



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

A report on

**Ton Pentre Junior School
Bailey Street
Ton Pentre
Pentre
RCT
CF41 7EL**

Date of inspection: January 2019

by

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

About Ton Pentre Junior School

Ton Pentre Junior School is in the village of Ton Pentre, in the local authority of Rhondda Cynon Taf. It has 191 pupils aged from 7 to 11. This is an increase in the number of pupils since the last inspection. There are six single-age classes and one mixed-age class.

The three-year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 19%, which is close to the Wales average of 18%. The school has identified approximately 39% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is much higher than the Welsh average of around 21%.

Nearly all pupils are of white British ethnicity. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language.

The school was last inspected in February 2013. The headteacher has been in post since January 2012.

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 headteacher has created a sense of belonging and teamwork across the school community. There are very positive relationships between staff, parents and pupils. Leaders have a shared vision for the school that promotes effort, ambition and respect for others.

There is an effective programme of personal and social education. Nearly all pupils show a mature understanding of consideration for others. There are many opportunities to learn about other cultures and this promotes pupils' understanding of diversity well. Many pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically and helpfully to benefit all.

Staff are developing a curriculum based on the interests of their pupils. Recent curriculum developments are also beneficial in enabling pupils to make useful connections between different areas of learning. Staff have useful opportunities for professional learning and they discuss their teaching to make helpful improvements.

Nearly all pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Most are well prepared for transition to the secondary school.

The school uses resources well to meet the needs of its pupils. For example, recent improvements to digital resources have a positive impact on pupils' learning and acquisition of skills. Staff make effective use of the outdoor environment to develop pupils' physical skills. Informative and colourful displays around the school enhance the learning environment and support the school's ethos.

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 Extend opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in real-life contexts
- R2 Raise standards in spoken Welsh
- R3 Improve the contribution of staff in leadership roles to school improvement work

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

During their time at the school, most pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well. Most pupils speak confidently to their class and explain their ideas with increasing detail and accuracy. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are articulate speakers and make purposeful contributions to discussions. They show good understanding of what they have listened to and respond appropriately.

Nearly all pupils make good progress with their reading skills. Many enjoy reading for pleasure and most can discuss the authors they know and those they prefer. Younger pupils use a range of strategies to work out new words. As they move through the school, they read for a range of purposes. For example, they use their skills to learn new facts about the effects of plastic in the ocean. Most older pupils analyse the features of a text successfully and skim and scan for specific information. Many attempt to read complex texts, for example when they begin to read quotes from Macbeth, considering the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases.

In Year 3, most pupils write basic sentences independently. In Year 6, many pupils write extended pieces with growing attention to accuracy in spelling and grammar. For example, they draft and edit their letters to a school in Kyoto and they write precise instructions on how to make sushi when learning about Japanese culture.

Most pupils make good progress in mathematics from their starting points and develop effective number skills. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils are able to multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000 accurately. Most pupils can explain their thinking to show their understanding of number processes and concepts. For example, when selling their crafts in the Christmas Fayre, they use their skills to work out profit and loss as percentages. Most show good understanding of shape and area and they measure angles with suitable accuracy.

Across the key stage, many pupils make good progress in developing their Welsh language skills. At the end of key stage 2, many pupils use familiar words and phrases to ask and answer questions during the daily Helpwr Heddiw sessions and during formal Welsh lessons. They read simple texts appropriately, and share information about themselves and their daily routines, for example by writing a letter to a friend. However, pupils do not use Welsh naturally outside of Welsh lessons and in the daily life of the school.

Most pupils develop their information communication technology (ICT) skills confidently as they move through the school. Most pupils use word processing and desktop publishing programs to share information skilfully. For example, they create presentations to share the outcomes of their research on Japan and to share the information that they have gathered during their European Day activities. Most pupils create and use their own databases and spreadsheets successfully, for example to record the amount of sugar in familiar snacks. Nearly all pupils know how to stay safe online.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Nearly all pupils feel safe at school. They know whom to go to if they are upset or worried. Most pupils behave well and nearly all show respect and consideration for others' feelings. Most show good understanding of their rights. They know they have a right to keep themselves safe and healthy and apply this to others as well. For example, when discussing cyberbullying, pupils show understanding of the impact of bullying on the victim and they explain that it is wrong to make someone feel upset. They write about avoiding communication with strangers on the internet knowledgeably.

