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

A report on

Pentrepoeth C.P. School

Bryn Hedydd
Cwm Cwddy Drive
Bassaleg
Newport
NP10 8JN

Date of inspection: May 2023

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Pentrepoeth C.P. School

Name of provider	Pentrepoeth C.P. School
Local authority	Newport City Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	457
Pupils of statutory school age	354
Number in nursery classes	45
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%)	4.3%
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%)	11.0%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2016
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/10/2014
Start date of inspection	15/05/2023

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

Pentrepoeth Primary School is a vibrant and safe community where pupils thrive and enjoy a wide range of engaging and exciting learning experiences. Strong working relationships and deep mutual respect between pupils and staff create a particularly supportive ethos that nurtures exceptionally good behaviour, consideration for others and a culture of high expectations.

Most pupils develop exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and this helps them to progress well as they move through the school. Young pupils settle well into the welcoming nursery environment and this establishes good patterns of learning and behaviour that grow from year to year. By the end of their time at the school, pupils' passion for developing new skills, gaining knowledge and understanding, finding things out and solving problems is clear.

Leaders and staff have made strong progress in developing a new curriculum that suits their pupils, their community and their vision. Collaboration between staff within the school and with other schools in the cluster is a strength and benefits their professional learning considerably. Enthusiastic, skilled teachers ensure that pupils benefit from interesting lessons, learn to challenge themselves, and achieve high standards in nearly all areas of the curriculum. Currently however, pupils do not make consistently strong progress in developing their Welsh vocabulary and sentence structures.

The school's leadership team, staff and governors have established a clear vision for the school, based on securing high levels of well-being, good progress and a strong culture of safeguarding. Successful collaboration, a track record of effective school improvement and high expectations enable everyone in the school community to contribute purposefully to achieving that vision.

Recommendations

R1 Improve opportunities to build pupils' Welsh vocabulary and sentence structures progressively to ensure consistently strong progress as they move through the school

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare two case studies, one on its work in relation to the use of the outdoor environment to apply numeracy, literacy and digital skills learnt in class and a second about how the school has approached raising pupils' and parents' awareness and understanding of personal safety, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils start Pentrepoeth Primary School with skills that are at a stage of development at or above those expected for their age. During their time at the school most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those eligible for free school meals, make at least good progress from their starting points. They acquire a wide range of skills and knowledge and deepen their understanding in many interesting contexts across the curriculum.

From a young age, most pupils listen attentively. They ask and answer questions appropriately and show respect for the views of others. Older pupils express their opinions clearly and use precise, subject-specific vocabulary to discuss their learning. By Years 5 and 6, nearly all pupils are confident, articulate speakers and considerate listeners. A few use exceptionally advanced techniques, such as pace, emphasis and dramatic pause, to capture and hold an audience.

The reading skills of most pupils are developing well. Young pupils read familiar words correctly and use an appropriate range of phonic strategies to decipher unfamiliar words. Most older pupils read an appropriate variety of texts, including fiction and non-fiction books and online material, accurately. When reading aloud, they vary their tone of voice and use punctuation correctly to show their understanding. Higher up the school, pupils use an increasing range of reading skills, such as prediction, inference and deduction, successfully to support their learning across the curriculum.

Overall, most pupils' progress in writing is highly effective. Nursery pupils record their ideas through mark making. These young pupils make good attempts at forming legible letters, while reception pupils write familiar words successfully to form simple sentences. As they progress, pupils use story maps purposefully to help them to structure various forms of writing, including diaries, to capture a story. Most pupils' vocabulary choices become increasingly adventurous and older pupils organise their work into paragraphs, using a variety of complex sentences. Older pupils' build their writing competence progressively in an extensive range of genres, adapting their work to different styles skilfully.

From an early age, many pupils understand and respond appropriately to simple classroom instructions in Welsh. Pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 use Welsh language placemats to help them to ask and answer basic questions about topics such as their family and the weather. By the end of Year 6, pupils are beginning to extend their sentences and give simple reasons for their opinions. However, the development of pupils' vocabulary and sentence structure as they move through the school is not sufficiently progressive.

