

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	21 JULY 2026
Report Title:	OUTCOMES OF ESTYN INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS IN BRIDGEND FROM SUMMER TERM 2025 TO THE END OF SPRING TERM 2026
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	GAYLE SHENTON HEAD OF LEARNING DARREN JONES GROUP MANAGER (SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT)
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 core inspections of eight primary schools, one secondary school and one special school that took place from summer term 2025 to end of spring term 2026. Additionally, the report provides information on interim visits to 11 primary schools and 3 secondary schools during the same period. There is also information on the removal of Blaengarw Primary School from Estyn review category and Bryncethin Primary School from the list of schools requiring special measures.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcomes of the Estyn core inspection visits from summer term 2025 to the end of spring term 2026 for the following schools (in order of inspection date):

- Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr;
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd;
- Litchard Primary School;

- Tremains Primary School;
- Llangynwyd Primary School;
- Tynyrheol Primary School;
- Ysgol Bryn Castell;
- Ysgol Cynwyd Sant;
- Penybont Primary School; and
- Cynffig Comprehensive School.

1.2 The report will also inform Cabinet of the outcomes of the Estyn interim visits from summer term 2025 to summer term 2026 to the following schools (in order of visit date):

- Cwmfelin Primary School;
- Garth Primary School;
- Nantymoel Primary School;
- St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School;
- Brynmenyn Primary School;
- Corneli Primary School;
- Maesteg School;
- Cefn Glas Infant School;
- Afon y Felin Primary School;
- Porthcawl Primary School;
- Brackla Primary School;
- Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd;
- Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School; and
- St Mary's Catholic Primary School.

1.3 The report contains information on Estyn's follow-up visits to Blaengarw Primary School and Bryncethin Primary School, and their removal from Estyn follow-up categories.

2. Background

2.1 From September 2024, new inspection arrangements were introduced by Estyn, which would allow for more regular visits to primary, secondary, and all-age schools as well as pupil referral units (PRUs).

2.2 Maintained schools and PRUs will now have a core inspection and an interim visit within the six-year inspection period. Core inspections will be led by an Estyn HMI (His Majesty's Inspector) or a registered inspector.

2.3 During a core inspection, inspection teams will not give overall grades for each inspection area. However, they will make a robust and thorough evaluation of the school or PRU's provision and its impact on pupils' learning and well-being.

2.4 The three inspection areas (IA) are set out below:

- IA1: Teaching and learning;
- IA2: Well-being, care, support and guidance; and
- IA3: Leading and improving.

- 2.5 Following an inspection, each provider will receive a report. The provider will also receive a parent and carer version of the report.
- 2.6 The key elements of a core inspection report include the following:
- an overview of the school or PRU;
 - a summary of the main points of the inspection report;
 - recommendations that identify what needs to improve;
 - a main evaluation of the three inspection areas; and
 - additional information on safeguarding arrangements, healthy eating and drinking, school funding, and health and safety issues (safety on the site).
- 2.7 Some reports may also contain one or more 'spotlights'. A spotlight is a short paragraph that highlights an innovative practice or area worth sharing.
- 2.8 The purpose of interim visits is to support providers with their self-evaluation and improvement plans, to ensure the best outcomes for learners. Interim visits will be led by an Estyn HMI.
- 2.9 An interim visit can last up to two days depending on the sector. For example, an interim visit will be a single day for most primary schools and for most secondary schools the visit will last two days. For larger primary schools, this can be extended up to two days.
- 2.10 Interim visits are not intended to draw overall conclusions about the effectiveness of the school, but they will support leaders to review progress since the last core inspection and consider their next steps for improvement.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 From the summer term 2025 to the end of the spring term 2026, there were eight primary schools, one secondary school and one special school in Bridgend who received an Estyn core inspection. The full text of these reports is available on the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk.

Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr

- 3.2 Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr was inspected by Estyn in May 2025, and the report was published on 22 July 2025.
- 3.3 Estyn identified the following spotlight:

Developing pupils' understanding of their local area

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.

- 3.4 Estyn also noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- The extremely supportive working relationships between pupils, teachers, assistants and the administrative staff are a clear strength. Teachers assess and evaluate pupils' progress effectively and track their development purposefully. As a result, they have thorough knowledge of pupils' progress, which enables them to support them successfully.
- Pupils' oral skills develop soundly and quickly and, by the time they reach the top of the school, most communicate confidently in both languages and discuss their work intelligently and maturely. Pupils' positive attitude to the Welsh language is notable and the swift progress they make from their starting points is excellent.
- Teachers and other adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This contributes to the fact that the behaviour of nearly all pupils is exceptionally good across the school.

3.5 Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Ensure that the main improvement priorities are clear and that it is easy to evaluate their effect on pupils' progress or well-being
Recommendation 2	Ensure that pupils are given varied and purposeful opportunities to write at length
Recommendation 3	Ensure that pupils are given regular and purposeful opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in rich contexts

3.6 Estyn inspectors concluded that Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr in addressing its recommendations.

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd

3.7 Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd was inspected by Estyn in June 2025, and the report was published on 11 August 2025.

3.8 Estyn identified the following spotlight:

Effective support to promote pupils' well-being and willingness to attend school regularly and to be ready to learn

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.

3.9 Estyn also noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- One of the school's best features is the way in which leaders have improved pupils' behaviour, attendance and mindset so that they are in a good place to learn.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together successfully to develop positive working relationships with pupils by creating an exciting learning ethos, which supports pupils to make sound progress from their starting points, particularly in acquiring the Welsh language.
- By tracking their progress regularly, teachers know pupils' needs well, including those with additional learning needs (ALN). They work with teaching assistants to ensure that they offer the best additional support to those who need it to challenge them consistently to make good progress.

3.10 Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Improve the accuracy of pupils' Welsh writing, particularly at the top of the school
Recommendation 2	Ensure that pupils present their work neatly

3.11 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon y Cymoedd in addressing its recommendations.

Litchard Primary School

3.12 Litchard Primary School was inspected by Estyn in June 2025, and the report was published on 2 September 2025.

3.13 Estyn identified the following spotlights:

Effective targeted support through rigorous pupil monitoring

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 staff to make timely and useful adaptations that enable them to reduce the impact of barriers to learning.

A strong culture of partnership working

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.

3.14 Estyn also noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- Litchard Primary School is a happy, safe and highly inclusive learning environment. The school's ethos is built on a strong culture of collective trust and open communication. Pupils are friendly and enthusiastic about their learning. There is a strong sense of teamwork and positivity across the school.
- The school provides a literature rich environment. Staff model topic-related vocabulary and language associated with different text types well. Most pupils talk confidently about their work and learning experiences using an increasing range of relevant vocabulary. The school's positive reading culture fosters a love of reading.
- The school's provision for additional learning needs (ALN) is highly effective. Most pupils with ALN, including those in the learning resource class and from low-income households, make good progress. Staff implement a wide range of purposeful interventions to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and to enhance their emotional well-being.

3.15 Litchard Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Refine teaching to provide appropriate challenge and support for all learners and to develop pupils' independent learning skills
Recommendation 2	Ensure that pupils develop and apply a broader range of digital skills

3.16 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Litchard Primary School in addressing its recommendations.

Tremains Primary School

3.17 Tremains Primary School was inspected by Estyn in November 2025, and the report was published on 8 January 2026.

3.18 Estyn identified the following spotlight:

Removing barriers to improve attendance

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.

