



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

A report on
Pennar Community School

**Owen Street
Pennar
Pembroke Dock
Pembrokeshire
SA72 6SL**

Date of inspection: October 2022

by

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

About Pennar Community School

Name of provider	Pennar Community School
Local authority	Pembrokeshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	NA
Number of pupils on roll	261
Pupils of statutory school age	231
Number in nursery classes	31
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 23.0%)	22.1%
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 16.1%)	14.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2012
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/02/2014
Start date of inspection	17/10/2022

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

Pennar Community Primary is an inclusive school, where pupils feel valued by staff and are proud to be part of their school community. Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to talk about the wide range of learning experiences provided by staff. A particular strength of the school is its work in creating ethical and informed learners through the pupil voice groups and in the wider curriculum. As a result, many pupils care deeply about the world they live in and are advocates for creating a more sustainable planet.

Staff are working well together to create a vibrant curriculum that reflects the strengths of the local community and provides rich experiences for pupils to develop their creative skills. Leaders work thoughtfully with all staff to think carefully about how well the curriculum is meeting the needs of pupils and regularly adjust their approaches when necessary. Where leaders and staff identify a concern, there is a collaborative approach to making improvements, for instance when raising the standards of pupils' writing. Leaders make accurate judgments regarding future priorities, and as a result, many pupils make strong progress in their knowledge and skills as they move through the school.

Leaders ensure that all staff have meaningful and regular opportunities to share practice, contribute to the vision and direction of the school and engage in useful professional learning. As a result, teachers think carefully about what they want their pupils to learn and how their teaching supports progress. In a very few instances, teaching is not matched well enough to the pupils' learning needs and does not develop their independent learning skills well enough.

Pupils with additional learning needs are very well supported and support staff are skilful practitioners who add real value to the teaching and learning in classrooms.

Recommendations

- R1 Build on the good practice across the school to ensure that all teaching is matched appropriately to pupils' developmental needs
- R2 Improve the provision for mathematics to ensure that teachers develop pupils' skills systematically and can apply them in more relevant and challenging contexts
- R3 Ensure that all classrooms are engaging environments where all pupils have opportunity to develop their curiosity and independence

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to developing ethically informed learners, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

Many pupils start Nursery with skills in language and mathematical development below those expected. Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, and those eligible for free school meals make strong progress from their starting points.

Many pupils across the school are developing as confident, articulate speakers who listen well to each other and adults. They respond well to questions about their work and express their own ideas confidently. Early readers develop their skills appropriately and use their knowledge of phonics to help them build unfamiliar words. As pupils improve their skills, they develop enthusiasm for their reading and understand its importance in finding out about the world around them. By the time they reach Year 6, the majority of pupils read fluently with expression and are beginning to develop as keen book lovers.

Most pupils make good progress with their writing skills. Reception and Year 1 pupils develop their early writing skills appropriately, experimenting with mark making or beginning to write familiar letters and numbers. The majority of Year 2 pupils write in well-constructed sentences with imagination and purpose, for example when writing letters to convince neighbours to plant flowers for the school bees. Older pupils write at increasing length and for different audiences. They use a variety of language and vocabulary to add interest to their work. In many cases, pupils use their literacy skills confidently across the curriculum. They write purposefully in engaging contexts, for example when drafting a letter to a local councillor. As pupils move through the school, they develop their handwriting and presentation skills appropriately and many show pride and care in their work.

Many pupils across the school develop their numeracy skills appropriately. Children in the Nursery for example are beginning to develop their concept of number, many recognise and explore numbers to 5 and a few count confidently to ten. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 recognise, and name, 3D shapes and older pupils develop confidence in using number to carry out calculations and solve basic problems. However, pupils' numeracy skills are not always secure enough to be applied in more challenging contexts across the curriculum.

Pupils develop their creative skills effectively across the school. Many produce interesting artwork using a range of media and apply their creative thinking to engaging contexts. In one instance, older pupils with support from a local photographer, set up a studio to create portrait photos focusing on lighting and expression to improve their work.

Many pupils use the Welsh language well across the school. Reception pupils count to ten in Welsh and respond to simple greetings. As they move through the school, the majority of pupils develop their skills with increasing sophistication. Many pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 use more complex language patterns to speak and read confidently. Pupils often use their language skills in class topics, for example when talking and reading about jobs as 'park rangers.'

Most pupils develop a good range of digital skills across the school. They use digital tools successfully to support their learning in other subjects, for example Year 6 pupils create high quality video animations linking sound and images together to enhance their tourism topic.

