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Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Pencoed Primary School
Penprysg Road
Pencoed
Bridgend
Mid Glamorgan
CF35 6RH**

Date of inspection: 25 - 27 January 2011

by

Mr Peter Mathias

Reporting Inspector, under contract to Estyn

for

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

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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Context

Pencoed Primary School is situated in the small town of the same name near Bridgend, which is the local authority (LA). The school was formed in September 2008 from the merger of Pencoed Infant and Junior Schools. Pupils generally come from homes which are neither socially advantaged nor disadvantaged. About 18% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below the national and local averages.

Nearly all pupils come from English speaking backgrounds. None has Welsh as the language of the home. Nine come from other ethnic backgrounds and two pupils are taught English as an additional language. There are 505 pupils on roll including 33 who attend one of the four resource bases for those with a range of learning difficulties. These include visual impairment, moderate learning difficulties and developmental delay. Two pupils have statements of SEN, one of whom has the national curriculum (NC) disapplied. No pupil was excluded in the previous school year. Four are looked after by the LA.

The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher were appointed in September 2010 along with seven other teachers. During the inspection two teachers were absent due to ill health or maternity leave; their places were taken by relief teachers.

The school holds green flag status (2), the BECTA award for information communications technology (ICT), the intermediate international school award of the British Council and the healthy schools award Level 3.

The individual school budget per pupil for Pencoed Primary School is £3,225 which compares with a maximum of £4,846 and a minimum of £2,758 for primary schools in the Bridgend LA. The school has the 25th highest budget per pupil out of the 52 primary schools in Bridgend.

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Summary

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good

Current performance

The school is good because:

- standards in the NC assessments are above local and national averages.
- Skills in communication, numeracy, ICT and Welsh are good.
- Standards in subjects are good, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT.
- Teaching is good overall.

Prospects for improvement

Prospect for improvement are good because:

- leadership of the school is focused on improving quality and continues to develop partnership working;
- the school's self-evaluation process is rigorous;
- there is a strong commitment from staff to continue to improve further; and
- the school has recently begun to evaluate performance in detail.

Recommendations

In order to improve further, Pencoed Primary School needs to:

- R1 strengthen teachers' planning to provide greater challenge for the more able and talented pupils and have higher expectations of what they should achieve;
- R2 continue to refine assessment procedures to raise standards further;
- R3 make the excellent teaching found in some classes consistent across the school; and
- R4 review the internal accommodation for children in the full-time nursery and reception classes.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Good

Standards: Good

As this is a new school there is very little data on past performance to indicate trends. Also there are four resource bases which provide for pupils with a wide range of difficulties.

In 2010 in the Key Stage 1 (KS1) national teacher assessments for seven-year-olds standards in English, mathematics and science are close to the national and local averages. The combined results are also close to these averages. When the results of those who attend one or other of the resource bases are discounted, results are above these averages. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher level 3 is below local and national averages.

In 2010 in the KS2 national teacher assessments for eleven-year-olds the results in English, mathematics and science are just below national and local averages. The combined results are also below these averages. When the resource base results are discounted, the school performs above local and national averages. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 is below local and national averages.

When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals (16-24%), the results without the resource base pupils are higher in KS1 and slightly lower in KS2.

When compared to the family of schools across Wales to which this school belongs, results in 2010 are above most of these schools in KS1 and below in KS2. These figures include the large proportion of resource base pupils in the school.

Boys and girls perform about the same in KS1 and girls do slightly better than boys in KS2. Across the school those with additional learning needs (ALN) achieve well and those in the resource bases benefit considerably from the close support they receive. Many of those who are entitled to free school meals reach the expected standards and make good progress. Bearing in mind their different starting points nearly all achieve well.

Standards in work seen across the school are generally good. In English many pupils speak and listen well. They are articulate and have growing vocabularies. By the end of KS2 many write neatly for a wide range of reasons. Across the school reading standards are good and many read with expression and comprehension. Standards in mathematics are good as they are in information communications technology (ICT), where nearly all pupils make good progress.

Standards in Welsh language development are good and pupils make good progress from the foundations laid when they begin in the nursery. By the end of KS2, many use Welsh and English together appropriately and accurately.

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Good communication, numeracy and ICT skills ensure most pupils develop fully as independent learners by the end of KS2. They have a clear understanding how these skills can be used across the curriculum and in their everyday lives now and in the future.

Nearly all pupils listen well and engage purposefully in partner discussions. Most speak clearly and express their ideas and answers logically. Most develop good reading and writing skills and show continued improvement. By the end of KS2, most read fluently and with good understanding, expression and accuracy and have positive attitudes to reading for enjoyment. Many pupils' standards in writing are good across the curriculum for a variety of purposes.

