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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Penderyn Primary School
Pontprenllwyd
Penderyn
Aberdare
CF44 9JW**

Date of inspection: January 2012

by

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



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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

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Publication Section
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

or by email to publications@estyn.gov.uk

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Context

Penderyn Community Primary School, in the village of Pontprenllwyd, is a short distance from Hirwaun on the main road to Brecon. It is based in a new school building, opened in 2007 on the site of the former school.

Pupils come from varying social backgrounds that are considered to be neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged.

There are 219 pupils aged between three and 11 years of age on the school register. The school is organised into two language streams. Parents opt for their children to study most of their lessons either through the Welsh language or alternatively through English. In recent years the number of pupils in the Welsh language stream has increased substantially to 146, whilst numbers have fallen significantly to 73 in the English stream. There are eight classes in the school, five of which where Welsh is the main language of instruction. All classes have pupils from more than one age group, apart from the Welsh medium nursery class.

Around 13% of pupils speak Welsh at home and 1% have English as an additional language. Approximately 25% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, compared to 15% in 2006 when the school was inspected previously. This is well above the all-Wales average of around 20%. Fifty-four pupils are designated as having additional learning needs.

The senior leadership of the school has changed since the last inspection. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

The individual school budget per pupil for Penderyn Primary School in 2011-2012 means that the budget is £3,222 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £6,499 and the minimum is £2,788. Penderyn Primary School is 71st out of the 114 primary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

Current performance is adequate because:

- pupils work well together, listen attentively in class and are keen to succeed;
- pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school is very good; and
- younger pupils enjoy and benefit from stimulating and varied lessons in the Foundation Phase and make good progress in their learning.

However:

- pupils in key stage 2 make uneven progress, and their standards at 11 years of age are not good enough in writing, numeracy, Welsh second language and information and communication technology; and
- more able pupils have work that is too easy for them.

Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- pupils' performance in the majority of National Curriculum teacher assessments at seven and 11 years of age over the last five years does not always compare well with that of pupils from similar schools in Wales;
- improvements over the last 18 months in the life and work of the school have yet to result in significantly better outcomes for pupils;
- teachers in key stage 2 do not provide work that is matched closely enough to the wide age and ability ranges within classes;
- assessment information is not always used well enough, especially in key stage 2, for pupils to know how to improve their work and for teachers to track pupils' progress more effectively;
- the governing body does not use teacher assessment results effectively enough to challenge the school to improve pupils' performance; and
- no progress has been made in improving pupils' attendance, which was a recommendation in the previous inspection report.

Recommendations

In order to improve, there is a need to:

- R1 raise standards in key stage 2 in writing, numeracy and information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum in both Welsh and English medium classes;
- R2 improve pupils' Welsh second language development;
- R3 improve planning in key stage 2 to provide work more suited to pupils' age and ability, and to allow for better progression in their skill development;
- R4 make better use of assessment information for pupils to know how to improve their work, and enable teachers to track pupils' progress more effectively;
- R5 improve the governing body's use of teacher assessment results to challenge the school to raise pupils' performance; and
- R6 improve pupils' attendance.

What happens next?

Penderyn Community Primary School will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Many pupils make appropriate progress in their learning in the Foundation Phase, often from a low starting point, especially in language. They show increasing confidence in speaking to adults and each other. Early writing and drawing activities are developing appropriately and most pupils recognise numbers up to five and match simple shapes and colours. They are enthusiastic in learning about the world around them and benefit from play and active learning in classrooms and in the outdoors. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well in Welsh and English in the Foundation Phase. Most older pupils in Year 2 show appropriate progress in their writing and numeracy skills. They write stories to develop their understanding of the importance of using sentences and correct punctuation.

In key stage 2, many pupils have good recall of previous learning. Nearly all listen well, and most speak fluently, read confidently and make good progress in these skills. In contrast, most pupils' written work is brief in length with limited progress in writing for different audiences and purposes in subjects across the curriculum. Similarly, pupils make limited use of their numeracy and information and communication technology skills to support and enrich their work in a range of contexts. Their skills of working independently and taking responsibility for aspects of their own learning are not well developed.

