



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Croesyceiliog Primary School**

**North Road  
Croesyceiliog  
Cwmbran  
Torfaen  
NP44 2LL**

**Date of inspection: June 2024**

**by**

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

## About Croesyceiliog Primary School

Name of provider	Croesyceiliog Primary School
Local authority	Torfaen County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	407
Pupils of statutory school age	369
Number in nursery classes	38
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 23.7%)	20.6%
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 13.2%)	5.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2009
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/03/2016
Start date of inspection	03/06/2024

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](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

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

## Overview

Croesyceiliog Primary is a happy school where nearly all pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with politeness and respect. Pupil behaviour is exemplary and most enjoy belonging to the school, speak warmly about their friends and teachers and look forward to arriving every day. The whole-school emphasis on improving pupils' well-being impacts positively across the school and, as a result, relationships between staff and pupils are strong and contribute well to the welcoming nature of the school and community. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and willingness to support one another in their work and play are notable. Most are confident and inquisitive learners and enjoy finding out about things that interest them.

From a young age most pupils develop good reading, speaking and listening skills. As they get older, they use these skills well to, present, debate and challenge each other's ideas. In addition, most pupils across the school develop good mathematical and digital skills. Nearly all pupils enjoy learning outdoors and understand the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' needs and, through joint planning, they prepare interesting activities that appeal to most pupils' interests well. They deliver the curriculum successfully through a comprehensive range of engaging learning experiences, they are ably assisted by skilful support staff, who encourage pupils to succeed well. Most teachers deliver lessons at a good pace and use questioning well to challenge, check and extend pupils' understanding. Pupils are beginning to develop useful skills that help them to reflect on their learning and to think about how they could improve their work. However, pupils do not generally have enough opportunities to engage in this important work.

The headteacher demonstrates thoughtful, caring leadership and works positively with other school leaders and staff towards fulfilling their vision to provide a caring, happy and secure environment for pupils. This culture enables most pupils to develop their confidence and self-assurance effectively. The governing body exercises its duties carefully and has an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders ensure that there are many opportunities for all staff to work together, for example by collaborating effectively to implement a curriculum that is authentic and reflects the needs of all pupils. Overall, leaders keep the work of the school under review suitably. They evaluate standards in lessons and the learning in pupils' books appropriately. Looking ahead, leaders acknowledge that by refining this work they can concentrate more on evaluating the difference that teaching makes to pupils' progress and what important aspects to improve next.

## Recommendations

- R1 Address the well-being issue raised by the inspection team during the inspection
- R2 Refine self-evaluation activities to enable all leaders to accurately identify and address important areas for improvement

- R3 Improve the quality of feedback so that pupils understand the next steps in their learning and have time to make improvements

## What happens next

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

## Main evaluation

### Learning

A majority of pupils begin school with skills and knowledge around that expected for their age. As they move through the school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make steady progress.

From an early age, the youngest pupils make good progress in developing their communication skills. In the nursery, pupils are keen to talk with adults, speaking with increasing confidence and clarity. By the time they reach Year 2 most talk imaginatively about the features of a Tasmanian Devil and whether if it is scary or not. Older pupils communicate freely and often articulate their ideas with skill and care, such as when discussing how a local festival could be improved to increase the enjoyment of attendees.

Most pupils develop as confident readers who speak enthusiastically about their books and favourite authors. Younger pupils develop a clear knowledge of letter sounds while beginning to develop a keen interest in books. As they become more experienced readers, they blend letter sounds accurately, applying their skills to tackle unfamiliar words. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils read lengthier novels with fluency and expression, they talk confidently and knowledgeably about characters and their personalities and the series of books they enjoy.

Overall, most pupils make sound progress in their writing across the school. Younger pupils develop early mark-making skills well and begin to write their names independently. As they get older, most write skilfully for a range of purposes across the curriculum and present their work with care and pride. Pupils' punctuation and spelling are appropriate for their age, with many spelling more complex words with increasing accuracy. The oldest pupils often write with flair using different genre, styles and for different audiences. They express themselves with clarity, for example when writing a persuasive letter about whether mobile phones should be allowed in school.

Many pupils across the school make strong progress in developing their numeracy skills and are becoming confident mathematicians. Younger pupils develop an early understanding of number well. For instance, through their play they match numbers and objects and count confidently to 20. By the time they reach Year 3, most pupils have a clear understanding of numbers beyond 100, adding and subtracting from any

given number and counting on and back in 10s and 100s. Most pupils have a firm recall of multiplication tables and are beginning to apply this to solve problems across the curriculum in meaningful ways. Older pupils analyse data and create pie charts to represent their findings. Pupils often explain their preferred methods for calculation and their strategies for solving mathematical problems well.

