

A report on

Litchard Primary School

**Garfield Avenue
Litchard
CF31 1QB**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

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

About Litchard Primary School

Name of provider	Litchard Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend 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	472
Pupils of statutory school age	356
Number in nursery classes	59
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%)	30.1%
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 11.1%)	16.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	8.1%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2024

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	06/11/2017
Start date of inspection	30/06/2025

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

Litchard Primary School is a happy, inclusive and nurturing environment where pupils feel safe, valued and eager to learn. Staff build strong, respectful relationships with pupils and work well together to promote a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils enjoy school and show enthusiasm and positive attitudes to learning across a wide range of experiences.

The headteacher provides determined leadership and promotes a shared vision that effectively supports improvement. Leaders place partnership working at the heart of the school's approach and work successfully with parents, governors, other schools and external partners to enhance pupils' learning and well-being.

Leaders have established a highly effective system to assess and track pupils' progress and well-being. Staff use this information well to identify needs quickly and check the impact of support, which helps reduce barriers to learning.

Teachers plan engaging learning experiences for pupils. They make effective use of local links to plan a curriculum that reflects the diverse needs of the community that the school serves. In most lessons, they question effectively, maintain a steady pace and support pupils to make good progress. In a minority of lessons, activities are not always well matched to pupils' individual needs, and opportunities to develop independent learning skills are limited.

Most pupils including those in the Learning Resource Class (LRC) make good progress in literacy and numeracy. They communicate clearly and use subject vocabulary accurately. Staff promote a strong reading culture and help pupils develop effective strategies so nearly all pupils read fluently and understand a range of texts. Most pupils write effectively for different purposes and by Year 6, many produce sustained high quality work. Most pupils apply their mathematical skills accurately to solve problems. Over time, many pupils use digital tools appropriately to support their learning. However, they do not practise a broad enough range of digital skills or apply them regularly to deepen their understanding. Most pupils learn to swim competently by the time they leave school, using the school's own pool. Teachers model Welsh regularly, and this ensures that pupils make steady progress in developing their language skills.

Leaders promote good attendance through clear expectations and supportive actions. As a result, attendance has improved over time, including for pupils eligible for free school meals.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Refine teaching to provide appropriate challenge and support for all learners and to develop pupils' independent learning skills
- R2. Ensure that pupils develop and apply a broader range of digital skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Litchard Primary School is a happy, safe and highly inclusive learning environment. The school's ethos is built on a strong culture of collective trust and open communication. Pupils are friendly and enthusiastic about their learning. There is a strong sense of teamwork and positivity across the school. Staff collaborate effectively to provide purposeful opportunities that enable pupils to thrive

In the relatively short time since his appointment, the headteacher has made a strong and positive impact on teaching, learning, and well-being. He provides determined leadership, characterised by high expectations for all pupils. This promotes a clear, shared vision that unites staff, pupils, parents, and the wider community in support of the school's aims.

Leaders and governors demonstrate a firm commitment to equity. They make innovative and well-considered use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) to significantly reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' well-being and access to learning. As part of the school's PDG strategy, pupils take on leadership roles in a successful community food project, run in partnership with staff. This initiative, which provides supermarket produce on a 'pay as you can' basis, supports the development of pupils' entrepreneurial skills and contributes effectively to their growth as ethically informed citizens.

Teachers plan engaging and meaningful learning experiences that motivate nearly all pupils. They use the school's context and community links well to design a stimulating curriculum that reflects the diverse community and promotes understanding of different values, beliefs and relationships. This approach supports pupils' well-being and personal development and deepens their understanding of the world around them. Most pupils treat others with fairness and respect. Most pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning and many persevere well when tackling learning tasks.

Many teachers plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their critical thinking skills, for example to prove the accuracy of their calculations. In a few lessons, pupils think strategically about how they will solve problems as a team to achieve the best outcome. Overall, pupils show a strong desire to improve and succeed in all aspects of school life.