3.19 Estyn also noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- Tremains Primary School is a happy and caring community that provides effective support for its pupils and families. The headteacher offers clear and purposeful leadership rooted in a strong vision of inclusive education. This vision is well understood and shared by staff and stakeholders, creating a positive school culture that promotes belonging and mutual respect.
- Provision for pupils with ALN, including those in the learning resource centres (LRCs), is an effective feature of the school. Staff know these pupils well and create nurturing environments that promote inclusion, engagement, and well-being. Systems for identifying and reviewing pupils' needs are purposeful and responsive. Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils in the learning resource centres to take part in lessons and activities across the school. This contributes positively to their well-being and progress.
- Provision for reading, writing, and mathematics is systematic and effective. As pupils move through the school, they become confident, fluent readers who apply their reading skills purposefully across the curriculum. They make good progress in writing and develop secure mathematical skills, which they apply increasingly well in practical and problem-solving contexts.

3.20 Tremains Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Strengthen self-evaluation and school improvement processes to focus more precisely on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning
Recommendation 2	Focus professional learning on reducing variation in the quality of teaching, ensuring that pupils experience effective challenge and have regular opportunities to develop independent learning skills

3.21 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Tremains Primary School in addressing its recommendations.

Llangynwyd Primary School

3.22 Llangynwyd Primary School was inspected by Estyn in November 2025, and the report was published on 15 January 2026.

3.23 Estyn identified the following spotlight:

Governing body, self-evaluation and improvement planning

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.

3.24 Estyn also noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- At Llangynwyd Primary School, staff work effectively to create a welcoming and inclusive environment. Strong relationships across the school promote a team ethos and reflect the school's shared values of inclusion and equity. Staff share a clear vision that supports a holistic approach to meeting pupils' learning and emotional needs well.
- Leaders use assessment information effectively to identify pupils with ALN and those who require support. They use this information well to plan bespoke interventions that enable targeted pupils to make good progress towards meeting their individual targets. Staff in the school's care base classes work closely with mainstream colleagues to implement strategies that support pupils' social and communication needs and this promotes successful inclusion across the school.
- The school implements robust systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. They use information well to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

3.25 Llangynwyd Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Address the inconsistencies in teaching to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately to become effective independent learners
Recommendation 2	Improve pupils' Welsh language skills
Recommendation 3	Address the persistent absenteeism affecting pupils' attendance

3.26 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Llangynwyd Primary School in addressing its recommendations.

Tynyrheol Primary School

3.27 Tynyrheol Primary School was inspected by Estyn in November 2025, and the report was published on 22 January 2026.

3.28 Estyn noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- Relationships between all staff and pupils across the school are positive and nurturing. Nearly all pupils behave well in class, around the school and at playtimes. Nearly all are polite, welcoming and respectful to each other and adults in the school. They are confident that any problems they bring to the attention of adults will be dealt with effectively and sensitively.
- Across the school, staff are good language role models and place a high priority on enhancing pupils' listening and speaking skills. This has a positive impact, and many pupils make appropriate progress in developing their communication skills as they move through the school. By Year 6, most pupils speak confidently, using extended sentences and a wide range of vocabulary.
- Since September 2025, the school has benefited from a clearer leadership structure with defined roles, responsibilities and expectations. Leaders are beginning to work supportively to establish a team ethos at the school. The interim executive headteacher and interim head of school set high expectations for themselves and their colleagues.

3.29 Tynyrheol Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Establish, implement and maintain an effective safeguarding culture and reduce rates of persistent absence amongst pupils
Recommendation 2	Provide stable and effective strategic leadership and governance
Recommendation 3	Improve teaching and assessment
Recommendation 4	Improve the curriculum and provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills

3.30 In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI was of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to Tynyrheol Primary School.

3.31 The local authority supported the school in drawing up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations, containing a range of support including school to school support, local authority officers and Central South Consortium professional learning advisers. The plan has been approved by Estyn, and they will monitor the school's progress every four to six months.

3.32 Local authority-led reviews, involving school leaders and a governor representative, indicate that the school has made appropriate progress against recommendations since the inspection. Notable improvements include strengthened safeguarding arrangements and the establishment of stable and effective strategic leadership and governance.

