



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

A report on

Penclawdd Primary School

**Park Road
Penclawdd
SA4 3FH**

Date of inspection: November 2022

by

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

About Penclawdd Primary School

Name of provider	Penclawdd Primary School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	137
Pupils of statutory school age	120
Number in nursery classes	22
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 21.3%)	24.9%
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 22.2%)	10.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	September 2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	07/05/2014
Start date of inspection	07/11/2022

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

Pupils at Penclawdd Primary School relish attending school. They are keen to talk to adults and speak confidently about how proud they are of their school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for, and they trust that adults will always support them through tough times. During their time in school most pupils, including those with additional needs and those who are vulnerable, make good and often better progress in all areas of learning. The school truly values the pupils' opinions. They have numerous opportunities to influence the work of the school and are thrilled to work alongside school leaders to bring about improvements.

Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school and staff work hard to ensure that the school is a thoughtful and inclusive environment. This inclusivity is shown by the positive relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers think carefully about how pupils learn best and employ a range of approaches to engage them successfully in their learning. All staff are developing their professional skills and knowledge together well. This enables them to adapt provision to best meet individual pupils' needs. The care, support and guidance provided across the school community is exceptional and supports the school's vision, to 'bring out the best in each other'.

The headteacher, shows strong and compassionate leadership. Along with the support of school leaders and governors, she has developed an enthusiastic team of professionals that have a strong understanding of the needs of the pupils and the local community. Partnerships with parents are exceptional and the school has earned their trust, particularly when deciding the right approaches to adopt so that their children can thrive. Leaders and staff are clearly on their way to implementing a curriculum that is real and reflects the needs of the community. Overall, school leaders and governors keep the work of the school under close review and there are good arrangements for monitoring the quality of ongoing developments.

Recommendations

R1 Continue to develop the outdoor learning environment so that younger pupils have more opportunities to strengthen their independent skills

What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a case study on its work in relation to developing the culture, ethos and language of Wales across the school, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main evaluation

Learning

Most pupils in Penclawdd Primary school, including those with additional learning needs (ALN) and those eligible for free school meals, make strong progress in their learning during their time at the school.

Most pupils' communication skills are strong. Pupils are confident, articulate speakers they listen well to each other and adults and respond enthusiastically to their work. Across the school most pupils make good progress in developing their speaking skills effectively in different contexts. In Year 4, for instance, the pupils use a range of expressive language whilst discussing a day in the life of a pit pony. Most pupils speak enthusiastically with an excellent range of vocabulary. They respond well to others during discussions and build enthusiastically upon their views.

Most pupils listen respectfully and effectively to their teachers and each other. The younger pupils focus and listen purposefully whilst participating in a range of classroom and school activities. For example, the younger pupils listen attentively to instructions during their drama session when preparing to act out the part of the three bears. As they progress through the school, older pupils respond and listen successfully to a range of different stimuli within their lessons and whilst undertaking high order thinking skills activities as part of their mission challenges.

Across the school most pupils' Welsh language skills are strong. Younger pupils confidently sing a variety of Welsh songs passionately and respond to classroom characters effectively. Older pupils confidently speak to each other and visitors positively, and ask and respond to variety of questions well. Across the school, most pupils make good progress in their Welsh reading skills. By Year 6, many pupils read clearly with correct pronunciation and can deduce meaning effectively from the text.

Most pupils' reading skills develop effectively as they progress through school. The youngest pupils develop their knowledge of letter sounds effectively and thoroughly engage with a wide range of interesting reading books. Many of the oldest pupils are skilfully developing their reading and research skills and are encouraged to enjoy reading a broad range of books and digital texts as they progress through school. Most transfer their knowledge and love of books skilfully to the younger pupils through the school's thoughtful reading buddy scheme.

Most pupils develop their writing skills effectively as they progress through the school. They have neat handwriting and present work to a high standard. Most pupils' spelling and punctuation are accurate, and vocabulary choices are adventurous. Nearly all pupils are encouraged to write extensively across the areas of learning in various text form. The standard of the pupils' writing across the curriculum is closely matched to the standard of their work within their literacy lessons. For example, younger pupils efficiently record a scientific experiment about their favourite colour of bees using appropriate connectives and scientific language. Older pupils, as part of their topic work, prepared extensive instructional writing on how to survive The Day of the Dead.

Across the school, most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills and learn to apply these skills across a variety of learning activities. Most pupils are benefiting from a whole school strategy to develop their problem-solving skills. As a result, pupils are systematically approaching word problems and breaking down their procedures to solve, at times, complex problems. In the best practice, pupils transfer their number skills well to a variety of contexts. For example, during their mission work on the Titanic, older pupils persevered and confidently solved how many lifeboats were needed for a successful rescue and potential survival rates.

