Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Penrhyn Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School

Hundleton
Pembroke
Pembrokeshire
SA71 5RD

Date of inspection: September 2022

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Penrhyn Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School

Name of provider	Penrhyn Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled School
Local authority	Pembrokeshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled
Number of pupils on roll	88
Pupils of statutory school age	60
Number in nursery classes	14
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 21.3%)	17.6%
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 22.2%%)	23.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2022
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	26/09/2022
The executive headteacher took up post on 01/09/22 and combines her role in Penrhyn CIW VC School with another school in Pembrokeshire.	

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.

Overview

In a very short space of time, the executive headteacher has worked diligently with the school's governing body and the local authority to develop a positive culture of teamwork amongst the staff and the local community. This has begun to address important weaknesses in the school's leadership practices and provision.

Over time, leaders have not monitored and evaluated the school's work and its impact on pupils' learning carefully enough. This has led to a lack of sufficiently challenging learning experiences to support pupils to progress and demonstrate their true abilities. Over time, leaders have not addressed vital aspects of the school's provision well enough. This includes improving teaching and assessment practices through purposeful professional development and implementing the Curriculum for Wales within required timescales.

Pupils interact well with adults and each other and they are courteous and polite. They enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. This is due to the positive working relationships that they have with their teachers and the support staff. There is a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere at the school and pupils and staff enthuse about the newly decorated corridors and the re-furbished and re-organised library and cooking areas.

The school environment promotes beneficial learning opportunities, both indoors and in the extensive outdoor areas. Within these appealing learning areas, all staff promote a positive ethos of care and guidance for pupils. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own well-being and behaviour effectively and contributes to their positive approach to school life. This culture of support helps pupils to build confidence in themselves as individuals, while also developing a strong respect for the feelings of others.

Pupils' speaking in English, their listening, reading, creative and physical skills make good progress as they move through the school, and they use these skills effectively across many areas of the curriculum. However, pupils do not develop their writing, numeracy, digital and Welsh oracy skills well enough, when considering their positive starting points at school.

Since taking up her role, the executive headteacher has shared responsibilities effectively among staff and provided relevant opportunities for professional learning. This has begun to develop and contribute to a thriving whole-school ethos, where staff and pupils feel valued for their contributions to school life.

Recommendations

R1 Embed the new leadership strategies to ensure that monitoring and evaluation processes improve teaching and the planning of learning experiences

R2 Improve the effectiveness of teaching, planning and assessment to challenge all pupils consistently

R3 Improve pupils' extended writing skills

R4 Ensure that pupils apply their numeracy and digital skills effectively across the curriculum

R5 Strengthen the provision for pupils to speak Welsh, and to learn about the culture and heritage of Wales

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress about 12 months after the publication of this report.

Main evaluation

Learning

On entry to the school, most pupils' literacy, numeracy and social skills are either at or above those expected for their stage of development. During their time at the school, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make appropriate progress from their positive starting points.

Most pupils listen attentively, speak clearly, and express their ideas confidently. Younger pupils discuss their work with adults and their peers effectively, such as when they discuss the benefits of eating broccoli and other vegetables. Most older pupils communicate clearly in English. They offer answers and express opinions sensibly. For example, in Year 6, most pupils explain accurately about the detrimental impact of plastic pollution and how it enters the food chain.

The reading skills of most pupils are developing well. By the time pupils are seven years old, many read fluently, and decode unfamiliar words well. By Year 6, most pupils read complex texts with good understanding, both in class and independently in the school library. They are confident readers, and they glean relevant information from various texts and appropriate websites to enrich their work across the curriculum. For example, they research the life of Roald Dahl and collate information on the works of Pablo Picasso.

