



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

**A report on**

**Penyrheol Comprehensive School  
Pontarddulais Road  
Gorseinon  
SA4 4FG**

**Date of inspection: October 2018**

**by**

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

## About Penyrheol Comprehensive School

Penyrheol Comprehensive School is an English medium 11-16 mixed comprehensive school maintained by Swansea local authority. It serves an area north west of Swansea that includes Gorseinon, Penyrheol, Loughor, Kingsbridge and Garden Village. There are currently 885 pupils on role, which is lower than at the time of the last core inspection in September 2013.

The school serves a mixed social community and the school receives pupils from the full ability range. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 16.3%, which is very close to the national average of 16.4%. Only a very few pupils are fluent in Welsh and speak Welsh at home. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs is 25.9%, which is higher than the national average of 22.9%. The percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is 3.7% compared to 2.2% for Wales. Around 2.5% of pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school incorporates a small specialist teaching facility for pupils with moderate to severe learning difficulties. This facility has a maximum intake of 10 pupils, generally two pupils per year group.

The current headteacher was appointed in September 2002. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, an assistant headteacher and a business manager.

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

Penyrheol Comprehensive School is a fully inclusive school that supports its pupils well. Support and guidance for pupils with additional learning needs is strong and has contributed well to the standards they achieve. Most pupils behave well in lessons. They are proud of their school and are courteous towards their teachers, peers and visitors. Many pupils make suitable progress in lessons. They read well to extract information, write with sound technical accuracy and develop their numeracy skills suitably in a range of relevant subjects.

The quality of teaching and learning experiences provided by the school has had a positive impact on outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4. Many teachers plan lessons effectively using their assessment of previous work. They use a variety of well-constructed resources that engage pupils well in lessons.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school based on raising the ambitions of all pupils and preparing them for their future lives. They share a sense of purpose and commitment to the school's values and ambition reflected in their motto "I lwyddo rhaid credu – To achieve you need to believe".

| <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 Improve standards of pupils' literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
- R2 Improve planning to address any weaknesses in teaching and assessment
- R3 Improve provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills in situations other than Welsh lessons

## **What happens next**

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

## Main findings

### Standards: Good

In lessons, the majority of pupils make strong progress and recall previous learning well. A few pupils make very good progress and produce work of exceptional standard.

Most pupils develop sound speaking and listening skills. They listen with due attention and respect to the teacher and their peers. Many contribute appropriately and confidently in class discussions when given the opportunity. They discuss their work well and explain their ideas clearly. A very few pupils build on the contribution of others without being prompted, and do so in a highly articulate way. A minority provide only brief verbal responses, though often this is in response to teachers' closed questioning.

Many pupils read well to extract information, for example in religious education when finding facts and different attitudes to creation. A minority of pupils use inference and deduction well to enhance their understanding of a writer's intentions. A very few pupils are able to evaluate characters particularly well and analyse skilfully how a writer uses language to influence the reader's feelings, such as when discussing Lady Macbeth's relationship with her husband.

Many pupils write with sound technical accuracy and use subject specific terminology well. They write clearly in a formal style, for example when writing up processes or experiments in science. A very few produce sophisticated pieces of extended writing, arguing effectively and synthesising information from a variety of sources, for example when examining the causes of poverty in Elizabethan times. The majority of pupils demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and audience in their writing. However, a minority lack a sufficient sense of audience and, as a consequence, they make incorrect language choices and their writing lacks the correct tone.

Pupils develop their numeracy skills suitably in a range of relevant subjects. Many pupils use the four rules of number well for simple calculations. A majority apply their number skills and knowledge of scales appropriately, for example when measuring latitude and longitude in geography. The majority interpret data appropriately when reading charts, tables or graphs. They measure accurately and use their understanding of proportions suitably, for example to produce exact replicas of food containers to scale for pop art drawings. In general, pupils do not take sufficient care when drawing graphs to ensure that they are titled, labelled and plotted accurately.

Pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well across the curriculum. When given the opportunity, many pupils use specialised software purposefully, for example when composing music, drawing and designing objects. A very few pupils carry out computational thinking well when producing diagrams to show processes in science, in topics such as osmosis or enzymes.