Ysgol Bryn Castell

3.33 Ysgol Bryn Castell was inspected by Estyn in January 2026, and the report was published on 30 March 2026.

3.34 Estyn identified the following spotlight:

Developing a committed staff team

Leaders have worked effectively with the staff team to develop leadership capacity across the school whilst also ensuring an improvement in staff well-being. 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.

3.35 Estyn also noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- Ysgol Bryn Castell is an inclusive, caring school where pupils are valued. The work of the school is underpinned by strong, trusting relationships founded on compassion, acceptance and respect. The swift establishment of these secure relationships is a strength. As nearly all pupils join the school having previously experienced considerable challenges in education, these relationships form a vital foundation for improving pupils' well-being, confidence, engagement and social skills.
- Teaching is purposefully planned and informed by effective assessment and tracking systems. The school's assessment processes are a strength. Leaders continually review these processes to ensure that they remain beneficial and relevant. As a result, assessment approaches are becoming embedded and provide accurate and detailed information on pupils' progress across all areas of learning and well-being.
- Curriculum planning is a strength of the school. Staff at all levels have contributed meaningfully to the school's curriculum development, while also incorporating pupil voice. This ensures statutory entitlement while maintaining flexibility to meet pupils' diverse needs and starting points.

3.36 Ysgol Bryn Castell's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Improve attendance
Recommendation 2	Strengthen teaching, building on best practice, to provide a consistent level of challenge for all pupils

Recommendation 3	Continue to work with the local authority to ensure that the school's learning environments are suitably adapted to meet the growing number of pupils and the increasingly complex range of need
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- 3.37 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Ysgol Bryn Castell in addressing its recommendations.

Ysgol Cynwyd Sant

- 3.38 Ysgol Cynwyd Sant was inspected by Estyn in February 2026, and the report was published on 15 April 2026.
- 3.39 Estyn identified the following spotlights:

Developing natural and mature Welsh speakers

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.

Supporting the wellbeing of pupils and their families

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.

- 3.40 Estyn also noted the following as positive attributes of the school:
- The warm and welcoming atmosphere at Ysgol Cynwyd Sant is the basis for a happy and inclusive learning community. The headteacher is an excellent role model who engenders the respect of almost every member of the school community. She has high expectations of herself, staff and pupils. She works diligently with staff, governors and the wider community to set a robust strategic direction and provide consistent education, care and support to pupils.
 - The provision for supporting pupils' wellbeing is a strength. All staff develop positive relationships with the pupils. As a result, the behaviour and attitudes of almost all pupils in lessons and around the school are excellent. In addition,

pupils' pride towards their school is very evident, with a strong sense of belonging to one family. They show respect, courtesy and kindness towards each other, adults and visitors.

- The school has robust arrangements to support pupils from low-income households and those with ALN, including pupils in the moderate needs class. Staff monitor and track pupils' progress thoroughly from their starting points and provide a comprehensive timetable of purposeful support programmes that respond to pupils' requirements beneficially.

3.41 Ysgol Cynwyd Sant's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendation:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Strengthen the opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners

3.42 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Ysgol Cynwyd Sant in addressing its recommendation.

Penybont Primary School

3.43 Penybont Primary School was inspected by Estyn in February 2026, and the report was published on 15 April 2026.

3.44 Estyn noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- Leaders establish a strong, inclusive ethos that places pupils and their families at the heart of the school's work. Staff work collaboratively with parents and carers to build trusting relationships that strengthen the sense of community. This culture is evident in the day-to-day life of the school, where pupils feel safe and respected.
- The school values the voice of learners. Pupils have meaningful opportunities to share their ideas about learning and reflect on what they already know and what they want to find out. Teachers use this information to plan activities that respond appropriately to pupils' interests. The 'Penybont Pioneers', a pupil leadership group, give older pupils a strong platform to influence school life. This enables learners, including those with ALN, to make authentic choices, and take on responsibility effectively.
- The school's provision for pupils with ALN is a notable strength. Staff identify needs early, monitor progress carefully and work closely with parents and external professionals to strengthen support. This helps most pupils with ALN to make good progress towards their individual targets.

