



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

A report on

Pillgwenlly C.P. School

**Capel Crescent
Newport
NP20 2FT**

Date of inspection: April 2023

by

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

About Pillgwenlly C.P. School

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| Name of provider | Pillgwenlly C.P. School |
| Local authority | Newport City Council |
| Language of the provider | English |
| Type of school | Primary |
| Religious character | * |
| Number of pupils on roll | 643 |
| Pupils of statutory school age | 471 |
| Number in nursery classes | 95 |
| 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 23.0%) | 36.3% |
| 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 16.1%) | 31.0% |
| Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home | * |
| Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language | 81.7% |
| Date of headteacher appointment | 01/09/2020 |
| Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable) | 09/06/2015 |
| Start date of inspection | 24/04/2023 |

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.

Overview

Pupils at Pillgwenlly Primary School are polite, friendly, and caring. They are eager to learn, work with others effectively and enjoy taking on leadership roles. They show a good awareness of important issues, such as equality, sustainability, and the importance of valuing others, but are not always clear about the importance of eating healthily.

The school is a vibrant, multi-cultural learning environment that gives pupils a broad range of engaging learning experiences. This helps to ensure that pupils make effective progress in areas, such as their speaking and listening, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. However, pupils' progress in mathematics and writing is not as good.

Alongside its multi-cultural ethos, the school values its Welsh culture and language, incorporating it into the curriculum to develop pupils' understanding well. Teachers develop positive and supportive relationships with pupils and consider their ideas carefully when planning learning. However, teachers do not always provide learning that challenges pupils to develop their skills well enough, nor provide pupils with helpful enough feedback to support their learning.

The school provides effective support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), and for those with English as an additional language. A dedicated team assists teachers to identify pupils' individual needs and provide them with targeted help. Pupils in the local authority's learning support class, and those in the school's own bespoke support classes are supported well and make good progress in their learning. While arrangements to keep pupils safe are suitable, the school does not have a strong enough safeguarding culture.

There have been significant changes to the school's leadership in recent years. Leaders have developed a clear vision for the school, based around their 'BRIDGE' curriculum and an approach to teaching that provides pupils with useful opportunities to develop their independence. However, leaders do not evaluate, or plan for improvements in, pupils' learning well enough. The school provides staff with useful professional learning opportunities. However, a minority of staff do not feel part of the school's improvement journey.

Recommendations

- R1 Address the issues relating to safeguarding identified at the time of the inspection
- R2 Sharpen evaluation and improvement processes so that they focus better, and impact more positively, on pupils' learning
- R3 Improve pupils' writing and their mathematical skills
- R4 Ensure that teachers provide pupils with challenging learning experiences more consistently and give them regular and helpful feedback on their learning

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress.

Main evaluation

Learning

When pupils first join the school in nursery or reception class, many have skills that are lower than those expected for their age. This is particularly true of pupils' communication skills. Many have English as an additional language. Overall, many pupils make good progress in developing skills, such as their speaking and their digital skills, but do not develop their writing or mathematics skills as successfully. Pupils with additional learning needs, including those in the learning resource class, make effective progress towards their individual learning goals.

From low starting points, many pupils make rapid and beneficial progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. In nursery, many pupils join in with songs and rhymes happily and a majority are happy to speak in front of the class. By Year 3, most pupils listen for extended periods with good attention and concentration. They are confident when explaining their learning and use their speaking skills well to develop 'Ted talks' to share with the school and with their families. By Year 6, most pupils speak clearly and confidently. They share their ideas in useful detail. In the learning resource base, pupils who struggle with verbal communication communicate imaginatively and appropriate through gesture.

Many pupils develop their reading skills appropriately. In reception, most pupils sound out letters well and a minority use their understanding of letters and sounds to read short, simple words, such as 'cat' and 'dog'. A few read simple texts using their phonological knowledge and picture clues. By Year 2, many pupils read simple texts accurately and use appropriate strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. However, few read with fluency. As they progress through school, many begin to read more confidently and with expression. However, a few still do not always have sufficient strategies to read more complex words. By Year 6, many read appropriately and use their reading skills to help them learn across the curriculum. For example, they read information sheets to help them understand their rights as children. A minority have more developed reading skills, for example understanding how authors use metaphors to make their descriptions interesting. In the resource base, pupils interpret visual schedules beneficially to help them make choices about their activities.

