

Report summary for parents and carers on Cowbridge School

Date of inspection: 26/01/2026

Summary

Cowbridge School is a caring and ambitious learning community where staff and pupils work together positively. Staff place a strong emphasis on high-quality teaching and learning, and as a result, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make secure progress over time. Nearly all pupils behave respectfully and have positive attitudes to their learning. For example, in lessons, most listen attentively, follow instructions well and contribute enthusiastically to class discussions.

The headteacher offers thoughtful, energetic leadership that puts pupils' well-being and progress at the centre of the school's work. She is backed by a dedicated senior team and well-informed governors who share the school's high ambitions. Together, they champion the vision of 'Education, Inspiration and Opportunities for Life', which is evident in the school's calm and respectful atmosphere. The school currently only has pupils of primary school age from Nursery to Year 2. Whilst foundation learning is in its early stage of development, it lacks the strategic direction and expertise required for it to flourish.

Leaders focus strongly on high-quality teaching and learning. Most teachers use their subject knowledge well and establish supportive classroom environments where pupils feel confident to ask questions and take part. A minority of pupils write with flair, showing a mature awareness of audience and purpose, particularly in extended written tasks. Many pupils read with good understanding and analyse texts thoughtfully,

Leaders monitor pupils' well-being carefully and use data thoughtfully to support those in need. However, despite their efforts, attendance remains an area for improvement, particularly for pupils eligible for free school meals. The curriculum is broad and engaging, especially in Years 7 and 8. Pupils benefit from rich experiences across subjects, including opportunities to be creative, such as designing textiles based on cultural patterns or composing music using digital tools. Despite this, curriculum arrangements in Year 9 do not fully meet the requirements for Curriculum for Wales. The school's extra-curricular provision is a notable strength, especially in music, sport and the performing arts. Pupils also lead and organise activities, which helps them develop teamwork and leadership skills.

Overall, strong leadership and a shared commitment to pupils' success help ensure that Cowbridge School provides a safe, inclusive and encouraging environment where pupils are supported to achieve and develop.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Strengthen strategic leadership to better support teaching and learning in foundation learning.
- R2 Improve attendance
- R3 Ensure that pupils have access to the full range of learning experiences until the end of Year 9 to conform to Welsh Government guidance

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

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

© 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: 30/03/2026