

A report on

Lansdowne Primary School

**Norfolk Street
Canton
CF5 1JY**

Date of inspection: January 2025

by

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

About Lansdowne Primary School

Name of provider	Lansdowne 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	320
Pupils of statutory school age	256
Number in nursery classes	37
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%)	38.8%
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 11.1%)	5.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	39.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	18/10/2018

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	27/01/2025

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

Lansdowne Primary is a welcoming and inclusive school where pupils feel valued and supported. Staff build strong relationships with pupils. This contributes to a positive environment where pupils behave well and focus on their learning. The headteacher and senior leaders work closely with staff, parents, and governors to support improvement. They encourage staff to reflect on their teaching and share ideas to develop their skills.

Pupils benefit from a broad and interesting curriculum that helps them grow in confidence and make good progress as learners and in their overall development as members of the school and wider community. Teachers help them understand different viewpoints and prepare them for the future. The school prioritises well-being, and staff provide strong support to help pupils manage their emotions and stay engaged. However, persistent absence remains too high and needs to improve so all pupils make the most of their learning.

Most pupils speak confidently and consider their responses carefully in discussions. Younger pupils develop Welsh skills well, although older pupils do not use the language as much outside lessons. Reading is a strength. Younger pupils develop a secure understanding of phonics and use this knowledge well to support them to read. Most pupils enjoy books and talk about their reading enthusiastically. Teachers choose texts that support learning, and the library fosters a love of reading.

Pupils develop their writing well, using grammar and spelling accurately. They write for a suitable range of purposes, although opportunities to write creatively are limited. Most make appropriate progress in mathematics. However, the quality of teaching in mathematics varies, and pupils do not always have enough opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in real-life contexts.

Generally, teachers use verbal feedback and questioning well to check understanding, but pupils do not always have enough opportunities to act on this feedback or contribute to decisions about their learning.

Governors support the school well. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is strong, and the school-based specialist provision provides valuable support.

The school provides a caring environment where pupils feel valued, make good progress, and develop the skills and confidence to take their next steps.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Improve the teaching of mathematics and provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R2. Provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback and influence what and how they learn
- R3. Continue to improve levels of persistent absence.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Lansdowne Primary is a nurturing and inclusive school where respect and diversity shape daily life. Pupils feel safe, supported, and encouraged to succeed in a vibrant learning environment.

The headteacher drives pupil progress with passion and a clear vision. She works closely with staff to strengthen ties with parents and the community. Senior leaders model reflection, transparency, and professionalism, creating a strong learning culture. They actively support the wider leadership team in developing expertise. Collaborating with senior leaders and governors, the headteacher has successfully refocused leadership responsibilities. This has improved effectiveness, strengthened governance and sharpened focus on school priorities.

Strong relationships between teachers and pupils create a positive culture where pupils behave well and positively engage in learning. The school promotes well-being through purposeful guidance and support, helping pupils manage emotions and stay focused. A broad curriculum builds cultural awareness, raises aspirations and encourages positive attitudes. Teachers help pupils understand different viewpoints and prepare them well for the future. The pupil leadership team continues to develop its role in making important decisions about their school. Although well-being is a strength, rates of persistent absence remain too high.

Most pupils start school with communication and social skills below expected levels. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those at risk of underachievement make at least expected progress from their starting points. Around half of pupils speak English as an additional language, and the school's strong focus on language modelling helps nearly all make good progress over time.

The school promotes and improves oracy skills consistently well across all year groups. Pupils carefully refine and enhance their spoken responses through discussion and reflection, demonstrating the school's emphasis on effective communication. This is a notable strength of the school's work. Welsh language development is a strong focus in younger classes where incidental Welsh is used well. Older pupils gain confidence in structured lessons but use Welsh less often in informal situations.

The youngest pupils develop strong foundations for their reading skills through a consistent approach to learning phonics. Most pupils develop positive attitudes to reading. During whole class reading sessions, they effectively use inference to interpret texts. Teachers use high-quality novels to strengthen comprehension and critical thinking.

Spotlight: fostering a love of reading

The school community takes great pride in its reading culture, with the library playing a key role. This inviting space actively fosters a love of reading by encouraging pupils to share texts, recommend authors, and immerse themselves in books. Because teachers carefully select the book collection to reflect the school's diverse community, every pupil sees themselves represented in literature. Pupil librarians take their responsibilities seriously, thoughtfully recommending books to their peers and enhancing the real-life lending experience. The provision extends beyond pupils, as parents and carers are encouraged to borrow books. By embedding diversity in book choices and promoting authentic reading opportunities, the school ensures that reading remains inclusive and meaningful.

Most pupils become effective writers, demonstrating a sound understanding of grammar, accurate spelling, and a wide vocabulary. They apply these skills well to write extended non-fiction texts. However, they have fewer opportunities to write creatively through plays, stories and poems.

Generally, most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their mathematical skills. Staff have worked effectively to develop a shared understanding of progression in mathematics and numeracy. However, the effectiveness of teaching varies, and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in meaningful, authentic contexts across the curriculum.

The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to develop creative and artistic skills to a high standard. Weekly lessons with a specialist art and drama teacher help most pupils to build strong skills in the expressive arts. They produce high-quality artwork and develop a rich vocabulary to discuss their own work and that of others. Overall pupils make effective progress with the development of a good range of digital skills, such as coding, animation and web page creation.

Teaching across the school is strong. Most lessons have a clear purpose, high expectations, and engaging delivery. Teachers and support staff use questioning well to deepen thinking and check understanding.

Strong transition support helps teachers know pupils well and ensures smooth progress between classes and when joining or leaving the school. Termly pupil progress meetings with senior leaders, teachers and governors provide valuable opportunities to review pupils' learning and plan their next steps. Teachers generally use verbal feedback and questioning well during lessons to gauge pupils' understanding, address misconceptions and adapt the focus of the session to better meet pupils' needs. Overall, there is variability in how effectively teachers provide opportunities for pupils to make improvements in their work. Similarly, staff do not involve pupils sufficiently in shaping how and what they will learn.

Staff use available spaces creatively to successfully support learning. Due to the deteriorating school building, staff struggle to use outdoor spaces but find creative solutions like visiting the local park.

The headteacher fosters collaboration, building leadership at all levels. Leaders and teachers lead school priorities, monitor progress, and support a reflective self-evaluation process. The school's leaders have a strong track record of improving the school by assessing strengths and identifying areas to develop. A sustained focus on reading has led to improved outcomes for learners and an embedded culture of reading across the school. Leaders work effectively with other schools to review evaluations, contributing to a reliable view of pupil progress. These beneficial partnerships create opportunities to share best practices and provide meaningful challenge for improvement.

Provision for pupils with ALN is highly successful. There are effective systems to identify, monitor and review the progress of all pupils including those with ALN. These support pupils well to make good progress in relation to their personal targets.

Spotlight: effective use of grant funding to improve outcomes for targeted pupils

Leaders use grant funding innovatively to support targeted pupils with ALN in the school-based specialist provision. The 'Nesta' class helps pupils to develop social and emotional skills in a safe environment. Well-trained staff provide effective enhanced support to meet pupils' specific needs. This enables pupils to engage well and make progress when they re-join their peers.

Governors work closely with the headteacher to manage the school's finances, including the pupil development grant. They support the school's safeguarding culture well and have a sound understanding of their role in keeping learners safe.

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)

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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