Agenda Item No: 4

Meeting of:	**Start Well Scrutiny Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**Thursday, 19 November 2026**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Start Well Scrutiny Committee
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (If yes, why)	
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Summary of Estyn inspection outcomes for summer term 2026 and update on schools in statutory follow-up.
Portfolio Holder:	Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language
Strategic Leadership Team:	Director of Learning and Skills
Lead Officer:	Carys Pritchard, Lead Officer for School Improvement

1.0 What is this report about?

1.1 Estyn inspects quality and standards in education across Wales. A new inspection framework was introduced in September 2024. From September 2024, Estyn will be engaging more regularly with schools. Schools will now have a core inspection and an interim visit within the 6-year inspection period (2024 – 2030).

1.2 During the summer term 2026, four schools from the Vale of Glamorgan received a core inspection: Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, Barry Island Primary, High Street Primary and Cogan Primary.

1.3 No follow up work was identified by Estyn in relation to the four schools that received a core inspection during the summer term.

1.4 A 'spotlight' highlighting interesting or innovative practice is included in the inspection reports of all schools that received a core inspection during the summer term. The inspection report for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg highlights the school's anti-racism strategy and its impact on curriculum development. Barry Island Primary School's report recognises the school's success in fostering a collaborative culture of reflection and continuous improvement, alongside its work in developing critical thinkers and responsible digital citizens. High Street Primary School's report highlights the school's work in empowering pupils through exceptional wellbeing support. The inspection report for Cogan Primary School recognises the school's inspiring approach to inclusion.

1.5 In addition to the 'spotlight', Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg has been invited to write two case studies for Estyn. These relate to how the school supports and enriches pupils' Welsh language skills and how it uses enquiry projects within its professional learning programme to improve teaching and learning.

1.6 During the summer term 2026, four schools received an interim visit: Dinas Powys Primary, Romilly Primary, St Brides Church in Wales Primary and Victoria Primary.

1.7 At the start of the summer term, four schools from the Vale of Glamorgan were in an Estyn statutory follow up category: Pencoedtre and Llantwit Major High in special measures, and Fairfield and St Richard Gwyn in significant improvement.

1.8 In July 2026, Estyn undertook a monitoring visit to Fairfield Primary. Estyn judged the school to have made sufficient progress in relation to its recommendations. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales has removed Fairfield Primary from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

1.9 In terms of schools in a statutory follow up, Pencoedtre High School remains in special measures. The progress of the school is monitored by Estyn on a termly basis. In terms of Llantwit Major High, the Post-Inspection Action Plan has been approved by Estyn, and they will also be monitored on a termly basis.

1.10 The progress of St Richard Gwyn Catholic High will be reviewed by Estyn 12-18 months following publication of their inspection report. The school's report was published in July 2025.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	**Reason for Recommendation – Why?**
2.1	That Members consider the Estyn inspection outcomes for the summer term and congratulate: • Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, Barry Island Primary School, High Street Primary School and Cogan Primary School on achieving positive core inspection outcomes with no follow-up activity identified by Estyn. • Fairfield Primary School on the progress it has made, resulting in its removal from Estyn's list of schools requiring significant improvement.	To ensure Members are informed of Estyn findings relating to Vale of Glamorgan schools.
2.2	That Members consider: • the progress made by Pencoedtre High School, Llantwit Major High and St	To ensure Members are aware of the progress being made by schools within

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
	Richard Gwyn Catholic High School in addressing its Estyn recommendations.	Estyn statutory follow-up categories in addressing their recommendations.

3.0 What is the background to this report?

3.1 A new inspection framework was introduced by Estyn in September 2024. From September 2024, Estyn will be engaging more regularly with schools. Schools will now have a core inspection and an interim visit within the 6-year inspection period (2024 – 2030).

3.2 School inspections are governed by the Education Act 2025 and related regulations. Inspections must be conducted by teams of inspectors, led by an HMI, additional inspector or registered inspector, and must result in a written report. Section 28 of the Education Act 2005, says that inspectors must report on:

- the quality of education provided by the school
- how far education meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school
- the educational standards achieved by the school
- the quality of leadership and management of the school, including whether the financial resources are managed efficiently
- the development of the pupils by reference to the four purposes of a curriculum for those pupils
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school
- whether the provision promotes health eating and drinking
- the contribution of the school to the well-being of pupils

3.3 With the new Estyn inspection framework introduced in September 2024, there are three inspection areas. They are:

- teaching and learning
- well-being, care, support and guidance
- leading and improving

