

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	23 JULY 2024
Report Title:	OUTCOMES OF ESTYN INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS IN BRIDGEND DURING SPRING TERM 2024
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	SUE ROBERTS GROUP MANAGER SCHOOL SUPPORT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the Council’s policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report contains information about the inspection of one infant school and four primary schools that took place between January 2024 and March 2024. The report also provides an update about the progress Croesty Primary School has made since their core inspection.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcomes of the Estyn inspection visits during spring term 2024 to:
- Betws Primary School;
 - Blaengarw Primary School;
 - Brackla Primary School;
 - Cefn Glas Infant School; and
 - St Mary’s Catholic Primary School.
- 1.2 The report will also inform Cabinet of the outcome of the Estyn review meeting with Croesty Primary School.

2. Background

- 2.1 All five schools that were inspected during spring term 2024 were previously inspected during the period of May 2014 to November 2017 under the old Estyn inspection framework.
- 2.2 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Estyn had suspended inspections across all schools for a one-year period.

2.3 During the spring and summer terms 2022, Estyn piloted inspection arrangements that support renewal and reform in education in Wales. The new inspection reports will no longer include summative gradings, but instead will detail how well providers are helping a child to learn.

2.4 Croesty Primary School was previously inspected in November 2022 and, following this inspection, Estyn decided to work with the local authority to review the school's progress.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 During spring term 2024 Estyn visited four schools in Bridgend, who were all inspected using the new approach. The full text of these reports is available on the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk.

Betws Primary School

3.2 Betws Primary School was inspected by Estyn in January 2024 and the report was published on 3 April 2024.

3.3 Estyn noted the following as strengths of the school:

- Wellbeing has a high focus in the life of the school and is a particular strength. Leaders identify early any pupils who are at risk of not engaging in their learning and provide effective intervention strategies to address their needs. As a result, most are happy, well behaved, and ready to learn.
- The acting executive headteacher has developed a vision for collaborative working across the federation that is effective and beneficial to both schools. She demonstrates professional values and sets high expectations for leadership, provision, pupil outcomes and their wellbeing across the two schools.
- Outdoor learning is a strength. Nearly all pupils enjoy beneficial opportunities to learn through forest school sessions where they develop important skills such as teamwork and problem-solving, whilst also improving their wellbeing.
- Provision for pupils identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) is strong and early interventions are a strength of the school. The ALN Co-ordinator works well across the federation and with external agencies to ensure that there is effective identification, tracking and support for individual pupils.

3.4 Betws Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Use evaluation processes more effectively to inform school improvement work.

Recommendation 2	Ensure that pupils develop and use their writing and numeracy skills progressively and to the standard they are capable of during their time at school.
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3.5 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress and no follow-up action is required.

3.6 The local authority, along with Central South Consortium, will support the school in drawing up an action plan to show how the recommendations will be addressed.

Blaengarw Primary School

3.7 Blaengarw Primary School was inspected by Estyn in January 2024 and the report was published on 3 April 2024.

3.8 Estyn noted the following as strengths of the school:

- Relationships between pupils, staff and parents are a strength of the school. Pupils show kindness to each other and extend a warm welcome to visitors. They are appreciative of the support they receive from staff to promote their wellbeing.
- The provision for developing pupils' oracy skills in English is a particular strength. A range of experiences and activities ensure that pupils build on their confidence as they progress through the school.
- Outdoor learning is a strength across the federation. Nearly all pupils enjoy beneficial opportunities to learn through forest school sessions where they develop important skills such as teamwork and problem-solving while also improving their wellbeing.
- The ALN Co-ordinator provides strong support across the federation and has a clear strategic overview of pupils' needs across Blaengarw Primary School.

3.9 Blaengarw Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Use evaluation processes more effectively to inform school improvement work.
Recommendation 2	Improve teaching to ensure that pupils receive the right level of challenge and develop positive attitudes to their learning.
Recommendation 3	Improve provision to develop pupils' writing, Welsh language and digital skills and ensure that they have opportunities to use the full range of skills in their work across the curriculum.

3.10 The local authority, along with Central South Consortium, will support the school in drawing up an action plan to show how the recommendations will be addressed. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress and the school will be subject to an Estyn follow-up review approximately one year after the report was issued.

Brackla Primary School

3.11 Brackla Primary School was inspected by Estyn in January 2024 and the report was published on 3 April 2024.

3.12 Estyn noted the following as strengths of the school:

- Throughout the school, pupils develop their reading skills well. As they move through school many pupils read more challenging texts with fluency and develop strong comprehension skills for their age. Pupils enjoy talking about the books they have read. Throughout the school, pupils' strong reading skills support their ability to work independently effectively.
- Outdoor learning is a strength of the school. The school's outdoor leader prepares stimulating experiences for the pupils, from which they develop confidence, self-esteem, perseverance, and strong creativity skills.
- Teachers have developed spaces within classrooms, corridors and other rooms into exciting break out areas. This allows pupils to follow their own interests related to the topics. This develops their independence and collaboration skills exceptionally well.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is supported by a highly effective leadership team. They create a welcoming, happy school community with wellbeing at the centre. Along with other senior leaders, they have worked collaboratively with staff to develop a clear vision.

3.13 Brackla Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendation:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Improve the quality of feedback to ensure that pupils understand what they do well and what they need to do to improve.

3.14 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress and no follow-up action is required.