3.45 Penybont Primary School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement processes to focus more precisely on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress
Recommendation 2	Strengthen teaching and learning experiences to ensure all pupils make the progress they should
Recommendation 3	Reduce persistent absence
Recommendation 4	Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

- 3.46 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Penybont Primary School in addressing its recommendations.

Cynffig Comprehensive School

- 3.47 Cynffig Comprehensive School was inspected by Estyn in March 2026, and the report was published on 21 May 2026.
- 3.48 Estyn identified the following spotlight:

Alleviating the impact of poverty through reading

All pupils, including pupils eligible for free school meals and those from low-income households, benefit greatly from the school's strong, whole-school emphasis on reading. This approach is embedded through activities such as shared class novels during registration, engaging World Book Day events, and accessible book swap opportunities. This consistent focus, alongside the use of well-planned reading strategies across lessons, supports pupils' engagement and helps to strengthen their literacy skills and broaden their vocabulary and wider knowledge.

- 3.49 Estyn also noted the following as positive attributes of the school:

- The strong, respectful relationships between staff and pupils are a notable feature of Cynffig Comprehensive School. This contributes well to its welcoming, inclusive ethos that is underpinned by the 'Cynffig Culture'.
- Pastoral transition is a strength of the school. Learning Leaders and pastoral staff visit pupils in their primary schools to build relationships and support a smooth transition so that pupils and parents feel supported. Additional visits, including to the school production and enhanced transition days, provide further opportunities for pupils to experience school life.
- Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and one-page profiles take suitable account of the views of pupils and their parents. The ALN team works well with mainstream staff to provide appropriate professional learning to enable them support pupils' progress across the curriculum.

- 3.50 Cynffig Comprehensive School's Estyn inspection report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Refine self-evaluation and improvement planning processes so that leaders focus precisely on the impact of teaching and provision on pupil progress
Recommendation 2	Strengthen the quality of teaching so that pupils are consistently challenged to make stronger progress in a minority of lessons
Recommendation 3	Improve the quality and coordination of the provision to develop pupils' numeracy skills

- 3.51 Estyn inspectors concluded that the school is making sufficient progress, and no follow-up action is required. The local authority will continue to support Cynffig Comprehensive School in addressing its recommendations.
- 3.52 From the summer term 2025 to the end of spring term 2026, there were 11 primary schools and 3 secondary schools in Bridgend who received an Estyn interim visit. A summary of the visit is provided through a letter to each school, which are available to view on the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk.

Cwmfelin Primary School

- 3.53 On Wednesday 11 June 2025, a team of Estyn inspectors visited Cwmfelin Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two recommendations from its previous core inspection.
- 3.54 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Writing has improved significantly**

Clear planning, structured progression, and professional learning have strengthened teaching, leading to more confident pupils (especially older ones) who write effectively, enjoy writing, and see meaningful opportunities to apply these skills across the curriculum.

- **Welsh language development is positive**

The school promotes Welsh positively through bilingual environments and well-led daily sessions, with most pupils showing enthusiasm, using a growing range of vocabulary, and making steady progress in their speaking skills.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Garth Primary School

- 3.55 On Thursday 12 June 2026, a team of Estyn inspectors visited Garth Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.56 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Self-evaluation processes are strong and increasingly impactful**

Leaders draw on a wide range of evidence to reflect on the school's work and are beginning to focus more sharply on improving learning, with particularly effective work in developing pupils' oracy skills and confidence. The school will continue to develop this area of provision.

