



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

A report on

Penboyr Voluntary Aided Primary School

**Felindre
Llandysul
SA44 5XG**

Date of inspection: November 2023

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Penboyr Voluntary Aided Primary School

Name of provider	Penboyr Voluntary Aided Primary School
Local authority	Carmarthenshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Church in Wales Voluntary School
Number of pupils on roll	79
Pupils of statutory school age	73
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	6
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average <i>(The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 23.0%)</i>	16.0%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) <i>(The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in the primary sector is 16.1%)</i>	6.0%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	22%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/01/2007
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	06/11/2023
The headteacher is also in charge of a neighbouring school.	

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different from 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

The school is a core part of the village's life and works closely with the local church. It is a familial, safe, caring and stimulating learning community which places a clear priority on providing equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils' well-being is a clear priority for the headteacher and staff and they support pupils' educational, emotional and social needs well. As a result, nearly all are proud of their school and most are respectful, behave well and consider each other's needs continuously. Most make sound progress from their starting points in nearly all aspects of their work by the end of their time at the school.

The headteacher, who is also in charge of a nearby school, is an experienced and energetic leader who ensures that the school runs effectively. Staff work together very closely as a team to foster a positive and supportive learning environment that ensures the best experiences for pupils. They plan interesting activities that inspire and encourage them to develop useful skills and apply them in a range of contexts over time. Teachers make extensive use of the village and the surrounding area, which has a rich history and many traditions, to stimulate learning. They often invite individuals from the community to talk to pupils about their experiences and memories. By doing so, they ensure that pupils have an extensive knowledge and understanding of their identity, their Welshness and their place within their local community, Wales and the wider world. However, the expectations of all staff are not always consistent enough to ensure that pupils use the Welsh language regularly during their lessons or at other times.

The school has a close and effective relationship with parents. Staff contact them regularly, seek their views and support them regularly with ways in which they can support their children's education and well-being at home.

Recommendations

- R1 Ensure that all staff have high and agreed expectations when encouraging pupils to respond in Welsh at every possible opportunity

What happens next

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

Main findings

Learning

Most pupils, including those with additional learning needs and those who are eligible for free school meals, make sound progress from their starting points in nearly all aspects of their work by the end of their time at the school.

Most pupils' listening skills develop well. They listen attentively to adults' presentations and each other and respond appropriately, where necessary. A majority make good progress in their oral skills in both languages. However, at times, a minority tend to respond in English to questions and instructions in Welsh-medium sessions or use many English words in their responses.

Most pupils' reading skills develop soundly. Those in the youngest pupils' class build unfamiliar words confidently. As they move through the school, pupils display an increasing interest in books and enjoy them. They read and understand familiar texts with appropriate accuracy and express an opinion sensibly about what they have read. Most pupils' writing skills develop soundly considering their progression step. They write for a purpose in various media and fairly maturely in both languages, where appropriate.

Most pupils' mathematical and numeracy skills develop soundly. Most have a strong understanding of the principles of number and apply their knowledge consistently in different contexts. Those in the youngest pupils' class, for example, estimate and count how many potatoes there are in a pot, while older pupils double numbers as they find the volume or measure the size of shadows and create a graph of the data in a science session.

Most pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills develop very well. They apply them confidently in different media, such as creating a digital game of Snakes and Ladders by choosing and inserting pictures of leisure facilities available in the village and coding some dice in order to play.

Pupils are used to applying their literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, ICT and wider skills meaningfully, appropriately and for a purpose in various projects and contexts. One notable example is their recent project on the theme '*Hamddena Hwylus*'. This project enables pupils to apply their various skills while learning fascinating facts about the range of leisure activities that were available to the residents of Drefach Felindre over many years. In addition to taking advantage of opportunities to learn about their leisure habits, they also learn about the history of prominent and important places. For example, they learn about the history of the Red Dragon Hall, Pwll Park, snooker competitions, the brass band and Bargod Rangers football club.

