

A report on

High Street Primary School

**St Paul's Avenue
Barry
CF62 8HT**

Date of inspection: May 2026

by

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

About High Street Primary School

Name of provider	High Street Primary School
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	English medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Not a faith school
Number of pupils on roll	232
Pupils of statutory school age	178
Number in nursery classes	31
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%)	32.3%
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 9.2%)	10.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.3%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.9%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	07/07/2023

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/10/2018
Start date of inspection	05/05/2026

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

High Street Primary School is an inclusive and nurturing community where pupils benefit from a broad, authentic curriculum. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion, well-being and improving outcomes for all pupils. Most pupils participate fully in school life and make suitable progress from their individual starting points.

The school's provision for emotional well-being is a notable strength, supported by useful programmes that develop pupils' resilience and self-esteem. Outdoor learning opportunities enhance pupils' confidence, teamwork and engagement. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences including clubs, leadership roles and residential visits, which support their independence and social development. The school's support for families and pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is highly effective, helping to reduce barriers to learning and strengthen engagement.

Teaching and learning are well structured within an-inquiry led curriculum that builds progressively from Nursery to Year 6. This approach helps pupils to make connections across their learning and apply knowledge in meaningful contexts. Teachers plan engaging activities that promote curiosity, independence and collaboration, although they do not always challenge pupils well enough.

Most pupils develop strong literacy and numeracy skills as they move through the school. However, many pupils' Welsh language skills are limited.

Leadership provides clear direction for the school's work. Leaders effectively identify priorities and ensure that improvement planning is purposeful and aligned with national expectations. They use professional learning well to support whole-school developments, such as the consistent approach to writing and mathematics. Leaders value pupil voice, which contributes meaningfully to school improvement and developments in provision.

Governors provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and priorities through regular visits, discussions and review of information. Their involvement in school life enables them to monitor progress and contribute to the school's strategic direction.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Further improve opportunities for pupils to use and develop their Welsh language skills
- R2 Ensure all teachers have consistently high expectations and challenge pupils appropriately

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

High Street Primary School is an inclusive, caring community where nearly all pupils feel safe, valued and respected. Strong working relationships between pupils, staff and families create a warm ethos that supports pupils' well-being successfully. Across the school, pupils behave well and interact respectfully with adults and peers.

The headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership rooted firmly in well-being and high expectations. She communicates a compelling vision that encourages pupils to go, "above and beyond" and to "Reach for the Stars". This vision is reflected strongly in the daily life of the school, where pupils and staff feel valued and supported.

Teaching and learning underpin an engaging curriculum that progresses effectively from Nursery to Year 6. Staff plan purposeful learning experiences that help pupils make meaningful connections across areas of learning and apply their skills in authentic contexts. The curriculum encourages pupils to think carefully about relationships, sustainability and their future aspirations. However, the expectations of staff and the level of challenge for pupils are not consistent enough across the school.

Working relationships between staff and pupils are particularly positive. Teachers and support staff know pupils well and use this understanding effectively to support emotional well-being and academic progress. Calm routines and positive behaviour strategies contribute successfully to purposeful learning environments.

Most teachers plan activities carefully to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those affected by poverty. Learning experiences generally build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants contribute purposefully to pupils' learning and well-being through effective support and interventions. This helps to ensure that many pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points.

Spotlight: Empowering pupils through exceptional well-being support

The school's well-being programme is a significant strength. It effectively promotes pupils' emotional well-being, self-esteem and aspirations. Pupils engage thoughtfully in discussions about resilience, future ambitions and emotional regulation within a calm, supportive and trusting environment. Staff who lead the programme model teamwork, empathy and mutual respect consistently and to a high standard. This contributes successfully to a positive culture in which pupils feel confident to express their thoughts and feelings openly and honestly. As a result, most pupils feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

Provision for pupils with ALN is strong. Staff ensure that pupils with a wide range of needs participate fully in learning and wider school experiences. Parents value the school's sensitive and effective support. Leaders monitor the progress of vulnerable groups carefully and ensure that barriers to learning are reduced successfully for many pupils.

Most pupils develop speaking and listening skills well. Most staff model language effectively and encourage pupils to use increasingly ambitious vocabulary. Younger pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning and use expressive language confidently when discussing topics such as minibeasts and life cycles. Older pupils articulate their ideas maturely and respond thoughtfully during collaborative discussions.

The school has developed a clear and systematic approach to the teaching of reading. Younger pupils apply phonics skills appropriately to support early reading development. As pupils progress through the school, many become increasingly confident readers. Older pupils read fluently with good understanding and respond thoughtfully to a broad range of texts.

The teaching of writing is a strength. Leaders identified writing as an area for improvement and implemented a whole-school strategy supported by effective professional learning. This helps to ensure that many pupils now write successfully for a wide range of purposes and audiences. Older pupils produce imaginative extended writing that is well organised and increasingly sophisticated in vocabulary and sentence structure.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to mathematics and engage purposefully in lessons. Teachers provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical skills in practical contexts that promote reasoning and independence. Most older pupils use digital technology confidently to collect, present and analyse information appropriately across areas of learning.

The school's extensive outdoor forest environment enriches teaching and learning successfully. Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to explore and collaborate outdoors. Outdoor learning contributes positively to pupils' independence, resilience and engagement in learning. Many staff use the outdoor environment effectively to develop pupils' teamwork and problem-solving skills.

Teachers provide valuable opportunities for pupils to consider diversity, empathy and global citizenship through meaningful projects and discussions. For example, pupils develop awareness of the wider world through work linked to schools in Uganda and charitable organisations such as the RNLI. Most pupils demonstrate respectful attitudes towards others and are developing a sound understanding of diversity within Wales and the wider world.

Many pupils develop simple Welsh language skills steadily through opportunities to hear and practise basic Welsh phrases. Teachers encourage pupils to use Welsh during classroom routines appropriately, although opportunities for pupils to use Welsh independently are less developed. As a result, many pupils lack confidence in using Welsh in everyday situations.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of experiences that support their personal development successfully. Many pupils value opportunities to be part of pupil voice groups that contribute meaningfully to school improvement. For example, the Forest Rangers have played an important role in developing the school's outdoor learning environment. School development planning aligns well with national priorities, including Curriculum for Wales, reading and well-being. Leaders provide staff with suitable professional learning opportunities that support the school's priorities successfully. For example, training linked to reading has helped establish a clear and consistent approach across the school, leading to improved outcomes for many pupils. Leaders track the progress of groups of pupils carefully and provide timely support for those requiring additional help. Leaders and governors manage the school's resources appropriately. They understand the current budget pressures and take suitable action to address them while maintaining provision for pupils.

Governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively and contribute positively to the strategic direction and ongoing improvement of the school. They engage actively in school life

through learning walks, discussions with staff and scrutiny of school information. Governors act as supportive critical friends and maintain an appropriate focus on safeguarding, well-being and raising standards.

The school has developed very strong relationships with parents and the wider community. Parents value the approachable leadership of the headteacher and appreciate the extensive support provided for families and pupils with ALN. Staff work closely with families and external agencies to reduce barriers to learning and provide timely support. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and work closely with families and external agencies to support pupils whose attendance is too low.

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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