

A report on

Puncheston School

**Puncheston,
Haverfordwest,
Pembrokeshire
SA62 5RL**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

About Puncheston School

Name of provider	Puncheston School
Local authority	Pembrokeshire County Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	Welsh-medium
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	80
Pupils of statutory school age	60
Number in nursery classes	6
Percentage of statutory school age pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year <i>average</i> (<i>The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in the primary sector is 22.9%</i>)	10.8%
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 11.1%</i>)	23.3%
Percentage of statutory school age pupils who speak Welsh at home	26.7%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	02/06/2025

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

Summary

There is caring and robust leadership at the heart of Puncheston School which creates a warm atmosphere, where all pupils are welcomed and valued. The headteacher and her team work together effectively across the federation to create a happy and inclusive community, by placing local identity and heritage at the heart of pupils' experiences.

Pupils feel safe and happy at the school. They know who to turn to if they need help, and show respect for each other and staff. There is a strong relationship between pupils and adults, which fosters excellent behaviour across the school.

Staff provide stimulating sessions which inspire pupils to commit themselves enthusiastically to their learning. They use a wide range of effective teaching methods, plan engaging and meaningful sessions, and adapt activities suitably to meet the needs of almost all pupils. They provide valuable opportunities for oldest pupils to work independently. However, staff tend to over-lead the youngest children's activities and hinder their ability to research, experiment and learn independently inside and outside the classroom. Teachers question and encourage pupils effectively to extend their understanding. In the best practice, teachers share feedback in a timely manner which enables pupils to identify what they have done well. However, the feedback does not always identify the next steps in pupils' learning effectively enough for them to respond purposefully.

Across the school, almost all pupils make sound progress in their skills in various areas of learning. Reading is a central element of provision, with effective strategies and attractive books which build enthusiasm and confidence. Most pupils make excellent progress in their reading skills, which supports their literacy skills more broadly.

The school uses a suitable range of evidence from different sources to evaluate its work and to plan for improvement. Governors are active, know the federation's schools well, and support the school effectively as a critical friend.

Recommendations

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve

- R1. Expand opportunities for the youngest pupils to strengthen their independent skills inside and outside the classroom
- R2. Ensure regular opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback and improve their work

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Puncheston School is a happy and inclusive community which prioritises developing pupils' understanding of their local identity and heritage. The headteacher has established a caring learning environment across the federation's schools, and pupils appreciate the support they receive. They know who to turn to if they have any concerns or worries and they feel safe learning and playing at the school. A strong sense of belonging is embedded in the school and, as a result, almost all pupils' behaviour is excellent.

The headteacher has high expectations of herself, pupils and staff. She is supported skilfully by a team of dedicated staff and they work together well to address local and national priorities, such as developing the Welsh language and promoting pupils' regular attendance at school. The headteacher knows the needs of pupils, staff and the communities exceptionally well. The federation's schools have successful links with the local community to offer the pupils valuable experiences. As a result, a strong sense of identity, pride and respect exists between pupils and staff which permeates naturally across the federation's close community.

The headteacher has allocated staff's responsibilities wisely and regular professional learning opportunities equip them to develop their practices consistently. The close cooperation between the federation's schools supports staff to share good practice, and to design a curriculum jointly which develops pupils' understanding of their local area.

An excellent feature of provision is the supportive working relationship that exists between pupils and staff. Teachers use a range of effective teaching methods and develop the learning activities at a suitable pace. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to work independently in the daily challenge sessions. However, staff tend to over-lead the youngest children's activities and hinder their ability to research, experiment and learn independently inside and outside the classroom. Teachers use questioning and encouragement methods in a timely manner to support pupils' progress and extend their knowledge and understanding of different contexts effectively. In the best practice, teachers share feedback in a timely manner which enables pupils to identify what they have done well. However, feedback does not always identify the next steps in pupils' learning effectively enough to enable them to respond by refining or improving their work.

Teachers and staff develop pupils' skills effectively by building well on their previous learning. As a result, during their time at the school, almost all pupils, including those with ALN and those affected by poverty, make sound progress in their numeracy and digital skills, as well as a range of other skills, in various areas of learning. A notable aspect of the school's work is the way in which staff have developed and embedded pupils' reading skills which, in turn, has had a positive effect on almost all pupils' literacy skills.

Spotlight: Developing and embedding pupils' reading skills

Following analyses of reading tests and staff evaluations, all staff members received purposeful professional development on developing reading interventions and rapid reading strategies. Purposeful, high quality Welsh books and texts were purchased to engage and ignite pupils' enjoyment of reading. Across the school, reading ambassadors were elected to lead strategies, such as the whole-school reading session. Almost every classroom has attractive and modern reading corners and staff plan purposeful learning sessions that embed reading and advanced reading skills on a weekly basis. As a result, a strong culture of reading exists across the school, and almost all pupils make excellent progress in their reading skills.

The school places a strong emphasis on developing the Welsh language, and staff promote the language excellently. As a result, by the top of the school, most pupils develop their listening and speaking skills skilfully. They are confident when taking part in discussions and express themselves maturely in both Welsh and English.

Most pupils' writing skills are good. The youngest pupils develop appropriate fine motor skills and begin to write for a variety of audiences and for different purposes. By the top of the school, most pupils write increasingly extensively and choose vocabulary purposefully to engage readers' interest.

Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to lead on important aspects of the school's work which develop skills such as cooperation, communication and empathy effectively. They take the responsibilities seriously and delight in the opportunities that they receive.

Joint worship periods promote pupils' spiritual and moral development. During the services, for example, pupils reflect meaningfully on kindness, responsibility and trying their best, which contributes successfully to a happy and caring ethos that exists across the school.

The headteacher has established robust arrangements to monitor and evaluate provision. Leaders use a suitable range of evidence to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The whole team contributes successfully to these procedures. However, the self-improvement processes do not always focus purposefully enough on the effect of actions on the progress of learning and teaching.

Governors are supportive of the federation's work, and they know the schools and communities that it serves very well. They receive up-to-date, regular information from the headteacher and use their experiences from their visits to deepen their understanding of the standards of learning and teaching. They have a suitable understanding of national priorities and they promote robust attendance rates. The headteacher and governors are

mindful of the effect of poverty on pupils' progress and well-being, and ensure that all the federation's activity is inclusive and open to all.

The school has a productive relationship with parents. Parents feel that they can speak with any member of staff to discuss their children's wellbeing and education. The headteacher seeks parents' views regularly about important aspects of their children's learning experiences, and responds to their ideas in a timely manner.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are not a cause for concern.

The school's arrangements for the management of the site are not a cause for concern.

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking.

Leaders and governors manage the school's funding appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer questionnaires and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers, staff and the governing body/members of the management committee 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, middle leaders, and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, 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 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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report refers to different quantities and proportions, e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

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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This document has been translated by Trosol (Welsh to English).