Most pupils' use of numeracy across the curriculum is good and by the end of KS2 many develop their skills of problem solving well.

Nearly all pupils' ICT skills are consistently good and are used effectively across the curriculum.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils, particularly those in Y5/Y6, have a good understanding as to how they maintain a healthy lifestyle through what they eat and the exercise they take.

Overall attendance rates have been adequate at around 92% and in line with the national average. Rates improved in 2008-09 but dropped back the following year due to serious health and medical issues surrounding specific pupils. Attendance last term rose to 93%. Unauthorised absence is low at 1%. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions over the last academic year. A few learners come late to school but the new practice of parents signing in late-comers is improving the situation.

The school council is actively involved in making decisions about life in the school. Their targets form part of the school development plan (SDP). At present, however, there are no elected officers to enable pupils to take more responsibility for the running of the council.

Across the school pupils' social and life skills are good. Pupils invariably behave sensibly in lessons and are eager to learn. They take turns fairly and share their resources willingly.

From the early part of the Foundation Phase children take out and put away their resources. They show respect for these and their helpers. By the end of KS2 many have a good understanding of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Good
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Learning experiences: Good

Education for sustainable development has a clear place in the curriculum and is part of the everyday life of the school. Pupils are very involved in recycling and older learners have a clear understanding as to why this is important. They understand the need to conserve fossil fuels. Food waste is turned into compost for the school's gardens, where a good range of vegetables is grown, and rainwater is collected for reuse.

An excellent practice is the reading of meters for the essential services and the series of graphs produced monthly to show learners the amount of energy that they save. There is a Golden Bulb reward for the class which conserves the most energy.

Pupils learn about global citizenship through their work supporting countries affected by natural disasters and through collecting boxes for charities.

Clear policy guidelines and detailed programmes of learning ensure that statutory regulations for the provision of learning experiences in the Foundation Phase are fulfilled. NC requirements are met and religious education is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum is broad and balanced within an adequate amount of time. Learning experiences are planned through a themed, topic approach to respond to pupils' interests and to engage all abilities, as well as through discrete subjects.

The curriculum builds systematically on knowledge and skills as pupils move from the Foundation Phase to KS2. Effective curriculum teams have organised learning experiences to reflect the areas of learning in the Foundation Phase and the introduction of Curriculum 2008.

The school plans successfully for the development of pupils' communication, numeracy and ICT skills. This is included in the schemes of learning experiences and the weekly planning, ensuring that pupils acquire the necessary skills to access the wider curriculum. A thematic and skills based curriculum is in place which encourages pupils to take an active part in their own learning. As a result nearly all pupils are highly engaged and motivated in their learning.

There is appropriate provision for Welsh language development both in class and in the wider life of the school. The Welsh dimension, is well represented in work across the subjects taught. This is enriched by a wide range of visits and involvement in cultural activities.

Teaching: Good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is a particular strength in the younger KS2 classes, where some of the teaching is excellent.

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Across the school, teachers show good subject knowledge. They promote the skills necessary for pupils to be successful learners. In many lessons they effectively take the opportunities which occur to develop pupils' Welsh language skills. They teach with pace and purpose.

Lessons are invariably well-planned. Teachers in the Foundation Phase understand how to provide for pupils of this age.

In all classes relationships between adults and pupils are positive. This is a particularly strong feature in the resource bases.

Where there are some shortcomings, because of the limitations of space, some pupils are under challenged; the pace of learning is too slow and the more able and talented are not extended sufficiently.

Assessment of learning is evident throughout the school with teachers providing clear feedback to pupils. Extensive portfolios of levelled work are collated for the core subjects. All teachers have been involved in the process. A majority of teachers use assessment for learning strategies; various methods are evident and different approaches are matched to different year groups and abilities. Pupils set their own targets and review them regularly, taking ownership of their own learning.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Effective teaching and learning experiences support pupils' emotional wellbeing and the provision for moral and social development. As a result pupils are well adjusted socially and their behaviour is consistently of a high standard.

Effective arrangements exist to support parents on educational matters, for example through parent classes and newsletters. Pupils enjoy life in school, which places a good emphasis on developing their health and wellbeing. Parents who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children are encouraged to be healthy. They are given the menus for school dinners so that they can make informed choices and there is also practical advice to help them provide healthy packed lunches.

There are appropriate policies to promote good behaviour and strategies to deal with any bullying. Pupils are guided to manage their feelings and, should there be any difficulties, good personal support is given to them.

The provision for ALN is good. Difficulties are identified early and are catered for well through child friendly individual education plans (IEP) and a number of interventions. The resource base pupils integrate well where appropriate and all ALN pupils play a full part in the life of the school. The school works closely with the LA services to enable provision to be carefully focused for ALN learners. The school has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community, where pupils receive equal access to all areas of the school's provision. All staff ensure this inclusive vision is implemented in the

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school's daily practices and procedures. There is a clear and strong emphasis on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.

