



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

A report on

Penrhiwceibr Primary

**Church Street
Penrhiwceibr
Mountain Ash
RCT
CF45 3YD**

Date of inspection: March 2024

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

About Penrhiwceibr Primary

Name of provider	Penrhiwceibr Primary
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	Not applicable
Number of pupils on roll	133
Pupils of statutory school age	101
Number in nursery classes	12
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 23.7%)	29.4%
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 13.2%)	10.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	5.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	16/10/2020
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/11/2015
Start date of inspection	11/03/2024

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

This is a happy, inclusive and welcoming school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk with pride about what it has to offer. Its curriculum provides engaging and motivating learning experiences that make learning fun. Pupils are interested in their lessons and most behave well and try their best.

Most pupils make good progress during their time at the school. They develop their speaking skills well, often from low starting points. The school's monthly podcast is a good example of how pupils become confident speakers by the time they reach Year 6. Most pupils are confident in their use of digital skills and use these well to showcase their work. They also have a very good understanding of how to keep safe online. Teachers are working towards improving pupils' mathematical skills, particularly their recall of number facts, but this work is at an early stage and requires improvement. Teachers talk to pupils about how to improve their work at regular intervals and pupils often act on this, but they do not always allow enough time for pupils to correct and improve work or identify precisely enough what pupils need to do to take their work to the next stage. Staff support pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), including those in the observation and assessment class, very well to ensure that they make good progress towards their targets,

The headteacher provides strong leadership and communicates his clear vision to all those involved with the school. He ensures that pupils' well-being is a priority and staff work very well to support him in this. There is very effective teamwork and co-operation at the school. Staff are ambitious for the pupils and work hard to remove any barriers to their learning. They provide high levels of care to pupils and meet their emotional needs well. Leaders have developed strong partnerships with parents, and this contributes to the family feel of the school. The school plays an important part in the local community. These links enhance the curriculum for the pupils and help them to develop a pride in where they live and an understanding of its place in Wales.

Leaders work effectively with governors to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors have recently improved their role in evaluating the school's performance and planning for its improvement, but this work is at an early stage of development.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' basic skills in mathematics
- R2 Ensure that feedback to pupils identifies clear steps for improvement and pupils act on this feedback
- R3 Strengthen the role of governors in self-evaluation and improvement planning to ensure that they provide suitable challenge to the school

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils start Nursery with skills in language, mathematical development and physical development well below those expected for their age. Most pupils make good progress as they move through the school although pupils eligible for free school meals do not always make the same rate of progress as their peers. Most pupils with ALN, and those in the observation and assessment class, make strong progress towards their individual targets.

When they join the Nursery class, many pupils find it difficult to listen and to communicate their needs clearly. Pupils' speech, language and communication skills progress well as they move through the school. For example, many pupils in Year 1 and 2 talk about the different buildings in Penrhiwceibr and explain the differences between different types of houses. Older pupils communicate fluently with adults and develop their skills well. An example of this is how their fast paced and enthusiastic delivery engages the listener when they produce the monthly podcast about school and community life.

In Reception, most pupils know initial letter sounds and are beginning to use these to blend simple words. They understand that words have meaning. Most Year 1 and 2 pupils recognise an increasing range of words and develop the skills to blend a few sounds to work out new words. Many know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and explain what this means. Older pupils develop their reading skills appropriately as they move through the school. By Year 6, many read fluently with expression. Their ability to infer and make deductions about what they read is at an early stage of development.

In Nursery, many pupils make marks during their play using a range of equipment with increasing co-ordination. Most pupils in Reception are beginning to form letters accurately with the support of an adult. In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to write their own sentences and a minority extend these into longer stories with suitable vocabulary. Their writing generally becomes more detailed, and they pay good attention to the use of simple punctuation. Older pupils write with increasing length and confidence. They understand the features of a range of different genres and demonstrate these when they produce their own writing. However, many pupils do not consistently use the rules of punctuation that they have learned previously, and do not always write neatly or present their work well.

Across the school, pupils develop a suitable understanding of many mathematical concepts. Younger pupils begin to use the language of mathematics accurately and learn to count and recognise numbers through their play and when playing board

games with adults. By Year 2, many pupils are beginning to tell the time confidently and to present and interpret the data they collect accurately. As they move through the school, pupils do not always develop a secure enough understanding of basic mathematical skills or have quick recall of number facts. This makes it more difficult for them to apply their skills to problem solving activities.

