

A report on

St Illtyd's Primary School

**Llanhilleth
Abertillery
Blaenau Gwent
NP13 2JT**

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About St Illtyd's Primary School

Name of provider	St Illtyd's Primary School
Local authority	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English- medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	178
Pupils of statutory school age	139
Number in nursery classes	21
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%)	22.9%
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%)	5.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	6.5%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2021

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/10/2017
Start date of inspection	08/06/2026

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

St Illtyd's Primary School is friendly, inviting, and inclusive. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of its work. There are respectful relationships between staff and pupils and a calm, supportive ethos has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. Most pupils feel safe and secure in school and engage well in their lessons.

The school's broad and balanced curriculum reflects pupils' interests successfully. Teachers plan many authentic and stimulating learning experiences that support pupils' learning and help them develop a valuable sense of belonging in the local community. Many pupils, including those from low- income households and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress over time.

Leaders and staff provide effective support for pupils with ALN. They work closely with families and external agencies to adapt and enhance support for pupils' learning and well-being. Teachers set clear expectations for pupils' learning and use questioning and feedback skilfully to promote thinking and to help pupils reflect on their learning. Most pupils respond positively to feedback and work well on their own and with others.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their English literacy skills but make slower progress in developing their Welsh language skills over time. Most pupils develop secure mathematical understanding and apply their numeracy skills successfully in everyday contexts.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Leaders apply highly effective strategies for managing change which results in rapid progress in several important areas. Staff benefit from high- quality professional learning, which improves the consistency of teaching approaches and develops the leadership skills of staff successfully. Governors carry out their duties diligently and provide worthwhile challenge and support to school leaders. Although the school has a consistent approach to promote regular attendance at school, the attendance rates of pupils from low- income households remain too low.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Improve the attendance of pupils from low-income households
- R2 Improve pupils' Welsh language skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

St Illtyd's Primary is a warm, welcoming, and inclusive school, where pupils' well-being is central to its life and work. The school fosters respectful relationships and a calm, nurturing ethos, which have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and how they relate to one another. Most pupils behave well and feel safe and secure at school.

The school environment is attractive and well resourced. Classrooms, learning zones, and carefully structured outdoor areas provide purposeful spaces for pupils to learn and develop a sense of responsibility.

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects pupils' interests effectively. Teachers plan interesting lessons and authentic learning opportunities that engage most pupils well. The curriculum develops pupils' sense of belonging within their local community and there are valuable opportunities for pupils to engage with the community to develop their understanding of the world of work, develop their entrepreneurial skills and to become ambitious for their future job prospects.

Pupils benefit from engaging opportunities to develop their creative skills, such as when studying the work of other artists and applying them successfully to their own work. The school presents valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving skills, thinking and collaborative skills well. Opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of diversity in their local community, Wales and the wider world support them to develop respect for views and cultures which are different to their own.

Teachers plan appropriately for pupils to learn about and reflect on social and moral issues, and pupils demonstrate values such as empathy, honesty, and fairness. Learning experiences generally build well on pupils' previous learning and enable them to apply their knowledge, skills, and understanding meaningfully in their work. This ensures that many pupils, including those from low-income households and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress over time.

The school's support for pupils with ALN is effective and insightful. Staff provide tailored approaches that meet pupils' learning and well-being needs well and ensure their continued progress. Leaders and staff work purposefully with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive effective support. Staff use a successful and consistent approach to help pupils manage their emotions. This supports pupils to regulate their behaviour successfully and increases their inclusion in school life.

Staff and pupils develop strong working relationships, which creates a positive environment for learning and development. Teachers set clear expectations for pupils' learning and well-being, and classrooms are calm and purposeful places to learn. Teachers use questioning and feedback skilfully to provide pupils with a clear understanding of how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve their work. Most pupils engage well in lessons, respond positively to feedback, and work well independently and in collaboration with one another. In a few lessons, learning experiences do not allow pupils to make mistakes or challenge themselves fully as independent learners. Teachers make good use of assessment information to monitor the progress of pupils.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. The school has recently established a consistent approach to developing pupils' reading skills, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Many younger readers build early reading skills rapidly and older pupils read a wide range of texts with confidence, clarity and expression. Many pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills. Most pupils develop effective mathematical knowledge and understanding and apply their numeracy skills successfully in real-life contexts. The school offers pupils suitable opportunities to develop a broad range of digital skills. Over time, most pupils develop these skills appropriately and apply them meaningfully across the curriculum. Across the school, although many teachers model the Welsh language appropriately, pupils do not have enough opportunities to build on their skills effectively, to make the progress they should.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and staff work well together in a positive and focused way to achieve the school's values and vision. The headteacher has an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas

for improvement and applies robust self-evaluation processes. A highly effective strategy for managing change and securing improvement has led to rapid progress in important areas of the school's work, whilst ensuring the well-being of staff and pupils. Leaders adopt a highly successful approach to coaching and mentoring, which supports and motivates staff to develop and improve their practice. High-quality professional learning has a positive impact on areas such as improving the consistency of teaching and developing the evaluation skills of aspiring leaders. Staff work well with local schools to improve aspects of their practice positively.

The school's recently revised leadership arrangements ensure that leaders at all levels have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Leaders address national priorities well, including ALN reform and implementing Curriculum for Wales. The school promotes pupils' regular attendance at school consistently but the attendance of pupils who are impacted by poverty remain too low.

The school has strong links with the community, and these enrich the curriculum and provide valuable advice and support. School governors are committed and supportive. They undertake their statutory duties diligently and provide school leaders with worthwhile accountability.

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/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:

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