Most pupils are developing as ethical, informed citizens. For example, they show maturity and care when fundraising for diabetes or discussing how to save water. Older pupils consider the effects of passive smoking when they discuss whether people should smoke in public places. They visit the Senedd and learn about the importance of citizenship and democracy and how these help society to consider what is best for everyone. Through this process, pupils also learn that there can be different points of view.

Nearly all pupils value the opportunities the school provides to learn from visitors such as the local police officer or people from the world of work. A few contribute to their local community. For example, pupils in the choir perform for local senior citizens and a few pupils act as road safety officers outside the school after applying for the role because they want to keep everyone safe.

Nearly all pupils understand that the school has high expectations of them. They explain confidently how they meet these expectations in their work and play. Most understand the importance of perseverance and of aiming to be the best they can be. They are willing to try to tackle difficult problems and to learn from mistakes. They take pride in their work and often show support for each other when working on tasks in pairs. Most enjoy making decisions about improving their learning and asking questions to follow their particular interests. Many accept leadership roles with enthusiasm and take their responsibilities seriously. For example, the school council surveyed younger pupils to improve their activities at playtimes.

The majority of pupils take advantage of the school's range of extra-curricular activities. For example, they participate in a range of sporting activities including fitness and dodgeball. Most pupils know the importance of taking regular exercise.

Over the last four years, the school's attendance has mostly placed it in the top 25% when compared with similar schools. Most pupils strive to achieve close to full attendance and nearly all arrive at school on time.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

The school delivers a broad curriculum that engages the interest of nearly all pupils successfully. Teachers plan an interesting range of learning experiences. They have begun to consult pupils on the topics that interest them and this engages pupils well, encouraging them to work hard and achieve their best. Nearly all teachers provide pupils with clear success criteria and they share the objective of their lessons so that pupils can evaluate their own progress. Most teachers also provide helpful

feedback to enable pupils to improve their work and nearly all pupils enjoy the challenge of extending their work or making it better. Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting pupils both pastorally and academically. Nearly all teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and match work to their needs. All staff use praise and encouragement regularly and know their pupils well.

Teachers use effective questioning to promote pupils' thinking skills. They develop pupils' skills progressively and enable pupils to work independently, in pairs and in larger groups.

Most lessons progress at a good pace. However, in a few lessons, teachers spend too long on the introduction and pupils do not settle quickly to their tasks.

The school is at an early stage in adapting its curriculum in light of curriculum reform in Wales. In recent curriculum developments, teachers have focused on making learning experiences more purposeful and related to pupils' ideas and questions. As a result, pupils are more enthusiastic about their learning. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils chose to focus on the theme of Japan and this offers pupils the opportunity to compare and contrast the food, music and weather in Japan with pupils' own experiences of life in Wales.

Most teachers plan suitably for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through cross-curricular themes and topics. For example, pupils apply their speaking skills when creating a video to record the history of Ton Pentre. They apply their numeracy skills to record the weather in Ton Pentre over time. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills within real-life contexts are limited.

The school is developing its provision to meet the requirements of the digital competence framework well. As a result, pupils apply their ICT skills successfully in many learning areas. For example, they create simple animations to share information about the life cycle of plants and create a database about the electronic characters they have created.

Teachers provide effective opportunities for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills during formal Welsh lessons. In Year 6, all pupils also learn French. This makes a positive contribution to their transition to secondary school.

Teachers enrich the curriculum well by inviting visitors from the local community to speak to pupils and through making educational visits. For example, pupils visited the National Museum of Wales as a stimulus for their project on Japan. Pupils have also visited the Big Pit Museum as part of their work on the history of the local community.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a safe and inclusive community that promotes pupils' personal and social skills well. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and sincere. The sense of community within the school encourages all pupils to develop their values of loyalty, responsibility and a feeling of belonging. The school building and grounds are safe and secure. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school tracks and monitors pupils' wellbeing and progress effectively. Staff quickly identify the needs of vulnerable pupils and provide beneficial support. Support staff work successfully to deliver a wide range of worthwhile intervention programmes flexibly to meet the needs of pupils. These programmes enable pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Most pupils who receive support for wellbeing and learning needs make good progress. Support staff help to raise vulnerable pupils' self-esteem and confidence so that they engage effectively in daily school life.

