



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

A report on

**Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Penderyn
Pontprenllwyd
Penderyn
Aberdare
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF44 9JW**

Date of inspection: April 2018

by

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

About Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Penderyn

Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Penderyn is situated in the village of Pontprenllwyd, which is a few miles from the town of Aberdare in Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. There are 239 pupils between 3 and 11 years old on roll, including 21 nursery age pupils. The school is divided into two linguistic streams, and there are 183 pupils in the Welsh stream and 56 in the English stream.

Over a three-year period, a little less than 14% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This is lower than the national percentage of 19%. Around 10% of pupils speak Welsh at home and very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The school has identified around 16% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, but very few have a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs is lower than the national percentage of 21%.

The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2010 and the school was last inspected in 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 school is a caring community that promotes pupils' personal development successfully. As a result, nearly all pupils are happy to attend. During their time there, a majority make good progress in nearly all areas of learning and present their work very neatly. Most pupils behave well, are ready to learn at the beginning of lessons and show perseverance and pride in their work. During recent years, the school has experienced success in raising pupils' standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

Teachers give appropriate consideration to pupils' views by planning interesting themes, and ensure that a majority of the activities that are provided are consistent across the mixed-age classes and both language streams. Tasks meet most pupils' needs and enable them to make appropriate progress. However, the school's planning methods are not as effective as they could be to ensure curricular achievement over time or to support teachers in lessons. Staff ensure that the classrooms and public areas are neat and colourful, in which displays celebrate pupils' work.

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

Recommendations

- R1 Refine monitoring and self-evaluation procedures and ensure that reports identify the school's qualities and areas for development clearly
- R2 Make sure that planning procedures ensure appropriate achievement of the curriculum over time, and that they are useful to teachers in sessions on the classroom floor
- R3 Ensure that the school implements all of the principles of the foundation phase consistently

What happens next

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

Main findings

Standards: Good

On entry to the school, only a few pupils from the Welsh stream have Welsh communication skills that correspond to the expected level for their age. In the English stream, a few have English communication skills that are higher than expected, while the rest are either at the expected level or lower. On entry, very few pupils have mathematical skills that are higher than the expected level or that correspond to it. During their time at the school, a majority of pupils make good progress in nearly all areas of learning. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their targets, but a few more able pupils do not always do as well as expected.

In the Welsh stream, a majority of foundation phase pupils start to speak the Welsh language fairly quickly. By Year 2, many talk in full sentences and discuss simple details about different issues, such as describing different insects fairly skilfully. A majority of pupils in the English stream talk to each other with increasing confidence when discussing what they like to do, for example, “Rydw i’n hoffi chwarae yn y parc. Beth wyt ti’n hoffi gwneud?” (I like to play in the park. What do you like to do?) A majority of pupils make good progress in their reading skills. They discuss their books with increasing confidence in both languages and use suitable strategies to build unfamiliar words. They write with increasing accuracy in their class’s language, vary the beginning of sentences and punctuate correctly for different purposes, such as writing a description of a pirate or a weather report.

A majority of pupils in the foundation phase make good progress in their numeracy skills. They apply these fairly successfully in a range of interesting contexts. For example, when studying themes such as insects, pupils in Years 1 and 2 double the number of spots on a butterfly’s wings confidently. A majority make good progress in developing their thinking and problem-solving skills.

Most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills with increasing mastery across the foundation phase. They use these skills sensibly to support them with their tasks. For example, they create a picture and a sentence on a computer to reinforce their knowledge of insects, and record the lifecycle of a bee electronically by cutting and pasting pictures in order.

A majority of pupils in key stage 2 apply their communication, ICT and numeracy skills naturally in the context of the term’s theme. Pupils speak with increasing confidence in line with the linguistic expectations for their class. In the Welsh stream, they speak to the same standard in both languages, while many pupils in the English stream speak eloquently in that language and strive to speak Welsh with increasing confidence by using appropriate patterns. Most pupils’ reading skills are developing soundly in line with the expectations in both streams. Older pupils talk about their favourite authors and give valid reasons for their chosen books. A majority of pupils’ writing skills are developing well in both languages in the Welsh stream, and in English in the other stream. Pupils learn specific writing skills in language lessons and practice them in a range of interesting contexts based on their themes in topic sessions. Older pupils, for example, write a script for the ‘Lloches y ddraig’

programme in Welsh or a review of the film 'The Chihuahuan Desert' in English. Many develop this further by using ICT skills skilfully to create multimedia presentations by using a green screen, among other elements. They use an appropriate range of programs confidently, including spreadsheets to record and analyse data on measurements of different parts of the body to discover whether there is a link between them. For example, they have tried to discover whether there is an obvious link between pupils' arm span and their height.