Most pupils develop their digital skills purposefully as they move through the school. From a young age they begin to use their digital skills constructively in a rich range of learning experiences across learning areas. Most older pupils use their digital skills very well to support independent research and many present their findings through creative multimedia presentations.

Pupils' creative skills develop well throughout the school, particularly through their independent mission tasks. For example, in Year 4, pupils confidently created a replica of the Loughor river including meanders and an ox bow lake using a range of different materials. Across the school, many pupils develop their creative skills through music sessions. The younger pupils confidently create rhythms to the names of dinosaurs, whilst the older pupils develop their musical competence through tuning and strumming rhythms on the ukulele.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all pupils feel proud of their school and are eager to share their classrooms and outside spaces with visitors. Most pupils feel safe and secure and believe they are respected and treated fairly. They discuss their feelings with adults daily within their classes, which contributes effectively towards supporting their confidence and emotional well-being. Nearly all pupils are friendly and polite and treat their peers and staff with respect. They are welcoming and very courteous towards visitors, particularly when engaging in conversations about the learning experiences they enjoy at school.

Most pupils enjoy lessons and are confident to undertake new topics, giving ideas freely to teachers about what and how they want to learn. Many work well as independent learners, are eager and ready to learn, displaying a confidence and a developing resilience to new challenges. For example, Year 2 pupils speak with great enthusiasm when preparing instructional writing on how to cross the road safely as part of their project on 'Street Detectives'. Older pupils often make improvements to their work during lessons and have a clear understanding of their next steps in learning. This helps them to make consistently good progress.

The behaviour of nearly all pupils during activities and around the school is exemplary. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Most work enthusiastically and show an interest in everything they do. They persevere to complete tasks, for example when researching information and conducting experiments about the job of nutrients in plants and animals. Many pupils are confident when choosing tasks and working independently. They concentrate and listen well, for example with younger pupils enjoying a story about Cinderella. Pupils listen respectfully to the views of others and create persuasive arguments for visiting

Mexico. Most pupils contribute purposefully to their learning by providing ideas about the attractions to see and foods to try.

Most pupils understand the importance of making sound choices that affect their health. They grow vegetables that are used as part of their healthy recipe writing in the topic 'At the Allotment'. Most pupils understand the importance of keeping fit. They take part in physical activities in the classroom, during break time and lunchtime and in after-school sports clubs including netball and rugby. Pupils understand that emotional well-being is important and participate actively in health and well-being lessons that promote good mental health through daily well-being 'check-ins' in class and effective support from trained staff. Nearly all pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and benefit from regular online safety sessions provided by the school as well as the local police officers.

Through a programme of interesting activities, most pupils develop an understanding of the importance of being moral citizens. During anti-bullying week, older pupils contribute purposefully to challenge stereotyping. All pupils celebrate diversity through Penclawdd Diversity Day with pupils recognising the diverse groups within their community. Pupils learn about the importance of citizenship and make valued contributions to their community, planning activities to support local charities; for example, pupils collect for the North Gower Food Hub and Matthews House homeless charities. Most pupils understand the importance of rules in school and have a good awareness of how they apply outside school. All pupils engage enthusiastically in learning activities promoting the rights of the child. Recently, they participated in a series of workshops with the Children's Commissioner for Wales about how their school promotes pupils' rights, sharing this with parents and local schools.

Almost all pupils enjoy opportunities to participate in leadership roles through involvement in the numerous pupil voice groups including the Eco Council, Healthy Heroes, who sell fruit during break time and the eager Penclawdd Teaching and Learning Detectives who work with school leaders to influence school improvement. They undertake their roles conscientiously and confidently and use their skills productively by leading initiatives such as operating the school's savings bank. This encourages pupils' positive attitudes towards careful financial management.

Teaching and learning experiences

Staff across the school know their pupils' abilities, needs and interests very well and build strong and nurturing relationships with them.

The school has a clear focus on developing an authentic community-led curriculum to support learner engagement. The school provides a broad and stimulating curriculum and staff plan exciting engagement visits to encourage learner enthusiasm. For example, pupils in nursery and reception experienced a visit to Castell Coch and this inspired younger pupils to learn more about traditional tales. Activities are well planned and build progressively and systematically on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills, which ensure progression as they move through the school.

Staff have a very good understanding of the principles behind the Curriculum for Wales and include these effectively throughout their planning. They are developing

original learning experiences that provide effective opportunities for most pupils to become confident creative learners through well planned 'missions'. The school uses an exciting variety of topics to plan learning activities for each of the six areas of learning experiences in the Curriculum for Wales. Overall, the range of activities across the curriculum supports good progress in pupils' skills, confidence and ingenuity. Pupils contribute well to short and medium-term planning based on each topic through their Everyone Plans In Class (EPIC) grids. Through these, pupils have useful opportunities to lead their learning.

