



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Penpoch Community Primary School
Blaenrhondda Road
Ty Newydd
Treherbert
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF42 5SD**

Date of inspection: February 2018

by

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

About Penpych Community Primary School

Penpych Community Primary School is in the village of Blaenrhondda in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

There are currently 201 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 and 11. There are seven classes in the school, including a nursery class with 33 full-time pupils. The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is 40%, which is well above the national average of 19%.

The school has identified 39% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs. This is well above the Welsh average of 21%. Very few pupils are in the care of the local authority. Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity and come from homes where English is the main language. Very few pupils have English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher took up the post of acting headteacher in September 2012, and became the substantive headteacher in December 2015. The school was last inspected in November 2011.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

The school provides a friendly, caring environment that enables nearly all pupils to feel happy and safe and to enjoy learning. Most pupils make good progress from their starting points.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan nearly all lessons to take good account of individual pupils' needs. The school plans the curriculum effectively and its provision is particularly strong in developing pupils' creative skills through a wide range of purposeful opportunities.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that focuses successfully on the wellbeing of staff and pupils. The staff have high expectations for all pupils. The school's provision is well planned and it has appropriate targets and priorities for improvement. The recently restructured leadership team is beginning to work well together. Governors have a wide range of relevant, valuable expertise, which they use well for the benefit of the school.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that teachers' planning addresses all areas of the mathematics curriculum in sufficient depth and provides opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R2 Improve pupils' Welsh skills in key stage 2
- R3 Clarify the roles and responsibilities of leaders at all levels to maximise their impact on the school's priorities for improvement

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Most pupils enter the school with literacy, personal and social skills that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress during lessons and as they move through the school. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in relation to their individual starting points.

Across the school, most pupils develop strong oracy skills that support them well in all areas of learning. They speak with confidence about their progress and how they can overcome any difficulties that arise. Most pupils listen carefully to each other and staff. During key stage 2, pupils express their opinions with confidence. For example, most pupils in Year 6 work successfully with their 'talk partner' to identify personifications and metaphors in the story of Beauty and the Beast.

Most pupils are enthusiastic about reading. They use their knowledge of sounds effectively to work out unfamiliar words. In Year 2, the more able pupils read well. They talk enthusiastically about characters and books they like. Most key stage 2 pupils have positive attitudes to reading and show a good understanding of what they read. In Year 6, most pupils discuss texts by their favourite authors in detail. Most pupils in key stage 2 use their reading skills confidently to access other areas of the curriculum, for example when writing informative reports on medieval siege weapons.

Most pupils in the foundation phase write successfully for a range of purposes. In Year 2 they write well for different purposes, for example when producing a factual report on penguins. They use basic punctuation well to organise their work. Their spelling of common words is often correct and they learn to form letters and develop their handwriting purposefully. They write lists of facts and instructions effectively and label charts clearly. In key stage 2, pupils are beginning to use interesting vocabulary and to organise their writing well, for example when composing a soliloquy in the style of Shakespeare on 'to do homework or not to do homework'. They explore and express their ideas confidently, and more able pupils produce detailed extended pieces of writing, for example when retelling the story of Branwen from the Mabinogion.

Most pupils develop their mathematical skills well. In the reception class, many pupils identify two dimensional shapes correctly and name a circle, square, triangle and rectangle accurately. By Year 2, most pupils count confidently forwards and backwards and in multiples of two, five and ten. Many develop purposeful mental skills based upon a sound understanding of place value and the relationships between numbers. Most pupils gather and present data on a bar graph confidently, for example when displaying the different types of houses where pupils live. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils apply suitable calculation strategies to solve problems using the four rules of numbers. They use limited number skills effectively in science experiments when measuring distances, or weighing and timing different variables. They record their findings in tables and most interpret the results correctly. However, across the school, pupils do not develop their knowledge of all areas of the mathematics curriculum to a suitable depth or apply their skills sufficiently in other areas of the curriculum, for example shape, measures and data handling.

Most pupils develop appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT). By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils use a range of applications on tablet computers to support their learning well. In key stage 2, many pupils use databases confidently and are able to create moving pictures appropriately. They develop competent research skills and produce multi-media presentations, for example on Buddhism.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make a purposeful progress in developing basic communication skills in Welsh. By Year 2, they read their own work with suitable pronunciation. In key stage 2, most pupils' writing skills develop appropriately when they use a set framework, for example to write their own simple dialogue and to share their likes and dislikes. However, many pupils in key stage 2 lack confidence in speaking Welsh in less formal situations outside Welsh lessons and use limited words and phrases. The majority of pupils do not read texts fluently enough or with accurate pronunciation.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are confident in the school environment. Nearly all pupils show care for each other, and older pupils take care of younger pupils, for example by accompanying them for whole school activities. Nearly all pupils' behaviour is good. They are very courteous to each other, staff and visitors.

