

**A report on**  
**Tredeggar Comprehensive School**

**Stable Lane  
Tredeggar  
Blaenau Gwent  
NP22 4BH**

**Date of inspection: October 2025**

**by**

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

## About Tredegar Comprehensive School

Name of provider	Tredegar Comprehensive School
Local authority	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	746
Pupils of statutory school age	746
Number in sixth form	
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 Secondary is 21.1%)	22.1%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Secondary is 11.2%)	1.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.3%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Lead partner for Initial teacher education	Yes
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/10/2016

Start date of inspection	13/10/2025
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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.

## Summary

Tredegar Comprehensive School is a caring, safe and inclusive school community. Staff and pupils show a strong commitment to their school and local area. They foster strong relationships underpinned by the school's core values, and well-being provisions such as 'Hafan' offer valuable emotional support.

Pupil leadership is a notable strength, with structured opportunities accessible from Year 7 onwards. The 'Leadership Diploma' recognises pupils' achievements and contributions to wider school life. As a result, this helps to develop their leadership skills and build their confidence to become active members of the school and wider community.

In most lessons, teachers establish calm, well-managed environments and apply strong subject knowledge and structured routines. This supports many pupils to make sound or better progress and to develop positive attitudes towards learning. However, a few teachers have low expectations and do not adapt activities to meet pupils' needs well enough, limiting engagement and progress.

Pupils at Tredegar Comprehensive School benefit from an appropriate curriculum offer, which includes a range of vocational courses and a well-coordinated personal and social education (PSE) programme. However, planning for the progressive development of pupils' skills is not sufficiently strategic. Pupils' literacy, particularly advanced reading, and numeracy skills are not developed consistently well-enough across the curriculum. In addition, opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills, both in Welsh lessons and outside of lessons are underdeveloped.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting good attendance through clear expectations and effective communication with pupils, parents and staff. Leaders and pastoral teams work closely together to monitor attendance and address barriers promptly. Despite this, overall rates of attendance remain below pre-pandemic levels.

Since its establishment two years ago, the learning resource base (LRB) has developed into an inclusive, nurturing and well-structured provision that effectively supports the learning and well-being of pupils with autism. As a result, many pupils within the LRB pupils develop their confidence, communication and social skills well.

The headteacher provides calm, purposeful leadership with a clear focus on raising aspirations and outcomes. Leaders have made progress in areas such as attendance, safeguarding, and support for vulnerable pupils. However, overall, self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are not precise enough. The governing body is very supportive of the school and provides suitable levels of challenge. The school currently has a deficit budget.

## **Recommendations**

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

- R1. Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement planning processes to focus precisely on the impact of teaching and provision on pupil progress and outcomes
- R2. Strengthen the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum, in particular their numeracy and advanced reading skills
- R3. Strengthen the provision for the progressive development of pupils' Welsh language skills and the opportunities to develop these outside of their Welsh lessons

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Teaching and learning

In most lessons, teachers develop positive working relationships with their classes. They establish clearly understood routines that help to create a calm learning environment. In many instances, effective teaching allows pupils to make sound or better progress. In these lessons, teachers:

- demonstrate strong knowledge of and enthusiasm for their subject
- plan carefully sequences of suitably challenging activities that build well on each other and help to maintain an appropriate pace of learning
- use questioning suitably to check pupils' understanding and monitor progress closely, providing helpful feedback where necessary

This effective practice encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning. Consequently, many participate successfully in a range of activities and maintain their concentration well. They listen respectfully to their teachers and peers and work effectively in pairs or groups to support each other's learning. When given the opportunity, they demonstrate appropriate independence in their learning.

In a few particularly effective lessons, teachers have notably high expectations of what pupils can achieve. These teachers plan lessons meticulously, demonstrate passion for their subject and use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils' thinking. This inspires pupils to become enthusiastic learners and helps them to make strong progress.

In a few cases, teachers' expectations are too low. As a result, they plan activities that are insufficiently demanding and do not ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to work independently. Consequently, a few do not engage well enough in their learning and are too often content to remain passive, especially during discussion activities. In these lessons, pupils make limited progress.

There is too much variation in how well written feedback helps pupils to progress. In a few instances, teachers provide clear guidance that helps pupils to enhance their work successfully. However, too often, written feedback is either overly generous or insufficiently precise to have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Many pupils explain their ideas clearly, using a suitable range of subject specific and general vocabulary. A few are notably articulate and explain their thinking thoroughly. In a few instances, pupils' verbal responses are brief and underdeveloped. This is often because teachers do not challenge them to develop their vocabulary well enough.