The school fosters a strong Welsh ethos where all staff have high aspirations for the development of pupils' Welsh communication skills. An outstanding feature of the school's work is the provision for developing pupils' listening, reading and speaking skills in English and Welsh. Staff are successful language role models, and this helps pupils to become confident and respectful speakers, keen to develop and use new vocabulary in both languages. Welsh language skills are promoted continuously around the school and within the classrooms through everyday language, bilingual wall displays, marking, bilingual dialogue with staff and specific language lessons. Throughout the school, teachers incorporate the Welsh language into their lessons to a high standard. Over time, most pupils develop strong Welsh language skills and are confident and proud to be Welsh speakers.

The school offers frequent activities to develop pupils personal and social education skills well. Through visits and community links many pupils have a clear understanding of issues relating to their well-being, lifestyle choices and behaviours. The school has a strong ethos to promote and support pupils' well-being and mental health. For example, through receiving valuable training in emotion coaching, all staff sensitively support pupils through many diverse challenges that they face on a daily basis.

Pupils benefit from effective teaching across the school with knowledgeable staff delivering exciting lessons. Across the school, teachers and support staff have strong working relationships with pupils. They have high expectations for their learning and behaviour and encourage them to have high expectations for themselves. Pupils are encouraged to use challenging vocabulary whilst choosing their activities. For example, learning tasks are called 'hard', 'harder', 'hardest' to ensure that pupils challenge themselves to be the best they can be. In many classes, teachers act as facilitators and this encourages pupils' independence and ensures that lessons move at a good pace. Support staff are highly skilled and are deployed effectively throughout the school to support all pupils, including those with social and emotional as well as additional needs. They are very good role models to pupils and each other.

Throughout the day, teachers' use of language, both in English and Welsh is highly effective, such as when the youngest pupils experience words such as 'aghast' and 'saunter' whilst adults talk about their own experiences. Nearly all staff ensure that their pupils have fun, enjoy their learning and feel free to express themselves.

Most teachers use questioning effectively to develop pupils' thinking and check for understanding. In a few cases, teachers adapt their teaching skilfully to address misconceptions and support pupils understanding. They differentiate their questioning to cater for pupils' individual needs well. Most teachers build on the

pupils' prior learning well. They use the outdoors regularly to enhance the pupils' learning experiences such as in the woodland and forest school areas. However, there are limited opportunities for the youngest pupils to develop their independent skills in the outdoor provision areas.

Teachers across the school create valuable opportunities for pupils to collaborate, which enhances their own learning and that of their peers. In most classes, teachers and pupils create tailored success criteria, which supports pupils to better reflect on their learning and make necessary improvements. Teachers provide timely feedback to pupils to enable them to make progress and improve their work during lessons. Many teachers use a range of assessment approaches to build a picture of pupils' individual progress over time. These procedures, as well as other observations of pupils' learning, inform the next steps in teachers' planning. They develop an accurate picture of each pupil's progress and monitor this robustly.

Care, support and guidance

The school knows its pupils, their families and the local community very well. Leaders and staff have developed effective arrangements to ensure that pupils and their families receive the encouragement and support they need to thrive at school. Work to support pupils' emotional well-being through a wide variety of nurture strategies is highly effective. For example, all staff are well trained, and the family liaison officer delivers specific support to identified pupils and care to their parents. Staff create an exceptionally warm and caring learning environment where pupils feel valued and safe. The calm atmosphere throughout the school reflects the success of this provision.

The school is preparing well for the transition to the new national additional learning needs arrangements. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is a strength of the school, it is well thought out, supports pupils' needs well and greatly valued. The additional learning needs co-ordinator works well with qualified staff to provide purposeful sessions that meet the pupils' needs, particularly in improving their communication skills. There are purposeful individual development plans for pupils, which include opportunities to review progress regularly and involve professionals, parents and pupils. The school tracks the progress of ALN pupils effectively and reports are detailed and rigorous. As a result, nearly all pupils make good and often better progress against targets in many areas of learning across school.

The school's electronic record keeping systems ensure an effective sharing of information internally and with outside agencies, including the local authority. Senior leaders ensure that referrals for additional help are followed through and that pupils receive the specialist advice and support they need. The school has positive partnerships with many outside agencies, such as with North Gower Food Hub, the local police, social services and the local churches. These crucial links enable the school to access and target the correct support for pupils and families.

The school actively supports healthy diets by selling fruit and encouraging pupils to rehydrate regularly, through valuable lessons on how to make healthy eating choices and how to have a balanced diet through packed lunches and snacks.