- **Writing provision is improving, with early impact**

Professional learning is strengthening teaching and supporting progress, particularly in pupils' understanding of writing and early skills. Leaders are aware there is further development required to important aspects of writing and are beginning to consider ways to make the necessary improvements.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Nantymoel Primary School

3.57 On Wednesday 17 September 2025, a team of inspectors visited Nantymoel Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.58 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Leadership is strengthening with clearer roles and growing impact**

The headteacher has successfully developed leadership capacity, including middle leaders, improved accountability, and effective use of evidence to evaluate provision, with professional learning beginning to influence classroom practice positively.

- **Curriculum development is progressing with increasing opportunities for meaningful learning**

Leaders are shaping a more engaging, well-matched curriculum, with effective independent learning opportunities, particularly for younger pupils, though opportunities for older pupils to apply skills across the curriculum are still developing.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

3.59 On Wednesday 17 September 2025, a team of inspectors visited St Mary's and St Patrick's Catholic Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.60 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Leadership and monitoring are strengthening teaching consistency**

Clearer systems, shared responsibilities, and improved performance management are giving leaders and staff a better understanding of teaching quality, leading to more consistent practice and positive impacts on pupil progress.

- **Feedback is becoming more effective in supporting learning**

A revised whole-school approach, supported by professional learning, is helping teachers provide clearer guidance on next steps, with many pupils responding well and increasingly taking responsibility for improving their work.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Brynmenyn Primary School

3.61 On Wednesday 15 October 2025, a team of inspectors visited Brynmenyn Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.62 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Stronger monitoring and improvement systems are in place**

Leaders and staff have developed effective, well-understood processes to evaluate teaching and learning, leading to improvements (for example, in pace and questioning). Governors are also beginning to develop their understanding of how they can further support self-evaluation processes.

- **Good progress in developing pupil independence**

Teaching provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning, with improved environments and effective questioning supporting independence. Feedback practices are developing positively overall, with growing consistency in supporting pupils to respond and improve their work, while further enhancement of the outdoor learning provision remains a priority.

- Overall, leaders and staff have a good understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement and have effective plans in place to continue to move the school forward.

Corneli Primary School

3.63 On Thursday 16 October 2025, a team of inspectors visited Corneli Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.64 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Leadership and monitoring have strengthened teaching quality**

Improved monitoring systems, clearer roles, and effective performance management are giving leaders and staff a shared, accurate understanding of teaching, leading to greater consistency and positive impacts on pupil progress.

- **A strong focus on independence is enhancing pupils' learning**

Effective professional learning, well-matched tasks, and supportive classroom environments are helping pupils develop confidence and independence, with a positive whole-school culture reinforcing these skills.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Maesteg School

3.65 On Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 October 2025, a team of inspectors visited Maesteg School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.66 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Self-evaluation is well established and increasingly effective**

Leaders use a wide range of evidence and collaborative processes to evaluate teaching and identify priorities, with growing consistency and strong professional dialogue supporting improvement.

- **Teaching and feedback are improving, with a stronger shared approach**

Whole-school frameworks and professional learning are supporting more effective teaching and useful feedback, helping pupils make progress, although consistency in practice and maximising impact across all areas continue to develop.

- Overall, leaders and staff have a good understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement and have effective plans in place to continue to move the school forward.

Cefn Glas Infant School

3.67 On Wednesday 14 January 2026, a team of inspectors visited Cefn Glas Infant School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.68 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Strong progress in developing pupil independence**

Staff have improved routines, environments, and opportunities that enable most pupils to take responsibility, choose resources confidently, and build resilience. The next step is to extend child-led learning so pupils can explore ideas more freely and deepen skills.

- **Effective improvements in digital learning provision**

Leaders have strengthened planning, progression, and staff expertise, resulting in engaging and purposeful digital activities; most pupils, particularly by Year 2, now use technology confidently and make good progress.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Afon y Felin Primary School

3.69 On Thursday 15 January 2026, a team of inspectors visited Afon y Felin Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.70 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Self-evaluation processes are becoming more robust and impactful**

Leaders and staff have strengthened monitoring arrangements, leading to a clearer understanding of strengths and priorities and improved consistency in teaching. Further refinement of assessment and feedback approaches will provide a valuable opportunity to build on this positive progress.