Many pupils develop their Welsh language skills suitably. The youngest pupils begin to recognise colours in Welsh and join in when counting to 10. As they get older, they start to develop their vocabulary to ask simple questions. Older pupils listen carefully to commands in Welsh and respond appropriately. The oldest pupils hold simple conversations with adults using a growing vocabulary, extending their answers to provide more detail for the listener.

Most pupils use digital equipment confidently and develop their digital skills well. Younger pupils use these skills in a range of learning experiences, including programming a toy to navigate a path, and using software to make a picture collage of the life cycle of a frog. Most older pupils use their digital skills effectively to support their learning, for example, they use spreadsheets confidently and use formulae to calculate the costings to set a budget for the Cwmbran Big Event. Most use tablet computers well to undertake research, share and then present their findings in creative ways. Many pupils in Year 6 use coding confidently.

Across the school, pupils' physical skills develop well. The youngest pupils use equipment and move confidently around the indoor and outdoor classrooms. They refine their co-ordination skills as they model with clay or when using painting and drawing tools. Older pupils further develop these skills through their PE lessons, and when engaging in a good range of after-school sports clubs.

Most pupils develop their thinking and problem-solving skills suitably. Younger pupils learn to apply their newly developing numeracy skills across the curriculum. Older pupils build upon their prior learning of materials that float and sink to construct a boat. They work together and discuss the reasons for the choices they make. For example, in the oldest classes, pupils plan a school trip, make budget decisions and justify their reasons.

Pupils develop their creative skills well. Most create good-quality artwork, taking pride and care in their drawing, painting and craft work. Younger pupils use playdough to make their own insects and minibeasts following observations during their class topic. The oldest pupils learn about samba music, singing songs and playing untuned percussion instruments, such as the tamborim, apito and surdo, appropriately and in time to the beat.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Well-being is a strength of the school and is central to its work. Staff create a calm, warm and nurturing environment for pupils to learn, which impacts significantly on the social and emotional needs of the pupils. Most pupils are happy and feel safe at school, they understand how to stay safe online. The school's Digital Leaders actively support this work, for example by designing posters to promote digital safety.

Working relationships between staff and pupils are strong and pupils view the support they receive from staff as a positive part of their school life. Most pupils know who they can speak to if they are worried or upset. They make use of beneficial emotional check-ins to let their teacher know if they need help. Most pupils show mutual respect to each other and adults, and feel that the school helps them to treat others fairly. This helps pupils to show an understanding of equity and compassion towards supporting others' needs. For instance, during breaktimes, the Well-being Warriors support peers on the yard by assisting younger pupils at play or offering help if someone is alone or upset. Pupils are courteous to each other, staff and visitors to the school. Nearly all pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour whilst learning in lessons and when moving around the school.

Nearly all pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They are ready to learn and confident, and demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for their work. Most pupils display good levels of perseverance when approaching tasks, enjoy talking about their learning and can explain what they are doing and why. Pupils are attentive when others speak and are considerate to the differing needs of their peers. During lessons, most pupils make valuable contribution. For example, older pupils enjoy class discussions and share ideas on what they would like to research and learn. In younger classes, pupils' interests shape new themes and topics.

Across the school, pupils develop as ambitious learners. When given the opportunity, they respond well to verbal feedback from staff about their learning, for example via regular pauses in lessons when teachers check pupils' understanding. However, as a result of a lack of opportunity, pupils do not respond to written feedback as often and as effectively as they could to improve their work and move their learning on.

Pupils understand the importance of looking after their physical and emotional well-being and enjoy the recent introduction of 'brain breaks' and 'calm corners' into their classrooms. This allows them to pause from learning and move around the classroom before re-engaging. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a range of well-attended after-school clubs, such as ultimate frisbee, dodgeball and netball. As a result, pupils further develop their physical and team building skills.

Across the school, pupils take part in a range of pupil voice groups to develop their leaderships skills. For instance, the Criw Cymraeg share a phrase of the week across the school and the Eco Committee encourage recycling and energy saving in classrooms. However, overall, opportunities for pupils to influence and impact on other areas of school improvement are less well developed.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

Staff across the school share a vision for its curriculum, based around 'learn to live, love to learn'. They work together to ensure the vision continues to evolve and meets the needs and interests of all pupils. The curriculum is well thought out, broad, balanced and with learning experiences linked clearly to the development of important skills, such as literacy, numeracy, digital and Welsh.

