

**A report on**

**Pontprennau Primary School**

**Heol Pontprennau  
Cardiff  
CF23 8LL**

**Date of inspection: February 2026**

**by**

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

## About Pontprennau Primary School

Name of provider	Pontprennau 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	483
Pupils of statutory school age	352
Number in nursery classes	70
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%)	13.0%
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 9.2%)	4.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	17.9%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2021

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/05/2019
Start date of inspection	23/02/2026

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](http://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

Pontprennau Primary is a highly inclusive and community-centred school. Leaders provide purposeful and considerate leadership that promotes strong relationships among staff, pupils, and families. The school's vision is shared by staff, governors and parents and contributes to the caring ethos and positive relationships across the school.

The school provides a highly nurturing environment where care, support, and guidance are notable strengths. The school's inclusion team ensures pupils and parents help to shape decisions, especially for those with additional learning needs (ALN). Leaders work with families highly effectively and transition arrangements from home to school for the youngest pupils are exceptional.

The school prioritises pupils' well-being successfully. Staff adopt a trauma informed approach and implement targeted support strategies for those in need. Attendance is monitored rigorously, with timely interventions that have improved overall attendance. Across the school, there is a strong culture of safeguarding, and nearly all pupils feel safe.

Most pupils display highly positive attitudes to learning and relationships across the school are extremely positive. They engage enthusiastically in activities and often demonstrate resilience when facing challenging tasks. Opportunities for pupils to influence wider school decisions is a developing feature.

Overall, teaching is effective. Clear learning intentions and appropriate assessment supports most pupils to make good progress in many areas of learning. In the best practice, questioning probes understanding and informs responsive teaching, though at times overly directed approaches can limit pupils' independence. The school's broad, engaging curriculum reflects the Curriculum for Wales purposefully. As they move through the school, pupils' language, reading, and writing skills develop well, alongside their development in mathematics. Though opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum are less well developed.

Leaders provide a clear strategic direction aligned with national priorities. A culture of trust encourages effective professional dialogue, while distributed leadership strengthens collective responsibility and builds leadership capacity. Monitoring and evaluation processes provide leaders with a sound understanding of strengths and areas for improvement, though they are not precise enough to identify and address inconsistencies in practice across the school. Governors contribute robustly and financial management is prudent. Spending is aligned clearly to improvement priorities and to support pupils' learning and experiences.

## **Recommendations**

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

- R1 Refine self-evaluation activities to enable leaders to identify important aspects of teaching that need to improve
- R2 Strengthen opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum

## **What happens next**

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

## Main evaluation

At Pontprennau Primary School, leaders and staff foster a strong sense of community and shared values. Highly positive relationships between staff, pupils and families help pupils to feel safe, valued, and motivated to learn. The school's engagement with the wider community reinforces this ethos and encourages families to actively support school life. Leaders are visible and approachable, strengthening communication with parents and carers. Clear, timely communication and sensitive responses from staff reduce barriers to learning and support families experiencing difficulties.

The school's community-focused approach ensures effective care and support for pupils and families. Staff build purposeful relationships with parents, fostering trust and respect, which promotes positive engagement in learning. The inclusion team ensures that parents' and pupils' views inform decisions, particularly for those with additional learning needs (ALN). This results in well-targeted support. Leaders provide professional learning to enhance staff understanding of pupils' academic and emotional needs, enabling teachers to adapt classroom provision effectively. They collaborate well with staff, families, pupils, and external agencies to develop and review individual development plans (IDPs) and monitor progress robustly to refine provision.

Barriers to learning are addressed thoughtfully, promoting equity for vulnerable groups, including pupils eligible for free school meals, those learning English as an additional language, and pupils with ALN. Support for pupils' well-being is a notable strength. Staff adopt a trauma-informed approach and implement targeted strategies for social and emotional needs. Attendance is tracked rigorously, with timely interventions improving overall attendance. Persistent absence is addressed collaboratively with families, external agencies, and the cluster attendance officer. Nearly all pupils feel safe and know whom to approach if they have concerns. Across the school there are effective safeguarding practices.