Pupils in key stage 2 apply their numeracy skills appropriately in different interesting contexts. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 form a number of different graphs to record data about their favourite Roman fruits when studying the theme. Others analyse and interpret data on rivers when studying life in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Pupils at the top of the school discuss the Mayan number system fairly confidently and identify Mexican cities by using co-ordinates in geography when studying the theme 'H'ola Mexico', and use a train timetable to calculate journey times from one place to another. These experiences, in addition to undertaken the 'problem of the week' challenge, develop pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills successfully.

Nearly all pupils present their work extremely neatly.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school during lunchtime and playtime. They are polite, confident, considerate and treat each other and adults with care and respect. This is one of the school's strengths and contributes effectively towards the consistently good learning ethos.

A majority of pupils are ready to learn at the beginning of lessons and show perseverance and pride in their work. They are enthusiastic and concentrate well on the contributions of their peers and teachers, and do not allow things to distract them from their tasks. A majority work productively independently, in a group and as a whole class, and move freely between activities. Pupils across the school suggest relevant ideas when choosing themes, in addition to the activities that will be included in them each term.

Most pupils feel safe at school and free from physical and verbal abuse. They know whom to approach for support when they are upset. A majority understand the importance of making healthy choices in relation to diet; for example, pupils decided to introduce "Fruity Friday" at school instead of "Cake Friday". Most understand the importance of promoting fitness and enjoy the range of physical activities that are available at the school. They understand how to keep themselves safe online and the digital leaders emphasise online safety regularly to their peers.

Most pupils apply themselves fully to school life and are willing to undertake leadership roles and responsibilities as members of the school council, the eco committee, digital leaders and playground buddies. The school council sponsors two children from South America each year, which raises their awareness of the needs of others across the world well. A majority of pupils' awareness of the importance of sustainability issues is developing effectively.

By taking part in a range of classroom activities that promote fairness, equality and tolerance, a majority of pupils are developing as ethical and knowledgeable citizens. A majority develop key attitudes and behaviours, such as the importance of helping and respecting each other and themselves successfully.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

The school is a caring community that encourages pupils to learn, and teachers provide tasks and experiences that engage a majority of pupils' interest. Teachers provide tasks that meet a majority of pupils' needs and enable them to make suitable progress. However, teachers' high expectations are a little inconsistent, and they do not always challenge more able pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. In lessons, teachers share learning objectives clearly with pupils, which enables them to understand what they need to do during the session. Teachers share instructions well and use various questioning techniques to stretch and develop pupils' responses further and identify what they understand. Support staff work effectively with teachers and provide useful guidance and support to enable a majority of pupils to achieve well. Most teachers provide pupils with beneficial feedback on how to improve their work and provide purposeful opportunities for them to assess their own performance and that of their peers. This reinforces their understanding of success criteria.

Teachers plan interesting themes as a means of developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, in addition to the curricular content of the subjects and other aspects. They plan together weekly in groups to ensure that pupils of the same age across both streams receive the same experiences, and consider the requirements of the literacy and numeracy framework continuously. However, their long-term planning is not detailed enough to ensure complete curricular achievement over a period of time. In their weekly plans, teachers give suitable consideration to the skills that they will develop and present to pupils, but this planning is not incisive enough to support them as they deliver individual lessons. This hinders the progress of a minority of pupils in lessons, particularly those of higher ability. The quality of provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills in the English stream, through formal teaching activities and informal situations, is good. This has a positive effect on their skills and attitude towards the Welsh language.

Staff encourage foundation phase pupils to develop their skills in a variety of interesting situations. However, the school does not always comply fully with all of the principles of the foundation phase. Tasks are often over-directed by adults, and the learning environment does not stimulate pupils enough to investigate and discover for themselves.

As a result of the shortcomings in planning and aspects of provision, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school has effective procedures to track and monitor all pupils' progress, and staff use this information regularly and appropriately to provide suitable learning experiences for them. These include appropriate intervention strategies that meet the needs of most pupils. Staff track the progress of pupils with additional learning

needs effectively. Teachers prepare relevant individual education plans for pupils who need them. These include realistic targets for them that have been set in partnership with them and their parents. As a result, most of these pupils make good progress in relation to their targets and from their starting points.