Many of the pupils who receive additional support for reading and writing and in numeracy make good progress in relation to their starting point. However, many of the more able pupils do not reach their full potential in their reading, writing or in mathematical work. A few less able pupils are unable to read their own work as their handwriting is poor.

In key stage 2, most pupils' skills in Welsh second language are unsatisfactory. Insufficient progress is made from year to year in speaking, reading and writing.

Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum teacher assessments in Welsh, English, mathematics and science at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 has varied considerably over the last five years. In comparison to schools in Wales with a similar percentage of free school meals, pupils' performance at seven and 11 years of age has placed the school between the best 25% and the lowest 25% in relation to the core subjects of Welsh, English, mathematics and science. Generally, pupils' performance over the last five years has been too inconsistent and, overall, is not good enough when compared with that of pupils in similar schools in Wales.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils are happy and feel safe in school and enjoy their work. Playground leaders take responsibility for looking after other pupils at break and lunchtimes. Pupils show care and concern for the welfare of each other. Pupils have a good understanding of

what it means to be fit and healthy and have good social skills. They all understand that bullying is unacceptable and know with whom to talk if they have any problems or concerns.

Pupils who are members of the school and the eco council are active in making decisions that affect many aspects of school life. These include recycling, saving energy wherever possible and organising fund raising events for numerous charities. Through school assemblies and other events members of the school and eco-council convey to others the importance of such responsibilities. This helps all pupils to begin to understand the issues affecting their locality and the wider world.

Attendance levels at the school are adequate. Whole-school attendance for the last two years has placed the school amongst the lowest 25% and lower 50% of similar schools in the free school meals group. Unauthorised absence has been above the all-Wales and the local authority average for the last four years.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate
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Learning experiences: Adequate

Generally, the school has an appropriate curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils and the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils take responsibility for making decisions about their learning. They choose a range of appropriate activities that develops their knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. In key stage 2, these aspects are less well developed, and pupils do not build sufficiently on their skills from year to year. More able pupils often have work that is too easy for them, especially in writing, mathematics and science. Not enough use is made in all classes of pupils' computer and other technology skills to reinforce the learning in subjects across the curriculum. Overall, pupils do not have sufficient regular opportunities to develop their wider learning skills such as problem solving, enquiry and investigative work.

Throughout the school, activities to promote pupils' understanding of their own culture, history and traditions are good. Events such as the school and Urdd eisteddfodau are a means of further promoting pupils' understanding about Wales and the Welsh language. Very few opportunities are provided for pupils in the English medium classes to improve the development of their Welsh language skills other than in their Welsh lessons.

The school promotes sustainable development effectively. It is a part of the Eco-Schools programme, and pupils have a prominent role in the day-to-day life of the school in activities such as recycling and in monitoring and saving energy. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in other countries are promoted successfully through projects such as units of work on Lesotho and links with the USA.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of interesting lunch-time and after-school clubs.

Teaching: Adequate

Overall, the quality and range of teaching approaches in the Foundation Phase are good. In key stage 2, the quality of teaching observed was good in many lessons and adequate or unsatisfactory in a few. Where teaching is good, teachers and support staff have a good understanding of the curriculum. Activities are challenging and are planned in response to pupils' interests and previous learning. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they need to learn and are allowed to discover answers for themselves. Lesson planning and the good use of support staff and other resources make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

In the few lessons where teaching was less effective, tasks are not well matched to the age and ability range. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to problem solve or to be responsible for aspects of their own learning. There are weaknesses in the way that teachers use questions to promote discussion and debate and, as a result, pupils lose interest in their learning.

Many teachers make good use of assessment information to plan the next stage in most pupils' development and to tell them what they need to do to succeed. These strategies are not used consistently in all classes and, in a minority of classes, pupils are unsure about their targets and how to achieve them. Though the school tracks pupils' progress, the information is not always used well enough by all teachers to plan the next steps in the learning and to inform pupils, especially the more able, how to improve their work.

The school identifies and supports groups of pupils that need additional help in reading, writing and numeracy appropriately.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate

Effective arrangements are in place to support pupils' health and wellbeing as well as to encourage their involvement in their school or wider community. Pupils' personal, spiritual moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

The school has procedures and an appropriate policy for safeguarding.

