



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

**A report on**  
**Penyrenghlyn Community Primary School**

**Baglan Street  
Treherbert  
Treorchy  
RCT  
CF42 5AW**

**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 Penyreglyn Community Primary School

Name of provider	Penyreglyn Community Primary School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	*
Number of pupils on roll	187
Pupils of statutory school age	144
Number in nursery classes	15
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 23.0%)	37.4%
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 16.1%)	3.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.1%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	6.3%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2023
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	13/11/2023

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](https://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

Penyreglyn Community Primary School is an inclusive, caring school that places a high priority on the importance of developing positive relationships with staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and display a sense of pride in their achievements. Staff care about the pupils and provide suitable interventions to support their well-being.

The recently appointed headteacher has begun to make positive changes to strengthen the leadership team and the role of the governing body. There are increased opportunities for governors to link with other staff members to gather first-hand information on the school's strengths and areas to develop. In a short time, leaders have strengthened partnership working between school and families and this is helping to improve pupil and family engagement in school life.

Overall, the majority of teaching is appropriate. Teachers plan a range of experiences for pupils and make suitable use of the local area to engage pupils in their learning as well as develop a sense of pride in the local heritage and culture. However, teachers do not always use ongoing assessments to plan learning that meets the needs of all pupils. They do not build on pupils' learning well enough, especially when developing pupils' writing skills.

Whole school self-evaluation and monitoring processes are at an early stage of development. When leaders use assessments accurately, plan relevant training and implement actions to improve the quality of teaching and provision, positive outcomes in learning are achieved. This is evident in the progress pupils make in reading. However, overall, there is limited use of first-hand evidence to inform self-evaluation, and monitoring does not focus well enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff and governors and a clear vision and desire to develop the school's curriculum and improve outcomes for all pupils. Whilst at an early stage of development, leaders are working closely with other schools and partners to strengthen staff knowledge and widen pupils' knowledge, skills and experience.

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning to ensure that it focuses on the aspects most in need of improvement
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching and assessment to ensure that lessons meet the needs of all learners
- R3 Ensure that teachers plan opportunities for pupils to improve and refine their writing skills to make the progress they are capable of

## What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

During their time at school, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make good progress from their individual starting points in developing their oracy, reading and numeracy skills.

Many younger pupils start school with oracy skills below those expected for their age. As they progress through the school, they begin to develop their vocabulary suitably, engage in conversations and share ideas about their work. Many pupils in Year 2 listen and respond to stories appropriately, talking about characters and events successfully. By Year 6, many pupils are confident and articulate, and enjoy leading presentations in whole school assemblies and governing body meetings.

Many pupils' reading skills are developing well. The youngest pupils use picture books and show an interest in stories. By Year 2, many pupils recognise letter sounds and blend these to read words independently. As pupils progress through the school, they read with suitable accuracy and fluency. Many older pupils use a range of strategies to predict, summarise and sequence texts. Many pupils across the school read confidently and develop as competent readers by the time they leave the school.

Overall, pupils' progress in writing varies. The youngest pupils begin to record their ideas through mark making, forming letters and shapes. By Year 2, many pupils write simple sentences with sensible attempts at spelling. As pupils progress through the school, they begin to write at greater length and for a range of different purposes. As their skills develop, a majority of pupils use adjectives and a variety of sentence structures effectively. They are beginning to use punctuation accurately to enhance their work. However, across the school, pupils do not develop their spelling skills and their use of punctuation well enough. As a result, the progress pupils make in writing is limited.

Overall, pupils make suitable progress in developing their Welsh language skills. Younger pupils enjoy learning phrases and respond well to simple questions about their age, where they live and the weather. Most older pupils develop a wide range of vocabulary and begin to give extended answers to questions. As pupils progress through the school, they develop greater confidence when asking and answering questions in Welsh and become less reliant on written prompts.

Many pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills as they move through the school. Younger pupils, for example, use their knowledge of

number and data to solve mathematical problems confidently when exploring the most and least popular foods, during international food tasting day. Most older pupils use a range of approaches to calculate totals and understand the different ways to measure weight, length, volume, and time. Most older pupils plot co-ordinates in the four quadrants, reflecting and translating shapes correctly and use this skill when plotting movements on the world map when studying the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour. Most pupils use and develop their numeracy skills appropriately across other areas of the curriculum. For example, older pupils record data in tables and graphs when investigating the decline in the use of coal. They use spreadsheets to analyse the number of deaths in coal mining across the Welsh valleys, and draw conclusions from their findings.

