



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

A report on

**Penygawsi Primary School
Llys Derwen
Penygawsi
Llantrisant
Pontyclun
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF72 8PZ**

Date of inspection: March 2020

by

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

About Penygawsi Primary School

Penygawsi Primary School is in Llantrisant in Rhondda Cynon Taff. There are 245 pupils on roll. This includes 29 nursery pupils. The school organises pupils into nine classes, two of which are mixed-age.

The three year average for pupils eligible for free school meals is around 6%. This figure is below the Welsh average of 18%. Nearly all pupils come from homes where English is the first language.

The school has identified about 4% of pupils as having special educational needs. This is well below the average for primary schools in Wales (21%). A very few pupils have statements of special educational needs.

The school was last inspected in June 2014. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2007 and is currently on a three-year secondment as a challenge advisor with the Central South Consortium. The deputy headteacher is leading the school during the headteacher's secondment.

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

At Penygawsi Primary School, nearly all pupils make strong and in many cases very strong progress as they move through the school. Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school; they care for each other and know what to do if worried or anxious. Pupils talk warmly about the staff and describe them as caring and approachable. Working relationships are positive, nurturing and trusting.

Nearly all pupils show very good levels of resilience in their work and they are keen to progress in their learning. They work very hard and complete learning tasks to a high standard. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their wellbeing and attitudes to learning are outstanding.

Pupils receive a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils very well. The school benefits from strong, effective leadership and staff work well as a team. Governors are effective in their roles. They approach new initiatives and change positively.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills
- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to influence how and what they learn
- R3 Improve opportunities for outdoor learning in the foundation phase

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

Nearly all pupils begin school with skills that are at or above the expected level for their age. As they move through the school, nearly all pupils make strong progress and a majority make very strong progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. Most pupils with special educational needs make at least good progress towards meeting their individual targets.

Most pupils in the early years of the foundation phase make rapid progress in acquiring an extensive vocabulary. By the end of the foundation phase, nearly all pupils are confident speakers and skilled listeners. They respond well to the contributions of others and build on their ideas, for example when discussing whether saving an animal from a carnivore is fair to the predator. As they move through key stage 2, nearly all pupils use increasingly sophisticated language. They are confident, competent communicators. They express and justify opinions well. For example, they are able to articulate what they have previously learned successfully and explain how it links to their topic on water.

At the start of the foundation phase, most pupils learn letter sounds quickly and soon begin to read simple words. They make very good progress as they move through the school and begin to read purposefully in a wide variety of contexts. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils read fluently with good expression. In key stage 2, most pupils' reading skills contribute positively to the overall quality of their learning and to the progress they make. By Year 6, nearly all pupils read at a standard at or above that expected for their age. For example, more able pupils read recognise bias in the different ways authors portray Thomas Cromwell.

Most pupils begin to form letters correctly in nursery and reception classes. By the end of the foundation phase, they use simple grammar effectively and write in a wide range of contexts. Most pupils continue to make very good progress throughout key stage 2. For example, Year 4 pupils use vibrant vocabulary when listing articles for sale. By Year 6, most pupils are competent, skilled writers. More able pupils use sophisticated vocabulary to express mood, character and setting.

Most pupils make good progress in learning Welsh in the nursery and reception classes. They respond to simple instructions throughout the school day and begin to use simple words in context. By the time they reach the end of the foundation phase, most pupils respond confidently to simple questions and expand answers in response to the question 'Pam?' They write meaningful sentences to describe aspects of their life, such as the weather. Most pupils build well on the sentence structures they learn in the foundation phase as they move through key stage 2. They read simple sentences in context and confidently respond to questions on a wide range of topics.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop strong numeracy skills. In the foundation phase, they develop a very good understanding of number facts and of how to complete basic calculations. Most pupils in reception order and count numbers to 10 reliably. By the end of the foundation phase, nearly all pupils use written and mental

strategies to double two-digit numbers confidently and produce simple bar graphs accurately. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 show a very good understanding of number and use a wide variety of suitable methods to solve problems. For example, pupils in Year 4 use their numeracy skills to identify the difference in rainfall between Llantrisant and Crecy. Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 apply their skills successfully across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils use a conversion graph successfully to work out how many euros they would get in exchange for pounds.

Across the school, most pupils develop satisfactory skills in ICT. In the foundation phase, many pupils use tablet computers to play games, which support their learning appropriately. Many pupils give instructions to programmable toys successfully. By Year 2, most pupils create simple graphs, for example about the castles in Rhondda Cynon Taff. Most key stage 2 pupils use a limited range of programs and apps to enhance their work, for example to create a digital presentation about Japan. However, most pupils do not use databases and spreadsheets often enough to enhance their learning.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

The wellbeing of pupils and their attitudes to learning is an outstanding feature of the school. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary both in the classrooms and at playtimes. They relate very well to staff and are polite, respectful and considerate towards each other. Working relationships between pupils and staff are extremely nurturing and trusting.

