

A report on

Perthcelyn Community Primary School

**Glamorgan Street
Perthcelyn
Mountain Ash
RCT
CF45 3RJ**

Date of inspection: January 2026

by

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

About Perthcelyn Community Primary School

Name of provider	Perthcelyn Community Primary School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	126
Pupils of statutory school age	96
Number in nursery classes	14
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%)	40.2%
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%)	25.0%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2024

A report on Perthcelyn Community Primary School
January 2026

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	23/04/2018
Start date of inspection	19/01/2026

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

Perthcelyn Community Primary has a strong nurturing culture that promotes pupils' well-being and sense of belonging well. Staff foster positive relationships with pupils and the school's inclusive ethos help nearly all pupils to feel safe, happy and valued. Pupils are polite, courteous and develop good social skills.

Teachers provide pupils with an appropriate range of activities to support them to develop their skills. Most pupils develop good speaking and listening skills and enjoy reading, with many showing a genuine love of books. Many pupils, including those in the local authority specialist classes (LASC), make suitable progress as they move through the school. Where teaching is strongest, staff plan learning carefully to meet pupils' individual needs and provide meaningful contexts for learning. However, the quality and effectiveness of teaching are inconsistent. Teachers do not build learning consistently from pupils' starting points or provide sufficient challenge, particularly for more able pupils. As a result, pupils have too few opportunities to work independently and do not always make the progress of which they are capable, especially in writing and mathematics.

Leaders, governors and staff work well together and are committed to improving the school. Self-evaluation informs improvement priorities suitably. Leaders have introduced clearer routines and improved systems that support the smooth and safe running of the school day. The school has implemented useful attendance procedures which are having a positive impact overall, though persistent absenteeism rates remain too high.

Leaders have worked with staff to improve the curriculum. This has helped staff gain confidence and begin to improve their understanding of curriculum design. Overall, there are appropriate processes in place to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and curriculum provision. However, actions taken to improve their quality are not always timely or precise enough and the role of the wider leadership team in contributing to this work is at an early stage of development.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen the wider leadership capacity at the school and sharpen improvement processes to address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum to ensure that pupils are challenged appropriately and develop as confident, independent learners.

R3 Decrease the rate of persistent absenteeism.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Perthcelyn Community Primary is a caring and nurturing school. Its inclusive ethos is built on strong relationships between staff and pupils. Nearly all pupils enjoy school. Pupils develop appropriate social skills, and the school's emphasis on compassion and empathy creates a positive learning environment for all.

As they move through the school, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, make appropriate progress. This includes pupils in the local authority specialist classes (LASCs), who make secure progress from their individual starting points. Nearly all pupils behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. Despite this, a minority of pupils, particularly the more able, are not sufficiently challenged in their learning. This often limits their opportunities to persevere, extend their thinking, or seek new solutions when they face difficulties, and results in them not achieving as well as they could.

The headteacher provides committed and purposeful leadership, working suitably to evaluate the needs of the school. She has an appropriate understanding of its strengths and areas requiring improvement. Leaders have made important changes to establish clear routines and to revise important safety procedures. These actions have strengthened the smooth daily running of the school and have contributed effectively to ensuring that pupils feel safe. Arrangements to distribute leadership responsibilities to support school improvement are at an early stage of development.

Across the school, the quality of teaching is variable. Where teaching is most effective, teachers build on pupils' prior knowledge appropriately and provide a range of activities that motivate pupils well, supporting them to make good progress. Within the LASCs, staff work particularly well to provide opportunities that are closely matched to pupils' individual needs. Strong relationships, clear routines and skilled use of additional adults, enable pupils to access learning and make secure progress. Where teaching is less effective, teachers scaffold learning too tightly. This results in pupils becoming overly reliant on adult support. Within these lessons, pupils do not develop their independence well enough. They have limited opportunities to think critically and creatively or to apply their learning in a range of contexts. In addition, teachers' assessment of pupils' starting points for learning, or pupils' views about how and what they learn are at an early stage of development.

Teachers provide a suitable range of activities that support most pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills effectively. Pupils express their ideas clearly and listen

respectfully to others. Most staff ensure pupils have useful opportunities to practise their Welsh language skills, and many pupils are beginning to speak Welsh with increasing confidence. This helps them to use the language with increasing frequency incidentally in lessons and during play.

The school has established an effective lending library, which contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of reading. Many pupils demonstrate positive reading habits and speak enthusiastically about books they enjoy. Younger pupils are beginning to blend sounds and read simple words accurately and, by Year 6, most pupils read fluently with appropriate expression.

While many pupils develop their writing skills appropriately, progress in writing is inconsistent. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at length or to apply their skills in meaningful and authentic contexts. As a result, a minority of pupils do not make suitable progress in developing the accuracy, structure and sophistication of their writing.

Where suitable contexts are provided, many pupils develop increasing confidence, independence and creativity in applying their digital skills across a range of learning. In most lessons, pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop their mathematical skills. However, teachers do not consistently build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. While many pupils make steady progress, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in their thinking or encouraged to solve problems. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in authentic contexts and across other areas of learning are less well developed.

The school has made positive changes to the organisation of the learning environment. In the most effective lessons, pupils are beginning to use areas of the classroom with increasing independence. In these lessons, staff deploy resources well, including the use of additional adults to support both learning and pupils' well-being. Overall, however, staff miss opportunities to use resources to enhance pupils' learning. For example, younger pupils have limited access to the outdoor learning environment, which restricts the development of their independence, creativity and physical skills.

Leaders use self-evaluation information appropriately to identify the school's priorities for improvement. For example, they have provided suitable professional learning to improve staff knowledge and skills in relation to Curriculum for Wales. This has led to a growth in staff confidence and improved understanding of curriculum expectations. As a result, the curriculum is beginning to provide pupils with increasing breadth and depth of learning. Leaders evaluate classroom practice suitably, but actions to improve teaching lack precise and swift enough action.

Governors know their community well and demonstrate a strong commitment to the school's vision to provide a brighter future for its pupils. They provide suitable support and challenge to leaders and contribute purposefully to setting the school's strategic direction. Governors work with the headteacher to monitor the school's finances appropriately. This includes the school's use of The Pupil Development Grant to support pupils from low-income families. They are beginning to develop their role in contributing purposefully to self-evaluation processes.

The school has appropriate systems in place to identify pupils with ALN. It works closely with a range of external agencies to support these pupils effectively so that they access learning with increasing confidence. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance carefully. The recently appointed Family Engagement Officer is beginning to have a positive impact on improving pupils' regular attendance. Despite this, rates of persistent absenteeism remain too high.

Purposeful assemblies contribute positively to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils enter assemblies respectfully and engage well when discussing a range of themes, including children's rights. Recently established pupil leadership groups are beginning to impact positively on pupils' opportunities to influence school life.

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.

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:

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

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2026: This report may be re used free of charge: (a) in any format or medium; and (b) may be translated by or on behalf of an education and/or training provider in respect of which this report relates into any language, in each case provided that it is re used and/or translated accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must, in each case (including in the case of a translation) be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 23/03/2026