Across the school, many pupils develop suitable digital skills to support their learning. Many younger pupils use digital devices to take photographs, draw pictures and write text. Pupils in Year 2 create bar charts of their favourite foods and, by Year 6, many pupils collect information to create databases. A majority of pupils use digital devices to create interesting presentations and short films. For example, younger pupils work with professionals to create animations about their local heritage using a wide range of skills. However, overall, pupils' use and application of digital skills are often limited to one off tasks and they do not develop well enough a range of digital skills that can be used purposefully in other areas of learning.

Most pupils develop their thinking and creative skills suitably. Younger pupils enjoy exploring the work of different artists and they replicate and evaluate their artwork successfully. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy using a range of recycled materials to create 3D sea creatures and pupils in Year 6 use a range of different types of paints and brushes to create artwork for Remembrance Day. A few older pupils demonstrate good use of tone and shade detail to their work and produce high quality paintings. Throughout the year, many pupils enjoy performing dance routines for the local care home, and singing with the local choir for celebratory events.

Across the school, most pupils develop their physical skills well. Many pupils benefit from opportunities to take part in a range of physical activities during break times and in lessons. Many older pupils enjoy engaging in sports experiences with pupils from other local schools.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Nearly all pupils feel safe and secure in school. Many pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well during lessons, lunchtimes and breaks. They are kind and respectful to each other and to staff, demonstrating strong levels of trust and mutual respect.

Many pupils have strong, inclusive values, and actively seek to ensure that all members of their school community are supported and included in school life. Older pupils act effectively as peer mediators to ensure that all pupils have someone to play with at break times. Most pupils know who to ask for help and appreciate the support staff provide.

Across the school, many pupils work together effectively to promote the key values of respect, co-operation, helpfulness, friendship and kindness. They develop the attitudes and behaviours that help them to become successful, independent learners.

Many pupils engage and participate in lessons well and are able to sustain concentration appropriately. However, a few of the youngest pupils become disengaged too quickly and have difficulty remaining on task, and this reduces the progress they are capable of.

Most pupils enjoy working in pairs and groups. For example, many pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy working together to create models of sea creatures as part of a 3D structure. As pupils progress through the school, they demonstrate greater independence and the ability to take responsibility for their own learning. A few older pupils are beginning to use the feedback given to them in lessons to make improvements to their work. However, pupils are at an early stage in reflecting on their own learning and responding to written feedback.

The recently established pupil leadership groups are beginning to have a positive impact on school life and the wider community. Many pupils enjoy taking on leadership roles and are beginning to make decisions and lead on actions to benefit the school community. For example, pupil leadership groups create and display posters encouraging all pupils to support others with their emotions. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 perform wartime songs and dance at their local care home, and this helps to develop their awareness and empathy of the needs of others in the community.

Many pupils are developing a good understanding of their rights and reflect thoughtfully on why there is a need for rights and rules in school and in wider society. In response to a discussion on the right to be safe, pupils write letters to local delivery companies to ask them to avoid drop off and collection times to keep pupils safe. Many older pupils are aware of how to keep them safe online and are able to talk about the importance of not sharing passwords and what they would do if someone were unkind online.

Most pupils understand how to make healthy choices relating to diet and how to keep themselves physically healthy. For example, they bring fruit to school for their break time snack and enjoy taking part in physical activity at break and lunchtime. They show an understanding of the importance of caring for their environment by recycling rubbish and waste. Pupils enjoy attending a range of extra-curricular activities including netball, art, rugby and cookery to further promote the importance of healthy lifestyles.

## **Teaching and learning experiences**

Teachers and teaching assistants develop positive relationships with pupils and generally manage behaviour well. They provide effective support to manage pupils' emotions and well-being.

The school is working closely with cluster schools to develop and redesign the school curriculum. Teachers are beginning to develop a deeper understanding of the principles of Curriculum for Wales. They consider purposefully the context of the school and its heritage when planning topics. For example, older pupils study the decline of the coal mining industry and visit the local museum to enhance their studies. Teachers also arrange visits from members of the local community who share their experiences. For example, older pupils visit the local nursing home to interview residents about their experiences during World War II.