Pupils' physical skills are developing well. They are keen to develop their strength and stamina through their adventurous play as well as during sessions carried out by visitors, for example through Swansea football academy and 'clocs ffit'

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel happy and safe in school. They feel that they are listened to by staff and know how to get help when they need it, for example when using the worry box in their classrooms. As a result, most pupils relate well to others, show empathy and talk readily about their thoughts and feelings.

Behaviour around the school is generally positive. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the school rules, and in most instances behave well in class to ensure learning can take place without disruption. Pupils talk to staff and their peers confidently and speak with enthusiasm about their learning. They show respect when listening to others and are often polite and considerate, for example when holding doors open and greeting and thanking each other in Welsh.

Most pupils show good attitudes to learning. They demonstrate enthusiasm and enjoyment in their work, for example when creating and performing monologues from the point of view of a fairy tale character. Most pupils are resilient and show good levels of perseverance in their learning. They are often keen to share their ideas and make suggestions about what they want to learn. In many cases pupils respond well to teachers' feedback and are keen to improve the quality of their own work. They see value in the whole school approach of using 'Deri' and 'Going for Gold' to help them identify the next steps in their learning.

Pupils in the school are developing successfully as ethical, informed citizens. Older pupils are aware of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNRC) and how these apply to their own lives. Pupils in the school's leadership groups take their responsibilities seriously and value the opportunity to represent their peers. The 'Green Team' for example, are passionate about ecological issues and have a wider impact across the school. They deliver their message through the 'COP1' events and present at the local authority conference. As a result, many pupils understand important issues such as climate change and how they can make the world a better place. One recent example of this is the work carried out by staff and pupils to improve the biodiversity of the school grounds, by keeping bees and planting wild gardens.

Most pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and keeping fit. In Year 1 and 2, pupils identify healthy choices when shopping for ingredients in the classroom role play area. Pupils enjoy the free fruit available to them at breaktime and create recipes with fruit and vegetables grown in the school garden. Many pupils are physically active at breaktimes and make good use of the outdoor areas and additional equipment provided.

Teaching and learning experiences

Almost all teachers and support staff across the school have developed strong working relationships with pupils. They have high expectations for behaviour in lessons and monitor pupil progress carefully to provide support where it is needed. Many teachers have a clear understanding of the learning they want pupils to achieve and a secure knowledge of the subjects they are teaching. As a result, they often provide clear and effective explanations which ensure pupils understand what they are supposed to do.

Leaders and teachers share a clear vision for the school's curriculum creating authentic experiences which help give pupils high aspirations for their future. Staff develop the curriculum thoughtfully, taking into consideration the unique needs of pupils and the opportunities available in the surrounding area. As a result, staff work well together to create vibrant learning experiences across the curriculum. The current whole school topic, 'When I Grow Up', for example, enables pupils to explore the world of work and make connections with local business owners and professionals.

Teachers often plan sequences of lessons across areas of learning and experience which allow pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to a range of curriculum areas. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, link their work in science on 'sound', to their work on diversity where they find out about inspirational deaf people and consider how they can make adaptations for those affected. Teachers often provide interesting opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across topics, however they do not always plan well enough for pupils to use their numeracy skills purposefully across the curriculum.

Teachers ensure pupils have regular opportunities to develop and refine their creative skills. Younger pupils for example, explore rhythm and dynamics when composing soundscapes with untuned percussion. Staff are developing the use of the outdoors and when given the opportunity, pupils enjoy learning in and about nature. The majority of teachers think carefully about how their classrooms can be designed to stimulate pupils' interest in their learning and develop their independence. However, in a minority of instances, indoor learning environments are not used well enough to support pupils learning. In these cases, opportunities are missed for pupils to make choices about their learning, develop their curiosity or to practice and deepen their skills in more engaging tasks.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the history and culture of Wales, enabling pupils to learn about their locality. For example, they examine the impact of tourism and shipping on the local landscape. Pupils learn about, and take inspiration from, the work of Welsh artists and practice traditional crafts such as weaving.

Many teachers and support staff use questioning effectively to challenge pupils thinking and check for understanding. In a few cases, they adapt their teaching skilfully to address misconceptions and support pupils next steps. Many teachers and support staff provide timely feedback to pupils throughout lessons to ensure they make progress and encourage pupils to improve their own work. As a result, in most lessons, teaching is well paced and challenges pupils appropriately. However, in a few instances, teachers do not ensure that learning activities are matched carefully

enough to the developmental needs of pupils. As a result, in these lessons pupils do not engage successfully enough in their learning or make enough progress.