Most younger pupils develop fine motor skills effectively, such as when using scissors to cut out their own hand and footprints, and when controlling paintbrushes to paint their favourite superheroes. As a result, many pupils progress suitably from mark making in the youngest classes to forming letters, words and sentences during their time in Year 1. The majority of pupils also spell correctly and punctuate appropriately. By Year 2, many pupils make satisfactory progress and use varied vocabulary and language patterns to write stories, letters and recipes. For example, they write a diary entry on the devastation caused by The Great Fire of London. However, many pupils do not produce extended pieces of writing that reflect their true writing skills and much of the writing lacks quality and precision.

By the time they reach the top of the school, only a minority of pupils write well in a range of contexts. Many pupils are beginning to present their written work neatly. They structure their work effectively, under the guidance of the teacher, and show an appropriate understanding of syntax and punctuation. For example, older pupils write recounts of their experiences on a sailing trip that use connective words purposefully. However, extended writing skills, for the majority of pupils are underdeveloped.

The progress that most pupils make in developing their Welsh oracy skills as they travel through the school is limited. A minority of pupils use suitable phrases regularly in everyday situations. Most answer with basic responses during discussions with teachers and each other. However, too few pupils build their knowledge of the Welsh language systematically.

By the age of seven, many pupils use mathematical principles appropriately. They use numbers confidently, collect information and record their results in simple tables

and charts. Many have a good understanding of different types of angles. For instance, they find right angles in different objects around the classroom. They measure the length and breadth of leaves with rulers and experiment with capacity when filling different sized containers with sand. A minority of pupils use their mathematical skills well in everyday tasks, such as when they compare their heights with that of a fictional character.

From Year 3 to Year 6, many pupils demonstrate sound mathematical skills, and older pupils develop effective strategies to multiply decimal numbers accurately to resolve problems. They use data appropriately and present it effectively in various forms. For example, many pupils use line graphs to compare a range of temperatures at different times of the day in a large city. However, across the school, most pupils do not apply their mathematical skills purposefully in real-life situations.

Most pupils have satisfactory digital skills. Younger pupils use electronic tablets appropriately, with adult support, to film each other on stage, acting as superheroes. By the end of their time at school, most pupils code and programme simple robots to travel around a course and they manipulate texts effectively. However, many pupils do not create databases and spreadsheets confidently and do not interrogate data with enough understanding.

Most pupils develop imaginative artistic skills. For example, younger pupils blend water colours to decorate their dream jars and create Diwali displays using Rangoli patterns on their handprints. Older pupils interpret the work of famous artists intuitively, such as Kyffin Williams and Giuseppe Arcimboldo. In addition, all pupils develop their creative skills successfully, for instance when designing and creating Victorian peg dolls.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are polite, courteous and interact confidently with both their peers and adults. They are co-operative, helpful and think of others' feelings sensitively. Nearly all pupils state that they are safe in school and feel free from any issues of bullying. Most pupils know who to turn to if they need additional support with their well-being. For example, at the start of the day, pupils report to support staff if they feel unsettled whilst coming in to school.

Nearly all pupils arrive at school eager to learn. The executive headteacher and class teachers greet pupils and parents warmly at the school door, which settles the pupils well before beginning the school day. Nearly all pupils behave well in class and when they move around the building. They understand and respond positively to the school's procedures to encourage good behaviour, and this is a strong feature at breaktimes. There is a caring and nurturing relationship between younger and older pupils. For example, older pupils support the needs of the youngest in the school successfully during their weekly enrichment activities, where they share interesting tasks in mixed-age-groups.

Most pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. For example, they know how to make sensible choices in relation to what they eat and drink. Nearly all pupils enjoy learning new skills in their physical activity lessons, such as in rugby and swimming sessions. As a result, most pupils appreciate the importance of exercise,

and they participate actively in a range of after-school clubs. These include skate and scoot, family fitness and running clubs. Most pupils embrace the outside environment and make good use of the school's developing outdoor areas and its outdoor equipment. They understand that this develops their health, well-being and physical skills, as they play with each other during the school day.

