

A report on

Penybont Primary School

**Minerva Street
Bridgend
CF31 1TD**

Date of inspection: February 2026

by

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

About Penybont Primary School

Name of provider	Penybont Primary School
Local authority	Bridgend 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	334
Pupils of statutory school age	251
Number in nursery classes	43
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%)	32.4%
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%)	3.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	14.3%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/11/2019

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	09/02/2026

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

Penybont Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive school where pupils and families feel valued. Leaders and staff place pupils at the centre of the school's work and promote a strong sense of community. Positive relationships create a calm and purposeful environment where nearly all pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils have regular opportunities to share their views and influence school life through leadership roles.

Most pupils make appropriate progress over time. They develop strong speaking skills and make secure progress in reading. Pupils apply their numeracy skills confidently in different contexts and use digital technology effectively to support their learning. As pupils progress through the school, they write with increasing confidence and generally use grammar and punctuation accurately. Across the school, learning experiences do not always enable pupils to build on their learning, and the level of challenge varies. Pupils do not speak Welsh as confidently or as regularly as they could.

The school provides a broad and engaging curriculum that reflects its local context well. Weekly practical and outdoor experiences, including cooking, camping and learning new sports, broaden pupils' experiences and help them become more confident and independent. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs supports them to make good progress towards their individual targets.

Leaders have suitable arrangements in place to review the school's work and support its improvement. These processes do not focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Leaders have useful systems in place to promote good attendance, but rates of persistent absence remain too high.

Governors are committed to the school and engage regularly in its work. This enables them to develop a sound understanding of the school's context and provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement processes to focus more precisely on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress
- R2 Strengthen teaching and learning experiences to ensure all pupils make the progress they should.
- R3 Reduce persistent absence
- R4 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 establish a strong, inclusive ethos that places pupils and their families at the heart of the school's work. Staff work collaboratively with parents and carers to build trusting relationships that strengthen the sense of community. This culture is evident in the day-to-day life of the school, where pupils feel safe and respected. Nearly all pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, behave considerately and co-operate well with one another. Overall, most pupils, including those from low-income households and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make appropriate progress during their time at the school.

This inclusive ethos extends to the school's commitment to equity. Leaders and governors make effective use of the pupil development grant (PDG) to support pupils affected by poverty. In partnership with the local community, the school provides enrichment opportunities that support pupils to develop valuable life-skills. Experiences such as on-site camping develop pupils' physical skills and independence, broaden their horizons and improve their confidence.

The school values the voice of learners. Pupils have meaningful opportunities to share their ideas about learning and reflect on what they already know and what they want to find out. Teachers use this information to plan activities that respond appropriately to pupils' interests. The 'Penybont Pioneers', a pupil leadership group, give older pupils a strong platform to influence school life. This enables learners, including those with ALN, to make authentic choices, and take on responsibility effectively.

Teachers establish calm, purposeful learning environments that support pupils to engage well with their work. They plan a broad curriculum that provides pupils with worthwhile learning experiences and makes effective use of the local context. Learning generally moves forward at an appropriate pace, with staff balancing direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to collaborate and share ideas. Most teachers use questioning effectively to extend pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding.

Teachers use assessment information appropriately to identify pupils' starting points and monitor progress. In lessons, verbal feedback helps pupils recognise how to improve, and many respond positively by refining their work. They plan learning experiences that support pupils to develop their skills independently across areas of learning and experience. These tasks meet the needs of younger pupils well. On occasion, however, learning is over directed by staff, which limits opportunities for pupils to explore and articulate their own ideas. In older classes, the level of challenge is not always sufficiently demanding. Over time, this limits the progress pupils make.

The school's curriculum supports pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development effectively. This helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of different faiths, cultures and traditions and to show respect for others.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their oracy skills and, by Reception, engage confidently in discussions with peers and adults. As they progress through the school, they use increasingly precise vocabulary to describe their experiences and learning. The school creates a positive climate for reading, and leaders and staff work in close partnership with families to encourage reading at home. This fosters pupils' enjoyment of books. The school's approach to developing reading provides secure foundations for the youngest pupils and over time, pupils develop a sound range of reading skills. By Year 2, most read simple texts with suitable fluency and accuracy. In the older classes, many pupils show a growing ability to understand and evaluate a range of texts.

As they move through the school, pupils write with increasing confidence, and their spelling and punctuation is generally accurate. Most develop a suitable grasp of grammar and the use of language for effect. In older classes, planning does not always support the progressive development of writing across different genres and areas of the curriculum well enough. This limits the depth and range of pupils' written work.

Teachers make effective use of digital technology to enhance learning. This helps pupils use a range of devices competently and apply their digital skills across the curriculum.

Most teachers model the Welsh language appropriately. Younger pupils use simple Welsh confidently, while older pupils' responses are often too brief and do not develop the sophistication needed to support steady progress.

The headteacher has a clear vision for strengthening leadership across the school. Senior leaders have well-defined roles and responsibilities, which they carry out purposefully. Leaders are beginning to develop a distributed leadership model, including establishing an extended leadership team to build leadership capacity.

Leaders have established a cycle of monitoring and review that involves staff, governors and pupils. This includes identifying actions linked to national priorities, such as Curriculum for Wales, Welsh language development and ALN. These processes are well organised, but do not focus sharply enough on evaluating the quality of teaching or its impact on pupils' learning and progress over time. This reduces the overall impact of improvement planning.

The school has suitable arrangements for staff professional learning. Recent training in mathematics, for example, has improved classroom practice. Teachers provide worthwhile

real-life contexts, such as budgeting and enterprise projects, that require pupils to apply their understanding of number. This enables most pupils to solve problems with increasing accuracy and confidence and develop secure mathematical skills over time.

Governors are committed to the school and engage regularly in its work. This enables them to develop a sound understanding of the school's context and provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. They use pupil views purposefully to evaluate how well the pupil development grant funding benefits targeted pupils.

The school's provision for pupils with ALN is a notable strength. Staff identify needs early, monitor progress carefully and work closely with parents and external professionals to strengthen support. This helps most pupils with ALN to make good progress towards their individual targets.

Leaders monitor attendance carefully. They have a clear strategy and processes are beginning to improve attendance. However, attendance levels remain too low, and too many pupils are persistently absent from school.

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.

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