As part of their literacy work, for example, the school's younger pupils have created a poster to attract people to a particular club. Older pupils have practised their writing skills by sending a letter to members of the community to ask them about their memories of their leisure time many years ago. Others have recorded the memories that came to light on an information board. Older pupils have created interesting digital stories based on Pwll Park and Welsh poems entitled '*Y Pentref*' ('The

Village') or English ones entitled 'Together' to accompany their study of how leisure time improves their well-being.

Following their visit to the snooker hall, some of the younger pupils applied their numeracy skills by estimating and measuring the length and breadth of a snooker table when learning about perimeter and area. Older pupils calculated scores by using different snooker balls. Others classified and recorded facts about past and present leisure methods in a Venn diagram and studied maps by applying their understanding of co-ordinates.

Many pupils apply their ICT skills at levels that are appropriate for their progression steps and again in a range of interesting contexts. Those in the youngest pupils' class have used a moving electronic toy to plan a journey on a map of the village, while older pupils apply their coding skills to produce and follow directions on a map of the area.

Most pupils' creative skills develop highly effectively. For example, they use a variety of media skilfully to produce pieces of artwork of a high standard. These include pieces that use different media, such as felt, that they have created following their visit to a local wool factory, and colourful woollen pompoms after they had spoken to members of the knitting club.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils are proud of their school and their local area. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and courtesy. This is characteristic of the school's inclusive, familial and highly caring nature.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and at other times, such as play time. They feel safe and appreciate the care that staff provides for them. They have a sound awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. They know whom to approach if something is worrying them and recognise the importance of the 'worry box' and the 'wall of feelings' as a convenient means for them to share their concerns privately. Pupils take regular advantage of the school's variety of effective strategies for supporting their emotional and social well-being. As a result, most develop as happy, healthy and confident individuals.

During learning sessions, most pupils have positive attitudes towards their work. They listen attentively to presentations and instructions from staff, show interest and concentrate on their tasks for extended periods. Many demonstrate perseverance and resilience while learning and understand that it is fine for them to make mistakes and that it is an important part of the learning process. When they are given an opportunity to do so, many practise their independent learning skills well and make informed decisions about their learning.

Most pupils work together effectively in pairs and small groups, and offer support to each other when necessary. They value and respect the contributions of others, for example as they listen patiently to their peers expressing their feelings and sharing their opinions when evaluating a piece of music. Pupils feel that they influence aspects of the school's life and work regularly. A good example of this is the natural

way in which they suggest ideas about what they would like to learn at the beginning of a new theme or project.

Most pupils have a sound understanding of their responsibilities as moral, kind and knowledgeable citizens. Many undertake leadership responsibilities confidently and fulfil the role effectively. For example, members of the eco committee promote sustainability conscientiously by encouraging their peers to pick litter, recycle and grow herbs in the school garden. Members of the Criw Cymraeg demonstrate positive attitudes towards the language and are beginning to influence others to use it while playing.

Pupils realise that there are many people who are less fortunate than themselves in the world. They are proud of every opportunity they are given to support these people and contribute to various charities and humanitarian activities in the local community. They feel that they are an important part of the community and take part regularly in services and concerts in the village.

Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They take advantage of regular opportunities to develop their physical skills in formal sessions in the hall and participate in learning activities in the outdoor area. The sports ambassadors also play an active role in promoting the benefits of healthy living and organise workshops and activities, for example during 'Iola Iachus' week. This has a positive effect on pupils' personal and social skills, as well as developing their confidence and fitness successfully.

Teaching and learning experiences

Teachers plan a stimulating, developmental, stimulating and cross-curricular curriculum for pupils. This enables them to develop and apply their various skills in a range of contexts over time. For example, they often make extensive use of the village and the surrounding area, which is full of rich history and traditions, as a basis for learning. Activities that derive from these interesting contexts challenge most pupils purposefully and support them to make appropriate progress in all aspects of their work. The whole-school project '*Hamddena Hwylus*', for example, compares the local leisure facilities that were available in the past with those that are available today. By acting in this way, teachers ensure that pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of their identity, their Welshness and their place within their local community, Wales and the wider world. These elements are at the heart of the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and teachers have given this serious consideration when planning their activities and providing natural opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, digital and ICT skills regularly and successfully in 'real-life' situations.