3.15 The local authority, along with Central South Consortium, will support the school in drawing up an action plan to show how the recommendations will be addressed.

Cefn Glas Infant School

3.16 Cefn Glas Infant School was inspected by Estyn in February 2024 and the report was published on 1 May 2024.

3.17 Estyn noted the following as strengths of the school:

- The standard of reading across the school is strong. Most pupils in the reception classes learn to recognise letters and their sounds rapidly. As they move through the school most pupils gain effective phonic skills, enabling them to decode unfamiliar words confidently. By Year 2, most pupils are developing fluency well, and many read with appropriate expression.
- Pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning are a clear strength of the school. There are warm and purposeful working relationships between staff and pupils and, as a result, pupils feel safe and settle quickly. They show pride in their school and enjoy having a voice in how and what they learn.
- The school places a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of visits and visitors that widen and enrich pupils' experiences well. These support pupils' understanding of the curriculum and help to engage pupils in their learning.
- Leaders establish highly effective relationships with families and the wider school community. The school provides worthwhile opportunities for parents to learn more about their child's education and increase their capacity to support their child's learning.

3.18 Cefn Glas Infant School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Ensure that provision for independent learning enables pupils to apply and develop skills effectively.
Recommendation 2	Ensure that older pupils develop their digital skills effectively.

3.19 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress and no follow-up action is required.

3.20 The local authority, along with Central South Consortium, will support the school in drawing up an action plan to show how the recommendations will be addressed.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

3.21 St Mary's Catholic Primary School was inspected by Estyn in February 2024 and the report was published on 1 May 2024.

3.22 Estyn noted the following as strengths of the school:

- School leaders and staff have put considerable thought into the development, design and planning of the school's curriculum over time. This process has been supported effectively by pupils, parents and governors.
- The positive relationships between pupils and adults are a strength of the school that is valued greatly by all pupils and parents. Staff place a high priority on pupils' wellbeing. They ensure that the school provides a nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe, happy, and cared for.
- Working closely with governors and other leaders, the headteacher has established and communicated a purposeful vision for the school, based on providing pupils with the best opportunities to learn. Leaders place the strong Roman Catholic ethos of the school at the heart of its vision and these principles underpin all aspects of its aims and strategic objectives.
- Staff maximise the use of the school's outdoor learning areas and the locality to offer authentic learning experiences to pupils. For example, pupils learn about and experience bee-keeping and growing vegetables in the allotment area. They harvest the honey to sell and use the vegetables to cook healthy meals. Teachers' skilful use of the outdoors enriches learning, particularly for the youngest pupils.

3.23 Estyn also invited the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to the provision of high-quality learning experiences for their youngest pupils.

3.24 St Mary's Catholic Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Improve teachers' skills and confidence in the teaching of Welsh to improve the progress that pupils make.
Recommendation 2	Improve self-evaluation processes to identify clearly the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching.

3.25 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress and no follow-up action is required.

3.26 The local authority, along with Central South Consortium, will support the school in drawing up an action plan to show how the recommendations will be addressed.

Croesty Primary School

3.27 Croesty Primary School was inspected by Estyn in November 2022 and the report was published on 3 February 2023. At that time, Estyn inspectors concluded that the school was not making sufficient progress and that the school would be subject to a follow-up review.

3.28 The Croesty Primary School report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Improve strategic leadership, evaluation work and improvement processes.
Recommendation 2	Ensure that teaching and the provision for skills build effectively on prior learning and support pupils in all classes to make progress in line with their ability.
Recommendation 3	Develop feedback and assessment for learning, so that pupils can clearly identify what they need to do to improve their work.
Recommendation 4	Strengthen the governance of the school to ensure that the governing body develops its role as a critical friend with the capacity to hold the school to account.

3.29 The local authority, along with Central South Consortium, supported the school in drawing up an action plan to show how the recommendations would be addressed and held regular progress review meetings over the course of the year.

3.30 On 25 March 2024, Estyn conducted a follow-up review of the school's progress and judged that Croesty Primary School had made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the section 28 inspection.

3.31 The school has been removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review and there will be no further monitoring activity in relation to this inspection.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty, and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services, and functions. This is an information report; therefore, it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Wellbeing of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Wellbeing Objectives

- 5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment provides a comprehensive summary of the outcomes expected from the implementation of the service.

Long-term	Supports the improvement of standards and outcomes in schools.
Prevention	Development of post-inspection action plans or refinement of school improvement plans helped to ensure that recommendations identified are addressed and acted upon to secure school improvement, preventing standards from slipping. The local authority and Central South Consortium will continue to monitor the school's progress.
Integration	Monitoring and acting upon school inspection reports is key to ensuring that outcomes for schools are achieved thus helping to support a successful economy.
Collaboration	The local authority works closely with schools, Estyn and with Central South Consortium to deliver the wellbeing objectives related to school improvement. The local authority receives the school inspection reports from Estyn and this informs the work conducted by Central South Consortium to deliver the support for school improvement services.
Involvement	This area of work involves all stakeholders in school improvement. Schools work closely with Improvement Partners from Central South Consortium to refine their improvement plans or post-inspection action plans and to identify strategic support from the local authority, Central South Consortium and elsewhere (as required) reflecting the diversity of stakeholders involved in aspects of school improvement.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications arising directly from this information report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising directly from this information report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this information report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the contents of this report.

Background documents

None.