A report on

Creunant Primary School

School Road
Crynant
Neath
SA10 8NS

Date of inspection:  January 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

## About Creunant Primary School

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|---|---|
| Name of provider | Creunant Primary School |
| Local authority | Neath Port Talbot 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 | 124 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 91 |
| Number in nursery classes | 20 |
| 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 22.9%) | 17.0% |
| 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 11.1%) | 4% |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | * |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | 4% |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 01/01/2017 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 01/10/2017 |

| Start date of inspection | 20/01/2025 |
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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

Nearly all pupils at Creunant Primary School are well-behaved, polite and show respect to each other. They feel safe in school and attend regularly.

A recent period of turbulence has impacted negatively on working relationships between leaders, staff and governors. In addition, leaders' relationships with a minority of parents are strained.

Leaders evaluate the quality of the school's work and identify areas for improvement. However, the evaluation processes do not always prioritise areas in most need of improvement, for example, leaders have not identified the weak areas of teaching identified during the inspection.

Members of the governing body are keen to support the work of the school, but their knowledge and capacity to hold the school to account are limited. They do not visit the school to collect first-hand evidence and are reliant on information presented to them by the headteacher.

During their time in school, most pupils including those with additional learning needs (ALN) do not make the progress of which they are capable. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, expectations are not high enough and staff do not plan for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills progressively. In many classes, teachers do not match activities to the ability of pupils, and they overuse worksheets. In addition, the learning environments do not enable pupils to learn independently, and activities for younger pupils tend to be very adult led.

The school budget has a large underspend, and leaders and governors have not prioritised funding well enough, for instance to improve the quality of outdoor learning.

## Recommendations

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

R1.    Improve leadership at all levels

R2.    Improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement activities so that leaders identify, prioritise and address successfully the areas of the school's work that are in most need of improvement

R3.    Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and ensure that all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils

R4.    Ensure that pupils develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills progressively over time

## What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion, that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress usually every four to six months.

## Main evaluation

The school has recently experienced a period of unrest, resulting in fractured professional relationships between leaders, staff and governors. In addition, relationships with a minority of parents are strained, and they feel that leaders do not communicate or consider their feedback well enough.

Leaders use a suitable range of monitoring and self-evaluation processes, including observing lessons and listening to pupils, to judge the quality of the school's work. However, these tend to lack rigour, be over-positive or check for compliance rather than evaluating the impact of the school's work on the progress made by pupils. In addition, self-evaluation activities have not highlighted the weak areas of teaching identified by the inspection team. Leaders do not always use the outcome of their self-evaluation activities to identify suitable areas for improvement or prioritise the ones that are most important. The school has made limited progress against the recommendations from its previous

inspection. Leaders ensure that staff access a range of professional learning, but this does not focus sufficiently well on school priorities or improving teaching and learning. They distribute roles and responsibilities suitably amongst staff.

Members of the governing body are keen to support the work of the school and to develop its role in the community. However, their knowledge and capacity to act as a critical friend are limited. They do not have opportunities to visit school regularly to collect first-hand evidence and are largely reliant on the information presented to them by the headteacher.

Across the school most staff promote good behaviour and develop positive working relationships with pupils. As a result, most pupils are happy, polite and well-behaved. All staff show care and consideration for pupils, and this helps them to know who to go to if they have a concern or problem. Pupils feel safe in school, and they attend regularly.

Leaders communicate a school vision for pupils to become respectful citizens of their community and the wider world. Overall, the school's curriculum helps to meet these aims and provides suitable breadth and depth to support their spiritual, moral and social development. However, the quality of teaching of other important areas of the curriculum is weak. This impacts on the learning and progress that pupils make. Consequently, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Many pupils start school with literacy and numeracy skills at or above those expected for their age. Despite this, weaknesses in teaching across the school mean that many pupils do not build on these positive starting points well. In addition, teachers do not have a shared understanding of the literacy, numeracy and digital skills that pupils should develop as they progress through the school.

Staff act as positive language role models, and this helps to ensure that most pupils make appropriate progress with their speaking and listening skills and vocabulary development. Provision to develop pupils' early reading skills is underdeveloped and, as they move through the year groups, teachers do not provide them with a broad enough range of texts. Many older pupils read texts aloud with fluency but cannot use inference and deduction to understand what they are reading, well enough. In the youngest classes, pupils do not have frequent opportunities to develop their early writing skills. Pupils do not develop their understanding of different types of writing systematically, and leaders recognise the need to put in place a cohesive plan to address this.

In many classes, teachers do not always match mathematical activities to the ability of pupils. As a result, many pupils do not develop their mathematical skills progressively. The oldest pupils use a suitable range of digital skills in their work. However, in many classes, pupils use digital devices in low level activities that do not develop their skills sufficiently.

In a few cases, where teaching is effective, lessons move along at an appropriate pace and staff use questioning well to determine pupils' understanding. Overall, teachers do not always have appropriately high expectations of what pupils can achieve and are not clear enough with them about the improvements they need to make. They use whole class approaches regularly, with little attention to the needs of individuals.

Inside the school, learning environments have attractive displays and suitably resourced areas. However, these environments do not always support pupils to learn independently. For instance, practical resources to support pupils' mathematical skills are not readily available in all classes. Similarly, the outdoor areas of the school are undeveloped, and there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills. When the younger pupils use the outdoor areas, activities tend to be very adult led and do not promote a natural sense of curiosity.

The school budget has a large underspend, and leaders have not prioritised funding to support teaching and learning well enough, for instance to improve the quality of outdoor learning for younger pupils. Leaders use grant funding suitably to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

Provision for pupils with ALN is generally appropriate. They have an individual development plan and leaders track their progress suitably. They work effectively with parents and outside agencies to review the provision.

Staff provide suitable opportunities for pupils to participate in and develop their leadership skills. For example, the Digital Leaders use assemblies to explain to other pupils how to stay safe online. However, recent changes to the timetabling of these groups significantly limits the school's extra-curricular offer. Consequently, pupils do not get opportunities to participate in sporting events.

The school's systems to manage pupil attendance are effective. Leaders respond to non-attendance appropriately and work closely with families to make improvements. The school provides beneficial learning sessions for families, where parents or grandparents learn alongside their children.

## 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 pupil development grant funding appropriately. They do not always manage the school's finances suitably.

## 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.

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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