

**A report on**  
**Garnteg Primary School**

**Hillcrest  
Garndiffaith  
Pontypool  
Torfaen  
NP4 7SJ**

**Date of inspection: May 2025**

**by**

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

## About Garnteg Primary School

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Name of provider   | Garnteg Primary School         |
| Local authority  | Torfaen 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   | 388                            |
| Pupils of statutory school age   | 300                            |
| Number in nursery classes  | 37                             |
| 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%) | 36.2%                          |
| 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%)               | 11.3%                          |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home   | 0.0%                           |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language  | 0.0%                           |
| Date of headteacher appointment  | 01/02/2010                     |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)  | 22/03/2019                     |
| Start date of inspection   | 19/05/2025                     |

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](https://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

Garnteg Primary School is an inclusive, nurturing community where pupils thrive. Staff know the pupils very well and support them to develop strong social and emotional skills. As a result, nearly all pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they are respectful and kind towards each other, staff and visitors. They are very proud to be a part of the school community, where they feel safe, secure and cared for.

The headteacher has a powerful vision based on high expectations in all areas. Senior leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and identify the next areas for improvement accurately. From this, staff engage in high-quality professional learning, including training and research. Staff then apply short-term action plans effectively to ensure that there is a quick and positive impact upon pupils' progress.

The school's 'Climb to Sparkle' curriculum is very effective, and pupils engage with it very well. Staff deliver a wide range of learning experiences that allow pupils to develop their skills very effectively. As a result, most pupils make very good progress in their literacy, numeracy and digital skills, including those pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) or who are from low-income households. However, a majority of older pupils do not develop their spoken skills in Welsh well enough.

Most teaching is strong and effective. Most teachers use questioning and other strategies well to extend pupils' learning, and highly skilled support staff provide valuable support. Teachers provide many beneficial opportunities for pupils to make choices in how and what they learn. Because of this, pupils make very good progress in their independent and creative skills. As they get older, almost all pupils take on leadership responsibilities and feel that they play an important part in the decision-making of the school.

The school is resourced very well, inside and out. The outdoor environment provides rich opportunities for learning. For example, the woodland and wetland areas are used by pupils of all ages creatively to enhance many areas of the curriculum. Staff are diligent in monitoring attendance and work effectively to help all pupils attend every day.

## Recommendations

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

R1. Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

The headteacher and senior leaders have a very clear vision for Garnteg Primary School. Leaders set high expectations for themselves, staff and pupils and strive for strong levels of inclusion, well-being and achievement. They promote a sound culture of safeguarding and ensure a rich and secure learning environment. As a result, the school is a positive, nurturing environment where pupils thrive. Nearly all pupils are very proud to be a part of Garnteg Primary School, where they feel safe, secure and cared for.

Nearly all staff foster excellent relationships with pupils in school. Staff know pupils well and have a clear understanding of their individual needs. This is a notable strength and supports pupils to develop social and emotional skills effectively. As a result of this, nearly all pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they demonstrate care towards one another. For example, they work together carefully to support each other when using the climbing wall. Nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), or who are from low-income households, engage positively with learning opportunities and make very strong progress from their starting points.

Staff support pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully. They learn about the values of famous people who have made a difference in the world and reflect thoughtfully on how they can follow these values in their own lives. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities within the school through pupil voice groups and curriculum teams. As a result, most pupils feel that they are involved in influencing the work and life of the school well.

Most pupils make very good progress in oracy, reading, writing and numeracy skills. Many of the youngest pupils speak confidently to friends and listen well to instructions from adults. By the time they reach Year 6, nearly all pupils speak articulately and with confidence on a range of subjects. A notable example of this is when pupils take part in live radio broadcasts or create podcasts in the school recording studio. When reading, many younger pupils sound out and blend words confidently and staff use questioning effectively to develop pupils' reading strategies. Many older pupils apply skills such as summarising and predicting through inference and deduction.

Teachers provide frequent and worthwhile experiences for pupils to write for a variety of purposes. This supports most pupils to develop their writing skills well. For example, by Year 6 they write at length effectively across a range of genres and use an increasingly adventurous range of vocabulary to good effect. Nearly all pupils take pride in their work and present their ideas creatively and effectively. They select and use different media, including many digital tools, independently. The school provides extensive opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills. As a result, most pupils develop their digital skills very well and have a sound understanding of how to stay safe online. Younger pupils programme a digital toy to turn and move in different directions to reach a destination. Older pupils create movies, documents and interactive presentations collaboratively.

Most pupils develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding effectively, due to the school's systematic and robust approach to teaching. This, in turn, provides pupils with authentic opportunities to apply their skills well. By Year 6, pupils develop a range of calculation skills, which they apply well when solving problems. For example, they investigate the age of trees skilfully, measuring the circumference, applying formulae and comparing the results against their predictions.

#### **Spotlight: Provision for developing and applying pupils' skills**

The school's provision for pupils to acquire and apply literacy, numeracy and digital skills is outstanding. The school's ambitious 'Climb to Sparkle' curriculum facilitates highly valuable opportunities for pupils to be creative and independent in authentic and purposeful situations. Because of this, most pupils make excellent progress in the development of their skills and have high aspirations. The curriculum is enriched effectively by projects, such as the Formula 1 racing car challenge, where the oldest pupils work in teams and take on roles related to careers in the car industry.

Many of the youngest pupils develop their Welsh language skills well. They can identify colours in Welsh and respond to simple questions and commands. Overall, there is insufficient emphasis on improving pupils' Welsh oracy skills progressively over time. Therefore, a majority of older pupils do not develop their spoken skills in Welsh well enough.

The school's provision for pupils with ALN is strong and these pupils make sound progress from their individual starting points. Teachers ensure that pupils with ALN have appropriate and useful individual development plans that match their needs well. The school offers a range of beneficial programmes to support pupils with their well-being and learning. Highly skilled support staff work in close partnership with teachers to provide valuable support to pupils.

In nearly all lessons, teaching is strong and effective. Teachers use skilful questioning and a range of assessment strategies effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and extend their learning. They provide many beneficial opportunities for pupils to make choices in how and what they learn.

### **Spotlight 2: A strong and effective culture of school development and professional learning**

High-quality professional learning is a strength of the school and contributes very effectively to raising standards. The leadership team has a strong track record of making and securing improvements. Through effective and robust self-evaluation, they identify priorities that reflect the needs of the school accurately. They seek out the most effective training for staff. Alongside this, staff carry out targeted research and draw up impactful short-term action plans for their own teaching and for the learners in their class. This ensures that changes are quickly reviewed and a positive impact on pupil progress is secured. For example, the school identified that progress in reading needed to improve. The ensuing professional learning and research undertaken has ensured that a consistent and effective approach has been introduced and pupils are making better progress.

The school is a warm, exciting and inviting learning environment, which is resourced extensively, inside and out. Staff provide a wide range of high-quality activities, experiences and opportunities in which pupils flourish, including a wide range of after-school activities. The school has effective processes for monitoring attendance and staff work as a team to support and overcome barriers to ensure that pupils attend school daily.

Governors are highly committed to the school, support it well, and have a strong understanding of the school's community and context. The headteacher ensures that governors are well informed and play an active part in school life. For example, they engage in worthwhile self-evaluation activities to monitor progress against specific priorities, such as improving the progress of girls in mathematics.

### **Additional information**

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils 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](http://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](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

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