

A report on
Hendreforgan Community Primary School

**Hendreforgan
Gilfach Goch
RCT
Gilfach Goch
CF39 8UH**

Date of inspection: September 2025

by

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

About Hendreforgan Community Primary School

Name of provider	Hendreforgan Community Primary School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	None
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	233
Pupils of statutory school age	185
Number in nursery classes	21
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 22.9%)	29.1%
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 11.1%)	3.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No

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Date of headteacher appointment	02/09/2024
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	10/07/2018
Start date of inspection	29/09/2025

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.

Summary

Hendreforgan is a happy, caring community school, where all staff treat pupils with high levels of care, respect and kindness. As a result, pupils engage positively with staff and their friends and show support and understanding towards each other. The strength of these relationships means that nearly all pupils feel safe in school and behave well in classrooms, at break times and when moving around the school.

Support for pupils' well-being is a strength and is actively promoted and prioritised through a range of whole school approaches. For example, through a range of school-based programmes most pupils develop their self-esteem and social skills well, to help them manage their feelings and to promote empathy and respect. This enables nearly all pupils to develop high levels of resilience, perseverance and positive attitudes towards their learning and school life.

The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school. He has a clear vision which is shared by all staff, pupils, parents and governors, ensuring that Hendreforgan Community Primary School is a happy and inclusive school where everyone achieves to the best of their ability.

During their time in school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress in their learning. Most pupils develop their oracy skills effectively so that they become confident speakers by the time they leave school. Most pupils develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills suitably. Staff model Welsh regularly, and pupils understand and respond well to simple classroom instructions and questions. However, pupils do not make consistently strong progress in developing their Welsh vocabulary and speaking skills.

Senior leaders have established effective systems to assess and track pupils' progress and well-being. Staff use this information well to identify needs quickly and check the impact that support has on reducing barriers to learning.

The school's approach to self-evaluation and school improvement has ensured that there has been purposeful change that has had a positive impact on teaching and learning and well-being in a short period of time.

Recommendations

We have made one recommendation to help the school continue to improve:

R1. Strengthen the provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

The headteacher provides very effective leadership for the school. He has a clear vision which is shared by all staff, ensuring that Hendreforgan Community Primary is a happy and inclusive school where everyone is encouraged to work to the best of their ability.

The school's work is characterised by high expectations, strong leadership, reflective self-evaluation and high levels of well-being. Leaders model effective collaboration and promote a cooperative approach to all they do. This collaboration includes a wealth of opportunities for productive professional learning, and the sharing of good practice between leaders, teachers and support staff, which have had a positive impact on provision across the school.

Spotlight – A Collaborative Approach to Rapid School Improvement

The school's strategic and collaborative approach with all stakeholders to self-evaluation and school improvement has ensured that there has been purposeful change that has had a positive impact on teaching, learning and well-being in a short period of time. Senior leaders and staff at all levels evaluate progress towards each improvement priority regularly. They use the information they gather purposefully to keep governors up to date, make modifications to targets, and adapt or refine approaches.

Leaders and staff have developed a shared vision for the school's curriculum. They ensure that there is a strong focus on fostering a sense of belonging and on encouraging all pupils to work towards achieving their full potential and contribute positively to school life and the wider community.

Most pupils, including those affected by socio-economic disadvantage and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress across most areas of the curriculum. Most pupils develop and demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning.

Staff use a structured approach to teach reading. That supports the youngest pupils to develop an early interest in reading books, helping them to identify simple letters and words. Most older pupils read with expression and use inference and deduction confidently to make predictions about the key characters in the books they are reading. They also write for a suitable range of purposes and apply their understanding of the features of different text types well, for instance to write persuasive letters and instructional text.

Most staff are effective language role models. They provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to talk within and about their learning. Most pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well and communicate confidently in a variety of contexts.

Staff model the Welsh language regularly, and pupils understand and respond well to simple classroom instructions and questions. However, overall, pupils do not make consistently strong progress in speaking Welsh.

Many pupils make suitable progress and develop a secure understanding of number. Most pupils apply their mathematical skills accurately to solve problems. Older pupils take information from graphs and contextualise the information. For example, they analyse the data of human and economic casualties in different countries during World War 2.

Pupils use digital tools appropriately to support their learning across the curriculum. Most older pupils are confident in their use of digital devices and use a broad range of digital skills with independence.

Teachers ensure that most lessons move at a good pace and offer appropriate challenge. They listen to and consider pupils' ideas and interests when planning topics. Many pupils have suitable opportunities to self and peer assess their work during lessons. Staff provide pupils with useful verbal feedback in lessons, which give pupils opportunities to improve their work and address any misunderstandings quickly.

Across the school, teachers and support staff know their pupils and their developmental needs well. They use this knowledge to make thoughtful adjustments to provision and skilfully and subtly use strategies to ensure that pupils get the support they need. Staff receive valuable professional learning to enable them to support pupils, including those with ALN. They use the skills and knowledge they acquire to deliver a range of support strategies successfully.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and creative development well to enable pupils to become empathetic and considerate towards others, respecting differences, and understanding the traits of their own personality.

There is a whole-school focus on outdoor learning. Younger pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to play, explore and influence their learning inside and outside the classroom. Staff create purposeful and engaging learning environments that nurture pupils' curiosity and independence. In the classes for older pupils, staff provide well-organised classrooms that support their learning well.

Spotlight – A Whole-School Commitment to Well-Being

The school is a caring and nurturing place where pupils feel happy and safe and staff feel respected and supported by leaders. Pupils' well-being is actively promoted and prioritised through a range of effective whole school approaches. This fosters a caring ethos which supports pupils' emotional and social needs very well. Pupils and families appreciate the well-being support provided by staff and readily share any worries or concerns.

The school has highly effective arrangements to support family engagement. Relationships between the school and families are extremely positive. The school offers early intervention and support to families and learners, which has led to improved attendance and punctuality, higher levels of well-being and good behaviour across the school.

There are regular and beneficial opportunities for parents and carers to be purposefully involved in the life of the school. For example, staff use a communication tool effectively to keep families up to date with school activities and their child's progress and organise numerous workshops that help families to support learning at home.

There are effective systems for promoting good behaviour and as a result, nearly all pupils demonstrate good behaviour in classrooms, at break times and when moving around the school.

Nearly all pupils benefit from opportunities to enhance their leadership skills and take on responsibilities through the school's pupil leadership groups. They take these responsibilities seriously and readily share their views about school life and how it can be improved. This aspect of school life is developing successfully.

Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school's work, gathered from the headteacher's detailed reports, visits to the school, and informative presentations from teachers. The governing body brings together people from a broad range of backgrounds and have a wide skill set that leaders are beginning to utilise effectively to inform the work of the school. They are developing link governor roles well and are beginning to challenge the school appropriately.

The school has robust procedures for the monitoring of attendance and works effectively with families. Nearly all pupils know the importance of coming to school every day, which is reflected in the increase in overall rates of attendance recently.

Additional information

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances 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 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

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references 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 (www.estyn.gov.wales)

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

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