3.4 Inspection reports from September 2024 include a section with additional information at the end of the report. This section includes statements on the following items:

- safeguarding arrangements
- healthy eating and drinking
- school funding
- health and safety issues (safety on the site)

3.5 When conducting school inspections, the main forms of evidence considered are:

- samples of pupils' work

- discussions with pupils, staff, leaders, managers, governors, parents/carers and others
- observation of teaching and other activities, including evidence gathered through learning walks
- pre-inspection questionnaire responses
- documentary or electronic evidence, e.g. information on pupils' progress
- relevant information from the local authority (LA) /regional consortium
- professional dialogue

3.6 The reporting inspector is responsible for producing a final inspection report that is clear to a lay audience and helpful to the school. Estyn publishes a report for the school and also a version for parents/carers.

3.7 The notice period for a school receiving a core inspection is ten working days.

3.8 During all core inspections, the inspection team will consider whether the school needs any follow-up activity.

3.9 With the new inspection framework introduced in September 2024, there are two types of follow-up category:

- significant improvement
- special measures

3.10 All follow-up work up work involves activity by Estyn inspectors. The activity involves increasing levels of intervention in proportion to need.

3.11 A new feature of the inspection framework introduced in September 2024 is the interim visit led by Estyn. 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 primaries, the visit can be extended up to two days.

3.12 The notice period for a school receiving an interim visit by Estyn is five working days.

3.13 The purpose of interim visits is to support schools with their self-evaluation and improvement plans.

3.14 Following an interim visit, feedback will be provided to the headteacher. A short letter will be published on the Estyn website summarising the outcome of the visit. The letter will outline feedback to support the school with the next steps in their improvement process.

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

4.1 Four schools from the Vale of Glamorgan received a core inspection by Estyn during the summer term 2026: Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, Barry Island Primary, High Street Primary and Cogan Primary.

4.2 A summary of the inspection findings for the four schools is appended to this report (Appendix A).

4.3 Appendix B provides an overview of the schools who have received a core inspection by Estyn since the introduction of the new framework in September 2024.

4.4 No follow up work was identified by Estyn in relation to the four schools inspected during the summer term.

4.5 Where inspectors identify interesting or innovative practice that is worthy of wider sharing, Estyn includes a short 'spotlight on…' section within the inspection report. Five such spotlights were featured in the inspection reports published during the summer term. The inspection report for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg highlights the school's anti-racism strategy and its impact on curriculum development. Barry Island Primary School's report recognises the school's success in fostering a collaborative culture of reflection and continuous improvement, alongside its work in developing critical thinkers and responsible digital citizens. High Street Primary School's report highlights the school's work in empowering pupils through exceptional wellbeing support. The inspection report for Cogan Primary School recognises the school's inspiring approach to inclusion. Appendix C summarises all spotlights identified in Estyn reports for Vale of Glamorgan schools since September 2024.

4.6 In addition to the 'spotlight', Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg has been invited to write two case studies for Estyn. They are in relation to how the school supports and enriches pupils' Welsh language skills and how it uses enquiry projects within its professional learning programme to improve teaching and learning. These case studies will be shared on the Estyn website.

4.7 During the summer term 2026, four schools received an interim visit: Dinas Powys Primary, Romilly Primary, St Brides Church in Wales Primary and Victoria Primary. These visits focused on progress against two previous Estyn recommendations or priorities identified within the schools' development plan. Appendix D provides an overview of the schools who have received an interim visit by Estyn since the introduction of the new framework in September 2024.

4.8 At the start of the summer term, four Vale of Glamorgan schools were in a statutory follow up category: Pencoedtre High School and Llantwit Major High in special measures, and Fairfield Primary and St Richard Gwyn Catholic High in significant improvement.

4.9 In July 2026, Estyn undertook a monitoring visit to Fairfield Primary. Estyn judged the school to have made sufficient progress in relation to their recommendations. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales has removed Fairfield Primary from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

4.10 For Pencoedtre, as a secondary school in special measures, a multi-agency panel has been established that includes an Estyn HMI, representatives from the school and LA. Two meetings of this panel were held during the summer term 2026.

4.11 Estyn undertook a monitoring visit to Pencoedtre in July 2026 with a particular focus on:

- Recommendation 1. Improve strategic leadership and accountability at all levels, including the school's approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning
- Recommendation 5. Improve the provision to develop and the standards of pupils' skills

4.12 Estyn report that Pencoedtre has strengthened its leadership capacity through a restructured senior leadership team, resulting in increased capacity to drive improvements. This has enhanced the school's ability to drive improvement, particularly in teaching and learning, where collaborative leadership approaches are beginning to have a positive impact.

