

A report on

Barry Island Primary School

**Clive Road
Barry Island
Barry
Vale of Glamorgan
CF62 5UZ**

Date of inspection: May 2026

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Barry Island Primary School

Name of provider	Barry Island Primary School
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	235
Pupils of statutory school age	169
Number in nursery classes	36
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%)	20.3%
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%)	8.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2015

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	05/05/2026

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

Barry Island Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive school with a strong ethos of aspiration and innovation. Leaders, staff and governors work together purposefully to create a clear vision for pupils' learning and well-being that ensures that nearly all pupils make good progress over time. Positive relationships across the school community help pupils feel safe, supported and confident to participate in school life.

Teachers engage pupils positively in their learning and adapt activities carefully to provide timely support and challenge. The school's innovative curriculum encourages pupils to investigate and solve problems and helps them to apply increasingly sophisticated digital skills across their learning. For instance, older pupils learn to think critically about online information and develop as responsible and discerning digital users.

Across much of the school, pupils develop independence well. In the youngest classes, activities do not always match pupils' interests and developmental needs closely enough, reducing opportunities for play and exploration.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a notable strength. Staff work effectively with families and external agencies to reduce barriers to learning and participation. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to contribute to school life and undertake leadership responsibilities.

Most pupils develop effective literacy, numeracy and digital skills. They read confidently, write thoughtfully for a range of purposes and apply their mathematical skills successfully through problem-solving activities. Pupils show positive attitudes towards using Welsh, although older pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their conversational skills in a range of situations.

Governors work closely in partnership with leaders and staff to support the school's ongoing development and provide valuable support and challenge. The school has a strong culture of reflection, where all members of the school community contribute to identifying the school's strengths and areas for further improvement.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Strengthen opportunities for younger pupils to learn through play and exploration.
- R2 Improve older pupils' conversational Welsh language skills.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Barry Island School has a strong ethos of aspiration and innovation at its heart. Pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to explore, question, and work together through meaningful and exciting learning activities. This encourages nearly all pupils to become curious learners who collaborate thoughtfully and tackle new experiences with confidence.

The headteacher, supported effectively by senior leaders, provides determined and agile leadership with high expectations for pupils' learning and well-being. Together, they promote a clear and shared vision that reflects the needs of the community well. This creates a strong sense of purpose among staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. Leaders distribute roles and responsibilities carefully and staff contribute purposefully to the school's ongoing improvement work.

Spotlight: Developing a collaborative culture of reflection and improvement

Leaders and staff share a reflective approach to improving the school's work. Through regular monitoring and review, they identify priorities accurately and refine provision successfully. The school brings together staff, governors, pupils and former pupils through its annual self-evaluation day to share findings, celebrate progress and identify priorities for improvement. Former pupils contribute valuable insights into how well the school prepares learners for the next stage of their education. This approach helps the school community to develop a shared understanding of priorities and next steps for improvement.

Leaders manage staff performance arrangements well and link professional learning clearly to whole-school priorities. Staff engage actively with worthwhile research and use this to enhance and broaden their teaching approaches. The school's forward-thinking culture contributes positively to the consistency and quality of teaching. This is evident in the school's sustained focus on refining the teaching of reading, which has improved pupils' skills and established a strong love of reading among pupils.

Across the school, teachers establish high expectations and provide stimulating learning experiences that encourage pupils to question the world around them from an early age. Overall, teaching is effective and supports nearly all pupils to engage enthusiastically in lessons and develop positive attitudes towards their learning. This helps to ensure that nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those from low-income households, make good progress in their learning and well-being.

Teachers adapt learning skilfully to provide timely intervention, support and challenge during lessons. In addition, they use artificial intelligence (AI) carefully to tailor learning to pupils' needs and experiences. This helps teachers respond effectively to pupils' individual learning needs and supports pupils to make strong progress towards their learning goals.

Spotlight: Building critical thinkers and responsible digital citizens

The school's curriculum provides rich and engaging opportunities for pupils to learn through thought-provoking enquiry questions. Most older pupils apply and transfer a range of skills, including increasingly sophisticated digital competence skills, to solve enquiry-based challenges and present their ideas clearly. As part of this work, the school successfully promotes pupils as responsible and discerning digital users. For example, pupils regularly question the reliability of online sources and think carefully about the information they find. This innovative curriculum approach encourages pupils to think critically and creatively as they solve problems.

Provision for supporting pupils' independence is effective across much of the school. In the youngest classes, teachers plan learning environments that engage pupils suitably and encourage them to make simple choices about their learning. At times, resources and learning opportunities do not respond closely enough to pupils' emerging interests and developmental needs. This limits opportunities for younger pupils to extend their skills independently through play and exploration.

As they move through the school, most pupils develop strong literacy, numeracy and digital skills and apply these capably across the curriculum. Younger pupils talk animatedly about their learning and share ideas readily with others. Older pupils discuss different viewpoints sensibly and communicate maturely in a range of contexts. Most pupils become confident, fluent readers who discuss texts perceptively and justify their ideas using relevant evidence. They also develop into capable writers who write with increasing accuracy and maturity for a range of authentic purposes. They adapt their writing successfully for different audiences, using rich vocabulary and varied sentence structures to create effect. In mathematics, most pupils make effective progress and apply their numeracy skills with increasing accuracy in a wide range of challenging problem-solving activities.

The school promotes the Welsh language well and provides suitable opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh language, history and culture. Most staff model Welsh consistently and pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards using the language. Most pupils use an appropriate range of vocabulary and respond suitably to familiar questions and prompts. Despite this, older pupils have too few opportunities to develop their conversational Welsh through regular spoken interactions. This means that they do not use Welsh confidently or naturally beyond familiar patterns and phrases.

A nurturing and inclusive ethos supports pupils' sense of belonging and well-being. Strong relationships between staff and pupils contribute positively to this. Leaders promote the importance of regular attendance successfully and respond promptly to concerns about pupil absence. This has contributed to improved attendance over time. The school's restorative approach supports pupils to resolve conflict and respond constructively to challenges and misunderstandings. Provision for equality and diversity is highly effective and enables pupils to gain a clear understanding of fairness and equality. The school's commitment to inclusion and well-being enables nearly all pupils to develop respectful and considerate attitudes towards others.

Across the school, pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to contribute to school life and take on worthwhile leadership responsibilities. Staff listen carefully to pupils' views and value their ideas, enabling pupils to help shape important aspects of the school's work. This develops pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility very well.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a notable feature of the school. Staff tailor provision carefully to meet pupils' individual learning and well-being needs. They work purposefully with families and external agencies to remove barriers to learning and participation. This supports most pupils with ALN to engage positively with school life and make good progress towards their individual targets. Staff also share effective practice with other schools and partners, helping them to strengthen provision for pupils with additional learning needs.

Leaders and governors use the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) strategically to promote equity and inclusion and reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' learning and well-being successfully. Governors provide valuable support and challenge, fulfil their statutory duties well and contribute constructively to the school's strong safeguarding culture.

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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