### **Spotlight: Starting school with a strong sense of belonging**

The school provides exceptional opportunities for the youngest pupils to transition from home to school. Before they start school, this begins purposefully with staff visiting children and their families at home. Coupled with a wide range of opportunities to engage with school, parents appreciate the positive relationships that they build with staff. This valuable bridge between home and school helps the youngest pupils and their families to develop a strong sense of belonging. Leaders and staff capitalise on this positive start well gaining beneficial information about pupils' barriers to learning. Teachers work with highly skilled support staff to assess and target pupil needs. This robust approach ensures that nearly all the youngest pupils, including those from low-income households, make strong progress from their individual starting points.

School leaders set a clear strategic direction and promote collective responsibility for improvement. They address national priorities well by providing an engaging curriculum, developing pupils' reading skills, and Welsh speaking skills. A culture of trust encourages professional dialogue across the school. Roles and responsibilities are distributed effectively, enabling leaders to monitor provision, support colleagues, and lead professional learning successfully. In addition, coaching and collaboration with other schools strengthen leaders' confidence and capacity.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Nearly all behave well in lessons and around the school, engaging enthusiastically in most activities. Pupils discuss their learning confidently and take pride in their achievements. Supportive relationships between staff and pupils foster trust and emotional security, helping pupils meet high behavioural expectations and treat one another with kindness and respect. Most pupils show resilience and perseverance when tackling challenges. They participate in decision-making through groups such as The Rights Knights and the school council, though there are limited opportunities for them to influence wider school decisions making.

In most lessons, teachers share clear learning intentions and use assessment strategies effectively. In the strongest lessons, teachers use thoughtful questioning to check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching. At times, teaching is overly directed and this limits pupils' ability to develop their independent learning skills and lead their own learning. Written feedback is generally effective. When strong, pupils understand how to improve their work and can articulate their next steps in learning. In a few instances, the impact of feedback on improving pupils' extended writing varies across classes.

Support staff provide targeted small-group support, helping pupils access learning, build confidence, and make progress. Teachers track progress systematically and use assessment information effectively to plan interventions for identified pupils.

Working with the local cluster, teachers have developed a broad, engaging curriculum aligned with the principles of Curriculum for Wales. Learning is well-structured to build knowledge, develop skills, and support progress. The curriculum reflects the local community, Wales, and the wider world. It is enriched through partnerships with families, businesses, and worthwhile educational visits. Pupils develop spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding well, showing a strong sense of belonging and respect for diversity. Creative experiences, including expressive arts inquiries, support artistic development, while learning about local heritage, Wales, and the wider world strengthens pupils' sense of Cynefin.

From the moment they start school, pupils develop strong early language skills through structured provision, speech and language support, and effective adult modelling. Most become confident communicators, using subject-specific vocabulary accurately. Older pupils articulate ideas clearly and engage maturely in discussions, including debates on current affairs. Younger pupils use familiar Welsh patterns enthusiastically. Whilst early Welsh oracy develops well, many older pupils lack confidence in forming more intricate sentences.

A strong focus on phonics supports early reading. Younger pupils decode confidently and apply skills across the curriculum, while older pupils read fluently and value reading at home and school. Writing develops steadily, with pupils composing, drafting, and refining work effectively. Older pupils write at length for a range of purposes.

Most younger pupils build secure number skills, supported by systematic teaching of number facts and calculation strategies. Across the school, most pupils solve problems confidently, though a few older pupils rely heavily on formal written methods. Opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum are limited. Overall, pupils across the school develop appropriate digital skills.

Leaders have established sound monitoring, evaluation, and review processes. They draw on a wide range of evidence to understand school strengths and areas for improvement, though at times, monitoring activities are not sufficiently sharp to identify specific aspects of teaching requiring improvement. Professional learning for staff aligns closely with school priorities. They engage enthusiastically in collaborative inquiry and visits to other schools to support and improve their work.

Governors understand the school well and contribute highly effectively to its work. Skills audits align responsibilities to their expertise, enabling them to provide robust challenge and support. Governors maintain rigorous oversight of safeguarding and ensure strategic and financial decisions, including pupil development grant spending, prioritise pupils' needs.

## **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](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

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

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