A minority of pupils develop their thinking skills suitably through considering a variety of sources and evidence to draw conclusions effectively, such as when discussing the claimants to the throne in 1066. Pupils demonstrate strong creative skills, for example when designing educational toys for young children or making festive merchandise.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has fluctuated over the past four years but is broadly in line with that in similar schools. Performance in the capped points score has been strong in two of the last four years. In 2015 and 2017, performance in this indicator is well above the average for similar schools. Provisional data for 2018 indicates that performance in these indicators has been maintained.

The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\*-A has fluctuated over the past four years. Performance in this indicator compares well with the average for similar schools in two of the last three years, which includes the provisional outcome for 2018.

Over the past three years, the performance of boys has been above that of boys in similar schools in many indicators at key stage 4. Girls' performance has been below that of girls in similar schools in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics for the last four years.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has fluctuated in most indicators over the last four years. Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has been below that of the same group of pupils in similar schools for three of the last four years. Provisional outcomes for 2018 shows a significant improvement on the previous year's performance in this indicator. Pupils with additional learning needs make strong progress against their targets and many achieve well by the end of key stage 4.

Most pupils are entered for a GCSE qualification in Welsh and many gain a level 2 qualification. Many pupils make suitable progress in developing their Welsh language skills in their Welsh lessons. However, pupils' use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and around the school is very limited.

At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils remain in education, employment or training.

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

Most pupils enjoy their life at school and appreciate the strong relationships they have with staff and their peers. Nearly all feel safe, included and valued. Pupils have a clear understanding of the range of support and guidance available to them and believe that the school deals effectively with the few incidents of bullying that arise. Most are proud of their school and are courteous towards their teachers, peers and visitors.

Pupils are active in decision-making to improve the school and its environment. In a few departments, this includes asking their opinion of teaching and learning. The well-organised school council plays an important part in representing the school community and pupil representatives take their roles very seriously. Recent initiatives include reviewing the system of rewards for regular attendance and designating pupils as 'waste warriors' to reduce and recycle plastic waste. Pupils develop their leadership skills well. For example, language ambassadors support younger pupils to practise their French and Spanish and sports ambassadors help to run lunchtime clubs.

Many pupils take advantage of the extensive offer of extra-curricular clubs and activities. This helps them to show-case their performance skills or participate in sports to keep active and healthy. A few more able pupils develop their oracy skills well in the 'Bar Club' by learning how to present a case in a mock trial.

Many pupils show positive attitudes to healthy living. They value the suitable choices of food in the canteen, access to water fountains in school and the opportunity to assess their fitness in physical education. Pupils of all ages are involved in charitable work, supporting local and national charities, such as the food bank during harvest festival week.

Most pupils behave well in lessons, although behaviour around the school is more variable. They listen attentively to the teacher and other pupils. Many display a positive attitude to their work and have a strong commitment to their learning. They sustain their concentration well throughout the lesson and work independently to complete and improve their work. They work purposefully and productively in small groups, for example when they co-operate to identify time signatures in music.

Many pupils engage fully in their learning and make positive contributions to the lesson. For example, Year 7 pupils practise speaking French with enthusiasm and, in art, pupils are proud to show the steps taken to produce their final piece. In a few lessons, pupils persevere when faced with particularly challenging tasks. This includes pupils in a computer science lesson using programming expertly to complete an HTML page and a complex computer game within a strictly limited timeframe. Many pupils organise their work and utilise techniques well to consolidate their learning, for example by highlighting important parts of texts without prompting

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

The quality of teaching and learning experiences provided by the school has had a positive impact on outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4.

Nearly all teachers have strong subject knowledge and offer clear explanations and instruction. They form productive working relationships with their pupils and manage behaviour well.

Many teachers use a variety of well-constructed resources that engage pupils well in lessons. They plan lessons that respond effectively to pupils' prior learning and are linked suitably to the teacher's assessment of previous work.

In a majority of cases, teachers provide well-timed activities with a successful balance of whole-class, group and individual tasks. This results in pupils making suitable progress in a range of skills. However, a minority of teachers do not consistently match tasks or questions to meet the needs of all pupils well enough.

