

Overview of school (Estyn) inspections

Inspections recommenced in April 2022, following the pandemic. In this time 48 of the 60 schools across the local authority have been inspected with 2 schools currently requiring a statutory category of follow up.

As of August 2025, 12.5% of secondary schools across Wales were in a statutory category of follow up, with 0% in Bridgend. Nationally 2.7% of primary schools were in a statutory category of follow up with 4.1% in Bridgend.

Since the implementation of the new inspection framework from September 2024, 23 schools (38%) in the local authority have received a core inspection and a further 22 (37%) schools have received an interim visit. Since September 2024, 75% of local authority schools have received a core inspection or interim visit.

23.3% of Bridgend schools have received an inspection spotlight for effective practice, with some achieving two spotlights. This compares favourably with the all-national average of 14.9% of schools.

Under the new inspection framework, spotlights of highly effective practice are identified to support sharing of practice and collaboration across networks.

The published spotlights of highly effective practice are:

School	Good practice description
Pencoed Comprehensive School	<p>Spotlight: Effective distribution of leadership</p> <p>The strength of the school is the wide distribution of leadership responsibilities. This empowers individuals, ensures ownership of important aspects of the school's work, and contributes successfully to the sense of collaboration. This focuses on individual development, and support for staff well-being fosters high levels of motivation and commitment amongst staff.</p>
Pencoed Comprehensive School	<p>Spotlight - Improving teaching through professional learning</p> <p>The school is developing a vibrant culture of professional learning. There is a strong focus on developing teaching based on first-hand evidence of strengths and areas for improvement in practice across the school. A variety of complementary approaches, including coaching, research-informed practice, collaborative planning and reflection, teacher-led workshops and whole school events are supporting the school well in its ambition to strengthen pedagogy. The views of pupils play an important role in this work. The 'Pedagogy Pioneers, a group of</p>

	pupil leaders has received training to develop a valuable set of skills to work with leaders to inform improvements in teaching and learning approaches.
Oldcastle Primary School	<p>Spotlight: Community Engagement</p> <p>The school's response to the community's needs is highly effective and has a positive impact on learners' engagement in school. Staff offer numerous, valuable activities for pupils and parents that focus on important life skills. These include advice on how to manage finances, cooking healthily on a budget and sessions that enable parents to support their child's development as a reader. The school also provides advice for those who find themselves in challenging circumstances. Parents value these opportunities and feel that they have a positive impact on their well-being and the well-being of their children.</p>
Penyfai Church in Wales Primary School	<p>Spotlight: Early learning provision for younger pupils</p> <p>Provision for the youngest pupils is excellent and ensures that pupils develop a firm foundation for future learning. Teachers make good use of professional learning opportunities to further develop their understanding of how young children learn. They use this learning well to provide learning environments that encourage pupils to be curious and to explore the world around them. Staff understand the importance of observation and use purposefully to plan appropriate activities that extend pupils' learning. For example, recent adaptations to the way numeracy is taught in these environments have resulted in pupils developing a deeper understanding of the concept of number.</p>
The Bridge Alternative Provision	<p>Spotlight: Well-being, care, support and guidance</p> <p>The pupil referral unit (PRU) excels in providing exceptional care, support, and guidance, addressing the diverse well-being needs of its pupils across all sites. Post-pandemic, the PRU has effectively adapted to support the increasingly complex mental health challenges faced by children and young people.</p>
The Bridge Alternative Provision	<p>Spotlight: Equity of curriculum offer.</p> <p>Leaders ensure an inclusive and equitable curriculum offer for all pupils, including those who are unable to attend the main site. These pupils benefit from full-time online teaching and learning delivered internally by PRU staff. This ensures a consistent approach for these pupils, with full access to all available</p>