Most pupils gain a strong understanding of the different areas of mathematics and make good progress. Over time, many develop a real passion for mathematics and thrive when playing with number patterns and shape, creating sequences, and finding ways to solve tricky challenges set by teachers or other pupils. In all classes, most pupils use their mathematical skills competently and confidently in specific

lessons, but a real strength is the way in which they apply their understanding in authentic contexts and environments around the school. For instance, young pupils weigh and measure ingredients carefully because they understand it needs to be accurate for the recipe to work. Older pupils refine their understanding of line and rotational symmetry in the forest area when trying to prove or disprove the question 'is there really symmetry in nature?' In Year 6, pupils make links between multiplication and division to convert between decimals, fractions and percentages. They use this mathematical understanding and a systematic approach successfully to solve complex problems.

Technology and digital skills are an important feature of the work of pupils in all classes. Most develop a full range of digital skills and use technology confidently across the curriculum. Young pupils use a range of programs and apps confidently and learn the basics of coding, for example, to control a programmable toy and understand direction and distance. Older pupils use their digital skills naturally and effectively, including carrying out independent research and using an extensive range of programs to enhance their work. This includes developing a strong understanding of the importance of technology in the world of work by creating their own app to help others to explore career opportunities.

Nearly all pupils' physical skills develop well through a variety of stimulating experiences. Nursery pupils, for instance, handle resources and equipment with dexterity when mixing ingredients in the mud kitchen or pegging underpants on the line. Older pupils become stronger by taking part in regular activities in the outdoor areas and in their physical education lessons.

Many pupils' creativity begins to develop early on when playing in the role play area and talking about the soup they are pretending to make in the kitchen. Older pupils use a range of tools and media to create precise marks when imitating the style of different artists and listen attentively and comment on how particular music makes them feel as part of their topic on 'Courage'.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Well-being is a strength of the school. Nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school, feel safe and are happy and confident in the school environment. They are proud of their school and welcome visitors enthusiastically.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other, staff and visitors. They listen attentively to adults and other pupils and follow instructions sensibly and promptly. Working relationships between staff and pupils across the school are very strong and highly supportive. Pupils feel respected and treated fairly. For example, they feel that any alleged incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and promptly by staff. They are confident to approach teachers and leaders about issues that are important to them and believe that their views will be valued and taken seriously.

Across the school, pupils settle quickly to their tasks and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They are keen to discuss and share their work, demonstrating a pride in their achievements and a willingness to improve. Nearly all pupils concentrate for appropriate lengths of time and use a range of strategies when they

face a problem or find their work challenging. They often choose a suitable resource or method from their 'pupil toolkit' to help them to get back on track. Most are resilient when solving problems and stick to a task until it is completed. Importantly, they know that it is completely normal to find things difficult, to need help, or to fail at something and have to try again.

The wide range of pupil voice groups contribute effectively to school improvement and make a tangible difference to the life and work of the school. For example, pupils' suggestions brought about the creation and resourcing of the school library and an annual eco green day, organised by the pupils. Members of the school's Croeso team (school council) were instrumental in creating an eye-catching, child-friendly version of the school safeguarding booklet, which enables pupils to understand important information about personal safety at a level appropriate to their age. The Eco team reports on its activities in a termly newsletter and this enables families to keep up to date with ideas and improvements, including the recent purchase of a new storage shed using money raised from the eco day. These opportunities are particularly successful in developing pupils' leadership skills and their understanding of the impact on and role in society.

Many pupils of all ages benefit from attending a wide range of after-school clubs and activities, which help to develop physical and social skills and enjoyment in school life. Participating in these clubs helps pupils to feel valued and supports the building of strong relationships with one other and with members of staff. Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of healthy eating and the need to eat a balanced diet, for example they explain clearly which foods would be included in a healthy lunch box. They enjoy physical exercise and participate enthusiastically during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes This contributes successfully to pupils' high levels of well-being.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school's curriculum provides a range of engaging and exciting learning experiences that meet the needs of all learners very well over time. Staff collaborate highly effectively to plan termly topics that integrate learning across the curriculum purposefully. Pupils use a digital platform at the start of each topic to share what they would like to learn with teachers. Parents' contribution to this planning process helps them to feel engaged, motivated and a part of their child's learning.

