

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Estyn review

Pillgwenlly C.P. School

**Mendalgief Road
Newport
NP20 2HH**

Date of visit: March 2025

by

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

Outcome of visit

Pillgwenlly Primary School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school following receipt of the action plan, to ensure that it is suitable and likely to bring about the required improvement. Inspectors will visit the school again, in a further 12 months' time, to monitor progress in addressing the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Address the issues relating to safeguarding identified at the time of the inspection

The school has addressed successfully all of the issues identified at the time of the core inspection. However, during our visit we identified a health and safety concern which we will report to the local authority.

R2. Sharpen evaluation and improvement processes so that they focus better, and impact more positively, on pupils' learning

Since the core inspection, leaders have reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement processes. A revised calendar of activities provides a useful overview for staff of the monitoring, evaluation and review activities scheduled to take place throughout the school year. These capture the breadth of the school's work and align appropriately with the school's improvement priorities.

Support from the local authority and regional school improvement service has helped the leadership team to gather first-hand evidence of the quality of learning and teaching through joint activities, such as looking at pupils' books and observing learning. Although still at an early stage, this has helped to raise leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve and, in a few areas of the school's work, supported them to focus their evaluations on how well pupils develop skills. While a few senior leaders are becoming better placed to judge whether the school's actions to improve teaching are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, their capacity to do so is still developing.

Leaders have strengthened how they communicate with staff about the school's improvement work. Staff feel that leaders are supportive, and take their well-being into account when making decisions that affect them. Following monitoring activities, leaders share their findings with staff. They note where progress has been made and identify the school's next steps. Teachers generally receive helpful individualised feedback on their teaching. However, in general, leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching across the school is too positive and does not identify areas that need improvement well enough.

Recently, the school has adapted its approach to planning for, and making improvements. Leaders recognise that these processes have not always focused sharply enough on outcomes for pupils, given sufficient prominence to improving the quality of teaching, or considered the longer-term strategic direction of the school. However, there is still not sufficient clarity about the approaches and actions the school will take to secure improvements, nor a clear understanding of timescales for achieving these goals. For example, leaders are not taking good enough account of how the school will address shortcomings in the teaching of mathematics. Overall, these processes have not had a sufficiently positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.

R3. Improve pupils' writing and their mathematical skills

Most teachers have benefited from a few professional learning opportunities to develop the way that they teach writing, and there is now a consistent approach to planning for, and building up to, extended writing tasks. As part of this process, most teachers select engaging texts that pupils enjoy exploring and writing about. Pupils now have greater opportunities to write at length across a variety of genres. As a result, many pupils have a widening vocabulary and make considered word choices that add description and flavour to their writing. However, in a few cases teachers' subject knowledge is not strong enough

and this leads to too much variability in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in developing their writing skills.

For the last few years there has not been a consistent approach to developing pupils' phonological and grammatical understanding. As a result, a majority of pupils continue to have an underdeveloped understanding of common spelling patterns and of how to use basic grammar. Recently, the school has introduced a structured phonics programme into the Reception class but this work is at an early stage of development.

Leaders have recently introduced improved documentation that identifies what should be taught in each year group in mathematics. However, there is not a whole-school approach to teaching the intended learning progressively as pupils move through the school. Their learning is still disjointed. For example, in a minority of classes, pupils have been exposed to too many skills over a short period of time without sufficient opportunities to consolidate or apply their learning. This means that pupils do not understand concepts well enough.

Many teachers focus appropriately on encouraging pupils to use correct mathematical vocabulary and to explain their thinking and reasoning. A few teachers use resources, such as blocks, beads, or geometric shapes, that help pupils to explore mathematics concepts in a practical way. This furthers their understanding helpfully. However, a majority of teachers have not benefited from recent professional learning opportunities to support their teaching of mathematics and help to improve outcomes for pupils. This leads to weaker practices, such as teachers telling pupils how to solve problems rather than fostering a deeper understanding of underlying mathematical concepts. As a result, a majority of pupils do not make strong enough progress in developing their mathematics skills.

R4. Ensure that teachers provide pupils with challenging learning experiences more consistently and give them regular and helpful feedback on their learning

All teachers develop effective working relationships with pupils, and this helps pupils to feel confident to share their thoughts and ideas, and to ask questions when they are unsure of what to do.

Leaders have set in place whole-school strategies to help ensure that all pupils are more consistently challenged in lessons, such as providing pupils with a range of activities at differing levels to meet their needs. In a minority of cases, teachers implement these

strategies appropriately. However, too often, teachers do not provide pupils with the appropriate level of challenge or ensure that learning moves forward at an appropriate pace. In these cases, pupils do not make strong enough progress.

In the Nursery, teachers provide pupils with a suitable range of engaging activities that focus on helping them develop skills. However, as pupils move through the school, learning becomes too formal too quickly. In many of the younger classes, teachers over-scaffold learning and do not provide pupils with activities that provide the right level of challenge or help them to develop their independence.

As lessons progress, many teachers monitor pupils' learning carefully and provide them with helpful verbal feedback. In the best cases, this helps pupils to focus on their learning objectives and make beneficial improvements to their work. However, when working with pupils, a few staff, and particularly support staff, do not engage with pupils effectively enough to support or to extend their learning. In a majority of cases, teachers' written feedback helps pupils to know how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve. For example, writing conferences often provide pupils with a helpful understanding of how well they are doing in this area of their work.

Teachers provide pupils with beneficial opportunities to consider their own work and that of their peers. In the strongest cases, this helps older pupils consider how they have met learning criteria and where they can amend their work further. However, the quality of pupils' responses to these strategies and the impact of this work remains inconsistent.