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and are keen to share their work with visitors. They have very positive attitudes towards learning. They settle in lessons quickly, concentrate well and focus very effectively on tasks and activities. They make a powerful contribution to the ethos of effective learning throughout the school. Pupils are beginning to influence how and what they learn, particularly in the foundation phase. They work well in pairs, groups and individually. Older pupils collaborate highly effectively in groups, for instance when writing with empathy about a character in their class novel. They have a very good understanding of what they do well and what they need to do to improve their work. They reflect on their own learning with maturity and honesty and are keen to edit their work. Nearly all pupils make effective use of self and peer assessment to evaluate their work in order to make improvements. As a result, by Year 6, they are capable, confident and resilient learners, proud of the progress they make.

Pupils' voice has a very strong impact on many aspects of the school's work. Pupils carry out their leadership roles very effectively and display outstanding qualities as ethical, informed and active citizens. For example, pupils are beginning to contribute to the development of a new curriculum and present their work very effectively to governors. All groups understand that they are representing the views of other pupils in the school community. They are keen to take on this role and do so with enthusiasm and commitment. They take their roles very seriously. For example, pupils play a very effective role in leading collective worship and working in teams to ensure the smooth running of assembly. Pupils feel that their voice is heard, and that staff value their opinions.

Most pupils in key stage 2 have a sophisticated understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and promote equality positively. They understand that not all children are as fortunate as they are and that this is a cause for concern and action. For example, they identify entrepreneurs in developing countries and raise money to support these small businesses and help them become sustainable.

Nearly all pupils feel safe and happy at school. They understand how the choices they make affect their health. For example, they explain why it is beneficial to eat fruit and why it is sensible not to have sugary drinks. Across the school, nearly all pupils understand the importance of taking regular exercise. The Play Leaders use their leadership skills extremely well to encourage all pupils to take part in physical activity on the playground, trim trail and grass areas. After school, around half of pupils take part in the good range of extra-curricular activities, including football and dance.

Nearly all pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and being punctual at the start of the day. Rates of attendance are consistently strong. This reflects the very strong attitudes to learning amongst pupil.

Digital leaders promote internet safety very effectively through the school. As a result, all pupils understand the need to stay safe online, and are aware of the need to keep their passwords private to protect themselves. The digital leaders also arrange a 'digital detox' to raise funds for new ICT equipment, and Year 6 pupils run a book club for younger pupils.

Teaching and learning experiences: Good

Staff have high expectations of all pupils' standards and behaviour. They plan stimulating and engaging learning opportunities for the pupils. Teachers provide clear objectives for pupils' learning and link these to meaningful success criteria. They involve pupils purposefully in devising these so that, by the time they reach Year 6, most pupils write their own criteria. This supports them to develop well as independent learners.

Teachers use imaginative approaches to capture pupils' interest. For example, pupils in the foundation phase were captivated by the prospect of completing challenges in order to qualify for Pirate Barty's crew. Staff make the classrooms stimulating and purposeful places to learn. They use pupils' work successfully to exemplify good standards and use displays well to provide valuable information for pupils to help them develop their skills.

Teachers and teaching assistants use questions purposefully to check pupils' understanding and move their learning forward. Staff manage pupil behaviour skilfully. They take into account the needs of the pupils sensitively and build positive relationships. They treat each pupil with respect and the ethos this creates is a strength of the school. Support staff make a strong contribution to the quality of learning experiences. They teach skilfully and understand their role well.

Staff make pupils aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They interact effectively with pupils in lessons to explain how they can

move their learning on. Foundation phase teachers provide a few worthwhile outdoor activities for pupils. However, this aspect of the school's provision is generally underdeveloped.

The school plans the curriculum in detail to ensure that pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skills systematically in a way that builds effectively on previous learning. The foundation phase planning and practice develops ambition, confidence and aspiration well. The curriculum in key stage 2 builds on this foundation successfully, enabling pupils to become very competent in basic skills. The school devises topics that promote the interest and engagement of pupils very well.

The curriculum is broad and encompasses a wide range of learning experiences in meaningful contexts. For example, as part of their topic on water, pupils in the foundation phase are designing a water feature for pupils in the nursery. However, opportunities for pupils to influence the curriculum in key stage 2 are at an earlier stage of development.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Teachers ensure that pupils maintain high standards when they read, write and discuss their work in subjects other than English and mathematics. For example, pupils in the foundation phase discuss, evaluate and write insightful conclusions about the speed of water flowing down an incline during a science activity. However, the school provides limited opportunities to develop and use ICT skills.

The school provides valuable opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills in Welsh, particularly in oracy. The school also puts careful thought into ensuring that pupils learn about unique aspects of Welsh culture and heritage, within their topic work. For example, as part of the celebration of World Book Day, pupils study the life and work of Roald Dahl.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school is a warm, caring and successful community, where staff and pupils show high levels of respect for each other. Staff know the pupils very well and respond sensitively and effectively to their emotional and social needs whilst helping to develop their skills and wellbeing. All staff contribute to the promotion of good behaviour throughout the school.

