

A report on

Libanus Primary School

**Libanus Rd
Blackwood
NP12 1EH**

Date of inspection: March 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Libanus Primary School

Name of provider	Libanus 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	337
Pupils of statutory school age	257
Number in nursery classes	35
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 22.9%)	13.3%
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 11.1%)	7.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2015
Start date of inspection	31/03/2025

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

Libanus Primary School provides a warm, friendly, nurturing environment that promotes pupils' personal, social, and emotional development very well. The headteacher has a clear vision, leads with strong direction, and creates a safe and inclusive learning environment. Staff place a high priority on ensuring that they meet all pupils' well-being needs. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) receive high-quality support to meet their individual targets.

Strong leadership at all levels has helped the school achieve positive changes. The curriculum is well-planned and offers interesting and motivating learning experiences. Teachers challenge and support pupils effectively. Careful planning ensures that pupils develop skills progressively, and most pupils make good progress across all areas of learning. The school's approach enables pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills to other areas, work independently, and improve their skills. Pupils' development of their creative, physical and digital skills are strengths of the school. Overall, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh language skills around the school, and this inhibits their confidence in using the language.

Staff build strong relationships with pupils and set high expectations. This results in pupils having positive attitudes to learning and displaying exemplary behaviour. Pupils have a strong voice in the school and are keen to take on leadership responsibilities. They are proud of the changes that their work has brought about, such as highlighting what pupils should do if they experience any bullying. Effective partnership work with parents and external agencies promotes good attendance successfully.

Robust procedures for monitoring and evaluation ensure continuous improvement in pupil performance and teaching standards. Governors provide valuable support, have a good knowledge of the school's work, and contribute well to school life.

Recommendations

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

R1. Continue to improve pupils' Welsh language speaking skills and provide more opportunities for them to use Welsh around the school

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Libanus Primary School provides a calm and nurturing environment that promotes pupils' personal, social, and emotional development extremely successfully. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and clear strategic direction for school improvement. Together with the effective leadership team, she creates an inclusive culture where pupils feel safe and protected, showing care and respect for each other. The school vision is well embedded and visible in all aspects of school life. There is a strong team ethos among all staff, who believe that pupils' well-being is at the core of all that they do and is fundamental to their success.

Spotlight 1: Shared leadership

The headteacher places a strong focus on building the school's leadership capacity at all levels to ensure there is an effective and collaborative approach to school improvement. Together, staff and pupils affect change successfully, for example to embed the school's exciting and authentic curriculum and to ensure that pupils make very good progress during their time at the school.

Staff build strong working relationships with pupils and model high expectations. As a result, nearly all pupils show positive attitudes to learning. Teachers have secure curriculum knowledge and plan exciting, purposeful lessons that challenge and support pupils effectively. Working with local schools, staff have developed a shared understanding of progression to support pupils to maximise their progress in learning. This careful planning ensures that pupils develop and build skills sequentially and that most make significant progress in their learning across all areas of the curriculum. The curriculum offers pupils worthwhile opportunities to develop spiritual, moral, social, and cultural awareness through varied activities, including themes about religions and beliefs. These activities promote inclusivity and prepare pupils to live in a diverse society, resulting in pupils developing respect, empathy, and understanding for others.

The school's approach to learning encourages pupils to transfer and refine their knowledge and skills independently in their work across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils' independent work is of high quality. Teachers and skilled teaching assistants support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and young carers effectively, helping them make good progress towards their individual learning and well-being targets. Staff identify pupils' needs swiftly and tailor support appropriately.

Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour and nearly all pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They use effective questioning to extend pupils' learning, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of what is required and how to improve. Pupils develop strong speaking and listening skills. They use increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and high-quality skills for oral presentations as they progress through the school.

Most pupils' reading skills develop well. Younger pupils use a variety of strategies to read unfamiliar words and begin to develop effective comprehension skills. Most older pupils read and understand a variety of texts competently. They locate and extract information from various sources and use this information to support class discussions effectively. Across the school, many pupils develop their writing skills well. Younger pupils make rapid progress, and by Year 2, many write at length using imaginative vocabulary and good punctuation. Older pupils choose language appropriately for effect and adapt their writing style for different purposes and audiences.

Staff promote the advantages of learning Welsh and different languages effectively. Many teachers are good role models for spoken Welsh and use a variety of appropriate instructions. Teachers provide regular Welsh lessons, which develop pupils' vocabulary and sentence patterns effectively. Overall, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to speak Welsh outside formal Welsh sessions. As a result, pupils lack the confidence to use their Welsh language skills beyond the classroom.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their mathematical skills. From an early age, they demonstrate a good understanding of number concepts. Older pupils have quick recall of mental facts and use these well to aid problem solving. Pupils apply their mathematical skills well in authentic contexts, and older pupils make thoughtful decisions about how best to present their work when carrying out mathematical investigations.

Spotlight 2: Pupils' selective and confident use of digital skills to enhance their work

Pupils develop highly effective digital skills. Across the school, they use these skills confidently and creatively to enhance their learning seamlessly. They have a good understanding of when digital devices can be used to best effect. Many of the oldest pupils use a broad range of digital technology to create sophisticated projects, for example, when programming robots to communicate with each other in Welsh. Digital leaders play an important role in developing pupils' digital skills across the school.

Pupils have many and varied opportunities to develop a wide range of creative skills. As a result, they are adept at using a range of tools and equipment. Most understand the design process and improve and refine their designs before creating a finished product. They use research about different aspects of design to provide ideas for the creative process and make thoughtful evaluations from an early age.

Most pupils develop their physical skills well. The school is very well resourced to support pupils' physical development, and indoor and outdoor areas are used well. A notable feature is the commitment to all pupils learning to ride a bike safely on the road by the time they leave the school.

Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and care for their school. They use their voice proactively to promote important issues and embrace leadership responsibilities. Opportunities to learn about the world of work help pupils develop aspirations for their future lives. Effective partnership work with parents and external agencies promotes good attendance, with the 'miss school, miss out' message helping families understand the impact of poor attendance on children's progress.

A robust cycle of monitoring and evaluation ensures that leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, focused on pupils' learning and the quality of teaching. Leaders plan an effective menu of professional learning, with well-planned provision having a positive influence on the school's work, such as on pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Governors provide valuable support, have a good knowledge of the school's work, and contribute well to school life. They engage in the first-hand gathering of evidence and use this to hold the school to account appropriately. School leaders and governors manage the school's finances effectively. They use the pupil development grant purposefully to ensure that funding has a positive impact on pupils' lives and ensures equity.

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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