4.13 The school is strengthening its accountability processes. Governors now provide effective support and challenge, while strengthened line management processes have increased leaders' understanding of their responsibilities and accountability. Professional learning and coaching have further developed middle leadership capacity. There remains inconsistency in the extent to which middle leaders challenge and hold staff to account.

4.14 The school has introduced revised self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, which are beginning to strengthen leaders' understanding of the relationship between teaching quality and pupil progress. Although senior leaders are supporting middle leaders to develop their quality assurance skills, middle leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating provision. As a result, their understanding of strengths and areas for improvement within their areas of responsibility remains underdeveloped.

4.15 In terms of skills, the school has strengthened leadership of literacy and numeracy through a revised structure that promotes greater subject expertise and clearer accountability.

4.16 Leaders have increased oversight of skills provision and are beginning to identify areas for improvement and target support more effectively.

4.17 There are early signs of improvement, including increased opportunities for reading and extended writing, appropriate interventions for pupils requiring additional support, and a stronger focus on developing basic numeracy skills.

4.18 Leaders are beginning to evaluate skills provision more systematically. However, self-evaluation and quality assurance processes are not yet sufficiently focused on the impact of provision on pupils' skills development, and skills leaders have limited involvement in evaluating practice.

4.19 Further work is needed to strengthen the quality and consistency of skills development across the curriculum.

4.20 In terms of Llantwit, the Post-Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was approved by Estyn in July 2026. The PIAP sets out the work proposed to enable the school to make sufficient improvement to address the deficiencies identified by Estyn as soon as possible.

4.21 The LA has worked closely with the school in devising the PIAP. The plan also sets out the actions the LA will take in response to the inspection report and the support it will provide to the school. Support arrangements include:

- targeted support from Local Authority officers to strengthen school improvement, attendance and Youth Service provision
- specialist support from Central South Consortium to improve teaching and learning, curriculum development and skills provision
- brokerage of school-to-school support to strengthen leadership capacity
- delivery of professional learning programmes for senior and middle leaders
- appointment of additional governors to strengthen governance and oversight

4.22 Multi-agency meetings will be held on a half-termly basis, commencing in the autumn term 2026.

4.23 In relation to St Richard Gwyn, their PIAP has been approved by Estyn in November 2025.

4.24 The school is working closely with the Central South Consortium and external providers to improve the quality of teaching, learning and skills development. In addition, new self-evaluation processes, including the introduction of 'Focus Fortnight' reviews, have been implemented last academic year. These are providing leaders with greater clarity about strengths and areas for development, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and its impact on learners.

4.25 Progress in relation to St Richard Gwyn's PIAP is being monitored by the LA on a half-termly basis.

4.26 Progress will be reviewed by Estyn 12-18 months following publication of the inspection report in July 2025.

5.0 How has evidence been used to inform the report, including the views of others?

5.1 Evidence used to inform the report includes:

- findings of Estyn core inspection reports
- findings of Estyn interim visits
- findings of Estyn monitoring visits
- information relating to the PIAP of schools in statutory follow up
- findings from progress meetings with schools in statutory follow up
- feedback from Pencoedtre multi-agency meetings

6.0 What are the next steps if the recommendations are approved?

6.1 Lead Officer for School Improvement will write, on behalf of the Start Well Scrutiny Committee, to all schools inspected during the summer term 2026 to congratulate them on their positive inspection outcomes and to recognise the effective practice highlighted within their Estyn inspection reports.

6.2 Further updates to be provided on schools in statutory category on a termly basis.

7.0 How does this report support Vale 2030 and Reshaping?

7.1 There is clear alignment with the wellbeing objective to work with and for our communities to ensure everyone has a good start in life, particularly by providing learners of all ages with access to high-quality education, skills development and appropriate support.

7.2 The report also links inspection findings with broader priorities such as wellbeing, attendance, and skills, demonstrating a joined-up approach across education priorities.

8.0 How does this demonstrate the Five Ways of Working?

8.1 This report recognises the importance of identifying best practice in learning, provision and leadership in schools which will meet the needs of young people over the long term.

8.2 The report aligns clearly with the Vale 2030 wellbeing objectives, particularly ensuring learners receive a good start in life through high-quality education.

