

A report on

Whitestone Primary School

**Rushwind Close
West Cross
Swansea
SA3 5RF**

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

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

About Whitestone Primary School

Name of provider	Whitestone Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	130
Pupils of statutory school age	107
Number in nursery classes	6
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%)	25.1%
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%)	31.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	2.5%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	8.5%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2014

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/02/2017
Start date of inspection	22/06/2026

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

Whitestone Primary School is a highly inclusive school where staff place the needs of pupils and their families at the heart of school life. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership, and staff build positive relationships with pupils to create a supportive environment where they feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of worthwhile learning experiences, educational visits and visitors that enrich their understanding of their local community, Wales and the wider world. Creative opportunities in art and music contribute positively to pupils' enjoyment of learning. At times, opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their knowledge and skills in sufficient depth across the curriculum are too variable.

Highly effective teaching in the youngest class gives children an excellent start to school life and, in many lessons across the school, most pupils to engage well in their learning, behave respectfully and develop confidence and increasing independence. In a few lessons, learning activities are not consistently engaging or challenging enough to enable pupils to make the progress they could.

Staff develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills successfully. Younger pupils develop secure speaking, listening and early reading skills, while many older pupils read with confidence and write successfully across a suitable range of genres. Pupils apply their mathematical and digital skills in meaningful contexts, and the school promotes the Welsh language positively through a strong Welsh ethos.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a significant strength. Staff identify needs promptly, work closely with families and specialist agencies, and provide carefully targeted support that enables nearly all pupils to make strong progress. The Specialist Teaching Facilities are particularly effective, providing highly individualised support while ensuring pupils are fully included in school life wherever appropriate.

Leaders and governors know the school well and work together purposefully to improve provision. Professional learning has strengthened important aspects of the school's work, including reading, writing and inclusive practice. Leaders are beginning to make the necessary improvements to strengthen the school's self-evaluation of the curriculum and support improvement.

Leaders work closely with families to improve attendance, reducing persistent absence over time, although attendance remains too low for a minority of pupils.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Improve the consistency of effective teaching across the school
- R2 Strengthen self-evaluation to focus more sharply on the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning
- R3 Improve attendance, in particular for those pupils who are persistently absent.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Whitestone Primary School is a welcoming and highly inclusive school where staff place the needs of pupils and their families at the centre of school life. The headteacher provides compassionate and purposeful leadership, establishing a clear vision based on inclusion, equity and high aspirations for all.

Across the school, teachers establish supportive relationships with pupils and create positive learning environments where most pupils engage well in their learning. They behave well, show respect to others and work cooperatively during lessons. Where teaching is strongest, pupils show resilience, sustain their concentration and increasingly work independently.

Staff know pupils well and use this understanding to provide appropriate support for their individual needs. In the strongest practice, teachers provide clear explanations, revisit prior learning effectively and use purposeful questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. In the youngest class, highly effective teaching, alongside stimulating indoor and outdoor provision, develops pupils' language, literacy and social skills successfully. The majority of teachers provide feedback that helps pupils understand how to improve their work and reflect on the quality of their learning. However, in a few lessons, learning activities lack sufficient challenge, pace or clarity of expectations. As a result, pupils make less progress and a minority lose focus and do not engage as effectively in their learning.

The school has worked collaboratively to develop a broad curriculum that reflects the principles of Curriculum for Wales suitably. Pupils benefit from a wide range of worthwhile learning experiences, educational visits and visitors. Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the experiences of people from different backgrounds. These opportunities enrich pupils' learning and help them understand their place within their local community, Wales and the wider world. The curriculum also provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills through art and music, contributing positively to their enjoyment of learning. However, opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their knowledge and skills in sufficient depth across the curriculum are too variable.

The school has established a consistent whole-school approach to developing pupils' literacy skills. Younger pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well through regular opportunities for discussion, role-play and language-rich activities. As they move through the school, many pupils communicate their ideas appropriately and listen carefully to the views of others.

