

A report on

Maendy Primary School

**Wayfield Crescent
Cwmbran
Torfaen
NP44 1NH**

Date of inspection: March 2026

by

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

About Maendy Primary School

Name of provider	Maendy Primary School
Local authority	Torfaen 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	248
Pupils of statutory school age	181
Number in nursery classes	33
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%)	39.2%
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%)	17.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	3.3%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	Yes
Date of headteacher appointment	06/01/2025

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	03/03/2026

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

Maendy Primary School provides a welcoming and supportive environment where pupils feel valued and enjoy learning. Strong relationships between staff and pupils help create positive attitudes to learning and a sense of belonging across the school.

The recently appointed headteacher has introduced a clear vision for the school, developed with staff, pupils and the wider community. Leaders are strengthening how responsibilities are shared and staff are increasingly involved in improving provision. As several leaders are relatively new to their roles, it is too soon for them to evaluate the full impact of their work.

Teaching and learning are effective overall. Staff know pupils well and adapt teaching to meet their individual needs. As a result, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those in the learning resource base (LRB), make good progress. The school provides a broad and engaging curriculum that helps pupils make connections in their learning. Teachers use questioning and feedback effectively to help pupils improve their work.

Pupils develop good communication skills. In mainstream classes, they take part confidently in discussions and explain their ideas clearly. In the LRB, staff support communication effectively using visual prompts and structured routines. Writing is developing well across the school, supported by focused professional learning that has strengthened teaching approaches. Across the school many pupils read confidently and enjoy a wide range of texts.

Most pupils develop a secure understanding of mathematics. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and digital skills in other areas of the curriculum are not consistent.

The school promotes inclusion and pupils' wellbeing effectively. The 'Magic' curriculum helps pupils develop confidence, independence and respect for others. Staff maintain a strong safeguarding culture and promote positive relationships across the school. It also works closely with families, the local community and partner schools to enrich pupils' experiences and support their transition to the next stage of education.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Continue to strengthen leadership capacity at all levels to support ongoing school improvement
- R2 Strengthen opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their numeracy and digital skills progressively across the curriculum

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Maendy Primary school provides a supportive and purposeful learning environment where pupils feel valued and engage readily in their learning. Strong relationships between staff and pupils contribute to calm classrooms and positive attitudes across the school.

The recently appointed headteacher has established a clear and ambitious vision for the school in collaboration with the wider school community. This shared vision strengthens the school's identity and sense of belonging among pupils, staff and families. Supported by senior leaders, the headteacher is developing an effective distributed leadership structure. Senior and middle leaders contribute increasingly to whole-school priorities and staff show growing ownership of improvement work. As several leaders are relatively new to their roles, it is too early for them to evaluate the full impact of their work.

Leaders draw on a secure evidence base to identify improvement priorities. Staff increasingly contribute to evaluation activities and reflect on the effectiveness of improvement strategies. Professional learning aligns well with the school's priorities and the needs of staff. Leaders provide purposeful opportunities for staff to develop their knowledge and share effective practice. Consequently, approaches to writing, marking and feedback have improved, the environment for learning has strengthened and attendance and parental engagement have increased.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances carefully and monitor the use and impact of grant funding appropriately. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They understand the school's work well and are beginning to engage more actively in evaluating classroom practice. This enables them to provide appropriate challenge and support through their discussions with leaders and scrutiny of reports.

The school provides an engaging curriculum that offers pupils a broad range of worthwhile learning experiences. Staff help pupils make meaningful connections so that they understand how knowledge and skills develop across different areas of the curriculum. Teachers use questioning skilfully to extend or consolidate pupils' understanding and provide effective feedback that helps pupils improve their work. Staff use assessment information well to monitor pupils' progress and to plan appropriate next steps in learning.

Nearly all pupils engage positively with their learning. Staff know pupils well and adapt teaching effectively to meet individual needs. Consequently, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), those from low-income households and those in the learning resource base (LRB), make good progress.