A majority of pupils do not develop their writing skills strongly enough. In reception a majority of pupils form many letters correctly and a few write short words with support. By Year 2 pupils are beginning to think about and to plan their writing appropriately, for example using a mind-map to prepare a speech to promote a pair of training shoes. Most select appropriate language to use and spell simple words accurately. In Year 4, most pupils write clear factual recounts, for example reflecting on their visit to a mosque. They choose and use simple, but appropriate vocabulary and phrases. However, their spelling, and use of punctuation is not well-developed. In Year 5 and Year 6, many pupils understand the features of a suitable range of types of writing, such as persuasive letters and diary entries. They use paragraphs to structure their writing and spell basic, familiar words accurately. However, in a majority of cases, their writing is short and not developed strongly. Many use a limited vocabulary, and range of punctuation, confidently. They spell more common

words appropriately but struggle with more complex words. They apply these skills suitably in other areas of learning. However, they have limited opportunities to develop their creative writing skills.

Most pupils develop Welsh language skills slowly. In the younger classes, most pupils join in with Welsh songs and repeat a few words and phrases suitably. By Year 3, many pupils have a suitable understanding of a few basic words and sentences. By Year 6, many pupils use simple phrases, such as those to ask others where they live. They describe themselves appropriately, for example describing their hair and eye colour. A minority of pupils use more complex phrases well, such as using sentences in the past tense to explain where they have been and with whom. However, overall pupils' skills are still at an early stage of development.

In general, pupils' mathematical skills develop suitably, but not strongly. In reception pupils begin to make appropriate progress in developing simple number skills. They add objects within 10 and identify and form numbers correctly. They transfer their mathematical skills to play and classroom activities appropriately, for example counting objects in the water tray. By Year 2, with support, many pupils are beginning to consider how to gather data and present it in different forms, such as simple tally charts and bar charts. A few apply their understanding of place value to 100 to solve number puzzles. As they progress, many pupils transfer basic mathematical skills to everyday situations suitably. For example, pupils in Year 4 and in the POD+ nurture class they use a right-angle measuring tool to find and identify right angles, acute and obtuse angles. Many pupils select appropriate techniques to add and subtract, including numbers with decimals. By Year 6, many pupils make links in learning and choose appropriate strategies to complete calculations, for example using 3 lots of 5 to work out 3 lots of 50. Throughout the school, many pupils use their learning from 'master classes' at a similar level in their wider work. However, this is often at a level below that generally expected for their age.

Most pupils develop effective digital skills and use these well to support their learning. In Year 2, pupils record short videos that persuade others to buy shoes they had designed in order to support their language skills. In Year 5, many pupils understand how to use spreadsheets well to record and analyse information, for example about the different religions in their year group. By Year 6, most pupils use a wide range of programmes and apps confidently, selecting the most appropriate to complete different tasks. For example, pupils choose a design app to create an imaginative poster to share information for safer internet day. They understand well how coding can be used to control what happens to a character on screen or to control external devices, such as a robot.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are polite and have a friendly and caring attitude towards each other. They behave well in school and respect the efforts and contributions of others, for instance listening to their peers politely and responding appropriately. They socialise and play co-operatively at break times. Pupils feel that staff care for them well. They are confident that they can talk with someone if they need help or support, and that staff will listen and deal appropriately with any concerns.

Many pupils are ready to learn at the start of lessons, although too many arrive at school late each day. They are keen to discuss their work and share their ideas with others. Most pupils collaborate well when working in pairs and groups. They are enthusiastic and remain on task to complete activities. When it is provided, most pupils value feedback on their work and are happy to make improvements. Older pupils understand well that this helps them to improve and make progress.

Most pupils are aware of the importance of equality, sustainability and environmental issues, such as plastic pollution in the oceans. They understand that they can play a role within their local and wider community, and take opportunities to help others, for example through performing in a local care home for the elderly. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding for others of different cultures. For example, pupils have a good understanding of the nature of different religions, such as Christianity and Islam, and respect the different beliefs of their peers.

Pupils take on leadership roles readily, such as those in the Criw Cymraeg and I-DIGITAL teams. They are keen to play their part in school life. For instance, the I-CREATIVE team help to promote reading across the school by ensuring library areas are welcoming for pupils and they encourage their peers to enjoy reading. However, the work of these group is at an early stage of development.

Across the school, most pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves safe when online. They know not to share passwords, and that they should tell an adult if they feel unsafe or receive unwanted messages. Older pupils are aware of the dangers of cyber bullying. Many speak suitably about how to stay fit, however too many do not demonstrate a good understanding of how to make healthy choices in relation to their diet. They often bring unhealthy snacks to school, such as sweets, crisps and chocolate, that they eat at break time and lunch time.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school is developing its curriculum thoughtfully, including considering how the structures of lessons and classes contributes to pupils' learning. The curriculum contains a broad range of topics that gives pupils engaging experiences across the areas of learning and experience. For example, older pupils work with an organisation who promote the film industry in Wales to plan, write, act in, and produce a video of their own choice. The curriculum also provides a range of wider experiences, for example learning to play the glockenspiel, which helps to support pupils' engagement in school. However, at present, the systematic development of pupils' skills is not yet coordinated well enough as they move through the school. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress in areas of their work, such as the development of their writing skills. Opportunities for pupils to develop mathematics skills, other than number skills, are underdeveloped.

