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12/06/2025

Dear Laura,

Interim visit: June 2025

Thank you for your support in facilitating the interim visit to the school. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet you, your staff and your pupils and hear more about the improvement work that the school has achieved since the core inspection.

During the visit, we had the opportunity to:

- Talk to leaders about developments and improvement work.
- Talk to pupils and gathering their feedback about the school.
- Scrutinise books and partake learning walks with senior leaders. Visiting various lessons through joint learning walks.
- Consider other evidence provided by the school.

Particular attention was paid to the work the school is doing to respond to the inspection recommendations to improve teacher feedback, attendance and sharpen evaluation and improvement planning.

Focus of visit

Ensure that teachers' assessment and feedback are consistently effective and lead to improvements in the quality of pupils' work

- Senior leaders described the range of effective strategies that have been implemented to improve teachers' feedback. They have worked collaboratively with staff to develop a clear and sensible approach.

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Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

- It was pleasing to hear that teachers have benefitted from significant professional learning on providing written feedback underpinned by research and effective practice.
- Senior leaders evaluate work in this area robustly. They carry out regular scrutiny of pupils' work identifying strong practice and areas for improvement. They use this information to support and develop teacher feedback further and monitor its impact on pupils' learning.
- In the best cases, written feedback is clear, subject specific and actionable. As a result, pupils respond well to this feedback and improve their work.
- Leaders recognise that teachers' feedback across departments and phases is still too variable.
- Pupils have opportunities to demonstrate their understanding independently through regular summative assessments.
- The school acknowledges that their approach to assessing pupils' knowledge and skills needs further development. In addition, staff absences and specific issues have hindered progress to some extent.

We think it would be helpful for the school to consider:

- How can leaders reduce the variability in the quality of feedback across phases and departments?
- How can leaders ensure pupils consistently improve their work following teacher feedback?
- How can leaders ensure that assessments are used effectively to accurately gauge how well pupils understand and remember what they have learned?

Improve attendance, especially that of specific groups of pupils

- Since the core inspection, the school has further developed its arrangements for improving pupils' attendance.
- Staff are committed to supporting good attendance and employ a wide range of strategies to achieve this.
- There is a clear focus on building positive relationships with pupils and their families. Leaders have a good understanding of the reasons for pupils' absence and arrange suitable support programmes that are specific to individual learners and families' needs.
- Pupils we spoke to on the visit articulated the importance of regular attendance and valued the support given by the school.
- It was interesting to hear about how the 'Q Room' provides bespoke support to improve pupils' attendance and how staff visit homes to support pupils' return to school where absence is persistent.

- Attendance has improved slightly among small groups of pupils over time. However, overall attendance remains weak and at the same level for the last two years. Leaders recognise the need to continue to make further improvements in this area.

We think it would be helpful for the school to consider:

- How will leaders ensure that the school's procedures for supporting attendance are applied consistently?
- Seeking out effective practice from other schools facing similar challenges.

Sharpen evaluation and improvement processes so that they focus on the impact of the school's provision on pupils' learning

Strengths

- Leaders have clear focus on addressing the recommendations from the core inspection. They have sharpened their evaluations and planning for improvement and provided useful guidance and support for staff, concentrating on pupils' well-being and teaching.
- They plan for improvement carefully based on their evaluations of the school's work, focusing on whole school issues as well as individualised areas for improvement. They share their findings with staff and governors.
- Evaluation activities such as lesson observations and book scrutiny focus well on the specific impact of teaching on pupil progress.
- Middle leaders evaluate provision and hold their teams to account suitably. They are developing a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities within faculties and across the school.
- Senior leaders coach middle leaders helpfully to evaluate, reflect and feedback to staff following observations.

We think it would be helpful for the school to consider:

- How can the school secure greater consistency in addressing areas for development identified in through self-evaluation, for example the quality of feedback and pupil response?
- How can senior leaders further develop middle leaders to take full responsibility for evaluating and improving their areas of responsibility.

We wish you well in continuing your work to improve the school.

The school'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/6745502>

Yours sincerely



Catherine Evans

Assistant Director