There are comprehensive systems in place that track and monitor the progress of all pupils. Teachers make purposeful use of this information to influence their planning and to identify pupils that may benefit from additional support at an early stage. The school provides a range of interventions that support these pupils to make valuable progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills and to enhance their wellbeing. The school has effective partnerships with a range of external agencies that provide good support for pupils. For example, the pastor from a neighbouring church leads a weekly assembly.

The school engages with parents well. Parents appreciate the opportunities that the school provides for them to share and celebrate their child's learning. For example, parent engagement days and information sessions provide valuable opportunities for

parents to learn about strategies to support reading and the school's plans for the new curriculum for Wales. The school shares relevant and up to date information with parents through a variety of communication channels. Annual reports to parents are informative and demonstrate teachers' detailed knowledge of individual pupils.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in a variety of committees. These experiences develop pupils' understanding of the importance of contributing to society, and help them develop as responsible citizens.

The school has effective arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Teachers ensure that all pupils understand the importance of living a fit and healthy lifestyle, and how to stay safe online. The school has high expectations with regard to behaviour and has produced a useful anti-bullying resource with the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual and cultural values. Staff encourage pupils to engage meaningfully in reflection time as part of collective worship and during lessons. The school makes effective use of visits by leaders from local churches and other members of the community to support pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The school promotes the importance of tolerance, respect and courtesy actively and celebrates diversity successfully. For example, Sikh visitors come in to school to share culture through art and most classes celebrate Diwali and the Chinese New Year. There are well-developed opportunities for pupils to build an awareness and understanding of life in other parts of the world, different religions and cultures.

The school's provision to develop pupils' creative skills is effective. The school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to take part in concerts. For example, nearly all pupils participate in the carol concert and the school choirs. Opportunities to perform in nativity plays, summer productions and the Eisteddfod contribute successfully towards increasing pupils' confidence and social skills. Staff plan a wide range of interesting activities that develop pupils' awareness and appreciation of Welsh culture. Educational visits to places of interest, such as Cardiff Castle, the Royal Mint, and the residential trip to the Urdd Centre at Llangrannog enhance pupils' learning successfully.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Leadership and management: Good

The acting headteacher, ably supported by her acting deputy, provides strong leadership with a focus on raising standards and improving wellbeing for pupils. She has a clear vision for the school, which she shares with all staff, pupils, parents and governors successfully. This creates a very positive and supportive school ethos. The acting headteacher has high expectations of all pupils and provides a caring and inclusive environment to help them make the most of their time at the school. She sets high expectations for staff, challenges them appropriately and develops their expertise successfully. Staff have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders support the acting headteacher well and carry out their duties with commitment and enthusiasm.

Staff work very well together to ensure that there are common approaches to nearly all aspects of their work. For example, as a result of the consistent way that staff manage and support pupils' wellbeing, behaviour across the school is exemplary. Senior leaders use meetings purposefully to ensure that staff share good practice and have meaningful discussions related to pupil outcomes. For example, the science leader has led meetings and surgeries to support teachers in developing their understanding of the progression of skills in science.

The school is part of a worthwhile network of schools. This gives staff the opportunity to work regularly with colleagues in different settings to celebrate achievements, highlight good practice and identify areas for improvement. For example, valuable peer enquiry has led to a purposeful initiative to involve the parents in training on how to use the Welsh Government learning platform. Staff and leaders take part in beneficial professional discussions as part of the school's performance management processes. These discussions enable the school to work towards its aims successfully. .

A broad range of well-organised self-evaluation processes enable school leaders to gather a wide range of information about the school's work. For example, leaders and staff use all available performance data and tracking information effectively. They ensure that they cross-reference these to provide an accurate picture of all pupils. They seek the views of a good range of stakeholders including pupils, parents and governors. However, in a few instances, the school does not identify aspects of its work that require improvement well enough, for example provision for outdoor learning in the foundation phase and pupils' standards in ICT.

For the priorities identified, improvement planning is comprehensive. Staff implement these plans effectively to bring about important improvements. For example, in recent years, there have been improvements in pupils' written work and to the indoor learning environment within the foundation phase.

The governing body supports the school usefully and provides good levels of challenge to senior leaders. Governors understand key performance information well, take an active part in school life and discuss and query improvement plans appropriately. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strategic priorities. They understand their role and discharge their statutory duties well.

The school uses its resources efficiently and to good effect. Leaders calculate and monitor the costs of improvement plans carefully. The school makes appropriate use of the pupil development grant to meet the needs of targeted pupils. For example, it has been used to fund training for staff so that they can run programmes to support pupils who have particular social and emotional needs.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent 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 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' wellbeing, 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)

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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