Leaders have collaborated with all staff to develop a clear understanding of how pupils should make progress in developing their skills. They use this well to ensure that lessons and activities are ambitious and challenge pupils to make the progress

of which they are capable. Teachers collaborate well within each year group. They use authentic topics to plan a range of well thought out lessons that systematically develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Most pupils engage well in their learning and apply their skills across the curriculum effectively, such as when discussing why it is important to have an education or calculating the perimeter and area of different historical buildings. However, at times in their writing, older pupils have less opportunity to develop a deep understanding of a particular genre, for instance when using persuasive writing.

The school supports the development of the social and emotional skills of pupils from all backgrounds well. Staff encourage pupils to gain a good understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices and how to stay safe online. There is a comprehensive range of visits to support pupils' learning effectively. For example, Year 6 experience an outdoor and adventurous residential trip and younger pupils visit a local farm. Teachers invite a wide range of providers into school to enhance the curriculum. For example, local police talk to pupils about anti bullying and religious leaders raise pupils' awareness of the many different local religions. In addition, pupils' aspirations for their future are raised through visits by parents with interesting jobs, such as a midwife and an airline pilot.

Provision to develop pupils' Welsh skills meets the needs of most pupils suitably. Many staff model Welsh phrases and sentences appropriately to give praise, instructions or ask simple questions. Most pupils respond suitably to simple questions and use their Welsh language skills appropriately. The school provides beneficial opportunities to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales. Pupils develop a good sense of belonging and learn about the features of their locality. For example, pupils visit Big Pit and Llancaich Fawr and learn about the history of the mining industry and life in Tudor times. Beyond the school's curriculum, staff provide a range of extra-curricular activities that further develop and enhance pupils' skills, for example through the Glee Club, chess and school gardening club.

Across the school, classrooms successfully enhance the curriculum and are engaging learning environments for all pupils. All staff build highly effective, positive, working relationships with pupils. For example, they provide well-established 'safe spaces' as areas for pupils to seek help with their learning and emotional well-being and have high expectations for pupils' behaviour in lessons. Highly skilled teaching assistants support pupils with additional needs to make good progress through effective intervention programmes and in-class support. In addition, staff collaborate effectively to develop outdoor learning spaces to enhance the curriculum for their pupils, such as the new forest school area.

In most lessons, the quality of teaching is robust. Here, teachers use a wide range of inspiring resources to pique pupils' interests and maintain their engagement in learning. Where teaching is most effective, they plan highly engaging activities set against real-life contexts, for instance when asking pupils to be financial experts to plan, cost and organise a school trip. Teachers use a wide range of assessments effectively to monitor and track pupils' progress over time. Many give valuable verbal feedback to pupils during lessons that successfully corrects misconceptions and identifies what pupils do well. However, overall, teachers do not always provide pupils with enough opportunities to consider the success of their learning, give them clear guidance on their next steps, or ensure dedicated time to make improvements,

for instance to enhance their extended writing. Reports to parents contain appropriate information about the pupils' attitudes to learning and their experiences throughout the year.

### **Care, support and guidance**

The school is a highly inclusive, caring community where pupils feel valued and safe with a strong emphasis on the well-being of both pupils and staff. This positive ethos helps to ensure that most pupils enjoy their time at the school. There is a calm working atmosphere where nearly all pupils behave well, are considerate of others and approach their learning positively. The quality of care, support and guidance for pupils is a strength of the school.

Across the school, staff adopt a calm and consistent approach to behaviour management. They use thoughtful check-ins with pupils that ensure that they start the day ready to learn. Teachers and assistants allocate time each day to listen and talk to pupils and provide regular opportunities for them to discuss their feelings, particularly during registration periods. This is a strong feature of the school's supportive provision.

The school promotes pupils' moral, spiritual and social development successfully. Staff encourage pupils to contribute to their community through opportunities to help others. For example, pupils write letters and create Christmas decorations to show compassion and kindness to elderly residents in the local community. Additionally, the local church minister regularly visits the school to lead acts of worship and deepen pupils' understanding of Christian beliefs. Staff ensure that pupils have a suitable understanding of equality and diversity. For example, older pupils study civil rights activist Malala Yousafzai and create freedom quilts inspired by Martin Luther King's freedom speech. Younger pupils learn about different faiths and celebrate religious festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Staff provide pupils with suitable opportunities to participate in and influence the life of the school by taking on leadership roles. This develops pupils' citizenship skills through contributing to the school community. For example, the older pupils act as prefects and run a school uniform shop, and the Eco Committee has developed a bog garden and installed bird boxes.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to be physically active during the day and this is enriched by a few after-school clubs, such as dodgeball and netball. Pupils participate in the 'active travel' programme that helps to develop their understanding of how to improve the environment by having fewer cars on the road. The school use Welsh places of interest thoughtfully, such as Cardiff Castle and Llantarnum Grange, to support the curriculum and this helps pupils learn more about their local area and the heritage and culture of Wales. Older pupils have opportunities to attend residential trips that provide valuable new experiences. This builds pupils' confidence, resilience and teamwork skills successfully.