Most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and are beginning to develop as ambitious and capable learners. Nearly all pupils participate willingly in the whole school theme of 'Superheroes'. They are eager to learn about individuals in their local community with important roles, such as police officers and health workers. Older pupils use the experiences encountered on educational visits well to enhance their learning, such as how to co-operate effectively with each other in a sailing boat.

Most pupils work in pairs effectively and stay on task for the duration of set activities. Nearly all younger pupils listen attentively to their teachers and work purposefully together on teacher led tasks. Many older pupils show diligence and interest in their work. However, at times, a few pupils are not engaged well enough during over long introductions to lessons. As a result, these pupils do not demonstrate their true abilities during tasks.

Nearly all pupils contribute willingly to planning by sharing their views and ideas in a variety of ways, through class discussions and mind mapping. As a result, they influence their learning suitably by contributing ideas to their termly topics. For example, through their research, older pupils discovered that the local lifeboat is supported through donations. This prompted them to begin to plan a fundraising event for Angle Lifeboat Station.

In recent times, most pupils show pride in their work and react positively to feedback from adults, and occasionally their peers. They act on oral and written feedback more effectively to make improvements in their work. Most pupils are at an early stage when reflecting on the quality of their own work and they are developing better self-assessment skills when judging their progress and productivity in lessons. For example, many pupils are beginning to redraft their writing to improve their punctuation and word choices, to make their writing more interesting.

Many pupils, including those with additional learning needs, express their opinions in pupil voice groups. Nearly all pupils are excited about their roles within these groups, which include, the school council, the eco-committee and the school librarians. The members are enthusiastic about their roles and eager to begin influencing the life of the school.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers provide a suitable curriculum that develops pupils' interests and wider skills appropriately, and the design of the current curriculum is satisfactory. However, the school's implementation of the Curriculum for Wales has been slow and its development over time has not met the anticipated timescales. Leaders, staff and pupils are beginning to work collaboratively with each other to create a shared vision for their own bespoke curriculum. They take pride in the school's new motto, 'Together, Stronger, Learning with Confidence', and this new enthusiasm is beginning to promote inclusivity amongst the pupils. The executive headteacher is

driving the new initiatives forward, which encourages positive attitudes to planning new learning experiences for pupils, both indoors and outdoors.

Teachers are beginning to research and improve their professional learning and to trial new ideas. Interesting strategies, such as growing vegetables using different types of manure, support pupils to begin to implement this new approach during practical activities. However, this is at an early stage of development and meaningful plans to focus on enhancing pupils' learning and skills through a well-balanced curriculum are currently underdeveloped.

Teachers are beginning to ensure that pupils receive beneficial opportunities to contribute to how they learn. The balance of learning experiences to provide consistency and progression from nursery to Year 6 is not secure and lack coherence. As a result, pupils do not develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills progressively as they move through the school. However, the new leaders have identified this as a target for improvement.

The curriculum provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the diverse nature of societies across the world. Learning about diversity and equality issues, such as the plight of refugees, encourages older pupils to consider how to care for the less fortunate in global and local contexts.

Teachers use resources from within the local area well to extend pupils' learning opportunities. For example, older pupils visit the seashore to investigate the effect of the tides and wind directions on the coastline. The school enriches its curriculum with a range of visitors and visits. For example, local clergy lead collective worship, and pond dips at a local wetland area allow pupils to study eco systems effectively.

Teachers model Welsh regularly to ensure that pupils hear and attempt to use the language, both in formal and informal situations. Most teachers provide a broad range of greetings and instructions in Welsh. However, this does not impact effectively enough on developing pupils' Welsh oracy skills. Additionally, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities to promote the culture and heritage of Wales across the school.

Teaching in the outdoors is evident across the school and it is particularly effective in the adventurous areas and on the new rugby field. This aids the development of pupils' physical and co-operative skills successfully. Teaching in woodland areas and amongst the growing beds benefits pupils' creativity and their well-being.