In a few very successful lessons, teachers maintain a suitably high level of challenge and pace to learning. They give pupils of all abilities an opportunity to decide how they would like to work and, through thoughtful selection of groupings, ensure full participation. In a few cases, when teachers talk too much, it slows the pace of learning and reduces opportunities for pupils to participate and work independently.

Most teachers use questioning competently to gauge pupils' knowledge and recall of prior learning. However, teachers' questioning does not consistently probe pupils' understanding or challenge them to develop their verbal responses.

A majority of teachers circulate effectively during lessons to support and encourage pupils. They provide useful verbal feedback during the lesson, which supports individuals suitably. A minority of teachers provide helpful written feedback to whole classes that highlights common areas in need of improvement. This is often followed by useful tasks that strengthen pupils' understanding of those areas. In a few cases, teachers' comments do not identify clearly enough how pupils can improve their work.

The school plans its curriculum effectively to meet the needs of pupils. It works well with pupils to enable most to take appropriate qualification choices, which provide suitable pathways for their futures. At key stage 3, the curriculum promotes foundation subjects equally, ensuring that all areas of learning are valued. As a result, pupils select a broad range of options at key stage 4, including foreign languages, humanities and creative subjects. In general, the school's setting arrangements support learning suitably. However, there are a few very large classes in key stage 3, creating difficulties in managing group and practical work.

The school's early identification of pupils who will benefit from bespoke opportunities through partnerships with other local education organisations is a particular strength. This leads to these pupils receiving worthwhile provision and achieving useful qualifications. In addition, the school ensures that pupils with moderate to severe learning needs receive valuable support in its specialist teaching facility. These pupils are integrated well into mainstream provision, ensuring very positive learning outcomes and promoting strong personal development.

In the main, the school plans effective opportunities for pupils to engage in worthwhile learning experiences. These include valuable creative and digital opportunities, such as using design software in technology or developing coding in ICT. Pupils have a wide variety of opportunities in after school clubs, such as drama, pottery and badminton. Useful projects support more able pupils, such as visits from medical specialists.

The school maintains an effective work placement programme, which includes varied opportunities, such as vocational trades, and legal and veterinary professions. These experiences have a worthwhile impact on pupils' understanding of the world of work and their personal development.

The school plans for the development of skills well. Comprehensive tracking of literacy skills across the curriculum informs teachers well about individual pupils' needs. It also provides pupils with up-to-date literacy targets for improvement. The school does not use these literacy targets well enough to improve its provision.

The development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum has been enhanced by helpful teaching resources, such as video clips and work cards for calculating averages or setting out pie charts. This ensures a good degree of consistency in the teaching. The school plans appropriate activities to support pupils' ICT skills. For example, in geography, pupils use global positioning systems (GPS trackers) in local survey work to develop their data collection skills.



The school provides a few opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language and appreciation of culture, for example a 'Shwmae' day and trips to Llangrannog. Generally, this aspect of the school's provision is underdeveloped.

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

Penyrheol Comprehensive School supports its pupils well in a caring and inclusive community. It supports vulnerable pupils well, using a wide range of initiatives. These include literacy and numeracy support, sessions to help develop social and emotional communication skills and interventions to improve behaviour. These are supported by useful links with external agencies and have contributed suitably to pupils' wellbeing and academic progress.

The school monitors attendance and behaviour robustly. The school behaviour policy is implemented consistently by nearly all staff and is understood by most pupils. The 'Cynnydd' project, providing an alternative curriculum in key stage 4, supports pupils in danger of exclusion and disengagement well. The specialist teaching facility provides high quality support, guidance and worthwhile academic and social experiences for very vulnerable pupils.

The school monitors pupil progress closely. Leaders use a wide range of evidence regarding their academic progress, behaviour and social development, to determine the support each pupil needs

Support and guidance for pupils with additional learning needs is strong and has contributed well to the standards they achieve.

A range of valid strategies is used by the school to communicate effectively with parents. These include social media platforms, parents' evenings and specific focused evenings, such as on e-safety and digital competency. Reports to parents on pupil progress are comprehensive.