- **Assessment and feedback practices are developing positively**

Professional learning has improved teachers' skills and the use of strategies such as verbal and 'live' feedback is supporting pupils' progress. Practice is continuing to become more consistent, particularly in written feedback and in helping pupils respond effectively.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Porthcawl Primary School

3.71 On Wednesday 28 January 2026, a team of inspectors visited Porthcawl Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.72 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Consistent challenge and independence are strengthening across the school**

Teachers use assessment effectively to match tasks to pupils' next steps, provide clear guidance, and encourage pupils (particularly older learners) to take ownership, reflect on progress, and set targets, resulting in most pupils being appropriately challenged.

- **Clear learning intentions and purposeful early years provision**

Staff now communicate learning intentions effectively in younger classes, using questioning and well-planned environments to support engagement, independence, and skill development, with ongoing improvements to assessment and provision further enhancing outcomes.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Brackla Primary School

3.73 On Thursday 29 January 2026, a team of inspectors visited Brackla Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing recommendation from its previous core inspection and one focus area from the school's current improvement plan.

3.74 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the recommendation and focus area:

- **Highly effective feedback systems support strong pupil progress**

A consistent, whole-school approach to feedback, including clear success criteria, purposeful dialogue, and reflective practices, enables most pupils to understand how to improve their work and make strong progress.

- **Strong and improving writing provision across the school**

A clear vision, collaborative practice, and engaging learning environments promote high-quality writing, with most pupils making strong progress and demonstrating increasing confidence, while further opportunities are being developed to apply skills independently across the curriculum.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against the recommendation and focus area and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd

3.75 On Thursday 29 and Friday 30 January 2026, a team of inspectors visited Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd to consider how the school has progressed in its improvement work since the previous core inspection.

3.76 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the improvement work:

- **Strong and embedded self-evaluation processes support improvement**

Leaders use a wide range of evidence effectively, with strong involvement of middle leaders, fostering a collaborative culture and clear links between evaluation, accountability and improvement planning, while continuing to refine the focus on impact.

- **Well-planned reading provision is improving pupils' skills and engagement**

The school has a clear focus on developing reading, with effective strategies, targeted support and increasing pupil confidence and resilience, while continuing to refine consistency and build on strong transition links with partner primaries.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress with their improvement work and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School

3.77 On Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5 March 2026, a team of inspectors visited Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School to consider how the school has progressed in the improvement work that has been undertaken since the previous core inspection.

3.78 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Self-evaluation processes are strengthening and becoming more collaborative**

Leaders have developed a supportive culture of reflection, with middle leaders gaining confidence through activities like learning walks and "Standards

Weeks,” leading to improved teaching practices, while there is growing consistency, leaders are continuing to refine how sharply evaluation focuses on pupil outcomes and how effectively it informs improvement planning.

- **Provision for numeracy is well planned and purposeful**

The school integrates numeracy effectively across subjects with meaningful, progressive opportunities and targeted support for weaker pupils, and there is increasing focus on developing consistent use of formative assessment to further strengthen how well teachers check pupils’ understanding during lessons.

- Overall, leaders and staff have a good understanding of the school’s current strengths and areas for improvement and have effective plans in place to continue to move the school forward.

St Mary’s Catholic Primary School

3.79 On Thursday 19 March 2026, a team of inspectors visited St Mary’s Catholic Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its previous core inspection.

3.80 Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in relation to the two recommendations:

- **Strong progress in Welsh language provision**

Pupils show positive attitudes and generally make suitable progress in Welsh, supported by improved teacher confidence, high visibility of Welsh across the school, and engaging lessons, with ongoing work to ensure activities build progressively to further sustain and deepen pupils’ engagement.

