

A report on

Cwm Ifor Primary School

**Heol Aneurin
Penyrheol
CF83 2PG**

Date of inspection: May 2026

by

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

About Cwm Ifor Primary School

Name of provider	Cwm Ifor Primary School
Local authority	Caerphilly 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	215
Pupils of statutory school age	166
Number in nursery classes	30
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%)	42.3%
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%)	18.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2012

A report on Cwm Ifor Primary School
May 2026

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	31/01/2017
Start date of inspection	11/05/2026

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

Cwm Ifor Primary School is a caring and inclusive school where pupils can thrive. Leaders, governors and staff focus on meeting the needs of all pupils, and keep well-being, respect and kindness at the centre of everything they do. Staff create purposeful learning environments where pupils develop confidence and positive attitudes to learning. A strong culture of safeguarding helps pupils feel secure and happy in school.

All pupils benefit from an engaging curriculum, which reflects the locality and helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of diversity and inclusion. Exciting learning experiences support pupils to develop important social, creative and physical skills alongside their academic learning. Positive working relationships between staff and pupils contribute strongly to pupils' good behaviour and willingness to learn.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and pupils from low-income households, make good progress. Staff place a strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills from an early age. Most pupils become confident readers, and many write effectively for different purposes. Pupils enjoy learning Welsh and use digital technology confidently to support their learning. Recent work to strengthen mathematics teaching is helping many pupils to build secure understanding and reasoning skills.

Teachers provide useful feedback and encourage pupils to reflect thoughtfully on their work. Pupils contribute positively to school life through leadership groups and by sharing their views about learning activities. Staff provide effective support for pupils with ALN, including through the nurturing provision in the school's Cwtch class.

School improvement processes are effective and bring about positive change for provision and pupils' outcomes, although attendance remains a challenge. Working relationships with parents and carers are broadly positive, but there are not always enough opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in the life of the school and understand how they can contribute most effectively to their children's learning and well-being.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Broaden engagement with parents and carers to enable them to support their children's learning and well-being more effectively
- R2 Continue to improve attendance

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Cwm Ifor Primary School is a nurturing learning environment in which pupils can thrive. School leaders and supportive governors have a clear vision for the school, based on meeting the needs of all pupils and inspiring them to make the most of the opportunities the school offers. Effective communication with staff helps them to understand this vision and to ensure that the principles of inclusivity, respect and kindness are at the heart of everything they do. A robust culture of safeguarding contributes strongly to pupils feeling safe and secure.

Leaders and staff have created an engaging curriculum that reflects the richness of the local area and develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. It provides pupils with a strong sense of belonging, along with a clear understanding of diversity and inclusion. An exciting range of experiences enhance pupils' learning and provides opportunities for them to develop the skills and confidence they will need throughout their lives. Consistency in teaching, common expectations of pupils, and productive working relationships contribute considerably to pupils' good behaviour, strong attitudes to learning and ability to recognise effort and success in themselves and others.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and from low-income households, make good progress during their time in the school. Beginning in the school's vibrant early years unit, teachers focus closely on developing pupils' oracy. Most learn to speak clearly and confidently and build a wide vocabulary, which they use to talk excitedly about their learning and experiences. The school's systematic focus on teaching phonics

and reading enables many young pupils to tackle reading confidently. This solid grounding and the encouragement governors offer when reading with pupils means that most older pupils read fluently and accurately, often with suitable expression and intonation. Despite this, only a few express a love of reading for pleasure. Teachers plan interesting opportunities for pupils to write. Very young pupils use mark-making and emerging writing skills purposefully in their play, and many older pupils write competently for a range of purposes.

Most pupils have a positive approach to learning Welsh, and enthusiastic teaching gives them the confidence to use the language around the school. They understand and use a suitable range of vocabulary and sentences relevant to their current topics and many tackle unfamiliar words confidently.

Leaders plan effective professional learning for staff that links specifically to school priorities. This builds their skills, knowledge and understanding which, in turn, brings about increased engagement and better progress for pupils. A strong example of this is the recent work to refine staff's teaching approaches in mathematics. A focus on helping pupils to gain a sound understanding of mathematical concepts enables most to apply their skills competently in mathematics lessons and across the curriculum. Teachers encourage young pupils' mathematical curiosity and give them the language to communicate their early thinking. As they move through the school, most pupils build on this successfully and gain the mathematical fluency and reasoning skills to tackle increasingly complex problems, often in real life contexts.

Pupils use technology as a natural part of their learning. Staff encourage them to view their digital skills and devices as tools to support and refine their work, whilst helping them to understand its limitations and drawbacks. This contributes considerably to the growth of their independent learning skills and awareness of internet safety.

Across the curriculum, teachers and pupils often have purposeful conversations about their work. This effective way of giving pupils feedback encourages them to extend their thinking, provide reasons for their answers, and move on in their learning. Over time, they build the skills to reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of their peers with increasing accuracy. To enhance these skills, leaders and teachers offer useful opportunities for pupils to share their views, through pupil leadership groups and by encouraging them to suggest areas of learning and activities they think might help them to learn effectively.

Pupils with additional learning needs receive effective, personalised interventions that enable nearly all to make effective progress from their starting points. Leaders provide skilled support and relevant professional learning to help teachers and teaching assistants to develop the expertise to carry out their roles competently.

Skilled staff in the school's Cwtch provision offer a nurturing learning environment for pupils whose emotional and social needs mean that they struggle in a large class.

Staff use the extensive indoor and outdoor learning environments particularly well to inspire pupils and meet their needs. Pupils often choose to work in shared areas outside classrooms. This offers them a degree of freedom that enables them to collaborate, move, or create music, art, dance or drama in small groups. As well as outdoor areas offering excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills when cycling and playing games, they also learn to take calculated risks when navigating the assault course and enhance their understanding of science and food in the garden.

The school's work to provide an extensive range of opportunities in and outside the curriculum means that all pupils, including those affected by poverty and other barriers to learning, benefit from a rich and exciting school experience. To maximise these benefits, leaders are persistent in their efforts to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. This has resulted in a considerable decrease in persistent absenteeism in recent years, but attendance overall remains a challenge. Although working relationships with parents, carers and the community are broadly positive, there are not always enough opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in the life of the school and understand how they can contribute most effectively to their children's learning and wellbeing.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement processes are comprehensive and successful in bringing about improvements in provision and outcomes for pupils. All leaders and teachers contribute meaningfully to identifying relevant, achievable priorities. They collaborate well to implement actions and measure progress towards targets and work closely with members of the governing body to monitor and evaluate the difference changes make to pupils' experiences, progress and outcomes.

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. However, the school currently has a deficit budget. Leaders and the local authority are working together to agree a suitable recovery plan.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers 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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© 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: 14/07/2026