Valuable working with other schools in the cluster has contributed to developing the school's useful guidance to support pupil progression. The school's curriculum 'lens' adds another perspective for staff to consider in their planning each term, such as diversity or 'Cynefin'. Together, these provide a curriculum overview that enables teachers to plan next steps in learning and identify gaps successfully so that pupils build well on previous learning and develop their skills progressively. A variety of interesting visits, such as to Aerospace Bristol, supports the curriculum, encourages engagement in learning and provides broader learning experiences for pupils. Recent visitors to school including a pilot, a beekeeper and a barrister enhance pupils' topics and their understanding of the world of work.

Collaboration between staff and consistency in important elements of teaching are strengths of the school that help to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils. Teams of

staff responsible for the areas of learning and experience share strong practices and expertise with others. Staff who lead on outdoor learning work closely with class teachers to plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills in meaningful ways. All learning areas are engaging, resources are accessible and working walls reflect and support pupil progression. Nearly all teachers have good subject knowledge and share clear aims and expectations of learning with pupils. Most teachers deliver lessons that are well paced, and staff's consistent use of effective questioning extends pupils' understanding and drives inquiry-based learning. Teachers encourage pupils to challenge themselves by choosing the level of their learning activities and, in most cases, pupils know their strengths well enough to choose appropriately.

Teachers and support staff have strong working relationships with pupils and high expectations of their learning and behaviour. They encourage pupils to be respectful, courteous and ambitious, which leads to the positive ethos of learning that permeates the school. Most teachers build on the pupils' prior learning well. They adapt their teaching skilfully to address misconceptions and use a range of assessment approaches to monitor and build a picture of pupils' progress over time. These procedures inform the next steps in teachers' planning effectively. Staff use feedback successfully to praise and celebrate the achievements of pupils and identify areas for improvement. Pupils are an important part of these processes and use the idea of 'wow, now, pow' to understand their strengths and the next steps in their learning.

Support staff are highly skilled and are deployed effectively throughout the school to support pupils, including those with additional needs and social and emotional challenges. These staff are very good role models for pupils and each other. In many classes, support staff act as facilitators of learning, encouraging pupils, and only intervening sensitively when necessary. This encourages pupils' independence and ensures that pupils are engaged in their learning.

Many staff greet and praise pupils in Welsh and use a range of simple instructions regularly, and this helps pupils to become familiar with basic everyday Welsh. The school has suitable resources available for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills. However, these are not used systematically or regularly enough to provide the opportunities pupils need to make consistently strong progress as they move through the school.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a warm and welcoming community where pupil welfare is a high priority. The whole-school strategy for well-being supports pupils' personal, social and emotional needs effectively. It helps to ensures that pupils enjoy coming to school and engage positively with a wide range of learning experiences. Staff and pupils work together positively and show a high level of respect for one another.

The additional learning needs co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the individual needs of pupils across the school. Teachers and support staff provide beneficial support in the classroom, as well as an extensive range of specific intervention programmes for literacy, numeracy, and social and personal development for identified pupils. These have a positive impact on pupils' progress and well-being. There is a detailed tracking system with clear entry and exit criteria for pupils

accessing interventions. All staff are familiar with the school's class support guidance, which provides clear information about the provision leaders expect to see in all classes, including visual timetables. The school holds valuable parent workshops regularly and this means that parents of pupils with additional needs feel well informed and supported. Staff work purposefully with external agencies, including the local authority visual impairment team speech and language service and Barnado's to gain valuable guidance that helps provide strong support for pupils.

Staff and leaders encourage pupils, including those with ALN, to become involved in a variety of worthwhile pupil voice groups, including the Croeso team and the rights respecting team. Year 6 pupils also take on responsibilities around the school and act as positive role models for younger pupils. In addition to these opportunities, there are plenty of good examples of pupil participation in making decisions that have improved their experience of school, and regular involvement in discussions with teachers about what and how they learn.

The school's values-based provision offers staff and pupils the opportunity to focus on a different value each month, such as courage, friendship or equality. This work is often celebrated in class assemblies followed by valuable opportunities for pupils to work on related activities with their parents. The school has effective strategies to support excellent behaviour. In addition, pupils have good opportunities to learn about children's rights and diversity through the curriculum and school routines. These experiences nurture pupils' social, moral and spiritual understanding and contribute well to their emotional well-being and their growing sense of citizenship.

