

A report on
Tywyn Primary School

Channel View
Sandfields
Port Talbot
SA12 6JF

Date of inspection: February 2026

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Tywyn Primary School

Name of provider	Tywyn Primary School
Local authority	Neath Port Talbot 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	439
Pupils of statutory school age	332
Number in nursery classes	64
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%)	38.5%
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%)	28.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.8%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.1%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2025

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/06/2018
Start date of inspection	02/02/2026

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

The school is a welcoming, caring and inclusive community where pupils' well-being is a priority. Staff have high expectations, and positive relationships help pupils feel valued, settled and ready to learn. Behaviour is good, and pupils are enthusiastic about learning.

The headteacher provides clear leadership and works well with staff and governors to drive improvements forward. Whilst leadership capacity is developing well, it does not yet secure consistently strong teaching and learning effectively across the school.

Leaders have effective systems and expectations so that pupils in mainstream and the learning support centre (LSC) classes learn, play and socialise together wherever possible. Staff adapt learning effectively, so pupils access shared experiences. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a strength, supported through close work with families and external agencies. The school has effective systems in place to monitor attendance, but overall attendance remains too low.

Pupils develop their communication and literacy skills well. Regular opportunities for discussion and performance help pupils to become confident speakers. Generally, pupils write well for a range of purposes and take pride in their work. The youngest pupils make good progress in reading from their starting points through engaging stories, songs and rhymes, alongside effective phonics teaching. Opportunities for older pupils to extend their reading skills are developing suitably. Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their digital and Welsh language skills. However, these are not developed consistently across the school.

In mathematics, pupils develop appropriate skills overall. However, too often learning in the older classes does not move quickly enough or provide sufficient challenge. This limits opportunities for older pupils to develop their reasoning skills and deepen their understanding.

The curriculum is developing appropriately. Staff are beginning to use the local area, community and families effectively to enrich learning and develop pupils' confidence and skills. Pupils increasingly influence school life through leadership roles and regular opportunities to share their views.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Further strengthen the role of the school's wider leadership team in improving the consistency of teaching and learning experiences across the school
- R2 Strengthen teacher subject knowledge and teaching of mathematics across the school to ensure consistently strong progress for all pupils
- R3 Continue to improve attendance

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The headteacher establishes a clear strategic vision for pupils' education and well-being that responds well to the needs of the school community. Leaders work effectively with staff at all levels to develop a reflective professional culture that is gaining momentum and having a positive impact across the school.

During their time in school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those from low-income households, make good overall progress from their individual starting points. Strong relationships between staff and pupils underpin pupils' well-being and attitudes to learning. Staff know pupils well and provide effective emotional and practical support, enabling nearly all pupils to feel safe, valued and confident. Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and carry out their learning readily and enthusiastically.

The youngest pupils settle quickly to school life because staff establish consistent routines and clear expectations that support early independence. Early learning provision in both the mainstream and the learning support classes (LSC) offers suitable opportunities for pupils to explore and engage in their learning. Skilled staff work well to provide pupils with well-matched and engaging opportunities to practice and develop their skills. However, at times staff miss opportunities to use authentic and real-life contexts to deepen learning.

Staff use questioning well, drawing on a range of question types and pupils' responses to adapt learning effectively. Many staff use well-timed 'pit stops' to check pupils' understanding and provide clear, purposeful feedback. Pupils generally listen carefully to feedback and use it well to improve their work.

Teachers plan regular opportunities for talk and performance across the curriculum. This helps many pupils to develop strong oracy skills over time. Many teachers' model language well, use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and ask purposeful questions that encourage pupils to explain their thinking. Consequently, many older pupils use increasingly complex vocabulary and sentence structures confidently to justify opinions, build arguments and perform to peers and wider audiences.

Staff follow a clear and structured approach to developing writing skills, and many pupils write well for a suitable range of purposes. Teachers provide regular and specific feedback that enables pupils to respond and improve their work. Overall, pupils take pride in their work and present it to a good standard.

