs of pupils with additional learning needs well. The experienced additional learning needs' co-ordinators have robust plans in place to support pupils as they transition into the new national additional learning needs system, using their knowledge of how best to support pupils according to their individual needs. Support staff and teachers work together closely to ensure they are consistent in the teaching approaches they use. Most parents are keen participants in the annual review process and appreciate the advice and support given to them and their children.

The school provides valuable opportunities for all pupils to take part in making decisions about important aspects of school life, including what they learn and how they behave. Teachers listen to their ideas, taking many on board when planning learning experiences and this helps to stimulate and engage pupils. For example, older pupils influenced their topic on 'disasters' to include learning about RMS Titanic. Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils, including those from different groups, such as those eligible for free school meals, to take on leadership roles within the school.

The school encourages pupils to learn about the heritage and culture of Wales and the wider world. These opportunities are linked thoughtfully to developing their understanding of values, such as compassion, empathy and courage. For instance, pupils learn about ancient Welsh stories, such as St Dwynwen, and the significance

of Mary Jones' determination to own a Welsh Bible. Staff talk to pupils about the benefits of speaking Welsh and how this skill could help them gain employment when they are older, by providing opportunities for pupils to examine the careers of high-profile journalists. Annual enterprise weeks, involving the local community, enhance their awareness of the world of work and their creative and entrepreneurial skills. To ensure that pupils benefit from provision to develop their imagination and creativity, the school develops exciting whole-school projects linked, for example, with the Royal Academy of Arts.

Through their curriculum planning, staff enable pupils to make strong contributions to the life of their community and these experiences help them to respect and care for others, as well as develop a positive work ethic. Pupils provide practical support in the neighbourhood by picking up litter and cleaning the local church. They learn about the important role the Mumbles RNLi lifeboat volunteers play in helping people to keep safe. In return, they offer suggestions about how they can help the lifeboat station in its work.

The school's arrangements to keep pupils safe meet requirements and give no cause for concern. There is effective provision to support pupils to keep themselves safe when working online. An important aspect of the school's work on developing a positive safeguarding culture has been to develop new anti-bullying and behaviour policies for the school, involving pupils, parents and staff. Through this work, staff have helped younger pupils to distinguish between right and wrong, and older pupils have developed their awareness of issues relating to respect, diversity and inclusion. They learn about their rights under the United Nation's Convention of the Rights of the Child and think about the rights and feelings of others.

The school has sound strategies in place to promote good pupil attendance, including daily monitoring, regular communication with parents and follow-up work, supported by a local authority educational welfare officer.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders have a clear vision for the school based on nurturing pupils' well-being and supporting their learning. The headteacher's sensitive and efficient leadership through the pandemic has been reassuring for the whole school community and she is steering the school competently through a period of educational change. Leaders model professional values and behaviour that contribute positively to effective collaboration amongst staff and result in a strong team ethos.

There are effective systems and processes in place, so all staff feel well informed and able to carry out their roles and responsibilities appropriately. These are distributed sensibly and equitably across the team, and staff performance is managed well. Communication with parents about whole-school issues and class-specific activities, through a range of platforms, is timely and comprehensive. The school website and newsletters are highly informative and often provide a useful vehicle for leaders to respond to parental feedback. In addition, the school has a dedicated website to support staff well-being. This has been particularly important during the pandemic.

Among leaders and staff there is a strong awareness and commitment to address national priorities in education. Leaders encourage and support staff to innovate and trial new approaches to teaching and learning in preparation for the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders have embedded a positive culture that promotes and supports the professional learning and development of all staff. For example, through shared teaching days, pairs of staff research and plan a series of lessons together to progress their professional knowledge and skills, linked to one of the school's current priorities for improvement. They observe each other teaching, reflect on their own and each other's practice, and identify what they will change in their own teaching as a result. A few months later, they review whether these changes have led to improvements. Over time, this approach has had a positive impact on improving aspects of the school's provision, such as teachers' questioning skills and their use of the outdoors to progress pupils' learning and well-being.

The school's governors are knowledgeable and experienced. They keep up to date with national developments and standards of education by discussing key reports in their meetings, such as the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector. This provides a beneficial context for helping them to monitor and provide robust challenge about the school's work. Together, leaders and governors manage the school's finances prudently. They balance short-term and longer-term needs appropriately and ensure the small amount of funding from the pupil development grant is used suitably. They involve parents and pupils in generating ideas and making decisions about how best to prioritise the allocation of private school funds, for example to enhance the learning environment. Governors ensure that the school has appropriate policies and procedures to promote the importance of healthy eating and drinking among pupils. They work closely with leaders to ensure that the school has robust safeguarding arrangements and leaders work effectively with the local authority to mitigate risks through careful risk assessment and control measures.

Leaders have developed suitable improvement processes that involve all staff and a wide range of partners, including pupils and parents. Generally, leaders identify the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement that relate to national priorities, such as the development of pupils' Welsh language skills. However, too often, monitoring focuses on aspects of compliance, such as the need to record evidence of pupils' learning, rather than identifying precisely the aspects of teaching and learning that need to improve. Where shortcomings in pupils' learning are identified, for example the development of pupils' skills, these specific areas for improvement in the school's provision are not always prioritised. This makes it difficult for the school to take forward timely improvements in the aspects of its work currently most in need of development, such as pupils' writing skills and pupils' use of feedback to move their learning forward.

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

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**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**