Teachers organise learning experiences into three main sections of Build, Do and Review, and take account of pupils' ideas well. They consider how sessions can contribute to developing pupils' wider literacy, numeracy and information technology skills appropriately. For example, pupils develop digital skills helpfully while analysing information on the different religions in their year group.

Younger pupils have a wide range of learning experiences based on the philosophies of foundation learning. Most staff ensure pupils have a balance of adult and pupil led learning in a purposeful learning environment. There are good opportunities for pupils to be creative and explore in the outdoors. However, a few staff do not always intervene at appropriate times to support or to extend pupils learning

Teachers use the school's diverse cultural and ethnic context to provide rich opportunities for learning. For example, during Diwali younger pupils make cakes, create Rangoli patterns and use Hindu stories as part of their literacy lessons. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and experiences of Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. For example, as part of a project on Cynefin, they invited members of the community from a range of roles and professions to share their experiences with pupils. The concept of respecting diversity is developed well through curriculum projects on identity and belonging, for example 'The Women of NASA'.

The school has a positive attitude to the Welsh language and developing pupils understanding of the nation's culture. For example, teachers plan learning that provides useful opportunities for pupils to learn about Welsh art and music. They plan learning appropriately to develop pupils' Welsh language skills. For example, all classes have daily Welsh sessions and the whole school has a weekly phrase which everybody practices. However, opportunities for pupils to practice and use their Welsh speaking skills around school are at an early stage of development. As a result, many pupils do not recall or use basic phrases and sentence well, and do not speak confidently enough.

Teachers ensure that pupils benefit from making visits to a range of places of interest to enhance their learning, such as the BBC studios and an aquarium. In addition, they organise useful visits to the school from organisations, such as the community police officer, the regional rugby team and music specialists. These engaging experiences help to broaden pupils' educational experiences. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to expand their interests and experiences through extra-curricular clubs.

All teachers have strong and warm working relationships with pupils. They engage pupils in their learning positively. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about symmetry imaginatively using, mirrors and butterflies. Throughout the school, teachers provide pupils with beneficial opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. They provide younger pupils with access to a broad range of learning resources and activities to encourage learning through discovery and play. As pupils progress through the school, teachers consider well how to allow them to become more responsible for completing learning tasks.

When pupils are working with teachers, their learning activities are challenging and purposeful. Teachers question pupils thoughtfully to encourage communication and to help them to develop their thinking. However, the learning activities that teachers provide for when pupils are working with no adult support are often at a low level and provide pupils with too little challenge.

Strategies to help pupils know how well they are doing, and what they need to do to get better, are in the early stages of development. At present, teachers' feedback to

pupils on their learning is inconsistent and does not always help them to know where they have made errors and where they need to make improvements. This slows the progress of pupils' development. For example, teachers do not always identify when pupils apply strategies in mathematics incorrectly and so pupils are not always aware that they are not completing tasks properly. There are a few opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning.

Care, support and guidance

The school's support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a strength of its provision. The school's 'Watch' team, who lead in this area, provide clear direction for staff and ensure that they have the support they need to help with pupils' individual needs. There is a clear school-wide strategy to support pupils, including effective identification of pupils' needs and well-focused support.

The school hosts a local authority specialist class for pupils with ALN. In this learning resource class, staff cater for pupils' particular needs effectively. They also support staff from around the school, for instance helping to develop visual timetables for younger pupils and helping to plan multi-sensory activities. The school has its own bespoke classes to address individual pupils' needs in its 'Bridge' and 'Pod' classes. In these classes, pupils have targeted support with the aim of preparing them for a return to learning in mainstream classes before they transfer to the next phase of their education. Teachers and leaders monitor pupils progress carefully and, where they do not make sufficient progress, the school works closely with specialist external agencies to access the additional support that pupils may need. These well-managed processes help to ensure that pupils with ALN make beneficial progress towards their own goals.

The school provides strong support for its pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). It works in close partnership with a specialist agency to ensure the needs of these pupils are met, particularly when they are new to English. As a result, these pupils make good progress in developing their language skills to access the curriculum and build important social relationships with their peers.

The school is a vibrant and diverse community and places a high priority on inclusion. There is a strong emphasis on helping pupils to learn about values, such as respecting others and the importance of community, as well as understanding world religions and their rights as a child. This helps pupils to develop as ethical and informed world-citizens and gives them a beneficial understanding of the need to respect others. Pupils develop a sound understanding global citizenship and are very proud of the 36 different languages spoken at the school.

