



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

**A report on**

**Pencoed Primary School  
Penprysg Road  
Pencoed  
CF35 6RH**

**Date of inspection: May 2019**

**by**

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

## About Pencoed Primary School

Pencoed Primary School is in the village of Pencoed, in Bridgend local authority. There are around 600 pupils on roll, aged from 3 to 11 years old. Twenty-nine of these pupils attend one of the four learning resource units for pupils with a range of learning difficulties. The school has 25 classes.

The three-year rolling average of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 16%, which is below the national average of 18%. The school identifies around 29% of pupils as having additional learning needs, which is above the national average of 21%. Very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background and very few speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher was acting headteacher from April 2012 and appointed the substantive headteacher in June 2013. The school's previous inspection was in January 2011.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.  
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

## Summary

The wellbeing of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and all members of staff work very hard to ensure that there is a caring, inclusive, family ethos. This has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement, their attitudes to learning, attendance and behaviour.

Most pupils, including those in the learning resource units, make good progress from their starting points. Pupils take on roles and responsibilities enthusiastically and contribute well to the life of the school.

Teachers provide a wide range of learning experiences to engage and motivate pupils to learn. The school promotes pupils' understanding of the Welsh culture and heritage well.

The school has a very strong and supportive relationship with parents. The family engagement officer has created a range of highly successful strategies to involve parents in the life and work of the school.

The headteacher, along with the deputy headteacher and senior leaders, provides strong and purposeful leadership. Together with a dedicated and conscientious team of staff, they work successfully to improve pupils' outcomes and raise their aspirations.

<b>Inspection area</b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Teaching and learning experiences</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Care, support and guidance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## **Recommendations**

R1 Raise standards in Welsh language skills

R2 Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners

R3 Ensure that all teachers give pupils enough opportunities to write at length

## **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 strategies to engage families in the life and work of the school for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

On entry to reception, the majority of pupils' basic skills are lower than those expected for their age. During their time in school, most pupils, including those with additional learning needs, make good progress in their learning and achieve well.

In the foundation phase, most pupils listen attentively to adults and respond sensibly to questions. By Year 2, most develop their speaking skills well and give clear explanations when asked to identify verbs and adjectives. Many develop their reading skills effectively. They read with understanding and use their knowledge of sounds suitably to tackle unfamiliar words. More able pupils in Year 2 read fluently and predict what might happen next in stories, for example when reading the Magic Tree or the Willow Pattern Plot. Many younger pupils in the foundation phase make sound progress in developing their early writing skills. In the reception, most pupils form recognisable letters and use their knowledge of sounds to attempt new words. By Year 2, most pupils can write extended pieces successfully. For example, they produce interesting accounts on Grace Darling, Lewis Hamilton and Neil Armstrong. They use basic punctuation to organise their work into simple sentences and form letters correctly.

Most pupils in key stage 2 have good listening skills and speak confidently and clearly in class, for example, when discussing their proposed project on planets. Most demonstrate a good understanding of what they read in different texts. They use dictionaries and internet searches well to learn about new words or topics, for example, when creating their stimulating research work on the Second World War. Pupils in Years 4 demonstrate strong interest in such books as the Barmy British Empire and Creatures of the Night and, as a result, they talk enthusiastically about the characters and plots. Across key stage 2, pupils write in a suitable range of forms. Older pupils plan their work well and use an impressive range of vocabulary, for example when writing about Snowdonia and Nelson Mandela. They structure their writing successfully, using appropriate punctuation and paragraphs, for instance when writing balanced arguments to compare life in 1940 with life in 2018.

Across the school, pupils develop a basic understanding of Welsh words and phrases. A few read simple Welsh texts suitably. Pupils' writing skills develop appropriately. However, most pupils lack confidence to speak Welsh, especially outside of designated Welsh lessons.

In the foundation phase, most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills across the areas of learning. They have a good understanding of money and give change from a 20p coin accurately. Most pupils apply the mathematics they learn in lessons to solve problems with confidence. For example, in Year 2 they are able to read a thermometer successfully to record daily temperatures. Most pupils in key stage 2 develop their numeracy skills well. Many use their mental mathematical strategies accurately when performing calculations, for example when explaining how to work out 25% of £780. They apply their mathematical skills confidently when solving problems in mathematics lessons and in subjects across the curriculum. For example, in Year 6 most pupils can plot co-ordinates and the flight paths of World War 2 bomber planes successfully.

Throughout the school, most pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively. In the foundation phase, most pupils confidently use electronic tablet computers to take photographs and make pictures, using simple drawing programmes. By Year 2, most use the keyboard and mouse successfully and open and save files correctly. Most pupils continue to make good progress in key stage 2. They have a good understanding of spreadsheets and use these purposefully across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use basic sorting functions to create their own spreadsheets about the Stuarts, while in Years 5 and 6 they create their own space spreadsheets and incorporate specific formulae. Most pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of how to stay safe online.