In a majority of lessons, teachers maintain a good pace and use questioning effectively to deepen and extend learning. However, in a minority of lessons, activities are not always well matched to pupils' individual needs to maximise their learning, and opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills are limited.

Staff make effective use of the school's extensive outdoor learning environments to develop pupils' creative and physical skills. Nearly all pupils from Year 2 regularly use the

school swimming pool to build water confidence, and most learn to swim competently by the time they leave school.

Spotlight: Effective targeted support through rigorous pupil monitoring

Senior leaders have developed a highly effective system for assessing and monitoring the progress and well-being of all pupils. The holistic approach to collating information enables staff to quickly identify pupils in need of learning and well-being support. Regular ‘pupil surgeries’ ensure staff carefully evaluate the impact of the additional support they provide. These allow staff to make timely and useful adaptations that enable them to reduce the impact of barriers to learning.

Most pupils, including those in the Learning Resource Class (LRC) make good progress with their literacy and mathematical skills as they move through the school. They build on their skills systematically and use these skills well to support their learning across the curriculum.

The school provides a literature rich environment. Staff model topic-related vocabulary and language associated with different text types well. Most pupils talk confidently about their work and learning experiences using an increasing range of relevant vocabulary. The school’s positive reading culture fosters a love of reading. Staff support pupils to develop a range of reading strategies ensuring nearly all pupils develop as fluent readers. Most pupils understand the key features of different text types and use this knowledge skilfully to write maturely for a range of purposes. By Year 6, many pupils sustain their ideas well and produce high quality written work.

Staff plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their early mathematical understanding through practical activities and play. Most pupils build on these skills successfully and develop confidence in using and applying a range of calculations in their work. Most pupils carefully consider the most efficient strategies to solve mathematical problems and apply these skills across the curriculum well. Over time many pupils use digital tools appropriately to support their learning across the curriculum. Most pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe online. As they progress through the school, many pupils begin to apply their digital skills more creatively and purposefully. However, they do not practise a broad enough range of digital skills or apply them regularly to deepen their understanding.

The school promotes a strong Welsh culture. Many teachers model the Welsh language regularly in lessons and around the school. This supports pupils with the development of their Welsh language skills successfully.

The school's provision for additional learning needs (ALN) is highly effective. Most pupils with ALN, including those in the learning resource class and from low-income households, make good progress. Staff implement a wide range of purposeful interventions to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and to enhance their emotional well-being.

Leaders and governors use robust self-evaluation to identify clear priorities that improve pupils' learning and well-being. They monitor progress rigorously and adapt their work in response to emerging needs. Their agile and reflective leadership contributes significantly to sustained improvement. Leaders address national priorities effectively, including Welsh language development, ALN reform, and Curriculum for Wales. They distribute responsibilities well and align professional learning with staff and school priorities. Staff work well together within the school and with other local schools. They often meet in small groups to share ideas and learn from each other, which helps them develop a stronger understanding of what effective teaching looks like.

The school has effective systems to support pupil well-being and improve attendance. Staff monitor attendance closely, and leaders promote its importance consistently through high expectations and clear messaging. This approach has led to improved attendance over time, including for pupils eligible for free school meals. Transition arrangements support pupils effectively as they move between settings, including into and out of the learning resource class.

Spotlight: A strong culture of partnership working

The school places effective partnership working at the heart of its vision. Strong communication fosters trust across the community, and leaders listen actively to the views of others to enhance pupils' experiences. This approach strengthens relationships with parents, pupils, and the wider community. Parents feel well-informed and involved in their child's learning. Governors, as strategic partners, know the school exceptionally well and provide valuable insight and challenge to support continuous improvement. Leaders collaborate constructively with other schools and professionals, increasing the school's capacity for innovation and growth.

LRC leaders promote a clear and inclusive vision that is shared across the school. They use a wide range of monitoring activities to identify strengths and address needs swiftly. Staff work effectively with external agencies, and the school makes good use of specialist support and training. This helps staff manage challenging behaviour well and strengthens ALN provision.

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/carer 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

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