

A report on
Ponthir Church in Wales School

School Close
Ponthir
Torfaen
NP18 1GA

Date of inspection: May 2026

by

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

About Ponthir Church in Wales School

Name of provider	Ponthir Church in Wales School
Local authority	Torfaen County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales
Number of pupils on roll	101
Pupils of statutory school age	88
Number in nursery classes	*
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%)	*
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%)	5.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	22/04/2024

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	26/02/2018
Start date of inspection	11/05/2026

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

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

Summary

Leaders communicate a clear vision that places pupils' well-being, progress and sense of belonging at the heart of the school's work. This vision is well understood across the school community and implemented consistently. Through robust self-evaluation processes and effective use of evidence, leaders identify priorities for improvement and refine provision purposefully. They use funding strategically to support pupils' progress and well-being, including support for those with additional learning needs (ALN). Most pupils engage positively in their learning and make strong progress from their starting points.

A notable strength of the school is its highly inclusive and caring ethos. Leaders and staff foster strong, respectful relationships that create a nurturing environment where nearly all pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour, show high levels of respect and care for others, and display positive attitudes to learning. Effective provision for emotional well-being supports pupils to build resilience and feel confident in sharing concerns. The school has strong partnerships with parents and carers, who feel well informed and confident that their children are safe and well supported, contributing to its inclusive ethos.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum enriched by engaging learning experiences, including effective outdoor learning. These opportunities encourage pupils to think creatively, solve problems and develop independence. Most pupils make strong progress and develop secure literacy, numeracy and digital skills, applying these confidently across contexts. Teachers use questioning effectively and provide clear feedback that helps pupils improve their work and deepen understanding. There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills effectively.

Pupil leadership is a strong feature of the school. Through a range of groups, pupils actively contribute to decision-making and help shape school life. This develops their confidence, collaboration skills and understanding of their impact within the school and wider community.

Recommendations

We have made one recommendation to help the school continue to improve:

R1 Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Leaders articulate and communicate a clear and inclusive, shared vision focussed on improving learning outcomes for all pupils, at the centre of the school's work. They ensure that this vision is understood and implemented consistently across the school.

Spotlight 1: Creating an inclusive and caring school

A notable strength of the school is its unwavering commitment to placing well-being at the heart of all provision. Leaders and staff establish and sustain positive, well embedded relationships with pupils and across the school community. Nearly all pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. They demonstrate exemplary behaviour, show high levels of respect and care for others, and take increasing responsibility for their actions, alongside consistently positive attitudes to learning. The school establishes strong and trusting relationships with parents and carers through effective communication and regular opportunities for engagement. Parents feel their children are safe, well cared for and valued.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, with effective opportunities for pupils to learn through engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Teachers plan purposeful, real-life contexts for learning, including highly effective outdoor learning, that encourage pupils to think creatively, solve problems and develop independence. Most pupils show motivation, curiosity and sustained engagement, taking increasing ownership of their learning. Most older pupils demonstrate resilience in problem-solving and refine their approaches thoughtfully. Inclusivity is a notable strength, and the school promotes this effectively through its rich learning experiences. Pupils develop as reflective, respectful and inclusive individuals with a sound understanding of diversity in their

community, Wales and the wider world. The school's established international languages provision further enriches the curriculum and strengthens pupils' communication skills. Overall, most pupils make strong progress and develop as confident and independent learners.

Teachers use effective questioning and clear feedback to support most pupils to make strong progress during lessons and over time. They ensure pupils have regular opportunities to review and improve their work and provide further support that helps pupils deepen their understanding of concepts. Teachers use assessment successfully to identify pupils' next steps in learning and plan effectively to enable pupil progress. Learning environments are engaging, purposeful and inviting, with high-quality displays that celebrate achievement, reinforce high expectations and actively support pupils' learning.

Most pupils develop secure literacy skills. They develop as articulate speakers with an extensive vocabulary and through the school's positive culture of reading become confident readers. Pupils benefit from opportunities to write purposefully in a range of interesting contexts. Older pupils write with confidence. They act on feedback effectively to create highly engaging work.

Staff provide regular, purposeful opportunities for pupils to practise their Welsh oracy skills, particularly in familiar and informal contexts. Many pupils use simple phrases and respond appropriately to basic questions, and most engage enthusiastically in structured activities. However, planning for Welsh does not yet ensure sufficient progression or challenge, particularly in extending pupils' responses and developing accuracy. As a result, most pupils rely too heavily on support and are not confident in communicating independently or using a wider range of language patterns.

Most pupils make strong and sustained progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Younger pupils develop a secure understanding of number, while older pupils demonstrate strong mental recall and well-developed problem-solving skills. They apply their mathematical knowledge effectively in a range of real-life contexts.

Across the school, most pupils develop secure digital skills and use them confidently in meaningful contexts. They understand how to stay safe online and use a range of devices and applications effectively to create and share their work. Most pupils apply these skills with increasing independence. They enjoy using and learning through technology and this supports their strong progress and positive engagement in learning across the curriculum.

Leaders use funding, including grant funding, effectively to support pupils' progress and well-being. This enables the school to provide targeted provision that supports individual

pupil's emotional development within a safe environment. Pupils receive timely support, feel confident to share concerns and develop resilience.

The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is effective. Staff identify pupils' needs promptly and work closely with leaders and external agencies to tailor support. Teaching assistants play a key role in delivering consistent and targeted interventions. They foster positive relationships with pupils and parents, which enhance engagement and trust. Transition arrangements are highly effective, particularly for pupils with ALN. This has a positive impact on their well-being and readiness to learn and ensures that they integrate successfully into school life. Nearly all pupils with ALN, make sound progress from their starting points.

Spotlight 2: Developing pupils as leaders

Pupil leadership groups are a strong feature of the school's work and play an active role in shaping both school life and aspects of the curriculum. Pupils participate regularly in a wide range of groups, where they contribute to decision-making and lead purposeful activities. Through these roles, most pupils develop confidence, collaboration skills and an increasing understanding of how their contributions influence the school and wider community.

Leaders establish robust self-evaluation processes, drawing effectively on a wide range of evidence to identify priorities and monitor progress. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and provide appropriate support and challenge, contributing to the school's capacity for improvement. Leaders use this information well to refine provision and maintain a clear focus on improving pupils' learning and well-being. Professional learning is purposeful and well aligned to school priorities, supported by effective collaboration and networks that have demonstrable impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

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.

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Publication date: 14/07/2026