The school works regularly with a variety of external agencies, which include the educational psychologist and officers from social services, to ensure that they provide suitable support that meets pupils' needs appropriately. The school's familial ethos and atmosphere ensures unconditional positive support for pupils with emotional and social needs. As a result, most pupils with specific needs benefit from every opportunity that the school provides.

Staff ensure that the classrooms and public areas are colourful and tidy, in which displays celebrate pupils' work. The school's open door policy has contributed towards establishing beneficial relationships with a majority of parents. The school's various communication methods meet a majority of parents' needs and enable them to communicate with individual teachers by using a specific electronic app. As a result, parents are able to raise any issues that may affect their child's learning or wellbeing with teachers regularly. The school provides a comprehensive annual report for parents, which provides them with appropriate information about their child's progress and the next appropriate steps for them.

The school promotes pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, successfully. Pupils are given an opportunity to reflect appropriately in whole-school worship sessions and in individual classes, where the atmosphere is calm, reflective and spiritual. Staff encourage pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the importance of making choices that will have a successful effect on their health, in co-operation with external agencies. For example, the school nurse provides personal education on a range of relevant and sensitive issues, and the police discuss issues such as the dangers of substance misuse and online safety. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote eating and drinking healthily, and follows a national programme for support. It also holds weekly extra-curricular clubs that promote pupils' health and wellbeing successfully. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern.

The school's general personal and social education lessons provide a cross-section of activities that relate to equality, diversity, harassment and bullying, which support the development of pupils' social skills. As a result, the school's arrangements for fostering a positive approach towards managing behaviour and creating a culture to eliminate bullying are effective.

The school promotes Welsh culture effectively by basing the content of a number of cross-curricular themes on local and national history and geography. Educational visits are provided that reinforce the class's thematic work and develop pupils' understanding of their culture and the local community. For example, there are strong links between the school and the Brecon Beacons National Park, where officers have helped to develop the forest area. This provides an opportunity for pupils to work in the outdoor area, where appropriate. Opportunities for pupils to compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod, and take part in various performances that nurture their self-confidence and expressive ability, are successful.

Leadership and management: Good

Leaders have a clear vision that is based on ensuring purposeful opportunities for all pupils to develop to the best of their ability in all aspects of school life. They convey this vision successfully to staff, governors and pupils in order to create an inclusive and supportive ethos. Members of the senior management team, along with the remainder of the staff, support the headteacher well. They work together effectively as a team to realise the school's strategic priorities. All are aware of their roles and responsibilities and fulfil them appropriately, which enables them to contribute purposefully towards ensuring robust standards in terms of pupils' wellbeing and achievement.

Leaders have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths, in addition to a number of areas for improvement. They use information from various purposeful self-evaluation procedures, such as scrutiny of books, lesson observations and data analysis to identify relevant priorities for improvement. They seek the views of parents, pupils, staff and governors on the school's life and work through regular questionnaires. This provides them with a useful picture of what is good, in addition to a number of areas for improvement, although they do not always convey this clearly enough in written reports. The self-evaluation report is not evaluative enough and, although it identifies the school's strengths, it does not refer clearly enough to all areas for improvement. The priorities in the improvement plan are based on leaders' knowledge of the school and of individuals' progress in particular. The plan focuses clearly on maintaining and raising standards, and leaders monitor progress against these targets regularly. Leaders have a clear history of raising pupils' standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT since the last inspection.

Members of the governing body have sound knowledge of the performance of cohorts of pupils. This enables them to support the school and hold leaders to account for its performance appropriately. Members of the governing body's sub-committees make a valuable contribution to the school's strategic direction by conducting beneficial activities, such as visiting the school to scrutinise books and talk to staff and pupils about their work. This ensures that they have a clear overview of the school's life and work.

Leaders make effective use of robust performance management procedures in order to support the professional development of all staff. This contributes effectively towards a culture and ethos that supports staff to increase their knowledge, understanding and professional skills. For example, many assistants have undertaken specific training in order to act as higher-level assistants across the school. Staff also take advantage of beneficial opportunities to work with other schools to develop aspects of provision, for example to develop pupils' numeracy skills. This has a positive effect on pupils' outcomes in various areas.

Leaders use the school's budget purposefully to improve provision and raise standards, and expenditure links sensibly with the priorities in the improvement plan. The school is staffed appropriately and support staff are an effective part of the team, and make a successful contribution towards raising standards and ensuring pupils' wellbeing and social skills. Leaders use the pupil development grant effectively to develop the literacy and numeracy skills and wellbeing of those who are eligible to receive it.

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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