

A report on
Rhos Y Fedwen Primary

**Honeyfield Road
Rassau
Ebbw Vale
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 5TA**

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

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

About Rhos Y Fedwen Primary

Name of provider	Rhos Y Fedwen Primary
Local authority	Blaenau Gwent 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	123
Pupils of statutory school age	81
Number in nursery classes	22
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%)	44.9%
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%)	19.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	6.2%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	April 2022

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/02/2017
Start date of inspection	01/06/2026

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

The school provides a caring and inclusive environment where nearly all pupils feel safe, happy and well supported. However, over time, leaders have not ensured that pupils receive an acceptable standard of education. The quality of teaching and learning is too variable across the school. In many lessons, activities do not match pupils' individual needs closely enough or build sufficiently on what they already know and can do. As a result, too many pupils, including those from low-income households, do not make enough progress during their time at school, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Leaders identify a few appropriate priorities for improvement. This is beginning to strengthen a very few aspects of the school's work. However, monitoring and feedback processes are weak. Leaders do not identify or address important shortcomings in the quality of teaching and learning. Progress towards addressing the school's improvement priorities is generally too slow.

The school curriculum is relevant to pupils and the local community. Staff provide pupils with a useful range of opportunities to broaden their experiences and develop new interests. Pupils contribute positively to the local community through the work of the school leadership groups.

Adults model language well and although many pupils start school with skills below those expected for their age, they strengthen their social and communication skills quickly. Recent work has improved pupils' enjoyment of reading and their reading fluency. Pupils' ability to read with deeper understanding is less well developed. The school has recently introduced a useful framework for the teaching of writing that is starting to improve the work of a few more able pupils. During lessons however, teachers do not focus their planning and use of resources on addressing specific gaps in pupils' basic writing skills. There are similar weaknesses in the teaching of mathematical skills. In too many cases, the work is too hard and the majority of pupils make limited progress in the development of their writing and mathematics skills.

Most pupils develop suitable digital skills and show enthusiasm for learning Welsh.

Staff build warm and purposeful relationships with families, connecting them to a beneficial range of support services where required. This work contributes positively to the well-being and attendance of vulnerable pupils. Effective links between school and external professionals help to ensure that pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make secure progress towards their identified targets.

Governors are beginning to develop their understanding of their role in challenging the school's work. Currently however, their ability to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress is at an early stage of development. They do not hold leaders to account for shortcomings in teaching and learning at the school.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Address the safeguarding concerns identified during the inspection
- R2 Improve the strategic leadership of teaching by using evaluation processes and professional learning more effectively to address shortcomings
- R3 Ensure that all pupils receive the right level of support and challenge in their learning
- R4 Ensure the progressive development of pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills.

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion, that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress usually every four to six months.

Main evaluation

Leaders and governors know their school community well and work hard to build warm relationships with pupils and their families. The school's calm, nurturing ethos and well-structured routines promote pupils' emotional well-being suitably. Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy at school. Pupils across the school display positive behaviour and are keen to learn. However, in lessons and over time, teaching is not effective enough in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, around a half of pupils do not make the progress they should.

Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive an acceptable standard of education. The quality of teaching and learning is too variable across the school. Where teaching is

effective, staff use assessment information suitably to plan learning and provide appropriate levels of support and challenge. In these lessons, purposeful activities develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding well. Teachers provide effective feedback and suitable opportunities for pupils to make improvements to their learning. However, too often, teachers do not consider pupils' individual abilities well enough when planning lessons. This means that teaching does not build sufficiently well on what pupils already know or can do, and activities do not provide appropriate challenge. As a result, around half of pupils disengage during lessons and teachers do not adapt their teaching well enough to address this.

Provision for supporting the well-being of vulnerable pupils and their families is a strength. A range of initiatives are beginning to increase parent and carer engagement with the school. Processes for tracking and monitoring pupils' attendance, effective collaboration with external partners and celebration events, such as 'Wow' days, impact positively on overall attendance rates. Staff provide useful support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Effective partnerships with external professionals combined with close working relationships with families ensure that pupils with ALN make secure progress towards their identified targets.

The school's curriculum is relevant and broadens pupils' knowledge and experience of their place in Wales and the world well. The school's pupil voice groups champion the work of the school in making a positive contribution to the local community. Teachers enhance topics with a range of educational visits and opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics and writing skills. However, weaknesses in the direct teaching of these skills, limit the usefulness of opportunities to apply them across the curriculum.

The opportunity the school provides for all pupils to learn a musical instrument raises pupils' aspirations and develops their creativity effectively. Provision for pupils' moral and spiritual development is appropriate, and diversity is celebrated well within lessons and through a broad range of reading materials and school displays.

The nursery environment provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to explore and learn about the world around them as they play. Adults model language well and although many pupils start school with skills below those expected for their age, they develop their social and communication skills quickly. Staff are beginning to adapt the nursery learning environment in response to observations of pupils' interests and the way they prefer to learn.

From reception to Year 1, recent changes to the learning environment have provided opportunities for pupils to make choices and to talk about their learning. In a few instances however, teachers over-direct learning. In the older classes, an over-reliance on teacher talk limits opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning with confidence.

The school promotes an enjoyment of reading and younger pupils engage with books with enthusiasm. By the end of Year 4, many pupils use appropriate decoding strategies to read unfamiliar words with increasing fluency. A few older pupils vary tone and expression to create atmosphere or communicate emotion. However, across the school, pupils' ability to read for meaning is underdeveloped.

Younger pupils enjoy regular opportunities to practise mark-making from an early age and soon begin to write words and simple sentences. As they move through the school, many pupils learn to write for a range of purposes. Provision to develop pupils' writing skills in the classes for older pupils is too variable. In the best practice, teachers demonstrate appropriate expectations for writing and a few more able writers, make suitable progress as a result. However, for many pupils, the work is too hard and gaps in their basic skills are not considered sufficiently. The additional resources and support materials provided by teachers do not support pupils in these lessons well enough.

A recent focus on establishing secure knowledge of basic number facts and the use of mathematical language is beginning to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, provision for the progressive development of mathematical skills lacks consistency through the school and this, combined with insufficient planning to meet individual pupils' needs, limits progress for a majority of pupils.

Most pupils develop appropriate digital skills and use technology well to research information and communicate ideas. They demonstrate enthusiasm for learning Welsh and display a good understanding of instructions given in Welsh by their teachers. By the time pupils reach Year 3, they have begun to hold simple conversations using the Welsh they have been taught. Opportunities for older pupils to build upon these conversations are limited and many lack confidence as a result.

In a few instances, leaders consider pupils' progress appropriately to identify areas for improvement. For example, recent professional learning for staff has begun to improve aspects of pupils' reading skills. Leaders monitor lessons regularly. However, their monitoring and improvement work does not focus sharply enough on the quality of teaching and how this links to pupil outcomes. In addition, the feedback that leaders provide for staff following monitoring activity lacks the precision necessary to secure improvement. As a result, progress towards school improvement priorities, particularly to improve the quality of teaching and learning has been too slow. Too many pupils, including those from low-income households, do not make enough progress, particularly in the development of their writing and mathematical skills.

Governors are supportive of the school. They provide practical help and influence the financial management of the school appropriately. Recent training with regional partners has enabled governors to begin to challenge the information school provides more

effectively. However, this work is at an early stage and their capacity to evaluate the school's effectiveness and to hold leaders to account is underdeveloped. During the inspection, a number of safeguarding concerns were brought to the attention of school leaders.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils give 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. However, governors are not involved in evaluating the impact of grant spending.

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.

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