Teachers are beginning to develop their subject knowledge to raise standards in teaching. For example, recent training on reading has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupil progress in reading. However, teachers subject knowledge of other areas of the curriculum varies and this affects how well teachers plan to develop pupils skills, especially in writing. Too often, lessons do not build on pupils' prior learning and there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.

The school enriches its curriculum and learning experiences appropriately. Staff make good use of the school's extensive outdoor learning environment and teachers use places of interest within the school community effectively to inspire learning. For example, visits to a local nursing home enable pupils in Years 4 and 5 to share their jive dances with residents who lived through World War 2, whilst older pupils prepare questions for residents to gain first-hand knowledge of the difficulties of living through the war. The school provides many new, exciting experiences for pupils, such as cookery, while older pupils benefit from a residential visit to develop their outdoor skills. Pupils in the younger classes have regular access to the school's outdoor areas including the forest area and allotment, and these high-quality learning environments enable pupils to learn enthusiastically through exploration and help pupils develop social relationships with their peers effectively.

Across the school, teachers are beginning to plan a range of suitable activities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills across the curriculum. Teachers are beginning to plan engaging and purposeful experiences to develop pupils' digital skills such as creating animations and multimedia presentations. Most teachers promote the Welsh language and model it well, during lessons and at break-times.

The quality of teaching varies across the school. Where teaching is effective, teachers build on pupils' prior knowledge, pupils understand what is expected of them and teachers use effective questioning to move learning on and to clarify pupils' understanding. Where teaching is less effective, the learning intentions are not always clear and lessons do not meet the needs of a majority of learners well enough, limiting their progress. Overall, too many lessons do not systematically build on pupils' prior learning and teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve are not always high enough.

A few teachers are beginning to develop the quality of their feedback to pupils. Where feedback is effective, pupils are beginning to respond, for example to make improvements to their written work. However, this development is at a very early stage. Overall, marking and feedback is weak, and many pupils do not know what they are doing well or what they need to do to improve. Too often, teachers do not identify important errors in pupils' work and pupils repeat the same mistakes.

The school's assessment processes are at an early stage of development. In a few examples, when leaders use assessment to identify groups of learners who may benefit from additional support, and plan personalised learning, these pupils make suitable progress. However, too many teachers do not use day-to-day assessments, including marking and feedback, well enough to ensure that learning experiences enable pupils to make progress. As a result, teachers and leaders do not have a clear picture of the progress made by all pupils.

## Care, support and guidance

The school is a nurturing environment and supports pupils' emotional health and well-being well. Staff provide suitable interventions to develop pupils' resilience and support pupils to manage their own emotions. Staff work well as a team to promote the strong culture of well-being, and this permeates throughout the school. This is a strength. Across the school, staff use a range of beneficial strategies to support both pupils' and their families' emotional health. The work of the school's counselling service is having a positive impact on pupil engagement in lessons.

Staff know their pupils and families well and build positive relationships to support pupil's engagement in school life. The school has developed effective partnerships to successfully engage parents. The recently appointed family engagement officer develops strong links with local organisations and uses these links effectively to support others. This is having a positive impact on the relationships between school and families, helping to break down barriers and engage parents in their child's learning.

Across the school, many teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well. They use a range of strategies successfully to promote positive behaviour. However, a few of the youngest pupils' behaviour is less well managed, and teachers in these lessons do not engage a few learners well enough to help develop their concentration and maintain their interest in lessons.

The school has effective strategies to identify and support pupils with additional learning needs. The additional learning needs co-ordinator (ALNCo) works closely with a range of other professionals to provide effective support for learners with ALN. They develop detailed learning plans that give beneficial support to pupils and regular monitoring helps ensure that most pupils with ALN make suitable progress. The ALNCo works with teaching assistants to provide a range of effective interventions to support pupils with ALN.

The school works effectively with external agencies to develop pupils love of reading as well as their reading skills and to engage pupils and their parents successfully in positive reading experiences, providing them with a range of interesting books they can use at home. The recent 'Reading Rhondda' project is having a positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm and interest in reading.

Staff provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider life of the school and to its wider community. The school is beginning to develop valuable opportunities for pupils to participate in decision-making at school level. For example, the Rights Respecting Committee held a coffee morning to raise money for a cancer charity and leads school assemblies on topics such as anti-racism.

The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on the values and beliefs of others and to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through lessons and daily acts of collective worship. Recently, pupils explored the life of Paul Robeson and the impact he had on the Welsh mining community in Rhondda. The school provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of different faiths, for example teaching about different festivals such



as Diwali, and this helps pupils develop an understanding of celebrations in other cultures.