The school understands it has a pivotal role in its wider, diverse community. Each month it produces a newsletter for parents, which in addition to informing families about events at the school, includes signposts to beneficial community links, such as those that support people at risk due to poverty, and the local police. The school supports parents well, for example by facilitating support for them to improve their English language skills. In addition, it provides supportive workshops on practical parenting skills, for example toilet training young children and to promote healthy eating. However, despite this, too many pupils still come to school with unhealthy snacks.

The school has a purposeful focus on ensuring that pupils learn to understand the heritage and culture of Wales through topics, for instance finding out about historic castles, people and landmarks. In addition, pupils study the work of Welsh artists and learn to sing familiar Welsh songs, which they perform in special assemblies and to residents from a local care home. They have opportunities to participate in the school's eisteddfod as well as performing on the stage at a local exhibition centre in front large audience as part of Queen Elizabeth's platinum jubilee celebrations.

Pupils have opportunities to apply for leadership roles as part of the nine leadership groups that focus on improving the school. Teachers select members for these groups who help to promote important events. For example, the i-stem team raise the profile of British science week. However, these roles are at an early stage of development.

The school has clear processes in place to address weak attendance and poor punctuality. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and work with external education specialists to support families to attend school more frequently and on time. However, despite this, too many pupils do not attend school often enough or arrive late at school. As a result, important learning time is lost.

Overall, arrangements to keep pupils safe are suitable. However, there is not a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. For example, record keeping is not accurate enough and not all adults at the school are fully aware of the school's child protection procedures.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has worked with other leaders to establish a vision for the school that has driven significant changes to its operation, an increase in the size and scope of the leadership team and the development of an engaging approach to teaching. For example, leaders have worked with staff to develop the school's 'academy' approach to teaching and the 'BRIDGE' curriculum as the basis for the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. This ensures that pupils benefit from an engaging range of interesting learning experiences.

Leaders have worked together well to create a strong leadership team. Nearly all leaders work effectively to support each other and to develop the school's systems and processes. Across the school, staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work diligently in the best interest of pupils' well-being and to develop positive relationships with the community. They oversee and manage resources, including the school budget and grant funding, effectively.

Leaders model strong professional values and demonstrate high expectations of their own performance and that of staff. They ensure suitable arrangements to monitor and improve the performance of staff, including addressing underperformance appropriately. Across the school, a majority of staff understand and share leaders' vision for school development and feel included in the changes. However, a minority do not feel that leaders communicate with them effectively enough or always consider their workload or well-being sufficiently.

Leaders address national priorities suitably, for example they have worked effectively to begin to implement Curriculum for Wales and address the requirements of Welsh Government's ALN reforms. However, there has been less progress in other areas, such as the development of pupils' Welsh language skills and the development of a strong culture of safeguarding.

The school is working to establish positive working relationships and communication with parents. For example, the 'VIBE' online newsletter and the school's website provide useful information for parents to keep them informed of events at the school and about what their children are learning.

Leaders have begun to establish a track record of improvement in a few areas. For example, their focus on ICT has led to valuable improvements in provision and the standards achieved by pupils. Leaders have established extensive systems and processes to evaluate the work of the school and to drive improvement. These include opportunities for most staff to contribute to self-evaluation and improvement strategies. However, the complexity of these arrangements means that there is not a shared whole-school understanding of the most important areas for improvement. School improvement has a useful focus on innovation, trial and improvement. However, leaders do not focus sufficiently on the impact that changes have on pupils' learning. This means that they are not always able to make accurate judgements about the effectiveness of their improvement actions.

The governing body has a sound understanding of the work of the school and plays a useful role in supporting self-evaluation through the gathering of first-hand evidence, such as through learning walks. The headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff with specific responsibilities for initiatives and projects, keep governors well informed about developments and progress. Governors have a good appreciation of the work the school is doing to take forward change in line with Curriculum for Wales, and to improve pedagogy. However, governors are less clear about the specific areas for improvement, the quality of teaching and its impact on outcomes for pupils. This inhibits their ability to act as a 'critical friend' to the school.

Governors have appropriate oversight of the school's resources and work suitably with senior leaders to prioritise and monitor spending, including the use of grant funding. However, they are less successful in ensuring that the school supports pupils to make healthy eating choices.

In-house and external professional learning opportunities support staff to develop their leadership skills and to innovate with their classroom practice. This has resulted in more engaging learning experiences for pupils. The school has developed its own professional learning platform containing helpful resources that clearly link to the school's priorities, for example developing understanding of Curriculum for Wales areas of learning and experience. Many staff find these resources useful and share their learning effectively with other staff to build capacity and improve practice.

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

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:

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