

A report on

Peter Lea Primary School

**Carter Place
Fairwater
CF5 3NP**

Date of inspection: March 2026

by

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

About Peter Lea Primary School

Name of provider	Peter Lea 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	303
Pupils of statutory school age	223
Number in nursery classes	55
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%)	38.0%
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 9.2%)	4.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.6%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2017

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	09/07/2018
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

Peter Lea Primary School provides a caring and inclusive environment where pupils and staff thrive. Leaders place a strong emphasis on building positive relationships and promoting well-being, creating a culture of mutual trust and respect. Staff work closely with pupils and their families to identify barriers to learning and adapt provision effectively. This ensures that nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), feel safe and make strong progress from their starting points.

Staff benefit from collaborative professional learning opportunities that support the strong and consistent quality of teaching across the school. They have high aspirations for themselves and their pupils and use their professional knowledge well to ensure equitable access to the curriculum for all groups of pupils, including those affected by poverty and those with ALN.

A well-designed curriculum and systematic approaches to developing skills ensure that pupils build their literacy, numeracy and digital skills effectively. The school's innovative approach to developing pupils' social, emotional and moral understanding supports them to develop empathy, tolerance and respect. Through the daily 'Criw' group sessions, pupils also develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. The school promotes the Welsh language appropriately. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use Welsh outside of lessons.

The school is well-led and benefits from an effective model of distributed leadership and the support of a knowledgeable governing body. Leaders and staff reflect thoughtfully on their work and use robust self-evaluation processes to identify strengths and priorities for improvement. Although leaders monitor attendance suitably and promote the importance of regular attendance, overall attendance levels remain too low.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Improve pupils' opportunities to use Welsh outside Welsh lessons and around the school.
- R2 Improve pupils' attendance, particularly for those pupils eligible for free school meals.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Peter Lea Primary School provides high levels of care and support for its pupils. Leaders share a clear vision that places well-being and strong working relationships at the heart of school improvement. This fosters an ethos of mutual trust and respect and creates a purposeful learning environment where pupils and staff thrive.

The school demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring equity for pupils. Staff build positive working relationships with pupils and their families to identify barriers to learning effectively. They use this information well to adapt provision and ensure that nearly all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), feel valued, safe and ready to learn.

Leaders work effectively with the governing body to promote a strong culture of safeguarding and manage school resources carefully. They ensure that grant funding is used purposefully to improve the well-being and progress of pupils from low-income households.

Spotlight: Developing pupils' empathy, respect and sense of identity

The school has successfully developed its curriculum to provide innovative and often bespoke learning experiences for pupils. The school's daily 'Criw' sessions provide an exceptional example of this work. During these sessions, staff embed the social, moral and cultural aspects of the curriculum skilfully into pupils' learning. This approach helps pupils develop empathy, tolerance and respect while improving their sense of identity and self-worth.

Pupils develop well as considerate and effective citizens in their community. The school's Senedd provides a purposeful opportunity for pupils to influence school improvement and contribute to decision-making, for example through the work of the Criw Cymraeg in promoting wider pupil representation in arranging events like the school Eisteddfod.

Teaching is a strength of the school. Teachers and support staff use a wide range of strategies to motivate pupils and support their progress. They have high expectations and use approaches such as recalling prior learning and focused questioning purposefully to engage pupils in lessons. Nearly all pupils, including those affected by poverty, make strong progress from their starting points.

Staff use assessment and feedback effectively to help pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Many pupils take part in self- and peer-assessment activities. These opportunities help them reflect carefully on their own work and that of others and encourage them to take increasing responsibility for their learning as they move through the school.

Spotlight: Using professional learning and collaboration to strengthen teaching and provide equity

A strong culture of professional learning underpins the school's work. Staff reflect regularly on their practice and respond positively to feedback to improve their work. Leaders provide valuable opportunities for staff to collaborate and share effective practice within the school and beyond. This contributes significantly to the strong and consistent quality of teaching across the school and the equity in provision for all pupils.

The curriculum is designed thoughtfully to meet the needs and interests of pupils. Pupils contribute positively to shaping imaginative learning contexts and independent tasks, which encourage them to ask questions and explore topics that interest them. As a result, most pupils are engaged and enthusiastic in their learning.

Provision for developing pupils' literacy skills is systematic and progressive. From an early age, teachers place a strong focus on developing pupils' oracy skills. Pupils learn to express themselves clearly and speak confidently with adults. This secure foundation in speaking and listening supports their early reading development well. Pupils develop a good understanding of letter sounds and sight vocabulary, and many read fluently and with expression by the time they reach Year 2. Their strong speaking and reading skills support them to develop their writing successfully. Pupils draft, improve and publish writing across a wide range of genres competently and imaginatively.

Curriculum planning for Welsh supports teachers to develop pupils' vocabulary and sentence patterns progressively over time. The confidence of pupils and staff to speak Welsh is improving. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use the language outside Welsh lessons and around the school.

Most pupils develop a strong understanding of number and mathematical concepts as they progress through the school. They benefit from an approach to teaching number that emphasises practical exploration. This begins effectively in the youngest classes, where pupils investigate number through a range of play-based activities. As they move through the school, most pupils apply their mathematical skills with increasing independence across the curriculum through a range of authentic learning opportunities.

Across the school, staff place a clear emphasis on developing pupils' digital competence. This ensures that many pupils build on previously taught skills and apply them effectively across a range of activities. Younger pupils develop early digital skills appropriately, using digital devices independently to capture their learning. Older pupils use technology purposefully to organise and present information, for example by creating structured digital presentations.

Provision for pupils with ALN is highly effective. The school adopts a person-centred approach that ensures pupils, parents and external professionals contribute. This provides staff with valuable information that helps them tailor provision to meet pupils' needs. Staff have a secure understanding of the impact of trauma and change and ensure that support is sensitive, well-judged and closely matched to individual needs. This helps to ensure that pupils with ALN flourish and make strong progress from their starting points.

The school supports pupils well as they transition to the next stage of their education. Staff establish positive home-school links quickly, helping the youngest pupils settle into school successfully. Across the school, they provide bespoke transition support for vulnerable groups of pupils including those who are care experienced. A targeted transition programme for older pupils with ALN supports their move to secondary education and helps reduce their anxiety.

The school monitors attendance and punctuality carefully and staff use appropriate strategies to raise awareness of the importance of attending school regularly. The school recognises that attendance remains a concern, particularly for pupils eligible for free school meals.

Leaders use robust monitoring and evaluation processes to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They draw on a wide range of evidence, including learning walks, to inform their evaluations. Overall, these processes provide leaders with an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.

The school is well led and benefits from a strong collaborative approach, with leadership responsibilities distributed effectively across the staff. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities clearly and contribute meaningfully to whole-school improvement, for example through recent work to strengthen provision for pupils' digital skills. The governing body provides effective support and challenge and carries out its role diligently. They make good use of governors' expertise and skills.

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.

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