	<p>qualifications, in line with that of their peers. This is a significant strength of the provision.</p>
<p>The Bridge Alternative Provision</p>	<p>Spotlight: Therapeutic support.</p> <p>Pupils value their experiences at the PRU, with nearly all expressing genuine respect for staff, peers, and their environment. Many pupils highlight the PRU as a welcoming space where they feel safe and cared for. The well-established integrated therapeutic approach across the PRU has led to significant improvements in pupils' well-being, attendance and emotional regulation, and as reported by parents and carers, strengthened family relationships. Parents and carers deeply appreciate the PRU's support, with a very few crediting it for helping their children overcome critical life challenges.</p>
<p>Nottage Primary School</p>	<p>Spotlight: Developing strong, shared and impactful leadership</p> <p>Strong and successful distributed leadership is an impressive facet of the school's work. Leaders strive productively to ensure the continuous development of the skills and knowledge of both pupils and staff, to support them all to reach their potential. Leaders at all levels have a thorough and accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this effectively to drive and sustain improvements in teaching and learning, such as recent successful work to improve reading.</p>
<p>Nottage Primary School</p>	<p>Spotlight: Developing pupils as thoughtful and independent learners who can solve problems</p> <p>A notable feature of the school's practice is the highly successful provision for pupils to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills in meaningful ways. Pupils of all ages skillfully tackle stimulating activities that promote creative thinking, independently or in collaboration with their friends. Nearly all pupils rise to these challenges well. They demonstrate perseverance to complete their tasks and show resilience when trying different approaches.</p>

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr	<p>Spotlight: Ensuring access to educational experiences for families who experience the effects of poverty.</p> <p>Leaders have established the Emotional and Family Well-being Team, which provides purposeful and sensitive support to families. Staff have fostered a close relationship with parents and pupils and they know the needs of families well. They offer tailored provision, including emotional support, and arrange access to specialist services such as advice on housing and budgeting. The team organises a collection and exchange service that provides free school uniforms to families who need it, including pupils who are transferring to secondary school. Grant funding is used wisely to ensure that cost does not prevent pupils from attending off-site educational visits.</p>
Brynteg School	<p>Spotlight: Digital Skills.</p> <p>Pupils develop their digital skills well. Key Stage 3 pupils and those in the sixth form use digital devices provided by the school responsibly and independently to enhance their learning. In their computer science lessons, pupils enjoy a range of purposeful opportunities to develop a broad repertoire of useful skills, for example how to interrogate a database successfully. Across the curriculum, there are beneficial opportunities for the progressive development of pupils' digital skills within authentic contexts, such as when pupils create a simple code to control a micro-bit device.</p>
Brynteg School	<p>Spotlight: Dyfodol</p> <p>The 'Dyfodol' provision creates a safe and caring environment for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 who find it challenging to access mainstream education. Pupils receive a personalised curriculum which is carefully matched to their social, emotional and educational needs. This not only helps to build their confidence and self-esteem but helps them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills so that they can be increasingly integrated into the mainstream curriculum and take part in the life of the school.</p>
Bryntirion Comprehensive School	<p>Spotlight: The school's provision for the development of pupils' digital skills</p> <p>Pupils develop their digital skills effectively in information and communication technology (ICT), in computing lessons, and in a range of subjects across the curriculum. These include well-planned opportunities in 'Dysgu Byw' lessons, personal and social education, skills challenge lessons, and also when completing enterprise challenges.</p>

