



# **Report summary for parents and carers on Maesgwyn Special School**

**Date of inspection: February 2023**

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

# Overview

Maesgwyn Special School is a nurturing and welcoming community that places a strong focus on pupil and staff well-being. Members of the school well-being team support pupils and their families extremely well. The well-being manager is employed to work throughout the school year, including during school holidays. Pupils are happy to come to school, feel safe and have strong working relationships with the staff team.

Across the school, most pupils develop a range of valuable skills that help them to make suitable progress from their individual starting points. They value the leadership opportunities provided by the school and school council members take their responsibilities seriously. They are proud to have influenced changes such as the tone of the school bell and the refurbishment of several areas of the school.

Teachers and support staff work together effectively to support learning. Teaching assistants are valuable role models in lessons. They know pupils very well and work effectively with them. However, the quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent. In the majority of lessons, teachers plan effectively to ensure that pupils make secure progress. In a minority of lessons, work is not always planned well enough to meet the additional learning needs of individual pupils and as a result they do not make the progress they are capable of.

The school has a very strong professional learning offer for all staff, which covers a range of valuable topics and will support the development of the curriculum within the school. Nearly all staff have strengthened their professional development through a strong network of support with valuable professional partners. However, the school does not consistently evaluate the impact of professional learning on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning.

The school has a valuable outdoor learning area, which is used effectively to enhance the curriculum offer. The offsite provision at “The Railway” is also used well to support older pupils in a vocational setting. However, limitations within the main school building do not allow for flexibility to meet the additional learning needs of pupils. For example, it does not allow sufficient space for pupils to self-regulate away from other pupils.

Leaders have a clear vision to develop the school. However, the extensive range of improvement priorities lack a clear enough focus on the quality of teaching, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make. Across the school, quality assurance activities do not always focus well enough on pupil outcomes. As a result, there is not a robust understanding across the school of the most important areas for improvement.

# Recommendations

- R1 Improve consistency in the quality of teaching and ensure that teaching meets the additional learning needs of all pupils**
- R2 Strengthen procedures for quality assurance and improvement planning to focus on pupil progress and the standards they achieve**
- R3 Improve the quality of the learning environment**

## What happens next

**The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress. This is the lightest touch of follow-up, as it is not statutory.**

## School context

Name of provider	Maesgwyn Special School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Special
Number of pupils on roll	125
Pupils of statutory school age	65
Number in nursery classes	0
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 Maintained Special is 46.2%)	64.3%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Maintained Special is 99.8%)	100.0%
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	01/10/2017
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	21/10/2014
Start date of inspection	06/02/2023

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