

A report on
Tonnau Primary Community School

**School Road
Tonna
Neath
SA11 3EJ**

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

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

About Tonnau Primary Community School

Name of provider	Tonnau Primary Community 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	206
Pupils of statutory school age	157
Number in nursery classes	29
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%)	21.8%
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%)	11.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2023

A report on Tonnau Primary Community School
June 2026

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	04/12/2017
Start date of inspection	15/06/2026

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

Tonnau Primary School is a caring, inclusive and welcoming school where pupils feel safe, valued and supported. Strong relationships between pupils, staff, governors and families contribute to a positive school community and a strong sense of belonging. The school's focus on emotional well-being helps most pupils manage their feelings successfully and contributes to high standards of behaviour. Nearly all pupils behave well, show respect towards others and have positive attitudes to learning.

Most pupils make good progress from their starting points, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals. Provision for pupils with ALN is effective, with well-planned support helping most pupils make good progress towards their individual targets.

The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is a positive feature of the school's work. Staff place a strong emphasis on communication from an early age and, as a result, most pupils become confident, articulate and mature speakers who contribute thoughtfully to discussions and express their ideas clearly. Most pupils also make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and apply these skills appropriately across the curriculum. While older pupils write creatively and for a range of purposes, opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length are more limited.

The school provides an engaging curriculum that reflects the local community and Welsh culture successfully. A wide range of visits, visitors and enrichment activities enhances pupils' learning experiences and supports their personal development well.

Overall, teaching across the school is effective and supports pupils to make good progress. In the strongest practice, teachers use questioning well to help pupils move their learning forward and they build on pupil's prior learning successfully. However, on occasion, learning experiences do not provide clear enough purpose, appropriate challenge or opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners.

Leaders, staff and governors share a clear vision for the school and work effectively together to support pupils' well-being and learning. Governors understand the school's context well and provide appropriate support and challenge. Strong partnerships with parents are a strength, and families value the support provided by the school.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Continue to strengthen teaching to ensure that learning experiences and teaching approaches meet the needs of all pupils
- R2 Raise teachers' expectations for how independently pupils develop and apply their skills
- R3 Improve attendance, particularly for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those with additional learning needs.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Tonnau Primary School provides a caring and inclusive environment where pupils feel valued, supported and respected. The headteacher, staff and governors build strong, respectful relationships with pupils, parents and one another and this contributes well to the school's strong family ethos. Together, they share a clear vision that promotes a nurturing and supportive school community in a calm, purposeful environment where pupils feel safe, secure and valued.

The school's structured approach to emotional well-being, including regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on and discuss their feelings, supports pupils to manage their emotions successfully. Consequently, nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They demonstrate highly positive attitudes towards one another and treat their peers and adults with respect and courtesy. These positive attitudes and respectful relationships contribute effectively to a calm and purposeful learning environment where most pupils engage well in learning and make good progress from their starting points. They develop effective learning behaviours and demonstrate increasing confidence as they move through the school.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is effective. The school has well-designed systems to identify, monitor and review pupils' progress. Staff provide regular,

focused support within lessons and through small group interventions. This helps pupils with ALN make good progress in relation to their personal targets during their time at the school. Staff work well in partnership with external services to provide effective targeted support for pupils with additional needs.

The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is strong. Staff model language consistently well and place a beneficial emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills from an early age. This helps most pupils develop into confident and able speakers. They communicate clearly, contribute thoughtfully to discussions and explain their ideas effectively. Across the school, most pupils listen carefully to the views of others and respond respectfully. These strong oracy skills enable most pupils to communicate their ideas clearly and participate confidently in learning.

The school has a systematic approach to the teaching of reading and writing. There is a positive culture of reading. Most pupils develop their reading skills well and demonstrate an enjoyment in reading. Older pupils demonstrate secure writing skills and convey their opinions, ideas and feelings creatively. They write appropriately for different purposes and audiences and use an increasingly varied vocabulary. However, opportunities for pupils to write independently across the curriculum are limited.

Most pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding. As pupils progress through the school, most develop appropriate mental and written strategies to complete calculations accurately and solve problems successfully. Overall, most pupils apply their reading, oracy and numeracy skills productively across the curriculum. In general, pupils develop and apply their Welsh skills appropriately.

Leaders and staff are developing a curriculum that reflects the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of the local community and Wales successfully. Teachers are beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to influence their learning and increasingly take account of pupils' ideas when planning termly concepts and activities. This gives pupils a sense of ownership of their learning. The school provides a range of learning and enrichment experiences such as visits and visitors to school and regular opportunities for music. These experiences support pupils' all-round development well.

The school's curriculum provides suitable opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These opportunities contribute positively to pupils' personal development and broaden their understanding of themselves, others and the world around them. School leaders are beginning to strengthen opportunities for pupil voice so that pupils contribute more effectively to decision-making and school improvement.

Overall, teaching and provision across the school are effective and supports most pupils to make good progress from their starting points. In many lessons, teachers recap prior learning successfully, helping pupils to build on what they already know and sustain their focus. In the most effective practice, teachers use questioning skilfully to assess pupils' understanding, address misconceptions and move learning forward. They provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply previously acquired knowledge and skills across different areas of the curriculum. Consequently, most pupils recall prior learning well and apply their skills confidently and naturally in new contexts.

In many cases, staff provide pupils with valuable opportunities to work independently, assess their own work and that of their peers, and make improvements to their learning. In these instances, pupils demonstrate strong levels of engagement, confidence and perseverance. However, this is not consistent across the school. In a few cases, learning lacks clear purpose and teachers' expectations and challenge, particularly for more able pupils, are too low. Opportunities for pupils to work independently, make decisions and apply their skills in these instances are limited. As a result, a few pupils do not develop their independence or achieve as well as they could.

There is an appropriate focus on developing leadership and teaching across the school. Overall, leaders understand their roles and responsibilities well and undertake regular monitoring activities. This helps them to gain a suitable understanding of many aspects of the school's work, though their findings do not always identify precisely enough the aspects of teaching where improvement is most needed. Leaders' work to improve attendance is ongoing, however too many pupils, particularly those with ALN and those who are eligible for free school meals, do not attend school regularly enough. Governors are supportive of the school. They engage well with staff and have a good understanding of the school's context and the community they serve.

Performance management arrangements are developing suitably. Leaders provide appropriate professional learning opportunities that reflect both school priorities and the professional interests and development needs of staff. As a result, staff are beginning to lead important aspects of the school successfully. The school works effectively with a range of partners and shares good practice actively across the cluster.

Leaders and staff have developed highly productive partnerships with parents. Family engagement activities help strengthen relationships between home and school and parents appreciate the support the school gives to both them and their children. Nearly all would recommend the school to others.

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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2026: This report may be re used free of charge: (a) in any format or medium; and (b) may be translated by or on behalf of an education and/or training provider in respect of which this report relates into any language, in each case provided that it is re used and/or translated accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must, in each case (including in the case of a translation) be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 17/08/2026