To bring learning to life for pupils, individuals from the community are invited to talk to them about their experiences and memories from their childhood and adolescence in the village. This, together with visits to relevant places, such as Puw Park, Red Dragon Hall and Penrhiw Chapel, which has now been re-built in St Fagans, enriches learning experiences for them further.

Teachers and assistants convey the content and requirements of the curriculum to pupils successfully. In the youngest pupils' classes, the principles of foundation

learning are embedded firmly. Many activities in the learning areas develop pupils' independence purposefully. However, older pupils are not given enough opportunities to nurture their independent learning skills regularly enough in all aspects of the curriculum. The school uses its rich outdoor area very effectively. For example, the youngest pupils are given opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and physical skills effectively in the forest during weekly sessions, while Year 1 and 2 pupils keep fit in the Gymnastics Cabin. The area is also used extensively by older pupils, as they undertake a range of interesting activities such as listening to sounds in nature while preparing to write similes. Staff use a wide range of methods and resources effectively to engage pupils' interest. For example, one combines a music lesson with physical education and encourages pupils to use balls to experiment with musical rhythms. In the best practice, in a majority of learning sessions, teachers remind pupils of their previous learning and question them skilfully.

Teachers and assistants work together effectively to support learning successfully and have a good working relationship with pupils. This fosters a positive and supportive learning environment. Staff model the Welsh language well, which often influences the standard of pupils' spoken Welsh directly, particularly those who do not speak the language at home. However, not all staff always have high enough expectations to encourage everyone to respond in Welsh, where appropriate, in learning sessions or at informal times.

Teachers provide pupils with useful oral and written feedback. This enables them to improve their work purposefully. Teachers use their daily assessments effectively to plan the next steps for pupils. At times, teachers encourage pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers in line with the expectations of the activity. By doing so, many pupils realise what they need to do to improve their work.

Care, support and guidance

The school is a safe, stimulating and highly inclusive learning community for its pupils, which promotes respect and tolerance for others very effectively. Its arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The school provides pupils with a relaxed and productive learning environment where most behave well and are considerate of each other's needs. Pupils' well-being is a clear priority and there are very effective arrangements in place to support the well-being and emotional and social needs of nearly all pupils. This is a strong feature and ensures that most pupils engage well with their learning and develop as confident, happy and healthy individuals.

The school has effective procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress, which enables staff to identify their needs at an early stage and provide them with appropriate support, where necessary. This includes provision for pupils with additional learning needs. The school has comprehensive individual development plans and one-page profiles for these pupils, which include clear and purposeful targets to respond thoroughly to their needs. Teachers review these plans regularly with pupils, parents and relevant agencies to plan purposefully for the next steps in their learning. The additional learning needs co-ordinator, along with the remainder of the staff, plans effective interventions to support pupils' needs in the classroom, individually or in small groups, where appropriate.

All pupils are given appropriate opportunities to influence the content of their projects and themes. Through the different children's councils, they are also given valuable opportunities to have a direct influence on the wider life and work of the school. Members of the various councils are very active and understand that they represent the views of their peers within the school community. They are given a range of purposeful opportunities to develop their leadership skills through the school council, the sports ambassadors, the Criw Cymraeg, the Grŵp Gobaith and the eco committee. These experiences increase their confidence, develop their understanding of the importance of contributing to their society and encourage them to become responsible and enterprising citizens in future.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development highly effectively. Staff encourage them continuously to be responsible citizens by raising their awareness of people who help them in the local community and by supporting different charities. The school nurtures shared values, such as respect, honesty, courage and trust effectively. This helps pupils to understand that they have personal control over their actions and that their behaviour affects others directly. A good example of this is the way in which the school encourages pupils to play together harmoniously on the playground and to be a good friend to their peers.