Across the curriculum, pupils have a suitable range of opportunities to write for an appropriate variety of purposes and audiences. Many write clearly and structure extended pieces suitably. A few write at length with confidence and maturity, for example when considering whether Christians can both value forgiveness and support the death penalty. Many pupils' writing is generally technically accurate, although a minority make frequent basic errors. These pupils do not take enough responsibility for proofreading their own work independently. In addition, teacher feedback does not have sufficient impact on improving pupils' written work, as it often focuses narrowly on technical accuracy and presentation rather than developing pupils' use of vocabulary, expression or the structure of their writing.

In general, pupils select relevant information from a range of appropriately challenging texts competently. Many use basic inference and deduction to interpret sources suitably. A few pupils analyse texts thoughtfully and perceptively, for example when they compare the stylistic features of biographical and autobiographical accounts of Taylor Swift's career. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities across the curriculum to develop advanced reading skills such as summarising and synthesising information.

The school has taken a range of appropriate steps to develop a culture of reading for pleasure across the school. This is having a positive impact on pupils' attitude to reading. There is an appropriate process for identifying pupils with weaker skills, and the school provides a suitable range of interventions to support these pupils. However, overall, there is not a sufficiently strategic approach to the coordination of provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills, especially their advanced reading skills across the curriculum.

In Welsh lessons, the majority of pupils understand familiar language and respond appropriately with simple Welsh phrases when communicating with teachers or peers. They generally use sentence patterns correctly and pronounce words accurately. A very few can communicate confidently in Welsh, responding spontaneously and using adventurous vocabulary and sentence structures.

The majority of pupils gather information from basic Welsh texts successfully. They have a sound knowledge of basic nouns and adjectives and can recall prior learning appropriately when completing translation tasks. Many pupils' complete short pieces of writing accurately and a few older pupils write extended pieces independently, using a rich vocabulary and idioms. However, in general, pupils are over-reliant on structure patterns and vocabulary lists given to them by their teachers to answer aloud or in written form.

Many pupils are entered for a suitable qualification in Welsh at the end of Key Stage 4. In addition, pupils benefit from a few suitable opportunities to develop their appreciation of Welsh heritage and culture across the curriculum.

The majority of pupils make suitable progress in developing their numeracy skills. They demonstrate a generally sound understanding of number concepts and apply these appropriately. For example, they use efficient methods to multiply whole numbers and to add and subtract fractions with different denominators. However, at times, pupils lack a secure grasp of mathematical and numerical concepts as teaching does not consistently promote understanding. This hinders their ability to recall and build upon prior learning.

The majority of pupils demonstrate an appropriate understanding of geometry and statistics. For example, they can solve problems involving angle facts and calculate the mean of a data set. A few more able pupils develop a strong understanding of more advanced mathematical skills, for example using and applying the sine rule.

Across the curriculum, pupils have a few worthwhile opportunities to apply their numeracy skills. However, these are not planned or coordinated well enough to ensure progressive development within authentic contexts. Generally, tasks do not provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils or enough support for those with weaker numeracy skills. As a result, opportunities for pupils to refine, apply and extend their numerical reasoning skills across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

In ICT lessons, pupils use digital tools purposefully, for example to research and consider the wider implications of technology use. However, overall, provision to support the purposeful development of pupils' digital skills across the curriculum is in the early stages of development. Overall, the strategic coordination of the provision for skills, including the monitoring and evaluation of the impact on pupils' progress is limited.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of most pupils well. At Key Stage 4, pupils choose from a suitable range of courses, including vocational options such as hospitality and catering, engineering and teamwork. However, a minority of Key Stage 4 pupils do not have access to appropriate provision for religion, values and ethics (RVE). Pupils are provided with a helpful range of information and opportunities, supported by external partnerships, to help inform their options and career choices. For example, local organisations provide pupils with authentic experiences to develop their interview skills.

The school has established a vision for its Curriculum for Wales based upon its core values of perseverance, respect, independence, determination and excellence (PRIDE). This vision has been developed through helpful collaboration between leaders, staff, pupils and local primary schools. Subject leaders trial and refine their approach to ensure that curriculum content is relevant. However, there is too much variation in how effectively they build upon prior learning, develop their knowledge and skills coherently and how robustly they evaluate the impact of their curriculum on pupil progress.



