

A report on
Pembroke Primary School

Fairfield Road
Bulwark
Chepstow
Monmouthshire
NP16 5JP

Date of inspection: June 2026

by

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

About Pembroke Primary School

Name of provider	Pembroke Primary School
Local authority	Monmouthshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	262
Pupils of statutory school age	194
Number in nursery classes	34
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 21.7%)	16.2%
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 9.2%)	21.1%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	3.6%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2021

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Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/01/2019
Start date of inspection	22/06/2026

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

Pembroke Primary School is a caring and nurturing school where nearly all pupils feel safe, happy and supported. Staff build strong relationships with pupils and their families, creating a calm and welcoming environment. As a result, most pupils enjoy learning, behave well and show resilience when facing challenges.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school and understand its strengths and areas for improvement well. They use a range of information, such as pupil progress data and feedback from pupils and staff, to help plan improvements effectively. There is a strong whole-school commitment to improving attendance, with all staff contributing to clear expectations and consistent approaches. As a result, attendance has improved over time and fewer pupils are persistently absent.

Teachers provide a wide range of interesting and engaging learning experiences. A particular strength is how pupils demonstrate their application of skills across the curriculum in a creative way. Pupils take great pride in this work and enjoy talking about what they have learned and how their skills have improved. The school makes highly effective use of its outdoor areas to enrich learning. High-quality experiences support pupils to develop confidence, independence and teamwork, while also helping them build a strong connection with the natural environment. The school supports pupils' well-being effectively and provides a wide range of opportunities for them to take on responsibilities in school life.

Most pupils make good progress as they move through the school. They develop their speaking, reading and writing skills well, and apply these across different subjects. They also build secure mathematical and digital skills and use these confidently in their learning.

Teaching is effective overall. Teachers ask good questions to develop pupils' thinking and provide helpful verbal feedback. However, written feedback does not always clearly show pupils how to improve their work, and pupils do not always have enough opportunity to reflect on and improve their learning.

Staff understand pupils' social, emotional and sensory needs well. However, the school does not ensure that pupils in the SRBs experience equitable provision or benefit fully from the breadth of learning opportunities available across the school, and this restricts their opportunities to develop skills alongside their peers.

Recommendations

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

- R1 Ensure equity of provision for all pupils across the whole school
- R2 Provide more consistent opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning, and to identify and address their next steps for improvement.

What happens next

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

Main evaluation

Pembroke Primary School is a caring and nurturing community where nearly all pupils feel safe, valued and supported. Staff build respectful relationships with pupils and their families, creating a calm and welcoming environment. As a result, most pupils engage positively with their learning, behave well and show resilience when faced with challenges. They work cooperatively with their peers and respond appropriately to support and guidance from adults.

The headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership and has established a strong culture of improvement based on a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders communicate a clear strategic direction that aligns appropriately with national priorities and the needs of the school community. They have developed robust self-evaluation processes that draw on a wide range of first-hand evidence, including monitoring activities, progress data and pupil voice. These processes are evaluative and support leaders to identify priorities accurately and respond appropriately, such as refining aspects of the curriculum and taking purposeful action to improve attendance. As a result, attendance has improved notably over time, including increased overall attendance rates, a reduction in persistent absence and a significant narrowing of the gap between different groups of pupils.

Leaders and staff have worked collaboratively to develop an engaging and authentic curriculum that provides pupils with a broad and purposeful range of learning experiences. Teachers plan stimulating activities that enable pupils to apply their skills, and make relevant links, across areas of learning. This approach supports pupils to

develop a secure understanding of concepts and apply their knowledge in meaningful contexts.

Spotlight: High-quality cross-curricular and creative learning

Pupils demonstrate a broad range of literacy, numeracy, science and humanities skills, alongside expressive arts, within authentic and purposeful contexts. The scrapbook-style format of their work enables pupils to make meaningful connections and apply their learning creatively and independently. Their work provides a coherent and purposeful record of progress, demonstrating very effectively how pupils apply their skills across many areas of learning. A notable strength is the quality of pupils' creative responses. Pupils make purposeful choices about presentation, resulting in high-quality work that reflects individuality and secure development of expressive arts skills. Pupils take considerable pride in this work and speak confidently about their learning and achievements.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress from their starting points. They develop effective oracy skills and speak confidently in a range of situations. Older pupils, in particular, articulate their ideas clearly and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately when discussing their learning. Most pupils develop secure reading skills that support them to access the curriculum successfully. They read fluently and with understanding, and many show positive attitudes towards reading. Writing standards are generally strong. Many pupils produce extended pieces of writing across a range of genres and apply their skills effectively across the curriculum. In mathematics, most pupils develop secure skills and apply these appropriately through relevant, practical activities. They demonstrate increasing confidence in using number and solving problems, including when applying their skills in real-life contexts.

Most pupils develop effective digital skills and apply these successfully to support their learning. They use a range of tools competently to create, present and refine their work. Across the school, pupils benefit from worthwhile opportunities to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills. Younger pupils collaborate effectively to solve practical challenges, while older pupils engage in tasks that require them to analyse information and justify their ideas. This helps most pupils to show increasing independence and resilience in their learning.

Most teachers demonstrate appropriate expectations and provide engaging learning experiences that support and challenge pupils well. They plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning and support progression in skills. Staff use questioning effectively to explore pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. In the most effective practice, learning proceeds at a suitable pace and pupils are encouraged to take greater ownership of their learning. However, in a minority of cases, teaching is over-directed, particularly in

older classes, which limits opportunities for pupils to make choices in their learning and develop a deeper understanding of their learning.

The school has suitable arrangements for supporting pupils with additional learning needs, including those within the specialist resource bases (SRBs). Staff understand pupils' social, emotional and sensory needs well. However, the school does not ensure that pupils in the SRBs experience equitable provision or benefit fully from the breadth of learning opportunities available across the school. There is a lack of cohesion between the curriculum in the resource bases and mainstream provision. As a result, pupils do not consistently access the full range of learning experiences. The school does not ensure that opportunities for purposeful integration into mainstream provision, particularly in relation to learning, are planned and implemented consistently. This limits SRB pupils' access to a coherent curriculum and restricts their opportunities to develop skills alongside their peers.

Most teachers provide valuable verbal feedback that helps pupils understand how to improve their work, although written feedback is often too general and focuses on praise or content rather than helping pupils to identify clearly what they need to do next. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and respond to feedback are too limited. As a result, pupils do not consistently develop the skills to refine and improve their work or to take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Provision for pupils' well-being is a strong feature of the school. Staff know pupils well and provide effective care and support. The school promotes a strong sense of belonging, and pupils treat one another with respect and kindness. Nearly all pupils feel safe and know who to speak to if they have concerns. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and participate positively in a range of activities that support their physical and emotional well-being. Staff provide meaningful opportunities to develop pupils' skills in the outdoor environment. This helps pupils to respect the environment, use tools and implements safely, and benefit from the joy of producing and preparing home-grown food.

The school's curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development purposefully. It helps them to develop a strong understanding of the complex nature of societies through the study of a variety of people from a range of backgrounds and religions. Staff provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills and contribute to school life. Pupil leadership groups influence decision-making, and pupils take an active role in improving aspects of the school environment. Many pupils develop confidence, responsibility and a strong sense of citizenship through this work. These opportunities, alongside a broad range of enrichment activities, contribute well to pupils' personal development and engagement in school life.

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/carers 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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