

A report on

Marshfield Primary School

**Marshfield Road
Castleton
Cardiff
CF3 2UW**

Date of inspection: January 2026

by

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

About Marshfield Primary School

Name of provider	Marshfield Primary School
Local authority	Newport City Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	444
Pupils of statutory school age	354
Number in nursery classes	39
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 21.7%)	4.2%
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 9.2%)	2.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2025

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	26/01/2026

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

Marshfield Primary is a welcoming and inclusive community where pupils are happy, polite and proud to be part of their school. Relationships between staff, pupils and families are warm and respectful. The school's strong culture of safeguarding contributes to pupils feeling safe, valued and motivated to learn.

A broad and stimulating curriculum offers pupils valuable opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge through meaningful, real-life experiences. Reading plays an important role in school life and is a notable strength. The school fosters pupils' love of books and this supports their confidence in understanding and using language accurately and effectively across the curriculum.

Overall, pupils make strong progress in many aspects of their learning. They use technology confidently to support their research, creative work and problem-solving. By Year 6, most pupils' mathematical understanding is good. Many younger pupils also develop their Welsh language skills successfully, although pupils' progress in understanding and speaking Welsh is less consistent as they move through the school.

Pupils in the nursery settle quickly. They make a strong start in their learning and development. As they grow older, opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills and become respectful, responsible citizens are a notable strength.

Teaching is often effective. In a few classes, though, tasks are not always matched closely enough to pupils' learning needs, and pupils have too few opportunities to develop confidence in working independently. In the younger classes, a minority of practical activities do not focus sharply enough on developing pupils' skills when they are expected to explore for themselves.

Leaders and governors know the school well and provide effective strategic direction. During a period of change, they have ensured continuity in the work of the school, fostering a culture of trust and high expectations for all pupils. Strong improvement processes have had a notable impact on the development of pupils' literacy and digital skills.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Ensure teaching provides an appropriate balance of support and challenge to meet pupils' learning needs consistently
- R2 Strengthen foundation learning experiences and improve pupils' independent skills across the school
- R3 Develop older pupils' Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Marshfield Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive community where pupils feel safe, respected and valued. Nearly all pupils behave very well, show care for others and enjoy coming to school. Pupils' attendance is good. Strong relationships between staff and pupils create a calm learning environment where pupils develop confidence, and positive attitudes to learning and life.

The curriculum is a particular strength of the school. Leaders and staff have designed rich learning opportunities that reflect pupils' interests and support strong progression in knowledge, skills and understanding in most areas of the curriculum. Teachers provide engaging experiences that stimulate pupils' curiosity and help them to make meaningful connections across different areas of learning. The Welsh dimension to the curriculum is strong. Pupils are knowledgeable about the culture, heritage and geography of their local area and other parts of Wales.

A key feature of the curriculum is the school's strong culture of reading. Leaders and governors have prioritised funding to ensure pupils access high-quality reading resources. With support from families, including the Parents and Friends Association, the school has developed an inspiring library that pupils value highly.

Spotlight: Curriculum themes rooted in reading and values

Marshfield Primary School has developed a thoughtful curriculum that places high-quality texts at the heart of learning. Teachers use carefully chosen picture books and other texts to introduce and explore important themes, such as respect, fairness, identity and religion. These texts provide strong foundations for discussion. They help pupils to develop as reflective, caring individuals who consider the experiences, beliefs and perspectives of others maturely.

Through well-planned learning experiences that integrate oracy, reading and writing in purposeful contexts, most pupils make strong progress in developing their English literacy skills. Pupils speak clearly, listen carefully and contribute thoughtfully to discussions and debates. As they move through the school, most become confident, fluent readers who discuss texts thoughtfully and develop advanced reading skills, such as evaluating the effect authors' words have on the reader and justifying their ideas using evidence from texts.

Pupils develop their writing skills rapidly from a young age. By Year 2, many write with a good level of technical accuracy, using their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences, spelling patterns and punctuation. Teachers provide relevant

opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, which they do well. Many older pupils use ambitious vocabulary and include lively detail in their work. In all classes, pupils take pride in presenting their work carefully and, in many cases, make thoughtful choices about how to record and share their learning, including through digital formats.