Well-co-ordinated provision for personal and social education (PSE) and RVE helps most pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. Leaders use feedback from pupils to refine and adapt the programme suitably, for example by including a focus on the importance of sleep for young people. This provision is well supported by other subject areas and external organisations. Pupils benefit from a suitable range of opportunities to develop their understanding of diversity by learning about gender equality, the experiences of black, Asian and minority ethnic people and the LGBTQ+ community. For example, in RVE they learn about the Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners movement.

A broad range of worthwhile enrichment and extra-curricular activities contributes positively to pupils' personal and social development as well as their physical and creative skills. For example, pupils participate in a wide variety of sports and expressive arts clubs, break time activities led by the Pupil Leadership Team and homework clubs. In addition, the school keeps pupils, parents and carers well informed about the opportunities available to them in the community, to enrich their experiences further.

### **Well-being, care, support and guidance**

Staff and pupils at Ysgol Gyfun Tredegar Comprehensive School show strong commitment to their school and community and demonstrate a clear sense of belonging to 'Team Tred' by embracing the school's core values of 'PRIDE'. The pastoral team works collaboratively to promote pupils' well-being, fostering strong relationships with families and providing the support they need to engage positively in school life.

Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). As a result, pupils with ALN make at least suitable progress against their targets. The school offers a range of suitable interventions to support the academic, social and behavioural needs of these pupils. The school's well-being provision 'Hafan' provides a safe place for pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem and to seek support when they face challenges. The ALN team work suitably with parents, external agencies and school staff to support those in their care. Individual development plans and one-page profiles are generally appropriate and are shared with staff and parents and carers. They take good account of the views of pupils and their parents and carers. However, these plans do not always focus sharply enough on specific strategies to support pupils in lessons. In addition, the school does not always monitor the impact of individual interventions, or the learning of pupils with ALN in mainstream lessons, robustly enough.

There are worthwhile transition arrangements, including plentiful opportunities for primary pupils to experience taster days so that they settle in quickly to Year 7. The transition ambassadors support this process effectively.

The school's recently revised 'Behaviour for Learning' policy is beginning to be implemented more consistently across the school. These new approaches are having a positive impact on behaviour, and, as a result, most pupils behave well in lessons. However, this policy is in its early days. The Tier 1 and Tier 2 rooms are used appropriately to encourage reflection and restorative work when pupils experience barriers to learning. Pupils value the reward system, which motivates them to work hard. The well-established 'PRIDE' points system offers rewards and incentives for good behaviour and attendance.

There is a well-established culture of safeguarding throughout the school and all members of staff are aware of their responsibilities. The safeguarding team respond to concerns promptly and diligently. There are strong partnerships with a wide range of external agencies to enhance the support the school provides to pupils. As a result, most pupils are aware of who to approach if they have a problem.

The school applies consistently a clearly understood anti-bullying policy and as result most pupils feel safe. Anti-bullying ambassadors are proactive in promoting a culture where pupils feel comfortable and supported to report any incidents of bullying. When incidents do occur, the school deals with them effectively. Most parents and pupils feel that the school provides a safe and supportive environment.

### **Spotlight - Pupil leadership**

The school promotes pupil leadership successfully by offering numerous opportunities for all pupils to develop their leadership skills, including those with additional learning needs. The school's 'Leadership Diploma' is a programme whereby pupils have the opportunity to participate in six areas of leadership. The diploma recognises their contributions and achievements, helping pupils build confidence to become active and capable leaders within the school and beyond. For example, the Sports Leaders organise a range of activities and clubs for younger pupils during breaktimes and lunchtimes in order to develop their confidence and social skills.

In Year 11, pupils are eligible to apply for a role in the Senior Pupil Leadership Team if they have been actively involved in school life and have achieved the gold award through the 'Leadership Diploma' programme. The Senior Pupil Leadership Team is a key vehicle to enable pupils' views to contribute to school improvement.

The school promotes positive attendance well and demonstrates a strong commitment to improving this aspect of its work. Targets are communicated clearly, and expectations are understood well by pupils, parents and staff. The school has robust procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Leaders and form tutors work closely with the school's attendance and pastoral support officers to address barriers to attendance.

In 2024-2025, attendance improved and was above that of similar schools. Although pupils' rates of attendance increased between 2022-2023 and 2024-2025, they remain below pre-pandemic levels. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved notably in 2024-2025 and is well-above that of similar schools. Persistent absence has decreased over the last two years.

### **Learning Resource Base (LRB)**

The LRB is an inclusive, nurturing and well-structured provision for pupils with autism. Staff in the LRB know their pupils well and use assessment information effectively to plan individualised learning. As a result, many pupils develop confidence, communication and social skills that enable, where appropriate, successful participation in mainstream lessons.