Most pupils feel safe, secure and happy within the school's caring and inclusive ethos. They know where to turn in time of need and most pupils are very confident that staff respond well to any friendship or behavioural concerns. Most pupils in Year 2 share the different types of emotions that can arise by creating their own film. Older pupils discuss maturely various methods of solving social problems and they contribute enthusiastically to circle time sessions, where they discuss potential scenarios and resolve issues. Most pupils in key stage 2 have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

Most pupils understand how to stay healthy through eating a balanced diet and taking part in regular physical exercise. The eco-council play an active part in raising pupils' awareness of the importance of eating fresh vegetables by growing their own in the school garden. Year 6 run a daily fruit tuck shop and prefects celebrate healthy attitudes by awarding class points. All pupils take part in regular physical exercise during weekly lessons. The play leaders organise games for the younger pupils during playtimes, which contribute purposefully to the development of their basic fitness and social skills. Many pupils in key stage 2 attend the extra-curricular activities that are on offer, such as rugby and football.

Most pupils have high expectations for their learning and participate well in lessons. They display positive attitudes and concentrate for appropriate periods when completing tasks. Most pupils are eager to support each other and give careful consideration to the needs of other pupils. Many pupils in the foundation phase make decisions about their role play areas and what they would like to learn. However, most pupils in key stage 2 are only beginning to contribute to decisions about what and how they want to learn.

Many key stage 2 pupils take on additional responsibilities seriously and appreciate the opportunities they receive. For example, digital leaders have recently begun to support pupils and staff across the school in their use of ICT. A strong pupil voice across key stage 2 has led to the purchase of a friendship bench to help pupils to find someone to play with during break times and they have established a space for all pupils to sit and socialise in a calm and quiet environment. This impacts positively on pupils' behaviour and wellbeing during playtimes and when they return to their lessons.

Most pupils develop their social and life skills well through a range of events during the year. They interact well with different age groups across the school. Pupils in key stage 2 partner successfully with pupils from the foundation phase during the annual innovation weeks. Most pupils engage well when learning about the tradition of Welsh love spoons and creating their own rice recipe books. Many pupils are developing an empathy towards others by supporting Velindre cancer hospital and other world-wide charities. Most of the older pupils have organised a charity concert to raise awareness of different heart conditions in order to buy a defoliator for use in the local community.

Pupils' attendance rates over time place the school above the average when compared with similar schools. Nearly all pupils are punctual at the start of the school day.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The school provides a balanced and rich curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers give pupils interesting learning experiences that engage pupils' interests well and develop their skills and curiosity successfully. For example, teachers develop pupils' creative skills well when using the school's stone circle or when taking pupils to the top of the Rhigos mountain to develop their appreciation of the local environment.

The quality of teaching is good. This derives from a successful working relationship between pupils, teachers and learning support assistants. Staff have a strong awareness of pupils' wellbeing needs and they question pupils skilfully to develop their confidence, thinking skills and understanding effectively.

Teachers have high expectations and most pupils respond well to the challenges that teachers set. Teachers explain new ideas in a purposeful and relevant way, and extend pupils' learning through hands-on experiences. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. However, there is a tendency at times for teachers in key stage 2 to over-direct pupils. This limits opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. All staff manage behaviour well in classrooms and around the school.

Teachers provide effective oral feedback to pupils on the quality of their work during lessons. They give pupils time regularly to reflect on their own and others' work. Most of the older pupils know how well they are doing. However, the effectiveness of comments to help pupils understand how to improve their work varies too much from class to class. Most teachers make effective use of assessment outcomes to identify individuals and groups of pupils who require support, for example through intervention strategies and groups.

Through detailed planning, teachers ensure that tasks are suitable for the range of ability in their classes and they give pupils good opportunities to build purposefully on their previous learning. The school plans a number of visits and visitors, which effectively broaden pupils' knowledge of the local and wider community. For example, pupils in the foundation phase visit Roath Park in Cardiff and representatives from the local windfarm discuss the benefits of using natural resources with the older pupils in key stage 2. The school offers an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities, such as football, choir and a mathematics club.

Teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in a structured way in their English and mathematics lessons as they move through the school. As a result, most pupils make good progress in the development of their writing and number skills. However, the school does not plan enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and knowledge of the full range of the mathematics curriculum in sufficient depth, or provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in their learning across the curriculum. The school provides purposeful opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills across the curriculum.

The school plans its provision from nursery to Year 2 successfully and according to the principles of the foundation phase. Continuous access to the outdoor areas ensures that all pupils benefit from a range of interesting activities. Staff give pupils in the foundation phase regular opportunities to share ideas at the beginning of each topic and to suggest aspects that are of particular interest to them. The teachers listen to the pupils' ideas and respond well by adapting the topic of 'Land Ahoy' to learning about pirates and using an old boat as an outdoor role play area. This has captured the pupils' imagination and developed their oracy skills well.

The school plans projects effectively, such as 'Voices of the Valley', to raise pupils' awareness and increase their interest in the traditions, culture and history of the local area and of Wales. A few members of staff are very good language models and use Welsh patterns regularly with pupils throughout the day. However, this is inconsistent across the school and many pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their Welsh skills.

