

A report on

Priory C.I.W. School

Pendre Close

Brecon

Powys

LD3 9EU

Date of inspection: January 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Priory C.I.W. School

Name of provider	Priory C.I.W. School
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Estyn does not inspect denominational religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for denominational religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.
Number of pupils on roll	157
Pupils of statutory school age	139
Number in nursery classes	NA
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%)	30.0%
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 11.1%)	48.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.3%

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Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.8%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	11/10/2016
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

Leaders, governors and staff at Priory Church in Wales Primary share a clear and successful vision for a creative and highly inclusive school that values all members of the school community. They support pupils' and staff's well-being exceptionally well. All staff act as positive role models and create a highly effective, nurturing and harmonious environment. They develop effective and respectful working relationships with pupils and each other. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. As a result, nearly all pupils are polite, caring and supportive of each other. They display excellent attitudes to their learning and exemplary behaviour. Leaders promote a strong culture of safeguarding. The school works hard to encourage good attendance and has recently implemented new approaches to reduce absences. However, these have not yet had time to embed, and levels of attendance remain too low.

Leaders and teachers regularly undertake a range of monitoring activities which draw on first-hand information to support the work of the school. They are beginning to involve governors, who are starting to use their knowledge to hold the school to account effectively. While leaders set worthwhile goals to improve the school, the priorities lack clarity, the success criteria do not focus well enough on pupil progress and teachers do not always fully understand their role in achieving the planned improvements.

Teachers use assessment to thoughtfully plan lessons that build on pupils' prior learning. This supports most pupils, including those from low-income households to make suitable progress. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make strong progress towards their individual learning goals. Teachers use an enquiry approach to learning and pupils engage extremely well. This approach is particularly effective in contributing to improving pupils' speaking, listening, reasoning, creative and thinking skills. Staff are good Welsh language role models and pupils use of the language is developing well. Most pupils develop and apply their reading, digital and mathematical skills suitably. However, in a few instances teachers do not provide enough challenge in aspects of pupils' learning, such as writing.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Set clear improvement priorities and strengthen leadership at all levels
- R2 Improve pupils' writing
- R3 Improve attendance

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Priory Church in Wales Primary is a happy and harmonious place. The school provides a calm, inclusive, extremely well-planned and highly nurturing environment, where everyone's learning and well-being matters. The headteacher has established and shared a clear vision for teaching and learning that promotes the creativity, imagination and beliefs of all pupils successfully. She provides considerate leadership and leads a team that works effectively to establish a caring and inclusive environment, where pupils and staff feel safe, valued and respected. The school's community focused approach ensures that leaders and staff maintain good relationships with parents, who appreciate the engaging methods of teaching that the school adopts and its caring and nurturing ethos.

The school's provision to support all pupils' personal development and citizenship is extremely effective. All members of the school community listen to each other and demonstrate respect, care and empathy. Teachers successfully support pupils to develop positive relationships with their peers. Pupils are polite and engage appropriately with each other, staff and visitors. Teachers provide all pupils with opportunities to take on responsibilities through a range of leadership roles. This gives pupils opportunities to express their views and contribute to school life. Teachers across the school create thoughtfully planned learning environments that are highly effective in supporting pupils' learning, enabling them to work independently and collaboratively.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and nearly all pupils engage positively in all aspects of their learning. The school's focus on developing pupils as creative, courteous, articulate and confident learners is highly effective. The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully through learning experiences and reflective collective worship.

Teachers and support staff know pupils extremely well. They have a good understanding of their well-being needs and understand pupils' learning needs appropriately. During their time in the school, most pupils, including those from low-income households, make suitable progress in many aspects of their learning. Learning support assistants provide well to meet the individual needs of pupils who require additional support, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), who make good progress towards their specific targets.

Overall, teachers plan a good range of interesting, real-life learning experiences that generally provide appropriate breadth across most areas of learning and experience. These experiences provide pupils with a range of opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Often, learning experiences capture pupils' imagination, enables them to respond creatively and helps them to become enthusiastic learners. They show resilience and determination to solve problems through amending their approaches to successfully complete their work. Teachers use an enquiry-based approach to learning which provides pupils with open ended tasks that enable them to consider dilemmas, problem solve, and think and talk creatively. This approach begins at an early age and supports the development of nearly all pupils' speaking and listening skills, which are noteworthy.

Pupils are proud of their school and the community they live in. The school makes good use of its locality to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers use local sites and facilities, including an art venue and the library to provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn about the culture and heritage of the immediate area and of Wales.

In many instances teachers challenge pupils appropriately and provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, digital and mathematical skills. Throughout the school, most pupils apply these across the curriculum appropriately, especially the oldest pupils who are challenged well. This contributes to the oldest pupils making good progress. Although teachers provide a range of purposes for pupils to develop their writing, these are not broad enough. Generally, as pupils progress, teachers' expectations for pupils' writing and presentation are not high enough. The work they

provide does not challenge pupils sufficiently and this impacts upon the progress pupils make in the development of these aspects of their learning.

Across the school staff are good Welsh language role models and demonstrate the use of the language well. Generally, pupils respond appropriately to requests, instructions and questions and a few pupils use extended phrases and sentences when replying.

Teachers use assessment to plan work which builds upon pupils' prior learning systematically, supporting most pupils to make suitable progress. Teachers use questioning skilfully to develop pupils' critical thinking and reasoning skills and to successfully provide opportunities for pupils to justify their views, opinions and thoughts. Learning support assistants help pupils' learning skilfully. They question pupils to clarify and extend their understanding. Teachers are trialling approaches to providing feedback to support pupils to improve their learning.

Leaders promote a strong culture of safeguarding with highly robust systems and measures in place to ensure the safety and security of all. Staff work collaboratively with partner agencies to provide support where attendance is a concern. Leaders have recognised the need to reduce pupil absences and have developed new processes to monitor and promote good attendance. However, these are at an early stage of development and attendance levels remain too low.

Leaders correctly identify the school's strengths and many of its areas for development and have had early success in aspects of school improvement, such as developing the school's provision for reading which has improved pupil outcomes. However, leaders and teachers do not set clear improvement priorities. Criteria for success does not focus sufficiently on pupil progress and the roles for staff and leaders at all levels to bring about success are unclear.

Governors are committed, supportive and have a comprehensive knowledge of the school. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly. They gather first-hand knowledge of the school's progress and are beginning to use the knowledge gained from these visits to hold the school to account effectively.

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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