

A report on

Pembroke Dock CP School

**Bush Street
Pembroke Dock
Pembrokeshire
SA72 6LQ**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

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

About Pembroke Dock CP School

Name of provider	Pembroke Dock CP School
Local authority	Pembrokeshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	617
Pupils of statutory school age	473
Number in nursery classes	83
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%)	28.2%
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%)	6.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	2.1%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.7%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/04/2010

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	09/06/2025

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

Pembroke Dock Community Primary School is an inspiring and welcoming place where pupils thrive. The school's strong rights-respecting ethos ensures that everyone feels included and supported. Staff focus clearly on making sure that every pupil, whatever their background, has the chance to succeed. They listen to pupils and act on their views, helping to create a supportive sense of belonging. Pupils show care for others, understand different perspectives and treat one another with kindness.

The headteacher provides determined leadership and sets high expectations. This has brought staff, pupils, parents and the wider community together around a shared vision. The school's leadership structure supports improvement and helps staff to grow professionally. Leaders work well with parents and outside organisations to give pupils the support they need. Staff benefit from high-quality professional development and are committed to improving their practice. Governors know the school well and use their experience to support and challenge leaders appropriately.

Pupils enjoy a broad and interesting curriculum that is often linked to real-life experiences. Teachers enable pupils to explore important issues and develop their understanding of the world around them. Most pupils develop their creative, physical and thinking skills well. They make purposeful choices, express original ideas, and solve problems with thought and care. Most make effective progress in reading, oracy and digital skills, and exceptional progress in writing. They also build secure Welsh oracy and mathematical skills as they move through the school.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress over time. Staff support pupils well with their learning, including those with additional needs and those in the school's learning resource base. Pupils benefit from valuable opportunities to develop their leadership skills and they are proud of the positive changes their contributions make to school life. The school works closely with families and external partners to improve attendance, but the rate of persistent absence remains too high. Through thoughtful use of funding and wide-ranging support, leaders reduce barriers to learning ensuring equity of experience.

Recommendations

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

R1. Address the high levels of persistent absenteeism

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Pembroke Dock Community Primary School is an inspiring and welcoming learning community. At its core is a strong rights-respecting ethos that promotes fairness and a sense of belonging. The school's notable commitment to equity ensures that staff celebrate the diverse backgrounds and meet the needs of pupils. Staff listen to pupils and act on their views, and this helps create a culture where everyone feels valued. Pupils show empathy and treat others with respect.

The headteacher provides determined and visionary leadership, characterised by high expectations for pupils' learning and well-being. Leaders promote a clear, shared vision that unites staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. They contribute effectively to school improvement and support the development of aspiring leaders through a culture of professional growth. The school creates valuable partnerships with its community to enhance and enrich pupils' learning and well-being.

Leaders provide worthwhile professional learning for all staff and promote an inquiry based approach. The school's sustained focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning ensures that provision is highly effective in meeting all pupils' needs. As a lead school for Initial Teacher Education (ITE), leaders contribute significantly to developing new teachers, strengthening the school's reflective and professional learning culture.

The school has embedded an inspiring curriculum that reflects pupils' interests and the locality effectively. Teachers work together to plan authentic learning experiences that support pupils to develop as confident and curious, independent learners. Pupils benefit from opportunities to explore local and global issues and to consider people's lived experiences. These opportunities support their ethical, moral social and spiritual development well.

Staff build positive working relationships with pupils and understand their individual needs well. Overall, teachers provide prompt and constructive feedback on learning, encouraging pupils to make appropriate improvements to their work and take pride in their progress.

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and pupils in the learning resource base, make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. They develop their oracy skills well, often from low starting points. They listen attentively and contribute effectively to class discussions. Across the school, most pupils make steady progress in developing their reading. An emphasis on comprehension is improving pupils' understanding of what they read. By Year 6, most pupils read fluently and with clear expression and use their reading skills effectively to extract information from a range of sources.

Spotlight: A whole-school focus on improving pupils' writing

A focus on professional development for staff to strengthen approaches to teaching writing has ensured that there are consistent and effective processes in place. Most pupils write well and older pupils' writing skills are exceptional. They write imaginatively and creatively to engage the reader and apply their skills purposefully using technical vocabulary in their work across the curriculum.

Most pupils are enthusiastic about learning Welsh. Staff use the language frequently in lessons and use regular opportunities to develop pupils' Welsh language skills across the curriculum. This consistent approach reflects the school's long-term priority to promote the Welsh language and supports pupils to make secure progress.

Overall, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge of mathematical concepts. Most build on this knowledge to develop a secure understanding of effective methods of calculation and apply their numeracy skills effectively in their work across the curriculum. Pupils' digital skills progress very well as they move through the school. All pupils have access to a range of digital resources and use these effectively to support their learning in other curriculum areas.

Most pupils develop their creative, physical and thinking skills well. They make purposeful choices, express original ideas and respond thoughtfully when solving problems. In the early years, most pupils engage regularly in activities that support imaginative thinking and physical co-ordination. Most older pupils develop their leadership skills successfully through involvement in school monitoring and rights-based initiatives.

Leaders address national priorities effectively. The school's improvement priorities reflect pupils' needs accurately. Leaders and teachers use monitoring, self-evaluation and high quality, collaborative professional learning opportunities carefully to bring about improvement. A focus on improving teaching and learning has a sustained and positive impact on pupils' learning and progress over time.

The school has appropriate systems in place to address attendance. Staff work closely with outside agencies and external partners and support families well. However, the rates of persistent absence are too high.

The school's provision for pupils with ALN is effective. Leaders work with staff and external agencies to provide timely and targeted support for pupils. Staff identify needs early, monitor progress closely and provide tailored interventions. This enables most pupils with ALN to make meaningful progress towards achieving their individual targets.

Staff in the learning resource base plan learning carefully to meet pupils' individual needs, using a range of information that helps them support pupils' social and well-being needs well. They work closely with mainstream staff to ensure that activities follow similar themes. Communication strategies and sensory activities help pupils to take part and enjoy learning. Leaders evaluate the quality of provision regularly, which helps to ensure it meets the specific needs of learners. A minority of pupils integrate appropriately into mainstream classes, and this supports their sense of inclusion.

The governing body is highly experienced and knows the school and its community well. Governors draw appropriately on their knowledge and experience to hold leaders to account for the school's performance and improvement work.

Spotlight: Removing barriers, enriching opportunities

A strong and sustained commitment to equity is central to the school's ethos. This is evident in the curriculum, daily routines and the wide-ranging experiences offered to all pupils. Leaders and governors make innovative and targeted use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) to reduce the impact of poverty. They rigorously review the impact of grant-funded strategies to ensure that they meet pupils' needs. This determined and creative approach reduces barriers to learning and has helped to narrow gaps in achievement.

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/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

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:

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