The learning experiences that the school provides for pupils are interesting and are often based on their local community. This ensures that pupils have a sound understanding and appreciation of their heritage and culture. For example, they are given an opportunity to investigate the importance of the wool industry locally and to learn about the life and work of Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, who was born on the outskirts of the village. This ensures that pupils foster a sense of belonging to their local area or *cynefin* and take pride in their heritage.

The school has robust and effective procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance and punctuality. This has a positive effect on them. Staff encourage pupils to eat and drink healthily and take part in regular physical activities, such as swimming, sports and dancing.

The school provides pupils with very effective opportunities to develop their creative skills through various activities. For example, all pupils have worked with a local artist as part of the Kindness project to create an attractive mural to welcome visitors. Staff also provide pupils with numerous opportunities to perform in the school and the local community and to take part in concerts and compete in eisteddfodau and other competitions. This develops their self-confidence and pride in themselves and their school successfully.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, who is also in charge of a nearby school, is an experienced and energetic leader who ensures that the school's strategic procedures are robust and effective. She has a clear vision for the school, which is based on ensuring that it is a familial community where everyone learns together. She conveys this vision successfully to staff, pupils, parents, governors and members of the local community.

The headteacher, the teacher who is responsible in her absence and the remainder of the staff work together highly effectively as a team. They demonstrate high

professional values and conduct. They have established a robust culture of safeguarding and monitor the well-being and progress of all pupils effectively. This contributes positively to ensuring that the school is a safe and homely educational institution that focuses successfully on the well-being and education of its pupils. The headteacher manages the performance of staff members regularly to praise them for their achievements and to encourage them to improve any specific agreed areas for improvement.

The school has comprehensive and robust self-evaluation procedures which are well established. All staff contribute directly to their implementation. Governors, pupils and parents also contribute to them occasionally. Monitoring procedures use outcomes from a range of sources of first-hand evidence, provide an accurate picture of the current situation and contribute specifically to setting development priorities for the school. The school's processes and procedures for improvement are also comprehensive and aim to ensure improvements in the areas identified as priorities.

There is a positive culture and ethos to promote and support the professional learning requirements of all staff. Professional learning activities link clearly with the findings of the self-evaluation process and improvement priorities. Over the past few years, these have focused specifically on improving teaching and developing the principles of the Curriculum for Wales, developing new assessment procedures, establishing rich mathematical tasks and safeguarding children. Leaders monitor the effect of professional learning activities on teaching and, eventually, on pupils' progress and well-being.

Governors act effectively as critical friends, by ensuring that they provide the headteacher and staff with a sensible balance of support and challenge. They visit the school regularly and hold discussions with staff to evaluate provision and standards. As a result, they have a sound understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. This enables them to contribute to specific discussions in an informed manner to set strategic priorities for the school and fulfil their roles effectively. They manage the school's funding prudently. This includes the pupil development grant, which is used appropriately to promote learning and reduce the impact of poverty on pupils' educational attainment. They ensure that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking.

There is a productive relationship between the headteacher, the teacher responsible in her absence, staff and parents. They use various methods to communicate with parents and listen to their views regularly to facilitate this partnership. For example, leaders have established an app to convey information to them electronically rather than just sending them a paper newsletter. Parents appreciate this very much. The school also holds sessions to inform parents of any changes to the way in which their children are taught at school. For example, they have raised their awareness of the principles of the Curriculum for Wales, online safety and to share ideas with them on how they can help their children to learn to read at home.

The school has a very effective link with other schools, which enables staff to share good practice and learn from each other. The partnership between the school and a nearby school for which the headteacher is also responsible is highly effective and ensures that staff and pupils of both schools benefit.

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/members of the management committee 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, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work 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 lessons, including learning support groups and the specialist resource base (where appropriate), 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 (where appropriate) and in outdoor areas
- visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning (where appropriate)
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs
- 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 (<http://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 going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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