The school provides equitable opportunities to support all pupils to take responsibility and contribute to the life and work of the school. All staff have ensured the provision of a wide range of pupil leadership groups to support and direct the work of the school. Leaders take the work of these groups seriously and pupils know that adults will listen to their views and act upon them. For instance, the learning detectives monitored and evaluated pupils learning styles and supported the staff in changing their learning environments to better meet pupils needs. Staff ensure that these groups represent fully the broad range of pupil abilities and backgrounds within the school.

Teachers provide a variety of valuable experiences to promote pupils' moral and spiritual development. They provide opportunities to reflect on current affairs and other religions in assemblies and class activities. There are good links with the local chapel who regularly visit school to present bible stories. Pupils have opportunities to discuss and reflect on their own beliefs and values as well as other faiths, for example when studying about Ramadan and how it impacts on everyday lives of Muslims. By holding sessions on challenging stereotypes during Penclawdd Diversity Day, the school ensures that pupils develop an understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Pupils have good opportunities to participate in competitive teams. There are regular practices for football and netball and pupils have regularly engaged in inter-school competition with rugby, football, netball and athletics. There are valued and worthwhile opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through visits to places such as Cardiff Urdd Centre for residential visits as well as to Borfa Beach where pupils enthusiastically participate in outdoor pursuits including kayaking and climbing.

The school promotes a culture of safety, empathy, care and support. There is an established system to report safeguarding concerns and the school makes timely referrals to outside agencies when appropriate. The school has a strong culture of safeguarding with clear arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides highly effective, compassionate leadership. She has established a powerful culture of trust, teamwork and drive for improvement across the school. Along with the very able senior leadership team, she facilitates a continuous focus on building and maintaining positive relationships and has a strong understanding of the needs of the pupils and the local community. All leaders and staff work tirelessly to meet these needs, with the firm belief that all pupils will receive a high-quality education and 'be the best they can be'. Staff and governors ensure that there is a strong safeguarding culture at the school.

The school has a clear vision for the education and well-being of all learners and implements this effectively. The vision, created by all stakeholders, has high aspirations for pupils, their families and the local community. It gives purpose to the school's work and underpins the high expectations that exist for pupils' welfare and progress.

Leaders assign roles and responsibilities effectively. The staffing structure meets the needs of the school well. There are good arrangements to build leadership capacity and distribute this across school. For example, support staff are trusted with key responsibilities across the school for well-being and working with families. Consequently, the school has an assured depth of leadership at all levels and is developing successfully as a learning organisation.

The school's improvement plan sets out the strategic direction of the school's improvement work well. It identifies people responsible for implementing priorities and the specific actions they will take. There are appropriate timescales, costings and success indicators in place to evaluate and measure progress. Leaders have developed robust procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the school's work, which leads to tangible improvements. For example, all staff received emotion coaching that led to improved support for pupils' well-being. An audit of staff skills led to improvements in providing better quality feedback for pupils across the school.

The school's work in partnership with parents and support agencies is exceptional. Leaders think carefully about how to adapt the school's provision to ensure better engagement with parents. For example, the leaders organise training to help parents in how best to support their child's well-being, behaviour, and first aid, in addition the school enables parents to access qualifications via Gower college. The school provides thoughtful aid to those who find themselves in challenging circumstances. Parents trust that the school is doing the right thing for their children and that staff will always act in their best interests and work with them sensitively.

The school addresses local and national priorities well. Work to develop the Curriculum for Wales alongside improving teaching is thorough and systematic. Leaders and staff work effectively with local schools to develop approaches to teaching and learning that provide continuity for pupils as they move to secondary school. Year group teams of teachers and support staff collaborate successfully to plan learning experiences that develop pupils' skills progressively. Leaders ensure that staff can access a wide range of professional learning opportunities. This includes being able to carry out action research to better meet the needs of groups of pupils in their classes, as well as contributing to whole-school priorities, such as developing pupils' communication skills. Leaders are fully aware of the impact of poverty on pupil progress. Penclawdd is a wholly inclusive community and the school invests in their pupils. There are no barriers to learning. For example, the school ensures that all pupils have access to music tuition, that extra-curricular activities are diverse and accessible and that all pupils can take part in all learning experiences such as trips and visits to special places.

The governing body is well informed, effective and committed to supporting the school. Governors have a valuable range of professional expertise and contribute well to school life and to its place within the community. They understand the school's improvement priorities and the reasons that underpin them. They support leaders to implement and monitor improvement work well, for instance by agreeing to allocate funding for worthwhile projects and by visiting the school to see new developments at first hand. Governors make appropriate arrangements for healthy eating and drinking. School leaders manage finances thoughtfully and allocate funds to support improvement successfully.

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:

Publications Section

Estyn

Anchor Court, Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gov.wales

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.wales

© Crown Copyright 2022: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 13/01/2023