

A report on

Cadoxton Primary School

**Victoria Park Road
Barry
CF63 2JS**

Date of inspection: March 2026

by

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

About Cadoxton Primary School

Name of provider	Cadoxton Primary School
Local authority	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	460
Pupils of statutory school age	341
Number in nursery classes	72
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%)	36.3%
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%)	21.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	6.2%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	Yes
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2011

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	27/11/2017
Start date of inspection	09/03/2026

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, governors and staff at Cadoxton Primary School know their pupils, families and the local community well. They share a clear understanding of the school's role in supporting its community, including pupils who may experience the challenges associated with poverty. The headteacher has established a strong vision for improvement and community engagement and has implemented this vision highly effectively.

The school provides a welcoming and nurturing environment where pupils feel safe and valued. This helps to ensure that nearly all pupils behave well, show positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. They concentrate for sustained periods and collaborate well with their peers. Younger pupils benefit greatly from the stimulating outdoor learning areas, while activities such as Amser Teulu help pupils across the school reflect on current events, develop friendships and strengthen social skills.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Teachers plan purposeful inquiries that are relevant to pupils' lives and reflect the diversity of modern Wales. These inquiries provide structure to the school year and include regular outdoor learning, enrichment activities and residential experiences. This approach ensures that pupils' learning is meaningful and enjoyable.

Most pupils make strong progress in their literacy and oracy skills. From often low starting points, they develop their reading skills successfully and many develop a genuine love of books. Over time, pupils grow in confidence as writers and produce thoughtful work for a range of audiences and purposes. Pupils also develop their mathematical and numeracy skills effectively through carefully structured teaching that builds their understanding progressively. Many pupils apply these skills successfully in different authentic contexts.

Teaching across the school reflects a strong understanding of effective pedagogy and focuses well on the needs of the child. Staff provide engaging learning experiences and effective feedback that helps pupils understand how to improve their work. Support for pupils with additional learning needs is timely and well organised, helping them make good progress in both their learning and well-being.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's work and support leaders effectively. The school is well resourced and provides high-quality indoor and outdoor learning environments. Leaders have taken steps to review spending to address financial pressures. Despite this the school's budget remains in significant deficit.

Recommendations

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

R1 Work with the local authority to reduce the school's budget deficit

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Leaders, governors and staff at Cadoxton Primary School understand their pupils, families and the local community well. They share a clear sense of the school's role in responding to their context and the need to support pupils living in poverty. Over time they have worked extensively to ensure that nearly all pupils make good progress with their learning and well-being in a safe and nurturing environment. The headteacher has led the implementation of this shared vision for improvement and community engagement highly effectively.

Leaders have developed a curriculum and approaches to teaching that mean most pupils are purposeful, engaged and enjoy their learning very much. Most sustain their concentration, often for extended periods of time, and cooperate well. There are many beneficial opportunities for pupils to explore culture and develop their creativity. Younger pupils particularly enjoy the vibrant and well-resourced outdoor learning environments. 'Amser Teulu' encourages pupils to reflect on events in the wider world, socialise, enjoy the outdoors, reflect on friendships and social interactions, and establish effective working relationships. Across the school, nearly all pupils behave well and want to work hard and do their best.

Spotlight: An authentic curriculum that raises standards

The school's curriculum meets pupils' needs particularly successfully. Teachers work with pupils to construct well-planned inquiries that are aspirational, excite and challenge pupils, and are relevant to their life experiences and the diversity of modern Wales. These experiences define the rhythm of the school year, providing a purpose and structure to outdoor learning, well-being, enrichment opportunities and residential trips. Teachers map out the stages of learning meticulously, taking careful account of their pupils' needs, interests and starting points. Rich experiences, including the frequent use of pupils' strong digital skills and consideration of social and moral issues, are carefully woven into the fabric of each inquiry. These culminate in pupils demonstrating their learning to an audience and reflecting thoughtfully on their next steps. This ensures that learning is deep, purposeful, memorable and fun.