Pupils with additional learning needs have appropriate support. Needs are recognised at an early stage and the school puts into place a programme to support pupils who are placed on the 'record of concern' register. Appropriate individual education plans are in place and are reviewed regularly. Parents are included in their child's review meetings. The school makes good use of specialist services such as occupational health practitioners and educational psychologists.

Good use is made of a range of external providers and support agencies to ensure that pupils' physical, emotional and spiritual needs are met. However, strategies to improve attendance have had little impact.

Learning environment: Good

The school offers a welcoming, safe environment where pupils have respect for one another. Pupils are treated equally, have good relationships with their teachers and

are given good opportunities to develop respect for people of different cultures and beliefs.

The building offers practical and spacious accommodation, which is generally well utilised. The outside spaces offer a stimulating learning environment for a wide variety of activities for pupils of all ages. The school has plenty of good quality learning resources.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Adequate
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Leadership: Adequate

The headteacher has established an appropriate vision and values for the school, which are supported and promoted by governors and staff. Good progress has been made in some strategic areas such as improving the quality of pupils' learning experiences in the Foundation Phase. Satisfactory progress has been made in self-evaluation and in prioritising areas for improvement in the school development plan. Other senior managers make an appropriate contribution to the strategic direction of the school. The role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring provision in their area of responsibility is a developing feature. However, these actions have yet to result in significantly better outcomes for pupils.

Governors make visits to classrooms to sample pupils' learning experiences and they support the school well in its day-to-day running. However, their role is not developed enough in interpreting data to judge how well the school performs in comparison to similar schools and nationally, and to challenge performance.

School initiatives to meet local and national priorities are on-going. The school has achieved the Eco quality mark in recognition of its work in developing pupils' awareness of environmental issues. A high priority is given to promoting pupils' wellbeing and the school is working towards gaining the healthy schools award.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school's self-evaluation document has identified and prioritised areas for improvement. These have a clear focus on improving pupils' standards. Governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation by visiting classrooms to view the teaching and learning. Monitoring by curriculum coordinators of the quality of provision within classrooms is beginning to inform and improve the process of self-evaluation. However, not enough attention is given in the monitoring to evaluating pupils' skill development and the provision for developing their enquiry, investigative and problem solving skills. Parents, pupils and others contributed their views to the school's self-evaluation. The school also takes good account of advice received by the local authority education service. There are clear links between self-evaluation outcomes and the school's development plan.

Teachers have recently begun to collaborate with other local schools to share expertise and good practice, especially in order to improve pupils' learning experiences. This is beginning to improve pupils' literacy skills.

Nearly all the recommendations from the previous report in 2006 have been addressed, apart from the recommendation to raise pupils' attendance.

Partnership working: Good

Parents and visitors from the community make a positive contribution to enriching pupils' experiences both in school, in the locality and further afield

Good partnerships exist with the local authority education service in supporting the school's work in the Foundation Phase and in the process of self-evaluation and development planning. Partnerships with local businesses including the local authority's Education and Business Partnership are effective. As a result, good progress has been made since the previous inspection in promoting pupils' understanding of the world of work.

Transfer arrangements agreed by the cluster of schools and the secondary school enable older pupils to prepare appropriately for the next stage in their education. These include effective arrangements for prospective pupils and parents to visit one of the four different schools that pupils can opt to transfer to at 11 years of age. Less effective are arrangements to help support the school in moderating and standardising pupils' attainment accurately and consistently at seven and 11 years of age in the teacher assessment tasks.

Resource management: Adequate

Appropriate use is made of teachers' and teaching assistants' time and experience. The school is appropriately staffed to teach the curriculum and teaching assistants make effective contributions in classes. However, the school does not use the expertise of staff in the Welsh stream to improve provision and standards in Welsh second language.

Performance management arrangements identify staff's development needs and the provision for planning, preparation and assessment time is appropriate.

Financial resources are allocated appropriately to match the priorities the school has identified. The school budget and staffing levels are reviewed regularly. Recently, this led to some efficiency savings in staffing levels to bring the budget under control.