Teachers ensure that pupils understand their rights and promote this through the work of the pupil leadership groups. Teachers provide increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of global issues, for example when donating food to a local food bank.

The school provides valuable opportunities to develop pupils' appreciation and understanding of their own identity, heritage and culture. For example, pupils learn about places in Wales and visit places of cultural significance, including places of interest in their local area, to learn about their history. The school provides valuable experiences for pupils to develop their knowledge of Welsh traditions through events such as the annual Eisteddfod and singing with the local male voice choir.

There are robust systems in place to ensure the security and safety of pupils and staff. There are robust systems in place to track and monitor pupils' attendance. Leaders work closely with the family engagement officer and local authority to support pupils and their families with lower attendance. These strategies are having a positive impact on attendance rates across the school. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are appropriate and give no cause for concern.

## **Leadership and management**

The recently appointed headteacher leads with passion and commitment with a vision to achieve positive outcomes for all pupils at Penyreglyn Community Primary School. Leaders work hard to develop an inclusive, nurturing school where staff and pupils feel valued and supported. Together with staff, leaders build effective partnerships between school, its families and the wider community.

Within a short space of time, the headteacher has worked with staff to realise the school's vision, 'Inspiring Ambition', and uses this to raise aspirations for all. Through partnership working with other schools in the locality, teachers are beginning to develop a greater understanding of each of the areas of learning in the school curriculum. They use this information to plan a purposeful curriculum that provides pupils with valuable experiences. Leaders make good use of the local area to enhance learning experiences for pupils. However, the school is at an early stage in designing its curriculum, and staff do not have a secure enough understanding of progression.

Leaders and staff are beginning to evaluate the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. They have accurately identified a few areas to develop, such as reading. They monitor how well this aspect of their work is developing and consider the impact of improvements on pupils' progress effectively. Leaders identify suitable training, develop the staff's knowledge of strategies to improve their approaches to teaching reading and use assessments to monitor the progress pupils make. However, overall, leaders do not use first-hand evidence well enough to inform self-evaluation. As a result, improvement planning does not always prioritise the most important areas for development, such as the variability in the quality of teaching.

Teachers are beginning to use assessment information to identify the needs of pupils and those who may benefit from additional support. However, they do not use this information to adapt their teaching or plan purposeful lessons, ensuring that they meet the needs of pupils at all levels. Monitoring procedures do not identify well enough the strengths and areas to develop in teaching. As a result, the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are not addressed well enough. For example, teachers' subject knowledge to develop pupils' writing varies across the school and this impacts on the progress pupils make in writing.

The headteacher is beginning to review the roles and responsibilities of leaders to ensure they meet the needs of the school and the curriculum. Teachers take responsibility for developing AoLEs as part of the school's work to design a suitable curriculum for all pupils. They share this work with governors to ensure that there is a shared understanding of how the curriculum is developing to support learning.

There are suitable systems in place to support performance management and these link to the school development plan priorities. Leaders plan relevant training for staff at all levels. For example, teaching assistants attend training to improve their understanding of speech and language and use this to provide purposeful and effective interventions. However, staff training plans do not always focus on the school's priorities for improvement and, as a result, the impact of training across the school varies.

Leaders manage the budget effectively to provide a range of suitable resources to support the curriculum and to improve the school environment. They work closely with parents to raise funds to assist with purchasing of play equipment and to contribute to the cost of trips. Leaders use the pupil development grant appropriately to provide beneficial interventions that support pupils' progress well in oracy and reading, as well as emotional support through the school counsellor.

The governing body is supportive of the school. Governors have positive working relationships with senior leaders and an appropriate awareness of national improvement priorities. For example, they have a good understanding of ALN reform and the steps the school has taken to address this priority. Recently, governors have worked more closely than previously with leaders and teachers across the school to develop their understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. These opportunities are enabling governors to develop the knowledge they need to act as a critical friend in evaluating the school's progress towards achieving its aims.

Staff and governors have a sound understanding of their responsibility to keep pupils safe and have created a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Governors make suitable arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking and pupil leadership groups are used effectively to support this work. Leaders plan purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. They provide a range of valuable experiences to promote the Welsh language and culture, and use older pupils effectively to lead weekly assemblies bilingually.

## 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](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 publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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