On the whole, teachers and support staff have positive working relationships with pupils, which foster a supportive learning environment. This includes a very caring approach to learning for pupils with additional needs. Teachers have appropriate expectations in relation to pupils' personal and social skills, and they manage behaviour successfully. Support staff are integral to the development of pupils' learning and they work together with teachers proficiently.

Teachers set clear objectives for lessons and are developing strategies to provide effective written and verbal feedback. Most teachers and support staff model language well, and their explanations are clear. They recap on previous learning appropriately. However, introductions to lessons are too long and pupils do not begin

tasks promptly enough. Teachers and support staff intervene too often and tend to control activities, which does not allow pupils opportunities to persevere during tasks. As a result, there is often too much emphasis on explaining tasks and scaffolding pupils too much before engaging their learning. This does not challenge pupils to perform at their best and it hinders pupils' learning and opportunities to use their independent skills in writing, numerical and digital tasks.

Teachers use a suitable range of assessment procedures to target the next steps in pupils' learning and it is beginning to inform future planning effectively. They provide occasional opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers. Very recently, teachers are beginning to use assessment tools to track pupil progress to monitor learning efficiently. Parents receive appropriate annual reports about their child's progress.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a caring community, and the staff encourage pupils to embrace its supportive and friendly ethos successfully. The positive relationships between staff and pupils, and among the pupils themselves, are a strong feature of the school. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and respond with sensitivity to the pupils' needs. Through good use of the extensive and well-equipped outdoor facilities, the school provides effective support for pupils' physical and mental health, and their well-being. The popular after school clubs run by parent volunteers contribute to pupils' social skills purposefully.

The provision for pupils identified as having additional learning needs (ALN) is thorough. The school's ALN co-ordinator works effectively with staff members. This partnership ensures that there is good identification, tracking and support for individuals and groups of pupils at an early age. Comprehensive pupil progress reviews result in teachers developing a deep understanding of the needs of all pupils. In the younger age classes, an emphasis on introducing familiar routines supports nearly all pupils successfully. The check-in system at the start of the school day helps to settle vulnerable pupils quickly.

The school works beneficially with external agencies, such as speech and language therapists. This secures additional, timely resources and offers specialist support to pupils with a range of academic, emotional and social needs. These arrangements ensure that most targeted pupils make appropriate progress in relation to their abilities. Additionally, safeguarding procedures meet requirements and gives no cause for concern.

Through a range of pupil groups, the school is beginning to develop opportunities for pupils to participate in decision-making. These provide nearly all pupils with emerging opportunities to contribute to what they learn. Pupils are beginning to support change across the school, such as, by introducing a whole school initiative to promote the Welsh language. The school celebrates St David's day and encourages pupils to participate in the school's eisteddfod. Such activities allow pupils to engage positively in school life. However, the school does not plan progressive opportunities well enough for pupils to develop an understanding of their Welsh heritage based on the school's locality and as a community within Wales.

The school is beginning to place a strong emphasis on providing a rich and varied range of visits and visitors to support the curriculum and to help pupils expand on their learning. These include, for example, a visit to a local beach to examine pollution and the prevalence of microplastic in the sea.

The school's ethos and collective worship sessions promote pupils' spiritual and moral development successfully. These help pupils to understand the value of being aspirational and making the most of their talents. Staff encourage pupils to consider the views of others sensitively and acknowledge the importance of values such as tolerance and empathy. For example, pupils take part in 'Empathy Week' activities. This includes the story of 'Lubna and Pebble', which stresses the importance of friendship and subtly addresses the refugee crisis.

Staff encourage pupils to participate in local community activities such as taking part in the annual Remembrance Sunday service held at a local cenotaph. Additionally, the community has been instrumental in helping the school improve the grounds by installing a sandpit and erecting new rugby posts. These activities contribute to the strong links between the school and the local community, which supports the learning and well-being of pupils positively.