The school provides adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

Commentary on performance data

Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum teacher assessments in Welsh, English, mathematics and science at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 has varied considerably over the last five years. In comparison to schools in Wales with a similar percentage of free school meals, pupils' performance at seven and 11 years of age has placed the school between the best 25% and the lowest 25% in relation to the core subjects of Welsh, English, mathematics and science. Overall, pupils' performance over the last five years has been too inconsistent and is not good enough when compared with that of pupils in similar schools in Wales.

In 2011, pupils at seven years of age attained above the national average and performed well in comparison to pupils in the family of schools in English and mathematics. Performance was below the national average in Welsh and science and is the lowest in the family. The school was among the lower 50% for pupils achieving the expected level in all three subjects of Welsh or English, mathematics and science in combination. Girls did better than boys because nearly all of the boys had additional learning needs. Apart from in English, very few pupils attained above the expected level at the end of key stage 1.

In 2011, pupils' performance at 11 years of age in National Curriculum assessments in Welsh was around the average for other primary schools in Wales and for the family of schools. In English, mathematics, science and the core subject indicator, pupils' performance was below the national average, but generally close to the performance of other schools in the family.

Very few pupils attained above the level expected at the end of key stage 2 apart from in science and Welsh where pupils did well compared to other pupils in primary schools in Wales. Boys did better than girls mainly because the majority of girls had additional learning needs.

Pupils eligible for free school meals do not do as well in the teacher assessments as the other pupils. In 2010, the performance of pupils entitled to free school meals was 45 percentage points lower than that of the other pupils. In 2011, the gap narrowed to 20 percentage points.

Compared to schools in Wales with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school's results in 2011 in key stage 1 placed it in the upper 50% of schools for English and mathematics and the bottom 25% for Welsh and science. In key stage 2, the school's results placed it in the upper 50% for Welsh, the lower 50% for English and science, and the bottom 25% for mathematics. Generally, pupils' performance over the last five years has been too inconsistent, and, overall, is not good enough when compared with the performance of pupils in similar schools in Wales.

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fifteen parents or carers completed the questionnaire. Overall, they expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school. The majority agree that their children enjoy school and feel that they were helped to settle in well when they first joined. Most parents who responded state that their children are making good progress and all stated that they are satisfied with the behaviour of children at the school. All parents believe the quality of teaching is good, and nearly all feel that the teachers' expectations of their children are good. A fifth of the parents who responded to the questionnaire believe that homework does not build well enough on the work their children do at school. A quarter of the respondents stated that their child does not receive appropriate additional support in relation to identified individual needs. Nearly all expressed satisfaction with the information they receive on their child's progress.

All believe that their child is safe at school, and that the school is well run. All are comfortable in approaching the school with questions, suggestions or problems. Nearly all understand the school's procedures for dealing with complaints. Many of the parents who responded feel that the range of activities including trips or visits is good but a few disagreed. A fifth believe that their child is not well prepared for moving on to the next school.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Eighty-nine pupils in key stage 2 completed the questionnaire. Most responses were positive. Nearly all pupils say they feel safe in school and know whom to talk to when they feel worried or upset. All stated that the school deals with any bullying effectively. They all agree that the school helps them to keep healthy and they get lots of opportunities to be physically active. All feel that they are doing well at school, that they have enough equipment, books and computers to do their work and that teachers and support staff help them to make progress. Nearly all know what to do and whom to ask if they find their work hard. Nearly all pupils state that the behaviour of other pupils is good in class and at playtime and lunchtime.

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Jeff Jones	Reporting Inspector
Buddug Bates	Team Inspector
Ruth Rhydderch	Lay Inspector
Garem Jackson	Peer Inspector
Arwel Wood (Headteacher)	School Nominee

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (FPR) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. FYear 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	FPR	FPY1	FPY2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Reception, Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

Glossary of terms – Primary

National Curriculum

Expected National Curriculum levels

- By the end of the key stage 1, at the age of seven, learners are expected to reach level 2 and the more able to reach level 3.
- By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of eleven, learners are expected to reach level 4 and the more able to reach level 5.

Core subject indicator in all key stages

The core subject indicator relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh first language, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum. Learners must gain at least the expected level in either English or Welsh first language together with mathematics and science to gain the core subject indicator.

All-Wales Core Data sets

Schools and local authorities may refer to performance relative to their family of schools. These families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.