Most teachers and support staff use a useful range of approaches to assessment to check on pupils' progress over time. These include using the national personalised assessments alongside ongoing formative monitoring to identify areas of concern quickly. As a result, they adapt provision suitably, for example when providing additional teaching in phonics for older pupils to support their fluency in reading.

Care, support and guidance

Pupil well-being is a priority for the school and a key focus of its daily provision. All staff work with dedication to create an inclusive environment for all pupils and as a result, there is a caring and nurturing ethos throughout the school. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and use a range of suitable strategies to ensure pupils know what is expected of them. As a result, in most classes there is a calm, purposeful working environment.

The school provides relevant opportunities to support pupils' moral and social development. They promote key school values such as empathy, kindness, belonging and respect. Many pupils relate these values to their own lives, for example when writing about their 'empathy heroes'. Staff ensure that pupils learn about diversity and equity and the rights of a child through regular class sessions and circle time. As a result, pupils can talk about what makes them unique and discuss their rights in their own life, at home and school.

Leaders and staff develop effective relationships with parents and provide useful information sessions to help them understand changes to the new curriculum. They work closely with parents of pupils with additional learning needs to carry out regular reviews of progress to share progress and work together on their children's next steps.

The Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) has established strong relationships with outside agencies and partners. This strengthens school processes and provides valuable training opportunities for staff. As a result, teachers and support staff identify pupils' additional learning needs (ALN) accurately. They monitor the progress of pupils with ALN suitably through regular pupil progress meetings and make important improvements in the support for these pupils. As a result, most pupils with ALN make good progress in relation to their starting points.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities, in a wide range of groups and school forums. A good example of this is the 'Green Team' who are very effective in raising awareness of climate and ecological issues and have made significant improvements to the outdoor learning environment.

The school has appropriate procedures in place for monitoring and improving attendance. The school's Family Liaison Officer works closely with parents to support them in ensuring their children attend schools regularly. As a result, pupils are attending school more regularly this year compared to last year, when the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact nationally on school attendance. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding embedded in its daily routines and practice and arrangements for safeguarding are secure.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders have established a clear vision for Pennar Primary School focused on 'belonging and aspiration. Leaders and governors are considerate of the needs of their local community and provide thoughtful and sensitive support to address equality issues caused by financial and social disadvantage. The school supports the community for instance by providing regular uniform swaps and ensures equity for all learners by placing a price cap on school trips.

Leaders create a strong culture of trust in which all staff work closely together to support each other and reflect on their impact on pupils' learning. They accurately identify areas for development and work closely together to make genuine improvements to the quality of teaching. A focus on developing purposeful writing opportunities, for example, has significantly improved the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum.

Leaders link school improvement effectively to national priorities. The collaborative approach to developing and refining the school's curriculum helps staff plan more engaging opportunities for learning. Middle leaders ensure that all staff develop their understanding of the areas of learning and experience (AoLEs) and evaluate the impact of curriculum reform on pupil progress. A notable strength of this is the thoughtful approach is the school's work on Relationships and Sexuality Education. Leaders have brought about change sensitively, improving staff confidence, supporting parents, and empowering pupils.

Prior to the pandemic, staff regularly shared good practice in teaching in the school and with partner schools. Opportunities to continue this approach and reflect upon its impact on pupil progress are now being re-established. Leaders ensure that all staff have appropriate support in their professional development and that these opportunities often focus accurately on the areas that are most in need of improvement. A recent example is the school's developing work on the practical application of mathematical concepts. However, in a minority of instances, leaders do not always address inconsistencies in the quality of teaching quickly enough. Performance management procedures for teachers and support staff focus suitably on school improvement priorities and in the majority of cases, are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching across the school.

The governing body is committed to supporting the school as a critical friend. The Chair of Governors is integral to securing strong partnerships within the school community, attends leadership meetings weekly and ensures that governors work closely with staff. As a result, governors are regularly involved in self-evaluation processes, undertake monitoring activities, and have a good understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. They evaluate policies and suggest changes to better support the needs of learners and the community, for example by improving accessibility to the school grounds.

Leaders and governors monitor spending plans and their impact efficiently. The school allocates its grant funding effectively to ensure equity of experience for all pupils. Leaders use the pupil development grant purposefully and put in place a range of measures to address the impact of poverty. These include the use of additional adults to support learning, subsidising school visits and providing free fruit

for all pupils as part of their arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking. Overall, leaders and governors maintain a strong and secure safeguarding culture at the school.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carers 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