

A report on

Penpych Community Primary School

**Blaenrhondda Road
Ty Newydd
Treherbert
RCT
CF42 5SD**

Date of inspection: November 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Penpych Community Primary School

Name of provider	Penpych Community Primary School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	170
Pupils of statutory school age	134
Number in nursery classes	22
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%)	37.4%
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%)	1.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2022

Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	26/02/2018
Start date of inspection	10/11/2025

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

Penpych Primary school provides a nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils behave well, are polite and supportive of each other and nearly all pupils feel safe. Leaders and staff act as positive role models, fostering respectful working relationships with each other, pupils and the community. Pupils are happy at school, develop excellent attitudes towards their learning and become confident individuals. They are proud to belong to the school. All staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour.

The school's governors offer highly effective support and are integral to the school's work. Leaders and governors use effective self-evaluation processes to improve provision and pupils' progress. They correctly identify the aspects that need improvement, including improving pupils' Welsh language skills and digital competence. The recent focus on developing pupils' writing has had a significant impact on pupils' progress.

Leaders understand the needs of pupils and the community they live in. They use this knowledge well, with their understanding of high quality teaching and learning and robust monitoring, to accurately identify areas for development and how to improve. They ensure that staff have the expertise to bring about the necessary changes through providing them with access to an effective range of professional learning. The impact of the improvements made to the provision for writing has resulted in nearly all pupils making significant progress in this area.

The school has made strides in successfully developing a curriculum which addresses the needs of the pupils and the community they live in. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting, real-life learning experiences that engage pupils and capture their imagination, including learning about different faiths and the world of work. This raises pupils' aspirations and is particularly relevant to pupils when they learn about aspects such as woodland and tree management, when considering their locality. These worthwhile opportunities support pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils, including those from low-income households make good progress overall. Teaching assistants support pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) effectively.

Recommendations

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

- R1. Increase opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their digital skills
- R2. Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Leaders, governors and staff at Penpych Primary School share a clear and successful vision for to provide equitable experiences for all pupils. They support the well-being of staff and pupils extremely well. Governors support the school effectively and work closely with leaders to evaluate the school's strengths and identify areas where development is needed. They have a thorough understanding of the school's progress towards its improvement priorities. Leaders and governors have developed effective school improvement processes focused on pupils' outcomes. The school's community-centred approach helps to maintain good relationships with families and the community. Leaders, staff and governors promote a strong culture of safeguarding and nearly all pupils feel safe in school.

The headteacher sets high expectations for staff and pupils. Leaders and staff are positive role models and create a highly nurturing and inclusive environment. They foster effective and respectful working relationships with pupils and each other. This encourages pupils to develop excellent attitudes towards their learning and to try their best. Nearly all pupils behave well. They are polite, courteous and supportive of each other. Pupils are proud to be in Penpych Primary School and have a strong sense of belonging. The school works successfully to encourage good attendance.

Spotlight 1: Leaders' use of professional learning to improve pupils' progress

Leaders know and understand the needs of pupils and the community they live in well. They have a clear grasp of effective learning and teaching and use this knowledge with their understanding of pupils' needs well to develop teaching across the school and to ensure that pupils make progress. They link professional learning opportunities thoughtfully to priorities for improvement, for example to improve the quality of pupils' writing.

Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well. They have a good understanding of pupils' learning and well-being needs and work together to support pupils appropriately. Most lessons are highly effective and during their time in school, nearly all pupils, including those from low-income households, and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress in most aspects of their learning.

The school has made significant progress in developing its broad curriculum across all areas of learning and experience. Staff plan effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in most areas of the curriculum successfully. These experiences capture pupils' imagination and help to develop them well as positive and enthusiastic learners who show resilience and determination to succeed.

Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to learn about the immediate and wider world. Pupils find out about the lives and faiths of different people, including Christians, Sikhs and Jews. Teachers enrich the curriculum with valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about different careers. These opportunities provide pupils with insights into the world of work and raise their interests in different pathways including those specific to the school's locality.

Generally, teachers demonstrate sound mathematical knowledge and plan learning that meets the needs of pupils well. Most pupils' understanding develops successfully and by the time they reach Years 5 and 6 and they have a firm grasp of concepts such as number and data handling. While teachers provide pupils with opportunities to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum, these are not regular enough. Pupils are beginning to explore a range of digital skills and benefit from a few opportunities to apply them. However, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their digital skills effectively or authentically in their work across the curriculum.

Nearly all pupils develop as confident speakers who listen well. They respond to their teachers and peers and progress to extending each other's ideas thoughtfully in their talk. The school places a high priority on developing pupils' reading skills and many pupils cultivate a love of reading. The school uses a systematic approach to teaching reading that enables younger pupils to decode words effectively. Older pupils reading skills continue to develop well and they use these skills to support their learning across the curriculum effectively.

The school's focus on improving the quality of pupils' writing has been highly successful.

Spotlight 2: Developing pupils' writing skills

Nearly all pupils make significant progress in developing their writing skills by the time they leave the school. Teachers plan innovative opportunities for pupils to apply their skills progressively in their work across the curriculum. Younger pupils develop their early writing skills well to communicate their thoughts and ideas. Older pupils' writing is imaginative. They write competently for a range of purposes across the curriculum. Most pupils write at length, editing and extending their writing to make improvements. They structure their sentences and choose varied vocabulary to enhance their work, resulting in engaging texts that hold the readers' attention.

Staff plan regular opportunities for pupils to learn and recall Welsh language patterns and, in a very few instances, pupils are beginning to use Welsh phrases during the day. Overall, there are limited opportunities for pupils to build their Welsh oracy skills progressively across the school which impacts on pupils' ability to speak Welsh with confidence and competence.

Teachers and teaching assistants question and scaffold pupils effectively to clarify and extend their understanding and move their learning on. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to review their learning. Most teachers use succinct and specific feedback to provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities for them to improve their work successfully.

Through curricular experiences and assemblies, pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on and consider important features of citizenship such as friendship and kindness. Pupils learn about children's rights and explore aspects such as equality. Pupils develop empathy and a strong sense of fairness.

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

© Crown Copyright 2026: This report may be re used free of charge: (a) in any format or medium; and (b) may be translated by or on behalf of an education and/or training provider in respect of which this report relates into any language, in each case provided that it is re used and/or translated accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must, in each case (including in the case of a translation) be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.