However, accommodation for Foundation Phase indoor learning in some classes is limited in terms of space available. Outdoor learning areas are adequate, though there is no covered area to support learning and teaching activities other than small huts.

Overall the school is an attractive learning environment for pupils. Good use is made of resources in the community to enhance the curriculum and the school halls and playing fields are used, in turn, by the community.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are generally good. Teaching and support staff are suitably qualified and are deployed effectively. The grounds are well maintained and optimum use is made of them to provide good learning experiences, including two forest school learning areas, which are used regularly to enhance pupils' understanding of and learning through the outdoor environment.

The school site is divided by a main road. This necessitates the supervision of the crossing by a full-time crossing patrol.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Leadership: Good

The headteacher provides experienced and pragmatic leadership. This has ensured that the new school has come together successfully. All staff share a common commitment to the new school and work together cohesively. A particular strength is the creation of curriculum teams which have developed a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. All have high expectations of themselves and of their pupils.

The senior management team (SMT), including the newly appointed deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, have a good understanding of the future needs of the school and plan carefully to meet them, for example in using assessment information efficiently to raise standards further.

The governing body is well led by an experienced chair who is very committed to the continued success of the school. Governors are well informed and actively engage through curriculum teams in evaluating the on going work of the school. Their role as a critical and yet supportive friend is well established.

The school is making good progress in addressing local and national priorities and initiatives.

Improving quality: Good

The school's self-evaluation programme identifies accurately the school's strengths and the areas it needs to develop through the use of curriculum area teams. The SMT defines appropriately the priorities for the school and allocates resources to enable its goals to be met. The new teams review progress regularly.

Teachers, governors and support staff work well in teams not only to identify school improvement targets, but also to plan towards achieving the targets set against challenging success criteria.

Staff have worked well with other local schools to agree standards between them. Collections of pupils works to indicate standards are extensive for mathematics, English and science. In Welsh, shared resources have been developed to improve provision. The school is beginning to develop links of networks of professional practice within and outside the school, in order to raise standards further.

Partnership working: Good

Effective partnership activities contribute well to improving pupils' standards and wellbeing. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and use strategic partnerships successfully to build capacity for continuous improvement.

Particularly strong partnerships with parents and carers, including highly effective communication channels, lead to nearly all parents having positive attitudes towards all aspects of the life of the school. Staff work very closely with the LA's children's services and other agencies to ensure suitable learning experiences impact positively on pupils' standards and wellbeing. This is a particularly strong feature.

Developing links and partnerships with the 'family' of schools across Wales is at an early stage of development.

Resource management: Good

The school has appropriate levels of well qualified, skilled, new and experienced staff and, along with good levels of resources, ensures this is appropriate to support learning improvement. The school deploys teaching and support staff to good effect to cover all aspects of the school's curriculum. The impact of resources on learning and teaching is kept under review and spending is closely linked to the school's priorities. The school gives good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

A small proportion of parents completed the questionnaire. The vast majority who replied are satisfied with the school and feel that their children like being there. They believe the school helps their children settle in and make good progress. Of those parents who replied, nearly all believe pupils are well-behaved and are well-taught. The vast majority think that their children have high expectations and are treated fairly. They think that homework is relevant and effective. All feel that their children are encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise. Nearly all believe that their children are safe in school and receive good support.

Nearly all parents feel comfortable about coming to the school to discuss concerns or to make suggestions. They believe the school helps their children to be more mature and to take on responsibilities.

Nearly all feel that their children are well prepared for secondary education and benefit from a good range of activities. Overall, nearly all believe that the school is well run.

Where a majority of parents who replied have concerns, this relates to them not receiving enough information about their children's progress. In addition, they do not understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints.

Responses to learner questionnaires

A large sample of learners in KS2 completed the questionnaire and the team also talked to younger pupils. Nearly all pupils feel safe in the school and believe that bullying is dealt with properly. Nearly all know who to go to if they are worried or upset. They feel that the school teaches them to keep healthy and to take regular exercise.

Nearly all feel that they are doing well at school and have good support. They know what to do if they find work hard. They think that their homework is helpful to them when in school. Nearly all feel they have sufficient resources for learning.

Where a few pupils had some concerns, these related to other pupils' behaviour in classes and in the playground. From the evidence of the inspection these concerns were misplaced.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

Peter Mathias	Reporting Inspector
Mike Thomas	Team Inspector
Rhiannon Boardman	Lay Inspector
Stuart Scammell	Peer Inspector
Rob Lewis	School Nominee

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Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11