

A report on

Caedraw Primary School

**Caedraw Road
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 8HA**

Date of inspection: January 2026

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Caedraw Primary School

Name of provider	Caedraw Primary School
Local authority	Merthyr Tydfil 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	228
Pupils of statutory school age	168
Number in nursery classes	34
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%)	26.9%
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%)	39.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	7.7%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/05/2018
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

Caedraw Primary School is a happy, vibrant school community where leaders articulate a clear and purposeful shared vision that places high expectations, wellbeing and inclusion at the centre of the school's work. This strong strategic vision promotes a positive whole-school ethos and enables staff to design an authentic curriculum that reflects pupils' needs and the local context well.

Teaching is effective across the school, with well-planned learning experiences that engage pupils successfully and support progress across the curriculum. Assessment and feedback practices are developing, although teachers' feedback does not provide clear next steps consistently.

Most pupils make good progress as they move through the school. They develop secure numeracy and literacy skills, including strong oracy and problem-solving skills. Most apply their writing skills effectively in meaningful, real-life contexts and develop positive teamwork skills through participation in community events and projects. The promotion of the Welsh language is a significant strength, with nearly all pupils demonstrating confident Welsh oracy skills.

Self-evaluation and strategic planning for the curriculum focus appropriately on pupil progress. Leaders identify strengths and priorities accurately, although improvement planning is not always precise enough to help leaders evaluate the impact of individual actions. The governing body supports and challenges leaders effectively. Governors have a strong understanding of the quality of provision and pupils' progress. They use this knowledge well to hold leaders to account. Systems to evaluate and improve attendance are not sharp enough and, as such, attendance is too low.

Leaders distribute roles and responsibilities purposefully to build leadership capacity across the school. They place a strong emphasis on high-quality professional learning and link it closely to the school's improvement priorities. Staff work collaboratively within the school, across the cluster and within the local authority, which broadens their expertise and strengthens teaching and learning.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Improve attendance
- R2 Improve the impact that all forms of feedback have on pupils' learning
- R3 Refine improvement planning so that it is more manageable and impactful

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Leaders at Caedraw Primary School articulate a shared vision that places high expectations, wellbeing and inclusion at the centre of the school's work. The vision has a positive impact across this happy school community and drives an authentic and engaging curriculum that reflects pupils' needs and the local context well. Staff make good use of the learning environment, including well-designed outdoor spaces and a local allotment, to enrich learning. Classrooms are inviting, and pupils speak with pride and confidence about school and their work. Strong relationships, a nurturing ethos and consistent behaviour management ensure that most pupils make good progress from their starting points.

Teaching is effective across the school with well-planned learning experiences that engage pupils and support good progress across the curriculum. The youngest pupils benefit from carefully considered practice that supports their learning and wellbeing needs effectively and prepares them well for their future development as they move through the school. Teachers provide good levels of challenge and support. Lessons with clear learning objectives meet the needs of most pupils, and effective questioning helps pupils understand their strengths and areas for development.

Pupils reflect on their learning carefully and respond positively to feedback from teachers and peers. In a minority of instances feedback is purposeful, though teachers do not always provide pupils with clear, immediate next steps that help them to improve their work or deepen their understanding.

Throughout the school, including the Learning Resource Bases (LRBs), pupil voice in the curriculum is strong. Staff use a range of strategies that allow pupils to influence their learning, such as 'Amser Fi' sessions. During these sessions, pupils identify the skills they need to develop within their topic work and work independently and confidently to practise and apply them. Pupil leadership groups have clear action plans, though meetings rely too heavily on teacher guidance. This limits the extent to which pupils influence decision making.

In the youngest classes, staff respond well to pupils' varying personal and social needs by creating calm, supportive and respectful learning environments. This helps them to settle quickly into routines and build positive relationships with their peers and teachers. Throughout the school, teachers have clear expectations for behaviour and engagement. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and develop positive attitudes to learning. In the few instances where pupils dysregulate, staff respond with compassion and understanding, which helps pupils feel safe and supported.

A strong emphasis on developing pupils' language and communication skills helps most pupils to develop strong oracy skills. They communicate clearly and talk confidently about their learning. Reading provision is effective. Most younger pupils establish secure phonic knowledge which they apply successfully when reading. By the time they leave the school, most pupils read fluently, confidently and with enjoyment. Most pupils develop effective writing skills and use them purposefully across the curriculum. Well-planned learning experiences provide frequent opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length. Most pupils apply a range of writing forms effectively, including persuasive writing linked to real-life contexts.

Flexible teaching approaches enable most pupils to make good progress in the development of their mathematics skills, including problem solving. Pupils enjoy authentic opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum although in a very few cases, teachers do not always identify and address misconceptions consistently.

Spotlight: Welsh language and culture

The development of the Welsh language and culture is a significant strength. There is a whole-school focus on developing pupils' Welsh oracy skills and staff act as strong language role models. Staff promote Welsh successfully through daily use and purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in authentic contexts such as assemblies and pupil voice groups. Most pupils learn to use ambitious sentence patterns that help them to develop their oracy skills confidently. Most pupils develop positive attitudes towards Welsh and take pride in their Welsh identity.

A wide range of creative, digital and expressive learning experiences enables pupils to develop digital competence and to apply their skills confidently. Creative opportunities, including work with local artists and participation in community events, help pupils develop collaboration skills, emotional understanding and enjoyment of learning. Most pupils develop their spiritual, moral and cultural understanding well. They develop empathy, respect and an understanding of equality. Enterprise projects and purposeful engagement with visitors from the world of work develop pupils' aspirations for the future successfully.

Strategic planning focuses on pupil progress appropriately. Leaders identify strengths and prioritise areas for improvement accurately through rigorous self-evaluation activities and analysis of evidence, including within the LRBs. Improvement planning though is not always precise enough and, in a few cases, targets include too many actions which limits leaders' ability to evaluate impact sharply enough. The governing body supports and challenges the school well. Their involvement in evaluating teaching and learning in individual year groups enables them to develop a deeper whole-school understanding of provision and pupil progress.

Leaders distribute roles and responsibilities effectively. They prioritise high-quality professional learning and link it closely with whole school priorities. Staff benefit from strong school, cluster and local authority collaboration to broaden their expertise which strengthens the quality of teaching and learning.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust, and staff are appropriately trained. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective, particularly within the LRBs. Leaders work closely with community groups to provide effective support for families, but systems to track the attendance of specific groups have not yet succeeded in raising attendance levels for specific groups. Consequently, the school does not address the overall low rate of attendance well enough.

Leaders manage the school's finances, including grant funding, effectively. Spending decisions align closely with school priorities and focus sharply on improving outcomes for all pupils. Robust financial planning enables leaders to deploy resources efficiently, maintain financial stability and enhance pupils' learning experiences.

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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