

A report on

George Street Primary School

**Wainfelin Road
Pontypool
Gwent
Torfaen
NP4 6BX**

Date of inspection: November 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About George Street Primary School

Name of provider	George Street Primary School
Local authority	Torfaen County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	409
Pupils of statutory school age	325
Number in nursery classes	37
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 21.7%)	33.4%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 9.2%)	5.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	4.9%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	
Date of headteacher appointment	

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	17/11/2025

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:
mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Summary

George Street Primary School provides a warm and supportive environment where pupils feel secure and valued. Staff form positive relationships with pupils and families, and this contributes strongly to the school's caring ethos. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They respond respectfully to staff and enjoy taking part in their learning activities. Safeguarding arrangements are well established and understood by all staff.

The school places a strong emphasis on attendance. Leaders use a range of successful strategies that encourage pupils to come to school regularly and on time. These approaches are having a positive impact, particularly for pupils who face additional barriers to attending school, including those from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community.

The recently appointed headteacher has strengthened the leadership structure and introduced clearer systems to check how well the school is performing. Governors work closely with the school and ensure that support and funding benefit the pupils at the school.

Many children start school with oracy and social skills below those expected for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils make steady progress, especially in their ability to communicate clearly and express their ideas. Teachers ensure that pupils develop progressively in their writing skills as they move through the school. However, pupils' progress in reading is limited. Younger pupils struggle to link letters and sounds, and older pupils do not read with fluency and understanding well enough. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn and practise Welsh language patterns, and many pupils show a positive attitude towards learning the language.

The school offers a broad and engaging curriculum to its pupils. However, teachers of the younger pupils do not always take good enough account of pupils' developmental needs. In these cases, they over direct learning, and provision does not always build and extend on pupils' skills in a coherent and progressive way.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Improve pupils' reading skills
- R2 Improve leaders' and teachers' understanding of early child development, to ensure that teaching and learning environments reflect developmentally appropriate practice.

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

George Street Primary School is a nurturing and happy school where leaders prioritise pupils' well-being successfully. Leaders build strong relationships with pupils, their families and the wider community, this creates an environment where pupils feel safe, supported and listened to. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe and there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

The recently appointed headteacher has established a coherent senior leadership structure that aligns well with school priorities. This has strengthened clarity of roles and responsibilities. Leaders have collaborated with key stakeholders to create a school vision that places community engagement and attendance at its core. Professional learning is well targeted, informed by staff aspirations and performance development needs. This approach supports the school's culture of reflection and continuous improvement well. Leaders work collaboratively with Initial Education Training providers to provide effective support and guidance to their students. Leaders are beginning to develop a set of beneficial self-evaluation and improvement processes to measure progress against. They use information from monitoring activities and input from staff, and governors to identify many important areas for improvement, such as pupils reading skills. However, a few key areas are missed, such as the need to improve the teaching, environment and the learning experiences for the youngest pupils. In addition, leaders do not apply the principles associated with effective early child development. As a result, when planning whole school priorities, they do not always consider the developmental needs of their youngest pupils well enough.

Leaders monitor pupils' attendance rigorously. They use a range of effective procedures that reduce persistent absence and improve punctuality across the school. This work is particularly beneficial for pupils adversely affected by poverty, and those from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community whose attendance has improved notably over time.

Across the school, nearly all staff foster supportive and respectful relationships with pupils. Nearly all pupils behave well and treat one other and staff with respect. They generally show enthusiasm for learning, sustain concentration, and make worthwhile contributions to lessons. They have suitable opportunities to contribute to the life of the school through their pupil voice groups.

Many of pupils start school with language and social skills that are significantly below those expected for their age. From these low starting points, most pupils make steady progress and, by Year 6, most have developed their listening and speaking skills effectively. In the younger classes, pupils have suitable opportunities to develop their mark making skills, which helps them begin to develop early writing skills. As they

progress, teachers focus well on developing aspects of grammar and punctuation and the use of interesting vocabulary. This sets a firm foundation for writing across a range of genres.

Across the school many pupils make limited progress in the development of their reading skills. Many younger pupils make slow progress when learning the link between letters and sounds and struggle to read simple words. Older pupils develop an enjoyment of reading and apply their reading skills well during lessons. However, a minority of pupils regularly skip over or guess words unfamiliar words. This prevents them from reading with fluency and expression and from fully understanding the texts they read.

Most pupils demonstrate increasing confidence in their mathematical skills. They use a wide range of concrete apparatus appropriately when exploring number, shape and measure. Teachers are beginning to plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum and to use these skills appropriately when solving problems.

Across the school most pupils develop their Welsh language skills suitably and enjoy conversing with adults and peers, using familiar questions, sentences and vocabulary. Many teachers are beginning to plan suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills and to build on these progressively as they move through the school.

Leaders provide meaningful and engaging experiences to develop pupils' musical skills. Opportunities to learn musical instruments and to perform both in school and within the local community contribute positively to pupils' enjoyment, confidence and creativity.

Teachers provide pupils with clear instructions during lessons which ensures that they understand what to do. They use questions to check pupils' understanding and prompt their thinking. They provide worthwhile feedback during lessons, which helps pupils to address misconceptions and improve their work. Teachers of older pupils use success criteria effectively to support pupils to evaluate their own work and that of their peers accurately. In a few instances, teachers collaborate successfully to teach across year groups, which has a positive impact on pupils' engagement and progress.

Teaching for the youngest pupils and those with complex additional learning needs (ALN) is not adapted well enough to meet their developmental and communication needs. Although there are a few purposeful opportunities for learning through play and exploration, the learning environments for these pupils do not reflect the principles of foundation learning well enough. This limits the progress these pupils make, particularly in their communication, personal and social development. In addition, too often support staff are not fully utilised to support children's learning as well as they could.

Leaders are beginning to review the current school's curriculum to better reflect the principles of Curriculum for Wales. They have created a clear vision that is rooted in using authentic contexts for learning and makes meaningful links across the curriculum. Pupils have suitable opportunities to influence their learning at the start of their termly topics. The school provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness through varied activities, including learning about different religions and beliefs and exploring their local area. These experiences help pupils to develop a sound understanding of their community and the diverse society of Wales.

Overall, the school has effective systems in place to identify, monitor and review the provision and progress of pupils with ALN. Staff know their pupils well and work successfully with parents to meet their individual needs. The school has very recently set up extra classes for older pupils who need help with literacy and mathematics. It has also created smaller, targeted provision for younger pupils whose needs are better met in this setting. The school has provided professional learning along with advice from external agencies to strengthen staff understanding of strategies to support younger pupils' communication and behaviour needs. Leaders and teachers are beginning to review the progress pupils make in these classes, although this is at an early stage of development.

Governors support the school well and are kept well informed by the headteacher. They demonstrate a strong commitment to their roles and understand the community that the school serves and its context well.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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