

A report on

Ninian Park Primary School

**Virgil Street
Grangetown
CF11 8TF**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

This report is also available in Welsh

About Ninian Park Primary School

Name of provider	Ninian Park Primary School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	584
Pupils of statutory school age	440
Number in nursery classes	78
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%)	43.7%
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%)	3.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	73.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	07/05/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	22/11/2016

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Start date of inspection	30/06/2025
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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

Ninian Park Primary provides a welcoming, multi-cultural learning environment that promotes important values of equity, respect and inclusion. The headteacher leads with passion and commitment to support the needs of families and the wider community and, as a result, pupils and their families feel supported and cared for.

During their time in school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and English as an additional language (EAL) make suitable progress in their learning and well-being. Most pupils develop their oracy skills effectively so that they become confident speakers by the time they leave school. Many pupils develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills suitably. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills, although this is often at a basic level and pupils do not build on these skills progressively.

The quality of teaching varies across the school. In the most effective lessons, a minority of teachers share clear learning intentions that are understood by pupils and develop effective questioning to support and extend pupils' understanding of the skills and knowledge they are developing. However, overall, teachers' expectations are too low, and they do not plan learning activities that challenge and build on pupils' skills progressively.

Leaders use a range of evidence to identify the school's strengths and areas for development. They plan suitable professional development to develop staff subject knowledge and skills. However, leaders do not evaluate the quality of teaching and its impact on learning well enough. As a result, improvement planning often focuses on activities to be completed and does not address weaknesses in teaching well enough.

Leaders work effectively with parents and the wider community to provide valuable workshops that help parents develop an understanding of the school's curriculum and how they can support learning at home. Leaders create effective partnerships that help support families. For example, they arrange translation services to help ensure that activities are accessible and meet the needs of the diverse school population.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Improve the quality of teaching and ensure that all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
- R2. Strengthen self-evaluation processes to focus more on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning
- R3. Improve standards in Welsh

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Ninian Park Primary is a nurturing and inclusive setting where leaders and staff actively promote a strong sense of community. They celebrate the rich diversity of pupils' backgrounds and embrace the benefits of a multilingual environment. As a result, most pupils feel well supported, valued, and enjoy attending school.

Over time, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and English as an additional language (EAL) make suitable progress in their learning. Leaders have a clear understanding of the challenges arising from a changing school population. They work closely with teachers and support staff to plan well-structured interventions that effectively support the progress of pupils with ALN and EAL.

Most younger pupils benefit from a language-rich learning environment that provides purposeful opportunities to develop their oracy skills. As they move through the school, pupils build effectively on these skills through activities such as class discussions and school assemblies. As a result, most pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.

Most pupils make suitable progress in developing their reading skills. Many younger pupils begin to use their phonic knowledge to read simple words independently. As they progress through the school, many older pupils read with increasing fluency and confidence. However, the culture of reading and older pupils' enthusiasm for reading are less well developed.

Across the school, most pupils make appropriate progress in their writing. Many younger pupils use their understanding of letter sounds to spell a range of common words accurately. In Year 3, many pupils begin to use a wider vocabulary and extend their sentences. By Year 6, many pupils write at greater length and for a variety of purposes, including reports, stories and biographies. Through topic work, many pupils develop their creative skills suitably.

Most pupils make suitable progress in developing their mathematical skills. Many younger pupils develop a good understanding of number through the use of practical resources and most older pupils use a range of strategies to solve number problems. However, overall, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills at a level they are capable of, and for a range of purposes across the curriculum. Most pupils develop suitable digital skills.

Teachers provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of faiths and cultures. The school maintains strong relationships with pupils, their families, and key

members of the local community to offer first-hand learning experiences that celebrate different traditions and festivals. As a result, most pupils develop an understanding and appreciation of their own identity and that of others and show respect towards the beliefs of others.

Leaders and staff work together to provide a curriculum that reflects both the multicultural nature of the school and Welsh heritage. Teachers provide daily opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to build on these skills progressively and, as a result, most pupils' Welsh language skills remain at a basic level.

The quality of teaching varies across the school. Where teaching is effective, teachers plan engaging and purposeful learning experiences that build effectively on pupils' existing skills and support their progress well. They use assessment information appropriately to inform planning and employ effective questioning to extend pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. However, in less effective lessons, teachers' expectations are too low, and tasks lack sufficient challenge, particularly for more able pupils. In addition, the quality of feedback is inconsistent and, in some instances, does not clearly support pupils to understand how to improve their work.

Leaders have established a well-structured cycle of monitoring activities, which they use appropriately to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They identify relevant priorities and align professional learning suitably with the needs of staff. In the most effective practice, leaders provide valuable opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively with professionals from other schools, which helps to refine the curriculum and enhance learning experiences for pupils. However, leaders do not always use evaluation activities precisely enough to identify aspects of teaching that require improvement. Feedback is often too task-oriented and does not consistently focus on how to improve the quality of teaching or its impact on pupil progress. As a result, some weaknesses in teaching persist over time, which affects the progress of a minority of pupils, particularly the more able.

Leaders work closely with the family engagement officer to track and monitor pupils' attendance effectively. They have a strong understanding of their families and engage well with them to promote the importance of regular school attendance. These efforts are beginning to have a positive impact, particularly for pupils who have previously had poor attendance. However, despite these improvements, overall attendance remains too low.

Spotlight: Supporting the needs of families in a diverse school community

Leaders work effectively with parents and the wider community to provide purposeful learning experiences that foster strong, trusting relationships. These partnerships are underpinned by a high level of mutual respect and contribute positively to the inclusive and supportive ethos of the school. The school offers a range of beneficial workshops and events to signpost support to families, as well as to develop parents' knowledge and understanding of the school curriculum. Leaders actively recognise and celebrate the school's cultural and language diversity, and they seek opportunities to provide translation and interpretation services to ensure that all families feel included and can engage in school life. As a result of this collaborative work, families from a wide range of backgrounds support one another effectively and play a valued role in the school community.

Recently, the governing body has strengthened its role in supporting school leaders. Governors engage positively with the life of the school and work closely with leaders to manage the budget and address the deficit. Governors are well informed about national priorities, such as ALN reform and curriculum developments, and understand how the school is responding to these. Governors are beginning to participate in self-evaluation activities, but their involvement is at an early stage. As a result, they do not yet have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil progress.

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/carers 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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