The school provides effective support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school helps pupils to make decisions regarding their own health and wellbeing by promoting healthy lifestyles effectively. The school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Pupils with additional learning needs are able to participate in all aspects of school life and have an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making groups. The school council contributes positively to improvements to school life, for example through recycling schemes, changes to uniform and promoting positive behaviour.

A comprehensive personal and social education programme is valued by pupils and contributes well to their development. The school evaluates and amends this provision carefully in light of pupil feedback. It develops pupils' attitudes and values effectively, allowing them to understand their place within their own community and the wider world, for example through its work in respecting the rights of children. The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others. It gives appropriate advice and guidance to pupils and their families to support their future career choices.

The school responds and manages any incidents of bullying well. This includes making effective use of 'Seriously K.I.N.D.' pupil ambassadors, who have been trained to foster inclusivity within the school community. Where incidents occur they are recorded and followed up thoroughly.

An extensive range of extra-curricular activities encourages positive pupil involvement in creative arts and sports activities. The opportunities for pupils to be involved in musical events, public speaking and the annual whole-school production have a positive impact on their confidence and self-esteem.

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

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

The headteacher has developed a clear vision for the school based on raising the ambitions of all pupils and preparing them for their future lives. He is supported suitably by his leadership team. They work well together and share a sense of purpose and commitment to the school's values and ambition reflected in their motto "I lwyddo rhaid credu – To achieve you need to believe". This has contributed well to the positive morale of most staff and has suitably supported improvements to pupil outcomes and wellbeing. There are a few important areas of the school's work where leadership has not led to sufficient and sustained improvements, such as the quality of teaching and the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Senior leadership roles and responsibilities are mostly distributed equitably and focus appropriately on raising standards of achievement and pupil wellbeing. The headteacher holds his team to account suitably through frequent meetings, which include regular reviews of pupil progress.

There is a clear line management structure for senior leaders to support and challenge middle leaders. This includes regular timetabled group meetings for curriculum and pastoral leaders respectively. These meetings are largely operationally focused, while individual link meetings have suitable, common agenda items focusing appropriately on monitoring the progress and wellbeing of pupils. A few of these meetings do not lead to sufficient, clear action points. This does not help senior leaders to hold middle leaders to account robustly enough.

Many middle leaders carry out many aspects of their role appropriately. However, the effectiveness of middle leaders overall in securing high standards and improving the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility varies too much. Leaders at all levels use performance data well to identify and address areas for improvement. In many cases, they have a suitable understanding of the specific aspects of teaching that require development and plan appropriate actions to bring about improvements. In a minority of instances, leaders do not focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on pupil progress. In particular, when scrutinising pupils' work, they pay too much attention to conformity with school policies at the expense of evaluating the standards that pupils achieve. This makes it difficult for these leaders to identify accurately specific areas for improvement.

Leaders collect an appropriate range of first-hand evidence, including pupils' views, in order to evaluate their areas of responsibility. They use this evidence to set broadly appropriate improvement priorities. However, there is too much variation in how precisely leaders plan and monitor their improvement strategies. As a result, these strategies have not had a consistent enough impact on the effectiveness of teaching and assessment.

The school has appropriate arrangements for managing the performance of staff. Objectives relate directly to the school's improvement priorities and support individual professional development well. The school challenges most underperformance robustly. Professional learning activities at a whole-school and individual level link appropriately to both performance management objectives and the school's improvement priorities. Staff have suitable opportunities to share good practice, for example through the 'triad' peer observation programme.

The headteacher, business manager and governors manage the school's expenditure carefully and make best use of the resources available to the school. Currently, there are sufficient staff, who are qualified appropriately and deployed suitably.

The school makes sound use of grant funding, including the pupil development grant, to support vulnerable pupils. This has supported improvements in the wellbeing, including the attendance, of pupils eligible for free school meals, though not in the standards they achieve.

The governors are enthusiastic supporters of the school. They are informed suitably about its performance, including through the use of link governors. Through their improving grasp of pupil performance data they have gained a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and now provide a suitable level of challenge on performance in key areas.

## 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.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court, Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.wales)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

**This document has been translated by Trosol (English to Welsh).**

© Crown Copyright 2018: 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: 10/12/2018