Pupils in the learning resource bases participate fully in their learning, according to individual abilities, and assess confidently their own and other pupils' progress towards meeting their own personal targets.

Pupils throughout the school develop their creative skills successfully. For example, they have worked on a project with a textile artist to create flags and candles, which have been exhibited at the Saatchi art gallery in London.

### **Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Good**

The school is a very warm, nurturing community where most pupils feel safe, valued and happy. Most pupils understand the importance of eating and drinking healthily. They bring healthy lunchboxes to school and run a fruit tuck shop at break times. Many are aware of the importance of regular exercise and take advantage of the extensive range of extra-curricular clubs, such as cricket, football and dance. All pupils take part in the daily mile exercise.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Nearly all are polite, courteous and well mannered. They are keen to share their learning and are extremely proud of their new school building. Nearly all pupils interact and care for one another very well and pupil support groups, such as 'worry warriors' and 'playground leaders', encourage them to develop their emotional wellbeing and to play harmoniously.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they work hard. They enjoy lessons and feel that the level of challenge in their work is appropriate. Most display a strong degree of concentration and perseverance when faced with challenges, such as solving difficult problems. Pupils benefit from the school's arrangements for supporting pupils' social skills. As a result, most pupils' self-esteem and confidence are high. Pupils respond positively to staff and are happy to approach them to discuss any worries or concerns. Pupils are currently working towards the first phase of 'Rights Respecting Schools' and all classes have drawn up charters to respect their own and others' rights.

Most pupils believe that the school encourages them to take on responsibility. For example, one group of pupils asked for teacher support to create their own website while another requested permission to teach games skills to a younger year group. Many pupils contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school. A minority of pupils are developing their leadership skills well through various pupil representative groups that make valuable contributions to the work of the school. For example, the 'healthy

team' works well with the school cooks to improve the school dinner menus. There is a strong school council which takes an active role in raising money for various charities, such as Children in Need. In addition, pupils produce their own school improvement plan and the 'family engagement team' effectively develops pupils' social and emotional wellbeing skills through close collaboration with the family engagement officer. Other pupil-led councils are beginning to make a positive contribution to school life, but these are in an earlier stage of development.

Pupil voice is developing appropriately and pupils in both key stages have opportunities to plan their own learning. For example, younger pupils work collaboratively to create 'thought showers' which indicate their preferences for learning, while pupils in key stage 2 design their own theme maps. However, in a few instances, pupils do not always develop well enough as independent learners.

Attendance rates have improved over time and pupils respond positively to the school's range of incentives. Nearly all pupils are punctual.

### **Teaching and learning experiences: Good**

Teachers plan interesting lessons that are matched well to pupils' abilities. Learning objectives are clear and teachers share these effectively with pupils. Most teachers set high expectations for their pupils and ask purposeful questions that promote pupils' thinking and build on their previous learning successfully. All members of staff establish positive working relationships with pupils and, as a result, there is an ethos of mutual respect and courtesy in all classes.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and they are effective language models. This has a positive effect on the development of pupils' language skills. Most teaching sessions proceed at a brisk pace. However, a few teachers do not balance their teaching methods well enough and often over direct pupils. On occasions, a few teachers rely too heavily on pupils completing worksheets and this means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend and practise their writing skills.

Teachers in the learning resource bases collaborate together well to provide effective learning experiences. For example, imaginative work on the use of adjectives enables pupils to generate words such as abundant, plentiful and exotic when they describe various foods.

Teachers provide effective verbal and written feedback and most pupils respond to the comments positively. Pupils also have suitable opportunities to learn through assessing their own work and that of others, particularly in key stage 2. In most classes, teachers set focused individual literacy and numeracy targets to enable pupils to improve specific aspects of their work.

Teachers across the school plan practical, stimulating and rich learning experiences, which ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of pupils effectively. The school gives good consideration to the principles of the foundation phase and ensures that pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn through hands-on experiences. The school takes good account of the principles of the new curriculum for Wales.

Teachers plan carefully to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. There are many interesting and relevant opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in topic work. For example, in Year 6 pupils are enthusiastically designing an imaginary project on planets. Staff enrich the curriculum successfully with a wide range of

purposeful visits. For example, older pupils visit the Imperial War Museum in London to explore war shelters, fighter planes, houses and trenches from the 1940s in order to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their Second World War topic. Older pupils visit various interesting historical and cultural sites in France.