Most pupils develop their skills in using the Welsh language well and show enthusiasm for learning the language. Younger pupils follow instructions in Welsh and often use the language spontaneously, for example when playing board games with an adult or at snack time to request a type of fruit. As they progress through the school, pupils' understanding of the Welsh language develops to include more complex language patterns. Pupils are keen to try to extend their sentences, often by providing reasons for their answers to questions.

Most pupils make good progress in the development of their digital skills. Younger pupils show confidence when using digital devices and begin to use them well to practise their mathematical skills. They use digital tablets to create music and to edit and play it back. By Year 6, most pupils develop a comprehensive range of digital skills, which they use to good effect to enhance and present their work. For example, older pupils create impressive animations and presentations on road and digital safety.

Pupils' physical skills develop appropriately. For example, younger pupils balance on, and move between, different apparatus in the outdoor area after they design an obstacle course. They develop their coordination well as they join in with the early morning exercise routine.

Most pupils enjoy the creative process and make the most of opportunities to be creative. For example, older pupils design their own science experiments to test different properties of the spinners they make. When studying their community, they ably use filters to edit photographs in the style of the artist Kyffin Williams.

Younger pupils are beginning to develop their independent learning skills well. They select the right equipment for and sustain interest in activities. Older pupils do not always complete independent work to the same standard as their other work or take as much care with presentation.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Pupils, including those in the observation and assessment class, demonstrate clear pride in their school. They feel safe and respected and know that their thoughts, ideas, and suggestions are valued. Most pupils are confident that if they have any concerns, staff will listen to them carefully and act accordingly to address any issues. Pupils' overall enjoyment of school means that most attend regularly and punctually. Pupils' rates of attendance have improved over the past year.

Nearly all pupils are polite and courteous. They show respect for each other, staff, and visitors. Across the whole school, pupils work and play together happily. Most are keen learners who show high levels of enthusiasm for the experiences they receive in school. They listen attentively to their teachers and each other, and

generally approach tasks with confidence and enthusiasm, maintaining concentration throughout sessions.

Overall, pupils welcome the feedback they receive from their teachers. However, many pupils do not react to this feedback regularly enough to improve their work or to correct mistakes. This aspect of pupils' work is developing. Many pupils understand how to take account of success criteria to carry out a range of tasks, such as noting the conventions of letter writing when they write thank you letters to the vicar after a visit to the local church. Younger pupils are beginning to reflect well on their own work and the work of others. For example, Year 1 pupils check each other's Easter cards and talk sensibly about ways they can improve their designs.

Most pupils behave well, and this is a strong feature of the school. They respect and follow the school rules. Their interactions with each other are caring and good-natured and they develop good levels of empathy and compassion. Many pupils, including those with ALN or those who are eligible for free school meals, take on leadership roles with pride, passion and vigour. They contribute well to the work of the school and carry out their duties maturely. For example, the school council has worked closely with staff to introduce pupil reflection time. This provides a sensitive way for pupils to share any concerns they have in the knowledge that they will be supported with care and compassion. A group of older pupils produce an informative and celebratory podcast each month that keeps families and the local community up to date with school life. The Criw Iaith promote the Welsh language enthusiastically through school activities and playtime games.

During their time at the school, most pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle. They embrace the opportunities for physical exercise and develop their physical skills through the many enrichment activities on offer. For example, younger pupils quickly learn how to work together and construct obstacle courses, many older pupils become confident and capable swimmers and pupils of all ages take part in a wide variety of beneficial sporting activities. By the time they leave the school, most pupils have a solid understanding of how to stay safe when online. They know not to share personal information and understand what steps to take if a stranger tries to contact them.

Most pupils engage actively with the school's drive to develop them as effective and ethical citizens. They develop good teamwork skills through taking part in regular events where they interview and engage with community members and organise fund raising events to support several charities. Older pupils develop a strong awareness of local environmental issues and the need to act sustainably through their topic work, projects and pupil voice groups. They develop a good understanding of the ecological and health benefits to be gained by maintaining and protecting their local environment. Most pupils contribute well to the school's work in this area and the pupil voice groups often collaborate as the school's Senedd to improve the inside and outside learning environment.

