



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

A report on

Pen-Y-Fai C.I.W. Primary

**Heol Eglwys
Penyfai
Bridgend
CF31 4LX**

Date of inspection: November 2024

by

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

About Pen-Y-Fai C.I.W. Primary

Name of provider	Pen-Y-Fai C.I.W. Primary
Local authority	Bridgend County Borough 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	237
Pupils of statutory school age	180
Number in nursery classes	34
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%)	5.9%
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%)	1.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016

A report on Pen-Y-Fai C.I.W. Primary
November 2024

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/12/2016
Start date of inspection	25/11/2024

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 place well-being at the heart of Pen-y-Fai CIW Primary School, fostering inclusivity and respect among pupils and staff and creating a calm and happy learning environment. Staff have strong, positive working relationships with pupils and provide effective support for them to build on their learning. The behaviour of all pupils is excellent, and they attend school regularly.

Evaluation processes are detailed and identify areas for improvement accurately. The headteacher and senior leaders have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and learning and plan strategic actions to bring about improvement. Weekly updates ensure that governors understand the work of the school, enabling them to support leaders and staff well.

Teachers plan a range of engaging learning experiences for pupils to develop their skills across the curriculum and they monitor their progress effectively. Staff who work with younger pupils collaborate well to create effective learning environments that respond well to pupils' interests. From an early age, pupils enjoy a broad range of high-quality engaging activities. These encourage them to be curious and explore the world around them and help them to develop good independent learning skills. As pupils move through the school, they become increasingly independent and develop good attitudes towards their learning. Most pupils take pride in their work and make worthwhile improvements following feedback from their peers and staff.

In many cases, teachers use questioning effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and learning. Staff support young pupils to become natural problem-solvers and, by Year 6, pupils are confident in their ability to choose areas to research and decide how they will present their work. Pupils across the school have good oracy skills, and they speak eloquently using a range of mature vocabulary. Teachers plan systematically for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensure appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum. Most pupils use their reading and writing skills well in their wider learning. However, teachers do not always plan learning activities that challenge pupils well enough to make progress, particularly the more able pupils. There is a strong, inclusive culture, and provision for pupils with ALN is effective.

Recommendations

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

R1 Provide learning experiences that challenge all pupils appropriately so that they make good progress, particularly the more able

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Pen-y-Fai Primary school is a caring, inclusive school with a strong focus on supporting well-being. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, the school team and pupils. They collaborate well to model appropriate professional values and to improve standards of teaching, learning and leadership. The school has worked effectively with all stakeholders to create the Pen-y-Fai way. As a result, staff and pupils take responsibility for and understand the importance of school values such as honesty, respect, kindness, spreading joy, independence, perseverance and creativity.

Leaders have a clear focus on improving outcomes for learners, regardless of their backgrounds and prior learning. This inclusive ethos is a strong feature in the school and is shared by all. As a result, nearly all pupils feel part of this happy and vibrant community. Staff appreciate leaders' support and care, and the steps they take to keep workload under review. Daily check-ins with staff confirm that leaders have well-being high on their agenda.

Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic about learning, and they enjoy the variety of experiences the school provides for them. They engage very well in their learning activities, are keen to challenge themselves and persevere well to complete their tasks. As a result, most pupils, including those affected by socio-economic disadvantage and with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress from their starting points in many aspects of their learning. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to the direction of their learning and to make choices about what and how they learn. For example, older pupils carry out a variety of individual and collaborative self-directed research activities, select how to present their findings, and often sharing these with other members of the class

Spotlight: Early learning provision for younger pupils

Provision for the youngest pupils is excellent and ensures that pupils develop a firm foundation for future learning. Teachers make good use of professional learning opportunities to further develop their understanding of how young children learn. They use this learning well to provide learning environments that encourage pupils to be curious and to explore the world around them. Staff understand the importance of observation and use findings purposefully to plan appropriate activities that extend pupils' learning. For example, recent adaptations to the way numeracy is taught in these environments have resulted in pupils developing a deeper understanding of the concept of number.

As pupils move through the school, teachers build on the success of early provision appropriately. Nearly all teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They

encourage pupils to become independent learners and ensure that the pace of teaching and learning meets their needs effectively. Many staff use questioning appropriately to support, check and extend pupils' understanding. Nearly all teachers demonstrate that they know their pupils well and generally provide suitable activities for pupils in sequences of lessons that build appropriately upon prior learning. However, too often teachers do not plan learning activities across the curriculum that challenge pupils well enough, particularly the more able pupils.

The school's curriculum builds on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. Staff are good language role models, and they provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop good oracy skills. For example, younger pupils are keen to talk about the class stick insects and by Year 6 they speak eloquently, using a broad vocabulary and precise language. Staff have a growing understanding of Welsh vocabulary and language patterns and use them incidentally in their teaching. However, overall, pupils' Welsh language skills are underdeveloped. In the youngest classes, pupils develop a robust understanding of letter sounds and are beginning to apply these when decoding new words. Most of the oldest pupils read texts that support their learning across the curriculum competently, for example when discussing climate change and analysing the effectiveness and passion of the speeches of Greta Thunberg. Many pupils talk about reading for pleasure and enjoy a range of modern classics, such as the Harry Potter novels.

There is a clear and structured approach to the development of numeracy skills, and many make sound progress by the time they leave the school. Younger pupils are developing a good understanding of early mathematical concepts. As pupils move through the school, teachers offer suitable opportunities for pupils to build an understanding of a wide breadth of mathematical concepts. However, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum at an appropriately challenging level.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their digital skills. They use a range of devices and platforms to support their wider learning and develop their digital skills progressively. For instance, younger pupils control a programmable toy to make turns on a street plan and older pupils code a model of the solar system and use their understanding confidently to rotate an image of earth. Pupils in Year 6 are developing an early understanding of how to produce data bases and spreadsheets. Most pupils understand how to keep personal data private and how to stay safe online.

School leaders have developed thorough procedures for evaluating the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This enables staff and governors to have a firm understanding of the areas that needs to improve. Shared responsibilities ensure that priorities are manageable and addressed promptly. The headteacher focuses well on building leadership capacity across the school through the provision of worthwhile opportunities for staff to develop leadership skills.

Pupils feel confident to talk to staff about any problems that might arise and know who to turn to if they need help. As a result, nearly all pupils feel happy and safe. Adults use positive, supportive language, and encourage pupils to do the right thing. This shared vocabulary and ethos of positivity contributes to pupils' exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school.

A particularly strong aspect of the school's work is its pupil voice provision. Most pupils have many exciting opportunities to develop their leadership skills, including those with ALN, through a variety of pupil voice groups, which have a positive impact on many areas of school life. Several pupil voice groups meet with school leaders as part of a Pupil Leadership Committee, including Criw Cymraeg, to share and present their ideas. For example, the Smile Squad share tips on how to sleep well during Healthy living week and the Eco Team organise a book swap on World Book Day.

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:

Publications 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