

Jonathan Lloyd
Hengoed Primary School
Chapel Terrace
Hengoed
CF82 7JU

08/04/2025

Dear Jonathan Lloyd

Interim visit: March 2025

A team of inspectors recently visited Hengoed Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing the recommendations from its core inspection in June 2023.

During the visit the team had the opportunity to observe teaching and learning, look at pupils' work, scrutinise evidence and talk to pupils, staff and leaders.

Below is a summary of progress against both recommendations.

Focus of visit

Ensure that the new leadership practices improve the consistency and effectiveness of teaching across the school.

- The executive headteacher has worked successfully with leaders and staff to create an effective professional learning culture where all staff have high expectations of teaching and learning.
- The executive headteacher and senior leaders empower staff successfully to innovate, to be ambitious in their teaching and to have high expectations of pupils
- Leaders collaborate successfully with staff to mentor, coach and improve their teaching.
- Staff benefit from targeted professional learning. These strategies support effectively to improve their teaching skills. For example, staff now use a more effective range of questioning to move learning on and to challenge pupils' thinking.

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- Staff build positive relationships with pupils, parents and the wider community. This helps them to gain useful insights into pupils' learning and to identify any barriers to learning. This supports all staff to have a strong understanding of pupils' needs and to adjust their teaching effectively.
- The school provides teachers with worthwhile opportunities to learn from other staff. They have also begun to share their own expertise on a wider scale. For example, the school's work to develop pupils' science and technology skills has been celebrated and shared across the region. This has developed staff confidence and their ability to innovate. Staff are now beginning to trial worthwhile approaches to improve feedback to pupils across the school.
- Since the core inspection, leaders have used a range of monitoring and self-evaluation strategies robustly to identify areas of strength and aspects of teaching that require further improvement. Leaders hold teachers to account appropriately and help teachers to recognise their own areas for development and to embrace ways to further improve their teaching. This has improved the quality and consistency of teaching across the school.

Provide better opportunities to promote pupils' independent skills

- Leaders and teachers have taken carefully planned steps to promote pupil independence. From a young age, pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and to make purposeful choices. As they move through the school, older pupils build on these foundations well to develop more complex independent learning skills.
- There is now a whole-school inquiry approach to learning in place. This provides purposeful cross-curricular learning opportunities that enable pupils to make good progress and develop their independence. Leaders are aware of the need to further refine these topics to ensure that they are not too abstract, particularly for the youngest pupils.
- The school's whole-school focus on developing pupils' science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills provides a beneficial context for pupils to become more independent in their learning. This includes the introduction of 'Discovery Rooms' which provide pupils with exciting, flexible spaces where they explore, ask questions, and think for themselves.
- Classrooms are attractive, engaging and designed to promote independent learning. Pupils access a range of high-quality resources, self-help zones and supportive strategies that guide them in completing tasks without always needing adult support.
- Teachers promote a positive mindset. This supports pupils effectively to gain confidence and feel nurtured. They learn that making mistakes is an important part of the learning process.

- Most teachers know when to take a step back in lessons and give pupils more responsibility for their learning. They use questioning effectively and provide a range of engaging activities which promote choice and independence. This allows pupils to become more confident, resilient, and reflective in their learning.
- Across the school, support staff help pupils develop independent learning skills effectively. They provide the right balance of support and challenge, ensuring that pupils grow in confidence and resilience whilst carefully monitoring their progress.

The school's/PRU's latest core inspection report and further information on the process and purpose of interim visits can be found on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/662148>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles

Assistant Director