Teaching and learning experiences

The school's curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop an enthusiasm for learning and an understanding of the local community and the wider world around them. Staff plan together and with other local schools to develop a

bespoke curriculum that meets pupils' needs. They usefully review and adapt Teaching and learning experiences at regular intervals and are beginning to develop a clear understanding of how pupils make progress across the school.

Teachers make effective use of the local area and school trips to enhance pupils' learning. They value the links with the local community and make good use of these to develop pupils' sense of empathy for the lives of others. For example, local residents and pupils appreciate the opportunities to talk to each other and work together in the 'Knit and Natter' group. There are many valuable opportunities for pupils to influence their learning. Pupils feed their ideas into topics during immersion days and staff collect the views of a range of pupil voice groups, which influence planning.

The curriculum provides good quality opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills. The strong focus on developing pupils' oracy skills is beginning to have a positive impact across the school and adults have been trained to support pupils to develop their speaking skills effectively. The teaching of reading is planned systematically and there is a structured programme to develop pupils' phonological knowledge. Older pupils particularly enjoy the guided reading sessions, which help them to develop a love of books and reading and to acquire a greater understanding of what they read. This element of the work is relatively new and to date has not had a significant impact on pupils' comprehension skills. There is currently a focus on developing pupils' basic mathematical skills across the school, particularly their recall of number facts. This work is at an early stage of development.

Staff provide good opportunities for pupils to hear and practise their Welsh language skills. Through a focus on the local community and its place in Wales they develop pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and heritage successfully.

Overall, staff plan effectively to develop a good range of digital skills for pupils, including aspects such as coding, databases and podcasts. These skills build very well through the school. Staff plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to understand how to stay safe online and how to use digital tools responsibly.

The school plans suitably to deliver the relationships and sexuality education curriculum and creates useful opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of how to show respect for others. For example, the Well-being Warriors group focuses on anti-bullying strategies and eliminating gender inequalities in the school playground.

There are good opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of diversity. For example, during 'Black History Month' pupils discuss important issues such as racism and during 'Deaf Awareness Week' they learn sign language to communicate with those with hearing difficulties.

Across the school, teachers and support staff have positive working relationships with pupils. They are extremely nurturing and model behaviour well. Teachers and support staff in the observation and assessment class have a strong understanding of pupils' learning and well-being needs and ensure that they focus activities specifically on the next steps in pupils' learning.

In all classes, learning proceeds at a good pace and keeps pupils engaged. Teachers usefully recap on prior learning and use questioning well to take learning forward. They generally match activities and tasks well to pupils' ability. However, pupils' independent challenges are on occasion too numerous or complex for pupils to complete without adult support. When this is not available, pupils do not always complete work to the expected standard.

Teachers provide regular feedback to pupils about their learning. In classes where this is effective, pupils improve their work as a result and understand what they need to do next time to make their work better. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to respond to this feedback or ensure that it is specific enough to help pupils to improve important aspects of their work.

Staff make extremely good use of the stimulating and well-resourced outdoor learning environments to enhance pupils' learning. This develops pupils' independent learning skills well, gives them the confidence to take managed risks and encourages creativity.

Care, support and guidance

The school, including the observation and assessment class, is a nurturing and very supportive community where staff foster a caring and friendly ethos that enables pupils to thrive. The strong relationships between staff, parents and pupils are a feature of the school's work. Teachers and support staff address pupils' emotional and social needs well and this help pupils to regulate their emotions and promotes good behaviour across the school. They provide engaging activities during and after school that encourage pupils to participate actively in school life.

The school's acting ALN co-ordinator collaborates effectively with staff and senior leaders to support pupils with ALN. Staff identify pupils' needs quickly and provide timely, targeted support. They review individual pupils' progress regularly and meet with parents to develop a shared understanding of pupils' ongoing needs. Teaching assistants run a well-planned series of focused intervention programmes. They work skilfully with pupils to narrow gaps in their learning and to boost their confidence. The school engages well with local schools and specialist services to access relevant guidance and support that helps nearly all pupils with ALN to make sound progress from their individual starting points.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to take on a variety of leadership roles. Staff support elected pupils to create their own development plans for their leadership areas and to contribute purposefully to decision-making. For example, the school's sports ambassadors have been instrumental in developing the Super Sporty Club. They coach and introduce pupils to new lunchtime sports and are conscientious role models. These initiatives develop valuable skills and interests that promote pupils' understanding of sport for all how to behave in a sporting manner. .

