

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

Penywaun Primary School

**Coed Glas
Penywaun
Aberdare
RCT
CF44 9DR**

Date of visit: May 2026

by

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

Outcome of visit

Penywaun Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve leadership at all levels to strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes to focus clearly on the impact of teaching on outcomes for pupils

The appointment of the headteacher has brought greater stability, consistency and strategic direction to the school's work. Leaders and staff work with increased confidence, clearer purpose and stronger professional accountability. Revised leadership structures and clearly defined responsibilities have supported notable developments to supporting vulnerable pupils, improving pupils' behaviour and driving school improvement priorities.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are robust. Regular learning walks, book scrutiny and curriculum reviews provide a more accurate understanding of the quality of education across the school. Monitoring activities now focus more sharply on how well teachers adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. As a result, teachers match tasks, questioning and the support they provide for pupils appropriately. This enables more pupils to participate successfully in lessons and to make stronger progress from their individual starting points.

Leaders have established clear expectations for classroom practice through the 'Penywaun Way'. Staff apply these agreed approaches successfully. Professional dialogue between staff is purposeful and reflective, further strengthening teaching.

Leaders have strengthened provision for vulnerable pupils successfully. Effective collaboration with external agencies along with targeted intervention means that pupils' needs are identified and addressed quickly. Consequently, behaviour has improved, engagement in learning has increased and the school environment is calmer and more purposeful. Overall, most pupils understand what is expected of them and show greater respect towards staff and one another.

Governors play an active role in school life and improvement. Regular visits to school, improved training and purposeful participation in a range of monitoring activities ensures they provide stronger support and challenge to leaders. Effective financial management by governors and leaders has supported school improvement successfully.

R2. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching to raise standards, particularly in pupils' literacy, Welsh and digital skills

Leaders have collaborated effectively with external partners to improve teaching and learning at the school.

When planning learning experiences, teachers take appropriate account of pupils' individual needs. They are beginning to adapt their teaching within lessons to match the level of challenge and support to the needs of pupils. Most pupils engage with learning well. They listen carefully to instructions, carry out tasks with increasing independence and demonstrate pride in the quality of their work. Across the school, most pupils now make good progress in lessons and over time.

In the classes for younger pupils, staff have established a well-considered and language rich learning environment that enables pupils to develop early skills and independence progressively. There are valuable opportunities to learn through play. Staff in classes for older pupils organise their classrooms effectively, enabling regular and purposeful pupil to pupil and adult to pupil interactions as they work. In most lessons, staff use questioning effectively. They identify and address misconceptions well to move learning forward. Written feedback processes are developing suitably. In the best instances, teachers' comments challenge and support pupils to improve their work.

Provision for reading has improved considerably. Professional learning, coaching and regular monitoring have strengthened staff confidence and consistency in the teaching of phonics and their capacity to support pupils to develop a wider range of reading skills. Access to a wider range of texts, combined with more effective modelling, supports pupils to read with deeper understanding. Most pupils make good progress in reading, with fewer pupils now requiring additional support.

A consistent whole-school writing process and increased opportunities to write for authentic purposes has improved the quality of writing across the curriculum. The introduction of writing journals has enhanced pupils' enjoyment of writing and contributes to improved outcomes. However, inconsistencies remain in the accuracy of pupils' punctuation and the quality of presentation.

Provision to develop pupils' digital skills has strengthened. Most pupils develop and apply a suitable range of digital skills confidently as they move through the school.

Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the vocabulary and sentence patterns during daily language sessions. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply the Welsh they

have learnt in other contexts are under-developed. Older pupils struggle to draw upon prior knowledge when attempting to hold simple conversations.

R3. Ensure that the curriculum provides effective opportunities for pupils to apply their skills at an appropriate level in meaningful contexts

The school has made strong progress in developing a relevant and engaging curriculum. A broad range of authentic learning experiences capture and sustain pupils' interests well. These include beneficial opportunities to learn about the local area, Wales and different cultures across the world.

There are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills. This in combination with improved teaching, ensures that most pupils now use their skills at an appropriate level in their work across the curriculum.

Beneficial opportunities for pupils to influence curriculum topics impact positively on their engagement and attitudes to learning. This, along with continued improvements to the environment, supports improved standards of behaviour.

The school's nurture provision is highly effective. A tailored curriculum supports the social and emotional development of targeted pupils well. This improves their resilience and ability to access mainstream lessons.

Teachers keep the effectiveness of the curriculum under regular review. They share and evaluate planning and examples of pupils' work to ensure that pupils develop their skills progressively as they move through the school. Regular monitoring by curriculum leaders ensures that pupils experience an appropriate breadth of learning during their time at the school.

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