The school provides frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. Many younger pupils respond successfully in familiar classroom situations, but pupils' progress in listening and speaking in Welsh is less consistent as they move through the school. Older pupils do not always understand or use a wide enough range of language patterns to speak confidently and accurately, without scaffolds to support them.

Digital skills feature prominently in pupils' learning experiences. Pupils use technology confidently to support inquiry and problem-solving, for example when developing and testing ideas using programmable resources. Professional learning has supported staff to strengthen this aspect of provision, and pupils benefit from a consistent approach to developing their digital competence across the school.

The school supports pupils' well-being highly effectively. Within a nurturing environment, pupils in the nursery settle quickly and make swift progress in their early learning and social development. Across the school, staff provide helpful pastoral care and respond promptly to pupils' needs. Dedicated indoor and outdoor spaces, alongside well-planned interventions enable pupils to regulate their emotions and engage positively in school life. Staff provide valuable support for pupils with additional learning needs and, where appropriate, for those pupils eligible for free school meals, ensuring that they make good progress in their learning and well-being.

Teaching supports pupils' progress successfully in many lessons. Nearly all staff use questioning effectively to move learning on. They provide beneficial verbal feedback to individuals and groups during learning activities. This helps to clarify pupils' misconceptions, encourages them to think deeply, and supports them to improve their work. In the few strongest examples, teachers challenge pupils to explain their reasoning, and this contributes positively to their problem-solving skills, especially in mathematics. While teachers often provide supportive written comments that recognise pupils' efforts, these do not always identify clearly the next steps for pupils' learning, particularly in the older classes.

Younger pupils enjoy the practical experiences available in classrooms and outdoor areas. Although many activities capture pupils' interests well, in a minority of cases they do not focus sharply enough on developing pupils' skills, particularly when pupils have opportunities to explore learning without an adult to direct them. Across the school,

teachers do not always strike the right balance between guidance and challenge to meet pupils' learning needs consistently. Tasks are not always matched closely enough to individuals' stages of development. Generally, across the school, pupils have too few opportunities to develop as independent learners.

The school has been through a period of transition with the appointment of new leaders, staff and governors. Leaders have managed this change effectively, maintaining stability and continuity for the school community. The school demonstrates a strong and sustained commitment to Welsh Government's priority of achieving an anti-racist Wales. It weaves these principles through pupils' learning experiences and reinforces them through the valuable work of pupil leadership groups.

Spotlight: Pupils shaping improvement and the school's inclusive culture

Pupil leadership is a notable strength at Marshfield Primary School. Through the 'Pupils as Leaders in School'(PALS) groups, all pupils in Years 4 to 6 take on meaningful responsibilities and contribute directly to school improvement. The wide range of groups enables pupils to influence decisions and lead initiatives linked to well-being, inclusion, sustainability and digital safety. Older pupils also mentor younger children effectively through buddy systems and mini-'PALS' activities, helping them to develop confidence in sharing their views. As a result of this work, pupils develop strong respect for others and a clear sense of their social responsibility as citizens of Wales. They play an important role in shaping the school's inclusive culture.

The headteacher builds trust successfully among staff and leaders. She has established a culture of collective responsibility for improvement, encouraging open professional dialogue about how best to address the school's priorities. The school develops leadership capacity effectively, for instance through the work of 'phase' leaders, who support consistent approaches to teaching and learning across the school. This work has had a positive impact on the development of pupils' literacy and digital skills in particular.

Effective monitoring, evaluation and review systems give leaders and staff a clear understanding of the school's strengths and most of its areas for improvement. Leaders recognise, for example, that while pupils generally achieve good standards in mathematics, their progress is inconsistent in a few classes. Currently, the breadth of the school's work on teaching and assessment is limiting how securely improvements are embedded in practice in all classrooms.

The governing body is effective. Governors play an active and informed role in the life of the school, providing a productive balance of support and challenge. For instance, they challenge leaders to ensure that the school makes strategic financial decisions that

are in pupils' best interests. This includes monitoring the impact of the pupil development grant on eligible pupils' progress.

Marshfield Primary School has a particularly strong culture of safeguarding. Adults act promptly and consistently to keep pupils safe, and pupils have an exceptionally well-developed understanding of how to protect themselves and others.

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/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

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.

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Publications Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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