

Report summary for parents and carers on Penyrheol Comprehensive School

Date of inspection: May 2026

Summary

Penyrheol Comprehensive School provides a caring and inclusive environment where many pupils feel well supported and develop a strong sense of belonging. The school's values of 'respect, aspire, thrive and belong' are increasingly evident in its culture and practice. Staff know pupils well and provide valuable emotional and well-being support through a range of targeted provision and effective partnerships with external agencies. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and leaders respond diligently to concerns. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), including within the Specialist Teaching Facility (STF), is a notable strength. Staff create highly nurturing and inclusive environments where pupils make good progress from their starting points and participate confidently in school life.

In many instances, teaching is effective and helps pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and make secure progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Many teachers establish calm and purposeful learning environments, plan learning carefully and provide clear explanations that build appropriately on pupils' prior learning. Many pupils behave well, engage positively in lessons and persevere with their work. In a few examples of highly effective practice, teachers use skilful questioning, assessment and individualised feedback to deepen pupils' thinking and support strong progress.

The school is developing an appropriate whole-school approach to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Many pupils apply their reading, writing and number skills suitably across the curriculum and develop digital and wider skills through a range of practical experiences. However, a minority need too much support when tackling more challenging mathematical work. In addition, the opportunities to develop pupils' Welsh language skills, both in Welsh lessons and outside lessons are limited.

The school has developed a clear curriculum vision and provides a broad range of academic and vocational opportunities that support pupils' progression well. Beneficial personal and social education provision supports pupils' understanding of diversity, equality and well-being effectively. A wide range of enrichment opportunities broadens pupils' experiences successfully.

The headteacher is deeply committed to the school and its community. Supported by the senior leadership team, they have established a clear strategic vision based on the school's core values. Leaders have strengthened behaviour and self-evaluation processes in recent years. Governors support and challenge the school appropriately and leaders use professional learning purposefully to support improvement. Although self-evaluation and improvement planning processes are generally appropriate, improvement plans contain too many priorities at times and success criteria are not always precise enough.

Attendance remains well below that of similar schools, particularly for pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils in Year 11. While leaders have implemented suitable strategies to improve attendance, these have not secured sustained improvements.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Improve attendance
- R2 Strengthen the school's strategies to develop pupils' numeracy skills
- R3 Sharpen improvement planning
- R4 Improve the use of Welsh outside the Welsh classroom to further develop pupils' language skills.

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

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

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Publication date: 08/07/2026