Through the very recent work on the school's new vision, the school has developed clear and relevant values, which includes a child-friendly development plan. Staff use these values and targets to encourage pupils to celebrate similarities and differences within the school community. However, pupils' understanding of issues, such as equality, diversity and inclusion, are at an early stage of development. The school encourages pupils to help others by raising money for different local and national charities, such as food banks before Christmas.

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher, who began her role in September 2022, has implemented significant improvements. In a very short space of time, she has addressed important weaknesses in the school's leadership practices and provision. She focuses on placing the school at the centre of its community and promotes the well-being of pupils and their families as a central feature of the school's vision. The governing body, under the direction of the newly appointed chair of governors, supports this philosophy and encourages the school to implement it in its daily practices. As a result, the new leaders ensure that a caring and collaborative ethos permeates throughout the school.

The executive headteacher's new monitoring processes aim to ensure that the performance of the school is evaluated effectively. These new practices enable the new leadership team to allocate additional responsibilities to staff sensibly. However, the induction of staff to the new processes is very recent and the impact and effectiveness of their roles are at an early stage of development.

Leaders now identify that improving the quality of teaching and instilling a common understanding of professional values among staff is essential to improve the school. However, this philosophy is new and such rigour to address issues in provision is not evident over time. The new leadership team has not had time to embed these

practices, to ensure that teachers challenge pupils purposefully and that pupils make effective progress from their individual starting points.

Leaders have introduced processes to evaluate a wide range of first-hand evidence. However, they are not established enough to demonstrate their effectiveness. Leaders identify that these new systems, which include the scrutiny of pupils' books and the monitoring of teaching, are integral to improving the provision and pupils' outcomes.

Leaders are beginning to gather valid views of other stakeholders about the school to inform their practices. For example, they now consider the views of parents and carers carefully and act on any findings conscientiously, such as providing stimulating educational visits to promote pupils' learning.

The new leadership team, in a short space of time, has developed a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. The link between the recently introduced self-evaluation activities and improved development planning is credible and accurate. As a result, leaders prioritise their findings effectively and set logical targets to move the school forward. In addition, the new leaders share the school's safeguarding culture with all staff efficiently. Governors ensure that pupils eat and drink healthily and advise parents and carers on the importance of nutritious food in their lunch boxes.

Leaders ensure that staff make the best use of the premises. This includes stimulating outdoor spaces such as the woodland and planting areas. Leaders allocate resources in the classrooms effectively and now use the pupil development grant wisely to provide specific interventions and enrichment activities across the school. As a result, the support staff enthuse about the dramatic changes to the school in very recent times, which now enhance the beneficial support for pupils' learning.

Governors now have a better understanding that the school needs to improve important areas of its practices. They are beginning to hold senior leaders to account as critical friends. The executive headteacher informs governors about pupils' learning regularly and advises them realistically on how to improve provision, such as improving the library and the cooking areas. Designated governors now undertake purposeful visits to measure the quality of provision and its impact on pupils' learning. Recently, governors have improved their monitoring of the budget and they ensure that spending decisions are now in line with the school's priorities for improvement, such as investments in pupil tracking packages and outdoor play equipment.

The access that staff have to high quality and pertinent learning opportunities to support their professional development is improving and now links closely to school improvement priorities. A positive feature of this new outlook on professional development is that staff focus on developing their own skills to improve pupil outcomes effectively. Notable examples are professional learning on how to develop pupils' writing and numeracy skills and to support pupils' well-being.

The school works with other schools within the local authority, and a recently formed partnership with another school supports the school's capacity for continuous improvement beneficially. It provides valuable opportunities for teachers to compare

and share their effectiveness with other professionals. As a result, the new culture of continuous professional development creates useful opportunities for staff, which is beginning to lead to better provision and learning experiences for pupils.

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

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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication 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 2022: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 28/11/2022