The curriculum promotes the history and culture of Wales successfully and provides a clear focus on local places of interest. For example, pupils visit Llancaiach Fawr, Caerleon Roman Museum and St Fagans. The provision for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills is appropriate. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and improve their Welsh oracy skills throughout the day.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school is an inclusive and welcoming community where all staff provide pupils with good quality care and support. Provision for developing pupils' personal and social skills, including their confidence, resilience and engagement in learning, is strong. Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues during assemblies and classroom activities, which encourage them to understand and respect other beliefs and religions sympathetically. All staff promote the importance of good behaviour, courtesy and respect successfully.

The school has effective systems to track and monitor pupils' progress. Staff know the pupils well and they have robust arrangements for assessing their attainment and progress. They moderate and standardise assessments rigorously. Teachers use the information that derives from these systems effectively to plan and provide support to address the needs of individual and specific groups of pupils.

Teachers identify pupils' needs at an early stage and provide them with highly effective support. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is extensive and has been developed through successful partnerships with outside agencies and partner schools. Knowledgeable members of staff deliver a valuable range of intervention programmes to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills successfully. All pupils with additional learning needs have a comprehensive individual education plan which includes specific targets that teachers review regularly with parents. All pupils in the learning resource bases have detailed learning programmes, which have a positive impact on their progress.

The family engagement officer is highly effective in engaging with parents and the community. This is a very strong feature of the school which impacts very well on pupils' wellbeing, attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning. The school delivers a range of successful programmes, for example, the Generation Game project which enables pupils to visit the local nursing home each week. Other examples include activities at the weekend, such as the Saturday forest school for pupils and parents. Specific programmes targeted at raising pupils' achievement include the family literacy programmes, such as 'Beyond the Bag' and 'Impact in Maths'. All these activities contribute successfully to the development of pupils' academic, personal and social skills.

The school's partnership with parents is very strong. The school meets the needs of families sensitively and creatively. For example, this has resulted in the creation of a foodbank on the school site. Leaders and staff communicate well with parents and inform them of school activities regularly through weekly newsletters. There are



effective strategies to seek parents' views through the parents' forum, which has resulted in purposeful parents' surveys and the monthly coffee mornings with the headteacher.

The school provides an extensive and rich range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to develop pupils' personal, sporting and musical skills. Staff celebrate the arts successfully, for example, through a recent exhibition of pupils' textiles work at the Saatchi gallery in London.

The school monitors pupils' attendance carefully. Working together with the family engagement officer, staff have had a significant impact on raising pupils' attendance through the family outreach programmes.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

### **Leadership and management: Good**

The headteacher provides strong leadership and sets a clear strategic direction for developing the school. Her communication skills successfully ensure that all staff, governors, pupils and parents share her vision for securing school improvement. As a result, teamwork is a notable strength of the school and staff work together harmoniously to raise pupils' standards. For example, the wellbeing officer, in collaboration with all members of staff, provides valuable support for vulnerable pupils with emotional and behavioural problems to enable them to engage more effectively in their work.

There is a well-defined leadership structure and the deputy headteacher and senior leaders support the headteacher well. All members of staff are clear about their roles and carry out their responsibilities enthusiastically and purposefully. The headteacher and deputy headteacher promote high quality professional values among staff that contribute effectively to school improvement. Regular staff meetings consider important issues, such as the analysis and discussion of pupil performance.

By working closely with the headteacher and other staff, the governing body has a good understanding of its responsibilities and the school's priorities. Governors challenge the school effectively to improve important aspects of its work, for example in relation to improvements in pupils' wellbeing. They receive regular and informative reports from the headteacher and staff on the school's performance and priorities for improvement. The governors use this information well to check on the school's progress and to ensure that the school is spending its money wisely. Governors make a valuable contribution to the life of the school.

The school has robust processes to evaluate its performance and to plan for improvement. Staff, governors, pupils and parents contribute purposefully to the self-evaluation process and identify areas for improvement. Parents take an active role by attending various meetings to improve their understanding of the work of the school. The school self-evaluation process is based on valid first-hand evidence, such as lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. All leaders contribute effectively to the school improvement plans as part of a robust programme of monitoring and self-evaluation activities.

Leaders have suitable performance management processes in place to develop members of staff and to ensure that their work is of good quality. Senior leaders ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have valuable opportunities for continuous professional development. Staff are encouraged to observe good practice in other schools locally, nationally and internationally. For example, the headteacher visited schools in New York to see how they engage with families in their areas. Local schools frequently visit Pencoed, for example to see how to use electronic tablets effectively in lessons and how to help parents improve their children's reading skills at home. In addition, the family engagement officer supports schools in other local authorities.

The school uses its resources effectively. The indoor environment is attractive and stimulating. The outdoor learning environment is spacious with direct access to outdoor learning for foundation phase pupils. The school uses the pupil development grant prudently to raise standards and enhance pupils' self-esteem.

## 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))

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

<b>Excellent</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>Good</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>Adequate and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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

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Publication date: 16/07/2019