The school makes effective use of outside agencies and specialist support for learners including Resilient Families and the Educational Psychology Service. Pupils and parents value the work of the family liaison officer. She works closely with families to improve attendance and she provides high quality additional support to help secure pupils' personal and emotional wellbeing. The school develops productive relationships with parents and keeps them fully informed of their child's progress.

There are appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. For example, pupils evaluate adverts to decide how healthy products really are and they undertake pledges to try to be healthier.

There is an effective programme to help pupils learn about a wide range of aspects of personal and social education. The Police liaison officer delivers a range of workshops for different year groups to support this including drugs and alcohol awareness. The school nurse supports appropriate sex and relationships education. The school effectively promotes and develops pupil online safety. Pupils create informative posters to show how to keep safe. There are successful workshops to promote internet safety across the school. The school provides opportunities to learn about different forms of bullying and pupils devised the school expectations to reinforce these values.

There are many opportunities for pupil contributions through a variety of pupil participation groups. For example, the pupil 'Senedd' group leads on promoting the school's rules and expectations. They liaise with the other pupil groups to help improve a wide range of aspects of school life.

The school has a long-standing connection with Maala School in Mbale, Uganda. This is successful in helping pupils develop their awareness of the wider world. Pupils are able to compare their own culture and local community with Mbale. They describe proudly how they have supported their link school by sending reading books, fundraising for equipment and providing water taps. They eagerly talk about how this project has caused them to think about their daily lives and education through exchanged letters and videos shared in assembly. The school also celebrates European Days and an Italian Week and learn about the importance of respect for diversity and equality.

The school provides effective social, moral, cultural and spiritual education. Through religious education lessons and in collective worship, all pupils learn about the importance of prayer to people and about belonging to a community. The school's expectations promote positive values and help pupils to develop their understanding of right and wrong.

Pupils explore the local community, sharing the history with a local photographer, and there are beneficial links with local churches and the nearby theatre. The school also provides a stimulating range of educational visits further afield, from day trips to the National Museum and Techniquet, to residential visits to the Urdd camp at Llangrannog and a cultural exploration of London. These visits allow pupils to use their imagination, learn in different ways and develop personally. The school provides opportunities to engage with the creative arts through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Leadership and management: Good

The headteacher provides the school with effective and supportive leadership. Together with the senior leadership team and the governors, he has established a clear vision for the school that focusses strongly on promoting the wellbeing and achievement of all pupils. He shares this vision effectively with pupils, staff and parents. The school is an inclusive and caring environment where all pupils are respected and valued.

The school's staff work together as a team effectively. They have many opportunities for professional learning and development. Leaders ensure that all staff continue to enhance their skills and knowledge. This has a positive impact on the quality of provision and standards achieved by pupils, for example in ICT. Performance management procedures are rigorous and staff objectives link directly to priorities in the school development plan. Training for teaching assistants on a variety of intervention strategies has had a positive impact on raising pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and improving pupils' wellbeing.

Governors provide very helpful support to the school and undertake their duties conscientiously. Through regular reports from the headteacher and by analysing a range of performance information, governors know the school well. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of development. They also visit the school on a regular basis. Their findings from these visits feed into the self-evaluation process and contribute usefully to the identification of the priorities for the school development plan.

Together with the local cluster of schools, senior leaders are beginning to prepare constructively for the implementation of the new curriculum for Wales. This is evident in the development of new curriculum leadership roles.

Senior leaders have developed a detailed monitoring and evaluation cycle to keep aspects of the school under review. Through the analysis of data, scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations the headteacher and staff form a fair and accurate judgement about the school's current strengths and areas for improvement. Senior leaders support the headteacher by effectively leading a wide range of activities within the self-evaluation cycle. However, their role in bringing about improvements by leading initiatives, evaluating their impact, and holding others to account is not yet fully developed.

Leaders take careful account of the views of both pupils and parents. An example of this is the way in which pupils' views have led to an improvement in the range of outdoor play resources. As a result, the behaviour of many pupils during break and lunchtime has improved.

The headteacher, with the support of the governing body monitors the school budget and resources carefully. They target the finances well to meet pupils' needs and to support priorities in the school's development plan, for example to purchase ICT resources and to employ a family liaison officer. They use the pupil development grant well to support literacy and numeracy catch-up programmes and to support pupils' wellbeing.

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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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