In the early years, pupils develop their phonics knowledge systematically and apply these skills successfully to support their early writing and spelling. Many older pupils read with suitable fluency and understanding and talk enthusiastically about the books and authors they enjoy. More confident readers discuss texts thoughtfully and demonstrate a secure understanding of characters, themes and vocabulary. A few older pupils lack the reading fluency and vocabulary needed to access more challenging texts successfully.

Leaders have established a coherent whole-school approach to writing that enables many pupils to develop and apply their writing skills successfully as they progress through the school. From an early age, pupils develop their writing skills well through engaging and purposeful activities that encourage them to progress from early mark-making to writing independently. As they move through the school, many pupils write successfully across a suitable range of genres. A majority of older pupils use an increasingly rich vocabulary and appropriate structures to produce engaging extended pieces. Most pupils use success criteria effectively to evaluate and improve their work.

Teachers plan appropriately to develop pupils' mathematical skills progressively. Younger pupils develop secure number skills and apply these confidently through practical learning experiences. As they move through the school, many pupils use an increasingly broad range of mathematical skills in purposeful and authentic contexts, for example when investigating road safety, budgeting and analysing data.

Staff also provide an increasing range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their digital skills. By the time they leave school, many pupils use digital technology confidently to support their learning and demonstrate a good understanding of online safety. Projects such as designing and coding sensors to improve recycling

provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to apply their digital and problem-solving skills.

The school promotes the Welsh language positively through a strong Welsh ethos and staff who model the language well. Younger pupils enjoy learning Welsh through songs, games and regular 'drilio' sessions. As they progress, pupils respond appropriately to familiar questions and begin to extend simple responses. Older pupils are beginning to use the past tense suitably, but they are not always confident in using a wide enough range of common sentence patterns independently.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is a significant strength of the school. Leaders have established robust systems to identify pupils' needs at an early stage and ensure that support is carefully matched to individuals' requirements. Staff work closely with a wide range of external agencies and families to remove barriers to learning. Purposeful planning, regular review and well-targeted interventions enable nearly all pupils with additional learning needs to make strong progress towards their individual targets.

The Specialist Teaching Facilities (STFs) are a notable strength of the school's work. Staff provide highly effective, individualised provision that reflects a deep understanding of pupils' complex needs. Carefully planned teaching, effective assessment and close collaboration with families and specialist agencies enable nearly all pupils to make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Spotlight: Valuing every pupil through an inclusive culture

Whitestone Primary School has established a highly inclusive culture, where removing barriers to learning and participation is central to its work. Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly together to adapt learning and provide timely support within classrooms, enabling pupils to remain fully engaged alongside their peers. Pupils in the Specialist Teaching Facilities are fully included in the life of the school, participating alongside their mainstream peers in lessons, assemblies, performances, breaktimes and leadership groups. The school continually seeks to break down barriers that may prevent pupils and families from engaging fully in school life through strong partnerships, tailored support and open communication. The school promotes empathy, belonging and respect for diversity, ensuring that pupils and families, including those who are new to the local community or from different countries, feel welcomed, valued and included.

Leaders monitor attendance carefully and work closely with families and external agencies to improve attendance. These actions have reduced persistent absence over time, although attendance remains too low for a minority of pupils who are regularly absent.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities through groups such as the school council. These groups contribute purposefully to aspects of school improvement and provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to influence school life while developing their confidence, responsibility and leadership skills.

The headteacher and senior leaders have developed purposeful approaches to self-evaluation that draw on a broad range of first-hand evidence and support an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Professional learning aligns closely with school priorities and has contributed to improvements in areas such as reading, writing and inclusive practice. Leaders are beginning to strengthen distributed leadership, with middle leaders taking increasing responsibility for monitoring provision and supporting school improvement. However, evaluation of the wider curriculum does not always focus sharply enough on the impact of curriculum planning on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

Governors know the school well and provide effective support and challenge. They use their professional expertise purposefully to monitor the school's work, contribute to self-evaluation and ensure that statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. Leaders and governors manage resources and grant funding appropriately to support pupils affected by disadvantage and reduce barriers to learning.

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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