- **Improvement in self-evaluation**

Leaders have introduced a clear framework and use a wide range of evidence to evaluate teaching, which is beginning to strengthen practice, with continued development focused on enhancing the impact of feedback and further sharpening improvement planning.

- Overall, Estyn noted that the school has made progress against both recommendations since the last inspection and has a clear understanding of the next steps for development.

3.81 Estyn conducted follow-up visits to Blaengarw Primary School and Bryncethin Primary School to assess whether they would be removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review and special measures.

Blaengarw Primary School

3.82 Blaengarw Primary School was inspected by Estyn in January 2024, and the report was published on 3 April 2024. At that time, Estyn inspectors concluded the school was not making sufficient progress and would be subject to a follow-up review.

3.83 The Blaengarw Primary School 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

3.84 The local authority 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.

3.85 On 17 July 2025, Estyn judged that Blaengarw Primary School had made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the section 28 inspection.

3.86 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.

Bryncethin Primary School

3.87 Bryncethin Primary School was inspected by Estyn in November 2024, and the report was published on 9 January 2025. At that time, Estyn inspectors concluded the school was not making sufficient progress and in accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI was of the opinion that 'special measures' was required in relation to this school.

3.88 The Bryncethin Primary School report included the following recommendations:

Recommendation number	Recommendation
Recommendation 1	Improve leadership at all levels
Recommendation 2	Ensure that monitoring and evaluation processes identify precisely the strengths and areas for development of the school's work most in need of improvement and contribute effectively to school improvement planning
Recommendation 3	Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress with their literacy, numeracy, digital and independent learning
Recommendation 4	Improve rates of attendance

3.89 The school were supported in drawing up an action plan to show how the recommendations would be addressed and held regular progress review meetings with officers.

3.90 In May 2026, Estyn conducted a follow-up review of the school's progress and judged that Bryncethin Primary School had made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

3.91 Estyn noted the following findings when reviewing the recommendations:

- Leaders have developed an effective distributed leadership structure across the school. They have worked with staff to review and clearly define their roles and responsibilities. As a result, all staff now understand their role in leading learning and share responsibility for supporting pupils to make progress. Leaders have benefited from a range of purposeful professional learning activities. These have supported them to develop their leadership skills. They work successfully with other schools and outside agencies to gain an understanding of effective practice in teaching and learning. They apply what they learn well in their own school.
- Leaders have developed a clear and focused cycle for monitoring the work of the school. This includes a wide range of activities related to their specific responsibilities. They communicate high expectations for teaching and learning clearly to staff, and these underpin all monitoring activities. Leaders are developing effective monitoring and evaluation skills to ensure their findings are precise, informative and support improvements in teaching and learning. This work undergoes robust quality assurance by the headteacher, who has created a positive culture of respectful critical analysis. Leaders now share their evaluations with the governing body who are becoming increasingly confident when holding the school to account.
- Across the school, the quality of teaching continues to improve. This is having a positive impact on pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy, digital skills and independent learning. Leaders continue to provide beneficial professional learning opportunities for staff to support improvements in teaching and learning. Recently, they have focused on developing the structure of lessons and the use of success criteria. This is helping teachers to plan lessons effectively. In lessons, nearly all teachers identify clear learning intentions and revisit them regularly with pupils. Teachers have an improved understanding of what pupils need to be able to do for learning to be successful. This is having a positive impact on pupil progress.
- Overall, rates of attendance across the school are improving. Leaders and staff analyse data rigorously to identify pupils and families at risk of low attendance. Leaders monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups carefully and take appropriate action to reduce barriers to regular attendance. They are aware the school is at an early stage in embedding these improvement strategies and understand the need for continuous monitoring of this important work.

- 3.92 As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales removed the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

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. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being 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 well-being 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 and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change and nature 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 content of this report.

Background documents

None.