Care, support and guidance: Good

There is a strong caring and nurturing ethos in the school where staff know and value all pupils well.

The school has a well-established system in place for tracking and monitoring the progress of all pupils. Termly progress meetings between class teachers and senior leaders address any concerns promptly. Teachers make purposeful use of assessment outcomes across all areas of learning in order to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning. They identify pupils' emotional and additional learning needs at an early stage and provide them with effective intervention support. All pupils with additional learning needs have a clear plan which sets out achievable targets for improvement. Teaching assistants work well with the additional learning needs co-ordinator, and other professional specialists, to plan and implement a range of effective intervention programmes. They provide successful support to individual pupils' needs to develop their basic skills and emotional wellbeing.

The school has strong systems to support vulnerable pupils and their families. For example, the school's family engagement officer holds daily drop-in sessions for families and organises workshop activities with outside agencies to show parents how to support their children's learning at home. This has a positive impact on raising pupils' self-esteem and improving family engagement in school life. Staff communicate with the parents often and inform them regularly about their child's progress.

The school promotes the importance of healthy eating and drinking well. There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. These include a fruit tuck shop and a healthy lunch box policy. The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for instance on the internet. A police community support officer based at the school makes pupils aware of how to look after themselves, including dealing with anti-social behaviour and peer pressure. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The provision to develop pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues is effective. The school promotes respect and tolerance and celebrates diversity successfully through whole school topics, such as Divali. Pupils develop a broad understanding of world religions through an appropriate range of planned activities. The school's link with a multi-faith ashram in west Wales is beginning to strengthen the pupils' appreciation and understanding of the wider world. The school's personal and social education programme is effective. For example, in lessons, teachers refer regularly to a variety of self-help strategies as a method for pupils to overcome difficulties when they are stuck.

The school provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their imagination and to engage with the creative arts and cultural activities, for example through participating in the whole school 'Dragon's Tail Trail' project. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to work alongside local artists, musicians, and Year 3 and 4 pupils have recently worked with a historian to create a film called 'One Mountain'. These experiences develop pupils' self-confidence, pride in themselves and their ability to work with others. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in school performances, including the annual eisteddfod, that promote their social and life skills successfully. The school council is well established and members take their role seriously and have made purposeful contributions on how to improve the school environment.

Leaders offer purposeful opportunities for pupils to engage in trips and visits to Cardiff Bay and use local theatres suitably to engage pupils with live performances. It makes particularly good use of an outward-bound centre, where pupils from Years 5 and 6 learn about team work while taking part in outdoor activities.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and its place at the heart of the local community. The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff and share these successfully with all stakeholders. Staff work together well to create a caring ethos for all pupils to develop their social, emotional and thinking skills.

School leaders and managers monitor the impact of initiatives and improvements effectively. Over time, they have established a suitable range of methods to evaluate the work of the school purposefully. All teaching staff analyse information on pupils' progress thoroughly and this has helped to raise standards, particularly in literacy. The school has liaised effectively with 'Flying Start' for them to establish pre-school provision on the school site to enhance pupils' skills and to help them settle quickly on entry to the full-time nursery class.

The recently re-structured leadership team has begun evaluating standards and the school's provision more rigorously by reviewing pupils' books, observing lessons across the school and gathering pupils' views. These activities have led to the identification of appropriate priorities for improvement, such as developing a more digitally enriched environment and the need to develop pupils' Welsh skills. All members of the senior leadership team have a job description, but it is not always clear who is responsible for taking forward agreed actions in order to address all school priorities effectively.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher manage the performance of staff effectively. Their personal objectives link well with the school's areas for development and national priorities. The process has had an effective impact on the standards of learning, for example on improving the outcomes of more able pupils.

There are good lines of communication and close collaboration among staff across the school. Staff receive appropriate support and training to help them to perform their roles and to develop their professional learning. For example, members of staff less familiar with teaching younger children have had opportunities to observe and learn from more experienced colleagues. Similarly, a well-established system of working with colleagues in other schools benefits older pupils and their teachers in key stage 2.

Governors make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. They have a sound understanding of the school's priorities and challenge the school effectively to improve important aspects of its work, for example in relation to improvements in pupils' wellbeing. They receive informative reports from the headteacher and useful updates from staff and pupils themselves. The governors use this information well to check on the school's progress in implementing its strategic priorities and to make sure that the school is spending its money effectively. For example, they ensure that the school makes good use of the pupil development grant to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils effectively.

The headteacher allocates staff carefully to provide a good balance of experience and skills across the age ranges. Resources are generally appropriate to meet pupils' needs and the targets in the school development plan. Leaders manage the budget and monitor the effect of school expenditure rigorously. Staff use the indoor and outdoor environment to support teaching and learning efficiently. For example, the effective use of the spacious outdoor areas and experiences, such as undertaking storytelling sessions in the yurt develops the pupils creative minds successfully.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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

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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court, Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

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