Classrooms and outdoor areas provide attractive, well-organised environments where pupils select and use resources independently. Younger pupils develop independence through activities such as preparing snacks and choosing appropriate resources, while older pupils settle quickly to tasks and use the environment effectively to support their learning. Opportunities for pupils to influence what and how they learn are at an early stage of development.

Provision for developing pupils' oracy and communication skills is effective across mainstream and LRB classes. In mainstream classes, staff model language well and provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas, explain their thinking and respond to others. Most listen attentively and contribute appropriately to discussions. In the LRB, staff use structured routines and visual prompts effectively to help pupils understand instructions, express their needs and make choices.

Younger pupils develop early reading skills, including phonic knowledge and word recognition, through regular opportunities to engage with high quality books. By Year 6, many read accurately and with expression, using strategies such as skimming and scanning to locate information. They discuss their reading preferences confidently and engage well with a range of texts. In a few instances, reading sessions in older classes do not focus sharply enough on developing specific reading strategies.

Pupils' writing skills develop well across the school. Younger pupils write simple sentences, label their work and begin to sequence ideas, while practising spelling, letter formation and basic punctuation. As they progress through the school, many write successfully in both short and extended forms, using a broad vocabulary and increasingly complex punctuation across a range of genres.

Spotlight: Improving pupils' writing through focused professional learning and consistent approaches to teaching.

Through robust evaluation of the school's work, leaders identified inconsistencies in pupils' writing. Since then, high quality, focussed professional learning has strengthened teachers' understanding of writing progression and effective teaching strategies. Building on this, leaders and staff have developed a shared approach to teaching writing across the school. Teachers apply this approach rigorously in their classroom practice and provide regular opportunities for pupils to write across a range of contexts. Consequently, teaching of writing is now consistently effective. Pupils write with confidence, producing sustained and purposeful pieces of writing.

Staff place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' Welsh language skills and act as positive role models in their use of Welsh. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to hear and use the language during lessons and daily routines. Many pupils show positive attitudes to learning Welsh and develop suitable spoken Welsh, using familiar words and phrases with increasing confidence. Although progression in Welsh across year groups is developing well, opportunities for pupils to build on their language skills are not yet consistent across the school.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their understanding of mathematical concepts and applying a range of number, data handling and measuring skills during mathematics lessons. When appropriate, they use concrete materials effectively to support their mathematical thinking and explain their reasoning. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the wider curriculum are not consistent across the school.

Younger pupils develop suitable digital skills, such as through creating simple presentations, recording ideas and organising their work. Older pupils use digital skills regularly across a range of contexts, but provision does not build sufficiently on these experiences to help pupils develop a broader range of digital skills progressively.

The school's 'Magic' curriculum promotes motivation, positive mind-set, awareness of themselves and others, independence and collaboration effectively. Pupils demonstrate these qualities consistently through their positive attitudes to learning and their respectful interactions with others. This work helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of different faiths and cultures. They compare countries and religions thoughtfully, recognising similarities and differences and challenging stereotypes. Older pupils deepen this understanding by exploring ethical issues such as climate change, recycling and environmental responsibility.

The school maintains a strong safeguarding culture where staff prioritise pupils' safety and well-being. Teachers help pupils understand how to stay safe online through regular sessions on responsible internet use. Staff promote positive relationships, challenge discrimination and address incidents promptly, using restorative approaches to rebuild positive relationships.

The school works productively with external agencies and cluster schools to support its inclusive approach. This collaboration strengthens provision for pupils in mainstream and the LRB classes and develops staff expertise when planning support for pupils with ALN.

Pupils benefit from the school's purposeful engagement with the local community. They contribute to meaningful community projects, including creating a mural and producing a book celebrating Cwmbran's 75th anniversary. Partnerships with local organisations and

on-site services enrich pupils' experiences and support the school's wider work. Leaders and staff also provide an increasing range of workshops for parents and valuable support for families, helping to engage parents more fully in the life of the school and promote good attendance.

The school provides a beneficial range of opportunities that enrich pupils' experiences, including after-school activities and pupil voice groups that enable pupils to contribute meaningfully to aspects of school life and decision-making. Strong partnerships with cluster schools supports pupils' smooth transition between phases and ensure continuity in their learning.

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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