8.3 There is purposeful collaboration between schools, the local authority, Central South Consortium and Estyn particularly for those schools in Estyn statutory follow up category. Multi-agency meetings, targeted support, and regular monitoring of progress illustrate how collective working supports school improvement and system-wide learning.

8.4 All relevant stakeholders have been involved in the consultation process through this report.

Resources

9.0 Finance

9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10.0 Workforce

10.1 There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

11:0 Legal and Equalities

11.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

11.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

12.0 Key Contacts

12.1 **Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?**

Lead Officer: Carys Pritchard Lead Officer for School Improvement	Democratic Services Officer: Gareth Davies Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer

cpritchard@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk	gjdavies@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Appendix

Appendix A – School Inspections Summer 2026

Appendix B – Schools who have received a core inspection by Estyn since September 2024

Appendix C – Spotlights of effective practice identified by Estyn since September 2024

Appendix D – Schools who have received an interim visit by Estyn since September 2024

Background Documents

Appendix A: School Inspections Summer 2026

School	**Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg**	**Headteacher**	Rhys Angell Jones
Date	**April 2026**	**Reporting Inspector**	Gwawr Meirion
Report	Inspection Report Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg		

Recommendations and context for recommendations
1. Improve attendance
Reason/Context for recommendation During the pandemic, the decrease in the school's attendance was less than that seen nationally. However, during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 academic years, the rate of improvement in attendance was very slow and the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals was significantly lower than in similar schools. Over the past eighteen months, the school has taken purposeful action to improve this aspect by increasing the capacity to support and tighten processes for monitoring pupils' attendance. As a result, unverified data shows that attendance rates, including the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, for this academic year have improved, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels.
2. Ensure that opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and digital skills are consistent across the school
Reason/Context for recommendation Opportunities for lower school pupils to apply their numeracy skills in different contexts are not always consistent enough. Although there are many useful opportunities for pupils to develop digital skills across the curriculum, provision is not co-ordinated fully to ensure that pupils develop their skills progressively over time.
3. Work with the local authority to address the budget deficit
Reason/Context for recommendation The school is in a significant financial deficit and senior leaders are working with the local authority to rectify the situation.

Follow-Up Category: No follow up

Have Estyn highlighted any 'spotlights'? Yes

- Anti-racism strategy to develop curricular provision

Case Study

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg have been invited to prepare two case studies for dissemination on Estyn's website. The case studies relate to:

- how the school supports and enriches pupils' Welsh language skills
- how it uses enquiry projects within its professional learning programme to improve teaching and learning

Appendix A: School Inspections Summer 2026

School	**Barry Island Primary**	**Headteacher**	Matt Gilbert
Date	**May 2026**	**Reporting Inspector**	Lisa Lewis
Report	Inspection report Barry Island Primary School		

Recommendations and context for recommendations
1. Strengthen opportunities for younger pupils to learn through play and exploration.
Reason/Context for recommendation In the youngest classes, teachers plan learning environments that engage pupils suitably and encourage them to make simple choices about their learning. At times, resources and learning opportunities do not respond closely enough to pupils' emerging interests and developmental needs.
2. Improve older pupils' conversational Welsh language skills.
Reason/Context for recommendation Older pupils have too few opportunities to develop their conversational Welsh through regular spoken interactions. This means that they do not use Welsh confidently or naturally beyond familiar patterns and phrases.

Follow-Up Category: No follow up

Have Estyn highlighted any 'spotlights'? Yes

- Developing a collaborative culture of reflection and improvement
- Building critical thinkers and responsible digital citizens

Appendix A: School Inspections Summer 2026

School	**High Street Primary**	**Headteacher**	Sarah McKee
Date	**May 2026**	**Reporting Inspector**	Peter Owen
Report	Inspection Report High Street Primary		

Recommendations and context for recommendations
1. Further improve opportunities for pupils to use and develop their Welsh language skills
Reason/Context for recommendation Many pupils develop simple Welsh language skills steadily through opportunities to hear and practise basic Welsh phrases. Teachers encourage pupils to use Welsh during classroom routines appropriately, although opportunities for pupils to use Welsh independently are less developed. As a result, many pupils lack confidence in using Welsh in everyday situations.
2. Ensure all teachers have consistently high expectations and challenge pupils appropriately
Reason/Context for recommendation The expectations of staff and the level of challenge for pupils are not consistent enough across the school.