Pupils in the LRB benefit from trusting relationships, a sense of belonging and a supportive environment that meets their individual needs. Transition into the LRB is managed thoughtfully through close collaboration with parents and external agencies. However, transition planning to prepare these pupils for post-16 education is underdeveloped.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and coherent, and inclusion in mainstream lessons is planned sensitively. Most pupils make steady progress and display positive attitudes, although a very few are hindered by lower attendance.

### **Leading and improving**

The headteacher provides calm and assured leadership. She has shared widely her clear vision for the school based on everyone working together to raise the aspirations and attainment of all pupils. This is understood well by nearly all members of the school community. Effective leadership has been successful in bringing about improvements in important areas such as improving rates of attendance for pupils eligible for free school meals, raising attainment, including for vulnerable pupils, and creating a positive culture of safeguarding.

The senior leadership team includes three members who started temporary roles in September 2025. In general, senior leaders' responsibilities are appropriate and equitable and they provide the headteacher with suitable support. Senior leaders take the well-being of staff into careful consideration when making decisions. The school pays due regard to national priorities, such as improving teaching, promoting equity and developing Curriculum for Wales.

Senior leaders meet regularly with middle leaders to discuss progress against their improvement priorities and provide reasonable support and challenge. However, there is too much variation in how robustly middle leaders hold their own teams to account.

The school has a wide range of activities to evaluate its work, and these are planned purposefully throughout the school year. Leaders at all levels contribute suitably to quality assurance processes. Senior leaders provide helpful support and guidance to middle leaders to evaluate the work of their areas of responsibility. They provide opportunities to work with others to observe lessons and scrutinise pupils' work, which is developing middle leaders' understanding of quality assurance activities suitably. However, senior leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning focus mainly on what teachers do and the teaching strategies used in lessons. They do not consider well enough the progress made by pupils or the impact of teaching on pupils' standards, understanding and skills development. The same is also true of middle leaders. As a result, evaluations tend to be overly positive.

The school communicates regularly with parents and the wider community. Leaders regularly seek pupils' and parents' views of the school's work. This has led to adjustments in a few important areas, such as the implementation of the mobile phone ban as part of the new Behaviour for Learning policy.

Leaders at all levels are actively involved in improvement planning. They set clear priorities based on the findings of their evaluations. Actions to address these priorities are generally suitable, but often lack the precision and clarity required for staff to understand what exactly needs to be done. In addition, the success criteria are not always sharp enough for leaders to hold others to account for their actions.

The school has developed a culture of professional learning successfully. Leaders prioritise professional learning for all, and most staff appreciate the support and guidance these opportunities offer. In particular, staff benefit from working together and with teaching and learning coaches to develop and improve their classroom practice. Professional learning links appropriately with the school's priorities and focuses suitably on teaching and learning, which is helping to develop shared routines and strengthen teaching across the school. However, the impact of professional learning is not always evaluated well-enough.

The school has recently adopted a new professional development review process. It has been integrated with the school's well-established coaching approach. This includes teachers recording lessons and discussing them purposefully with their teaching and learning coaches. However, individual professional development priorities are often too broad and do not always target sharply enough the areas of greatest need. This limits the school's ability to evaluate progress accurately.

The school is a lead partner in an initial teacher education partnership. Staff benefit from the opportunity to collaborate with other schools, and the departmental mentors have worthwhile opportunities to develop professionally by supporting trainees.

The school has a wide range of beneficial strategies to support the well-being and attainment of pupils from low-income households. Leaders make appropriate use of grant funding, including the pupil development grant, for example to improve the attendance and attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals. Over the last three years, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals at the end of Year 11 is generally above that of their counterparts in similar schools’.

Governors are experienced and enthusiastic supporters of the school. A few gather first-hand evidence, for example, through learning walks and meetings with pupils, to help them to understand and evaluate the work of the school. In general, they offer suitable support and challenge to senior leaders alongside appropriate monitoring of grant spending such as the pupil development grant. However, the school currently has a deficit budget. At present the school’s strategic financial plan does not set out clearly how the deficit will be addressed and eliminated over time.

### **Additional information**

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

A site management concern was raised during the inspection, and the local authority has been notified.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Aspects of the school’s finances are monitored appropriately, such as the use of the pupil development grant. However, the school currently has a deficit budget.

## **Evidence base of the report**

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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 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, where appropriate
- visit a broad sample of lessons, 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  
(<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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