The school offers pupils opportunities to engage in a wide range of after school and lunchtime clubs, including various sports, chess, dance, and engineering. There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to be involved in performances to develop a wide range of personal skills and to increase their self-confidence. For example, all pupils take part in the school Eisteddfod, class assemblies and Christmas productions.

The school takes safeguarding and health and safety matters very seriously. The 'Culture of Safeguarding' booklet is a practical guide that links closely to the school's well-being strategy and serves as a reminder that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The school's well-considered booklets help staff, parents and pupils to understand the school's approach to safeguarding. The child-friendly version is a particularly effective way of helping pupils know what to do if they have concerns about their personal safety, including any issues they might encounter online. The parent leaflet contains useful explanations of aspects of safeguarding that may concern them. The school has suitable processes in place for monitoring attendance and following up on concerns.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders have collaborated effectively with staff and governors to establish a clear vision for the school. It is based on meeting the needs of all pupils and aims for high levels of well-being and strong progress. Leaders have nurtured a strong culture of safeguarding that permeates all its work and helps to ensure the safety of pupils. They engage purposefully with families to make a positive difference to provision and experiences. For example, the headteacher gathers views on important matters from the parent forum and invites parents to contribute to the planning of new topics and

learn alongside their children. These approaches have proved successful in securing parents' interest in and commitment to the development of the school's new curriculum and their children's learning.

Members of the leadership team set high expectations for themselves, their colleagues and pupils. They model effective collaboration and promote a co-operative approach to all they do within the school and with other schools in the cluster and beyond. These collaborations offer a wealth of opportunities for productive professional learning, the creation of cross-cluster approaches to aspects of education and the sharing of good practice between leaders and staff in Pentrepoeth and in other schools.

The governing body brings together members from a broad range of backgrounds with an exceptionally useful set of skills. Governors understand their statutory responsibilities well, including their roles in embedding a positive safeguarding culture and promoting healthy eating and drinking. They provide strong support and robust, purposeful challenge for school leaders, particularly in relation to pupil progress and financial matters. For example, governor discussions around a dip in pupils' mathematical reasoning led to a whole school priority to improve the application of mathematical skills. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school's work, gathered from the headteacher's detailed reports, visits to the school, and informative presentations from teachers and pupil voice groups. Governor self-evaluation champions are well informed about school improvement processes and outcomes and provide other governors with assurance of the quality of this aspect of the school's work.

Senior leaders work closely with staff to identify relevant school improvement priorities through a rigorous cycle of self-evaluation. Identified areas for improvement take good account of national priorities as well as developments that are specific to the school. For example, the current priority to build the school's challenge curriculum focuses on personalising the cluster's curriculum model in response to the principles of the Curriculum for Wales. Senior leaders and staff at all levels evaluate progress towards each priority regularly. They use the information they gather purposefully to keep governors up to date, modify priorities and adapt approaches. This flexibility enables them to respond swiftly if an action is not having the intended impact on pupil outcomes, or in response to pupil needs or challenge from governors. The school's strategic and collaborative approach to self-evaluation and school improvement has ensured that the school has a strong track record in bringing about improvements that make a positive difference to pupils' learning and well-being.

Governors and school leaders allocate appropriate resources to ensure that improvement priorities move forward at pace. A recent example is the significant funding that has been allocated to improve outdoor learning environments to enable teachers to offer a wider range of authentic experiences for pupils. The school uses specific grant funding effectively to ensure beneficial support for identified pupils. For example, leaders use the pupil development grant well to provide a range of strategies to support improvements in pupils' well-being, and literacy and numeracy skills.

Professional learning for all staff is key to the school's ongoing improvement journey. Leaders recognise the vital role that high-quality teaching plays in sustaining and

improving the quality of learning and they have focused well on increasing staff's understanding of formative assessment and progression. Partnership working and joint planning between teachers is an important starting point for professional support and challenge. In addition, purposeful and sustained working with other schools in the cluster over recent years has proved to be a successful model of professional learning. It enables staff to learn with and from one another and drives the work of the school and other schools forward. Leaders encourage individuals to enhance their personal learning and interests through a variety of routes, including leadership training and classroom-based research.

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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