Thoughtful planning and an engaging curriculum help to ensure that most pupils make strong progress in developing their oracy and other literacy skills. From often low starting points, they develop their reading well through the progressive teaching of skills and an encouragement of a love of books and stories, with many pupils choosing to read for pleasure. Over time, pupils become increasingly confident authors, with pupils writing effectively for a range of audiences and authentic purposes, drafting and improving their work thoughtfully. Many pupils make suitable progress in developing their Welsh oracy

skills. They are keen to express their pride in being Welsh and recognise that the language is important, as it connects them to their heritage.

Carefully considered teaching supports most pupils to develop their mathematical knowledge and to apply numeracy skills effectively and progressively to a high standard. Staff provide thoughtful opportunities for pupils to explore mathematics through concrete, pictorial and abstract approaches, helping them to build their understanding securely. Younger pupils develop their knowledge and understanding through engaging independent practical activities. Pupils across the school apply their numeracy skills in a range of contexts, often for authentic purposes.

Leaders have worked highly successfully with staff, drawing on research and a solid understanding of effective pedagogy, to ensure that teaching and learning across the school is child-centred and holistic. The principles of Foundation Learning are firmly embedded, and every space within and outside the school building is used and resourced exceptionally well. This exciting learning environment interests, enthuses and engages nearly all pupils, including those affected by poverty and those with additional learning needs. Assessment for learning is a natural part of the learning process, and integral in informing the pace and sequence of learning activities. In the youngest classes, teachers facilitate a 'plan-do-review' approach, where pupils decide for themselves the activities that interest them and review their own learning to decide on the next steps. Teachers and other adults provide careful feedback to learners to help them to improve their work and encourage pupils to support their peers with constructive feedback. Often this feedback is timely and verbal.

Cadoxton is a lead school for initial teacher education, partnered with Cardiff Metropolitan University. Alongside wider professional learning, this work encourages staff to reflect on and refine their professional practice and impacts positively on the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have established a strong track record in supporting the development of the wider education system across Wales, including roles in the development of curriculum for Wales and supporting school leadership at a national level. Teaching and learning within the school benefits from this experience and expertise.

Support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is timely and effective. Leaders have designed systems to identify and assist pupils who require extra help that reflect the context of the school and its community. Leaders provide valuable advice, guidance and mentoring for staff to ensure that intervention programmes, support for families and tailored teaching techniques enable pupils to make good progress with their learning and well-being despite any challenges they may face.

Leaders identify key priorities for development and take prompt, considered action to tackle them. Their work to mitigate the impact of recent leadership changes is particularly timely, especially in relation to provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and low attendance.

Spotlight: Breaking down barriers to learning, supporting pupil engagement and regular attendance

The school's 'Breaking Barriers' team plays an important role in identifying and supporting pupils who may face challenges to their learning and well-being. The team, which includes senior and middle leaders and learning support assistants, meet weekly to consider pupils who may require additional support. They consider pupils' learning needs alongside wider factors such as family circumstances, well-being, safeguarding and attendance. This shared understanding helps staff to identify appropriate support and interventions for individual pupils. The team then monitors the progress and well-being of these pupils carefully, reviewing the impact of the support provided and adapting it where needed to ensure that pupils receive effective and timely help. This is highly beneficial in supporting individual pupils' well-being and is impacting very positively on improving rates of attendance.

Supported by a wide range of skills and a strong understanding of the community they serve, governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Through regular visits and activities, such as learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work, they gather first-hand evidence that helps them make informed decisions to maintain and improve the quality of teaching and learning. They work well with leaders to establish a strong culture of safeguarding.

The school is well resourced. Indoor and outdoor learning environments are of consistently high quality. There are ample resources to support pupils' learning and well-being. Despite ongoing challenges with finances, leaders have worked innovatively, including with local charities, such as Cadog's Corner, to ensure that the school remains well-staffed and able to deliver highly effective teaching and learning and successful support for pupils' well-being.

The school has revised spending across several areas to reduce its in-year overspend. Despite this, the budget remains in substantial deficit. Current financial management plans do not reduce this deficit. Current projections show that the shortfall will increase over the next few years.

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

The school makes appropriate use of the pupil development grant. The school currently has a large deficit budget.

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.

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