Follow-Up Category: No follow up

Have Estyn highlighted any 'spotlights'? Yes

- Empowering pupils through exceptional well-being support

Appendix A: School Inspections Summer 2026

School	**Cogan Primary**	**Headteacher**	Sue Sibert
Date	**May 2026**	**Reporting Inspector**	Rhian Lundrigan
Report	Inspection Report Cogan Primary School		

Recommendations and context for recommendations
1. **Increase opportunities for pupils to direct their own learning and develop their independence across the indoor and outdoor environments**
Reason/Context for recommendation Opportunities for pupils to learn purposefully and independently in the extensive outdoor areas are underdeveloped.

Follow-Up Category: No follow up

Have Estyn highlighted any 'spotlights'? Yes

- Inspiring inclusion everyday

Appendix B: Schools who have received a core inspection by Estyn since September 2024

Autumn 2024	
Gwenfo C/W Primary School	**Read report here**
St Athan Primary School	**Read report here**
Spring 2025	
Oak Field Primary and Nursery School	**Read report here**
Ysgol Y Deri	**Read report here**
Fairfield Primary School	**Read report here**
Ysgol Gymraeg Gwaun Y Nant	**Read report here**
Summer 2025	
Palmerston Primary	**Read report here**
St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School	**Read report here**
Autumn 2025	
Gladstone Primary	**Read report here**
Colcot Primary	**Read report here**
Ysgol Sant Baruc	**Read report here**
Spring 2026	
Cowbridge School	**Read report here**
St Nicholas Church in Wales Primary	**Read report here**
Llantwit Major High	**Read report here**
All Saints Church in Wales Primary	**Read report here**
Cadoxton Primary	**Read report here**
Llansannor and Llanharry Church in Wales Primary School	**Read report here**
Summer 2026	
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg	**Read report here**
Barry Island Primary	**Read report here**
High Street Primary	**Read report here**

Cogan Primary	**Read report here**

Appendix C: Spotlights of effective practice identified by Estyn since September 2024

Autumn 2024	
Gwenfo Church in Wales Primary	• Partnership and community working

Spring 2025	
Oak Field Primary	• Developing effective partnerships with parents to support pupils' learning and well-being • Developing a creative curriculum through a focus on the expressive arts and inquiry-based learning
Ysgol y Deri	• High quality interventions • The provision of assistive technology • Vocational curriculum • Outdoor experiences • Professional learning

Summer 2025	
Palmerston Primary	• Effective Family Engagement

Autumn 2025	
Gladstone Primary	• Providing a highly effective enabling environment for younger pupils • Effective partnership working to support pupils and their families
Colcot Primary	• Partnership Working and Supporting the Needs of Families
Ysgol Sant Baruc	• Using a staff charter to facilitate the performance evaluation procedure

Spring 2026	
Cowbridge School	• Developing pupils' reading skills • A collaborative culture of professional learning
St Nicholas Church in Wales Primary	• Effective curriculum development • Promoting an anti-racist culture
Cadoxton Primary	• An authentic curriculum that raises standards • Breaking down barriers to learning, supporting pupil engagement and regular attendance

Llansannor and LLanharry Church in Wales Primary	• An effective curriculum • Developing independent learners

Summer 2026	
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg	• Anti-racism strategy to develop curricular provision Case Studies • how the school supports and enriches pupils' Welsh language skills • how it uses enquiry projects within its professional learning programme to improve teaching and learning
Barry Island Primary	• Developing a collaborative culture of reflection and improvement • Building critical thinkers and responsible digital citizens
High Street Primary	• Empowering pupils through exceptional well-being support
Cogan Primary	• Inspiring inclusion everyday

Appendix D: Schools who have received an interim visit by Estyn since September 2024

Autumn 2024	
Stanwell School	Interim letter

Spring 2025	
Llandough Primary	Interim letter
Whitmore High	Interim letter
St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary	Interim letter
Albert Primary	Interim letter
Peterston Super Ely Church in Wales Primary	Interim letter
Sully Primary	Interim letter
Pendoylan Church in Wales Primary	Interim letter
Ysgol y Ddraig	Interim letter

Summer 2025	
Y Bont Faen Primary	Interim letter

Autumn 2025	
St Helen's Catholic Primary	Interim letter

Spring 2026	
Ysgol Iolo Morganwg	Interim letter

Summer 2026	
Dinas Powys Primary	Interim letter
Romilly Primary	Interim letter
St Brides Church in Wales Primary	Interim letter
Victoria Primary	Interim letter