The school provides a good range of beneficial experiences that develop pupils' understanding of Welsh heritage and culture. For example, as part of the 'Valleys Retold Project' pupils are working, in conjunction with the National Museum, to produce artwork based on a town trail.

Staff provide rich opportunities for pupils to engage with the expressive arts. For example, through projects delivered by artists in residence pupils create artwork which is sold as part of entrepreneur week. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 create an engaging and informative monthly podcast based on school and community life. These experiences support pupils to develop their skills and to use their creativity and imagination with purpose.

Teachers plan a diverse range of visits that enhance the curriculum and engage all pupils actively in their learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit an outdoor education centre to participate in physical activities involving problem solving, critical thinking and team building. The school uses an established connection Spanish to develop pupils' language skills. Pupils share information about their beliefs and cultures and visit the local parish church regularly as part of their local area topics and celebrations.

The school promotes pupils' understanding of the needs and rights of others, both locally and globally. This helps pupils to make choices that align with the school's values and reflects the respectful attitudes modelled in school. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discussed Article 23 of the Rights of the Child, focusing on inclusivity for people with disabilities. They created a film centred around celebrating differences. The school's super ambassadors organise anti-racism events to enhance pupils' understanding of diversity and the importance of making the right choices. As a result, pupils develop an understanding of the impact their actions can have on the well-being of others.

Through careers weeks, where the school organises for local businesses to engage with pupils, and regular enterprise projects, the school usefully provides pupils with information about the world of work. Staff encourage pupils to be aspirational for their futures by providing activities that look at the life and work of successful and inspirational adults.

Leaders ensure that there are appropriate procedures for safeguarding pupils and all staff understand and promote the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. They make suitable arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils and to develop their understanding of how to manage risk. For example, staff teach pupils and parents how to keep safe online and arrange informative workshops and coffee mornings that develop pupils' understanding of healthy living and relationships. The school places a strong emphasis on securing the well-being of pupils and has a robust culture of safeguarding.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. He shares the school's vision clearly with all members of the school community. He ensures that the school provides a purposeful learning environment that is at the heart of its community. Leaders set high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and the well-being of pupils is a priority.

Senior leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and the main areas for development. They set clear expectations for the quality of provision and ensure there is consistency in standards of teaching and learning across the school.

For example, the structured approach to teaching reading is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' standards of reading.

The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher in the strategic management of the school and leadership is well distributed. Together, along with other senior leaders, they prioritise key areas for school improvement, which address local and national priorities well including a strong focus on reducing the impact of poverty on pupils' educational attainment.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties and provide appropriate support to the headteacher. Many know the school well and understand its strengths and areas for improvement. They support the headteacher effectively to promote a strong safeguarding culture across the school.

The school's comprehensive and flexible annual monitoring, evaluation and review cycle effectively supports senior leaders to evaluate teaching and pupils' learning, and well-being. Regular book scrutiny, analysis of teachers' assessments and learning walks provide appropriate first-hand evidence regarding the effectiveness of the school's curriculum the quality of pupils' skill development.

Governors support the headteacher well to monitor and evaluate school finances and plan appropriate spending. They are beginning to contribute to school self-evaluation through regular visits to school, for example visiting the school to observe a numeracy project, although this is at an early stage. Recent training with local authority officers is improving this aspect of their role. They fulfil their statutory responsibility for ensuring healthy eating and drinking at the school well.

The school manages and deploys its resources effectively to tackle the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on learners. Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the needs of the pupils and the local community and monitor the use of grants well. The pupil development grant is used effectively to provide emotional support and specific intervention strategies for identified pupils.

The school builds effective relationships with parents and the local community. Parents have regular opportunities to attend the school to participate in class activities and gain an understanding of what pupils learn. Leaders encourage parents to share their views regularly through completing questionnaires and contributing their ideas through open days and informal coffee mornings.

Leaders provide regular and worthwhile professional learning opportunities that support staff to address the school's improvement priorities. For example, leaders identified a suitable range of professional learning linked to the initial development of the school's curriculum. The school also provides good opportunities for teachers to carry out peer to peer lesson observations, which has a positive impact on the quality of their teaching. For example, a focus on teachers' questioning in lessons has improved this aspect of the school's provision.

All teaching staff forge effective links with improvement partners, other schools in the cluster and the local authority to develop aspects of their curriculum provision. For example, the school has developed its strong digital provision and its ability to effectively track pupils' progress across the curriculum as a result of collaborative working.

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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