<p>Bryntirion Comprehensiv e School</p>	<p>Spotlight: Bryntirion book week</p> <p>To promote enjoyment in reading and encourage a love of books, the school holds an annual Bryntirion book week. This involves a range of activities involving all pupils and staff. These events include writing and poetry workshops for pupils run by authors, journalists and poets, a readathon, a free book swap and a book review competition.</p> <p>During this week, there is a ten-minute shared reading activity at the beginning of each lesson, where teachers model reading aloud. This is based on an engaging text that encourages pupils to be curious and excited to find out what happens next. Each book week is based on a theme. This year, the theme was careers linked to reading and studying English.</p>
<p>Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr</p>	<p>Spotlight: Developing pupils' understanding of their local area</p> <p>What is characteristic of Prosiect Cynefin, which is based on enriching pupils' understanding of their local area, heritage and culture, is that it starts with the pupils themselves. Pupils consider their own experiences in relation to a specific theme or area of learning. It then expands to consider the differences between individuals in the classroom, the school, the local community and Wales, before learning about the cultures of the wider world.</p>
<p>Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd</p>	<p>Spotlight: Effective support to promote pupils' well-being and willingness to attend school regularly and to be ready to learn</p> <p>Vulnerable pupils are given the opportunity to attend Hwb Hafan at the beginning of the day. This is a safe and welcoming room that enables them to settle down and prepare mentally for the day's activities. In addition, staff are available throughout the day to support and re-engage with these pupils to ensure that they are happy and ready to continue with their learning.</p>
<p>Litchard Primary School</p>	<p>Spotlight: Effective targeted support through rigorous pupil monitoring</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>staff to make timely and useful adaptations that enable them to reduce the impact of barriers to learning.</p>
Litchard Primary School	<p>Spotlight: A strong culture of partnership working</p> <p>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.</p>
Tremains Primary School	<p>Spotlight: Removing barriers to improve attendance</p> <p>Leaders have a strong understanding of the barriers that poverty can create for pupils' learning and well-being. They use funding, such as the Pupil Development Grant, purposefully to promote equity and inclusion. The appointment of a family engagement officer has strengthened communication with parents and carers. The school council and pupil attendance ambassadors promote good attendance, for example by creating a video encouraging pupils to attend school every day. These initiatives and the priority that leaders have placed on regular attendance have improved the attendance of many pupils, particularly those pupils eligible for free school meals.</p>
Llangynwyd Primary School	<p>Spotlight: Governing body, self-evaluation and improvement planning</p> <p>Leaders work closely with the governing body to develop a strong and professional partnership. The governing body is highly effective and demonstrates a deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Through regular engagement in monitoring activities including learning walks and meetings with pupils, governors gather first-hand evidence about the school's curriculum and pupils' progress and use this information to contribute to the school's self-evaluation processes. This knowledge helps governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively and develop meaningful dialogue to provide support and challenge to leaders.</p>
Ysgol Bryn Castell	<p>Spotlight: Developing a committed staff team</p>

	<p>Leaders have worked effectively with the staff team to develop leadership capacity across the school whilst also ensuring an improvement in staff well-being.</p> <p>Leaders have used a range of purposeful professional learning as well as targeted coaching and mentoring sessions to strengthen leadership capacity. As a result, they have developed a team of enthusiastic middle leaders who support with evaluating and improving practice at the school. Further, leaders have planned activities and provision to ensure the well-being of the staff team. They have developed both internal and external mechanisms to support staff wellbeing, with access to services such as physiotherapy, counselling and healthcare. Other beneficial activities include visits from well-being providers such as reflexology. As a result, most staff feel well supported by leaders and feel that they take their wellbeing and workload into account.</p>
<p>Ysgol Cynwyd Sant</p>	<p>Spotlight: Developing natural and mature Welsh speakers</p> <p>The provision for developing pupils as natural Welsh speakers is a strength. The leadership of the school's leaders promotes a deep love for the Welsh language and Welshness, which fosters pupils' strong pride in the language. Oracy is a clear priority across the school and the daily opportunities to develop correct language patterns and syntax foster fluent, polished Welsh speakers from an early age. The progress is clear and there is robust progression in pupils' language skills, with most showing linguistic maturity and richness by the time they reach the top of the school.</p>
<p>Ysgol Cynwyd Sant</p>	<p>Spotlight: Supporting the wellbeing of pupils and their families</p> <p>Leaders value the school's families as key partners by recognising the effect of a supportive home on pupils' wellbeing and learning. They make extremely effective use of the family engagement officer who offers a purposeful menu of weekly workshops to support parents. Through sessions on how to establish sleep patterns, for example, there is a positive effect on pupils' punctuality and attendance levels. In addition, a purposeful plan that supports close family members who are not at home for a certain period of time is very effective. As a result, parents and carers feel that someone listens to them, without prejudice, and the support ensures that pupils are more stable, happy and ready to learn.</p>