The ALN Co-ordinator has a firm understanding of the requirements of Welsh Government's ALN reforms and works constructively with other staff to ensure that ALN provision is tailored carefully to pupils' needs. Alongside senior leaders, the ALN Co-ordinator assesses pupils' needs and devises useful support plans. These include one-page profiles and manageable targets that focus on small steps to support



pupils' progress. Staff regularly monitor and evaluate the progress pupils make against these targets and, as a result of effective interventions, many pupils make good progress in their literacy and mathematical skills. Where appropriate, the school involves outside agencies to provide additional support for pupils.

There are robust processes in place to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality. Leaders use a range of rewards and activities to promote the importance of good attendance. They identify pupils who do not attend school regularly and work closely with these families. The school addresses persistent non-attendance and lateness effectively through a clear set of follow-up actions, such as phone calls, letters and face-to-face meetings between parents and senior staff.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Everyone is aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Adults know the processes to be followed in the event of a disclosure or allegation. However, an issue relating to the security of the school site was brought to the attention of the headteacher and chair of the school's governing body during the inspection.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher demonstrates a thoughtful, caring approach to leadership and, alongside the deputy headteacher, is highly visible around the school. Together they have created an inclusive culture, where pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's work. Staff at all levels work collectively to embed trusting and caring relationships in classrooms and, as a result, most pupils feel safe and secure, and have a strong sense of belonging. Staff work together adeptly and support each other positively. They have a good understanding of the varied needs of individual pupils and the local community and want the best for the pupils in their care. They provide and maintain a robust safeguarding culture at the school.

The distribution of roles and responsibilities and the school's arrangements to develop leadership capacity support its work well. Senior leaders operate as an effective team and draw effectively on staff experiences and skills to improve the quality of provision and its impact on pupil progress and outcomes. For example, the thoughtful approach to curriculum development has led to pupils benefiting from a wide range of interesting and authentic learning experiences.

Most staff receive regular worthwhile professional learning linked to school improvement priorities and performance management. They undertake personal professional enquiries and access training to support their career aspirations. For example, professional learning has impacted positively on all staff and strengthened the school's provision to develop pupils' reading skills. Focused sessions have allowed all staff to extend their knowledge and understanding of ALN reform. This has ensured highly effective processes to support the emotional well-being of all pupils. Collaboration with other schools progresses well. For example, the school led the successful introduction and development of a worthwhile oracy programme for pupils across the local cluster.

Leaders use a range of evidence to evaluate the progress and standards of pupils' work, such as book looks, learning walks and listening to learners. Overall, self-evaluation processes are appropriate and suitably inform leaders of the school's

strengths and areas for improvement. However, monitoring activities are not always rigorous or sharp enough to allow leaders to accurately identify and address important areas in need of improvement.

Leaders have established useful working partnerships, with many agencies, such as the education welfare officer (EWO), occupational therapy and local police. These help the school to clearly identify the right support and provision to enable pupils to succeed. For example, the strong provision for pastoral care ensures that vulnerable pupils attend school regularly and meets their emotional needs effectively. Leaders and staff enjoy very good working partnerships with parents. Parents trust that the school is doing the right thing for their children and will always acts in their best interests. Specialist agencies support the school regularly to provide parents with useful guidance and advice. Staff support parents sensitively. For example, they help parents to better understand how to assist their child with their reading and arrange workshops to enable parents to understand how best to support their child's emotional well-being.

Overall, work to address national priorities progresses well. Leaders, along with staff, have implemented curriculum design to reflect the requirements of Curriculum for Wales. They adopted a thoughtful, measured approach focussed on developing pupils' skills across the six areas of learning and experience (AoLEs). Most pupils' digital skills are effective, and their Welsh language skills are developing suitably. In addition, the school has approached ALN reform successfully, making significant improvements to the provision for pupils. As a result, pupils with additional learning needs often make good progress from their individual starting points.

The governing body is well informed, helpful and committed to supporting the work of the school. Governors know the school and community well and allocate funding effectively to support improvement for all. They have a diverse and valuable set of skills matched to their roles and responsibilities that they utilise well, for example to support leaders in improving the provision for pupils with ALN. They understand the school's improvement priorities and the reasons that support them. At times they join school leaders to evaluate the work of the school and provide a suitable level of challenge and support. They work effectively with the headteacher to manage finances and make prudent spending decisions that benefit pupils. The school uses its grant funding efficiently, for example to support vulnerable pupils with their emotional well-being and to provide equal access to the curriculum. Governors make suitable arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking in school.

## 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

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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