Many pupils in the younger classes develop their early reading skills well. Regular storytelling, rhymes and singing sessions capture pupils' interest and foster positive

attitudes to books and reading from an early age. Staff build on this strong engagement by teaching phonics systematically and reinforcing key skills consistently, enabling younger pupils to read with increasing accuracy and fluency. Older pupils develop wider reading skills appropriately. Nevertheless, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for older pupils to engage with a rich range of challenging texts to deepen their inference and analytical skills.

Leaders and staff promote the Welsh language appropriately, supported by enthusiastic pupil leadership groups. However, pupils' use of Welsh remains inconsistent. Many pupils use familiar structures in Welsh lessons but are less confident in applying these independently.

Pupils' mathematical skills develop appropriately overall. In a majority of lessons, teachers explain ideas clearly, use accurate mathematical language and ask focused questions to correct misconceptions. However, in a minority of lessons, low expectations, slow pace and worksheet-heavy tasks limit pupils' opportunities to think deeply and explain their reasoning.

Nearly all pupils develop a secure understanding of respect, responsibility and well-being. Staff create a caring and inclusive ethos, and pupils show kindness, acceptance and respect towards others. Pupils learn about the world around them, including different countries and cultures, and use this understanding when discussing ethical issues and the impact of choices on others. They understand how healthy lifestyle choices influence physical and emotional well-being.

Provision for pupils with ALN is a particular strength. Leaders deploy staff effectively and provide beneficial professional learning. Staff use a wide range of strategies successfully, including visual aids, signing, sensory resources and digital communication aids, to meet pupils' needs.

Spotlight: Inclusive practice

A strong inclusive ethos underpins the school's work. Leaders have clear systems and expectations so that pupils in the mainstream classes and the LSC learn, play and socialise together wherever possible. Staff adapt learning well, enabling pupils to take part in shared experiences. This approach promotes equality, reduces barriers to learning and supports pupils' progress, well-being, and pride in belonging to the school community.

Pupils benefit from suitable opportunities to develop thinking, problem-solving, creative and physical skills. When working independently, many pupils explain their ideas clearly and justify their thinking. In a few older classes, adults' overdirect tasks, which limits pupils' independence and problem-solving during creative tasks. Staff support pupils'

physical development well through a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities, enabling pupils in both mainstream and the LSC to develop confidence, control and coordination.

Pupils have a suitable understanding of online safety, and many use digital tools well to present information and support their learning. They use technology with increasing independence to enhance the quality of their work and communicate their ideas effectively.

The school is developing a purposeful and increasingly engaging curriculum. Relevant topics, first-hand experiences and effective use of the local area, visitors and parents bring learning to life, and nearly all pupils show enthusiasm and motivation. Teachers' use of assessment and progression processes is improving and supports pupils' progress increasingly well. However, teachers do not yet use this information consistently well enough across all areas of learning to plan next steps accurately.

Leaders provide a wide range of purposeful professional learning opportunities aligned closely to improvement priorities, which increasingly influence classroom practice. Leaders involve staff successfully in evaluating provision and improvement planning. Professional discussions increasingly focus on the impact of actions on pupils' progress and experiences. This has led to improvements in writing, feedback and aspects of the curriculum. However, whilst leadership capacity is developing well, it is not yet effective in securing consistently strong teaching and learning.

Leaders and staff strengthen pupils' well-being and engagement by working effectively with families and external partners. They have increased the school's capacity to provide targeted support for families who require additional help by putting appropriate systems and staff in place. This approach is beginning to improve attendance for a few persistently absent pupils by building stronger relationships with families. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains too high. Staff work closely with external providers to support smooth transitions for pupils within the school and as they move between phases, including those with ALN. They provide enhanced support for vulnerable learners as they move on to secondary school.

Governors contribute actively to the life and work of the school. They provide suitable support and challenge, take appropriate account of pupils' views and share a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities.

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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