

Jane Harries
Haverfordwest High VC School
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03/07/2025

Dear Jane

Interim visit: June 2025

Thank you for your welcome and support during the interim visit to Haverfordwest High VC School on the 18th and 19th of June 2025. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils and hear more about how the school has responded to two of the recommendations made by Estyn during the last core inspection in December 2019. We appreciated the way in which your staff embraced the process and the openness they showed during discussions.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with leaders to discuss their work on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills
- Speak with senior and middle leaders about how they evaluate their own work and plan for improvement
- Talk with pupils and hear their feedback about the school
- Visit lessons in a variety of subjects to see pupils and staff undertaking their work
- Scrutinise a small sample of pupils' work
- Undertake joint work scrutiny with middle leaders and lesson observation/learning walk activities with senior leaders and discuss the main findings from these activities.

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Focus of visit

Improve pupils' skills by strengthening the leadership and co-ordination of provision for the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum

During our visit we were able to hear leaders, including the skills' co-ordinators, talk about their vision of how to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects. Leaders ensure that there are beneficial opportunities to share best practice through, for example, professional learning sessions.

It was good to hear that leaders of literacy are working with specific departments to identify opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills and provide appropriate support. The school is also focusing on developing a reading culture. Leaders are implementing a range of suitable strategies to promote the importance and benefits of reading for pleasure, for example 'DEAR time' and a reading buddy scheme. Senior leaders recognise that there is still work to do to ensure that more good quality opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their advanced reading skills across the curriculum and that writing tasks are not overly scaffolded.

It was also good to hear that leaders are sensibly prioritising the development of numeracy in subjects where opportunities arise naturally and that numeracy specialists work alongside subject leaders to design opportunities in this area. Most of the opportunities provided across the curriculum enrich the learning within the subjects and, in the best examples, they are tailored for pupils of different ability. Leaders realise that not all opportunities in mathematics and numeracy provide pupils with an appropriate level of challenge.

We believe it would be beneficial for you to consider:

- How do leaders ensure that teachers plan rich opportunities to develop pupils' advanced reading skills across relevant subjects?
- How do leaders ensure that reading sessions such as 'DEAR' are valuable and effective in developing pupils' reading skills?
- Do all opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills offer a suitable level of challenge for all pupils?
- Is the teaching of mathematical and numerical concepts sufficiently focused on ensuring that pupils develop their conceptual understanding and identifying and addressing pupils' misconceptions in a timely manner?
- Are skills coordinators sufficiently involved in whole school quality assurance activities to allow them to gain a detailed picture of pupils' learning and the quality of provision?

Strengthen the role of middle leaders, in particular how they evaluate provision and secure improvement

During our visit we heard how the school is changing the middle leadership structure sensibly, which is helping to develop middle leaders' understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects and other responsibilities. Middle leaders analyse data and use a range of quality assurance activities, including lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil voice, to inform their departmental self-evaluation reports and identify key areas for improvement. It was useful to hear how senior leaders support and challenge middle leaders through regular one-to-one meetings, and how this is starting to help middle leaders secure improvements in pupils' learning. Senior leaders recognise there is still some variation in the accuracy of middle leaders' evaluations. It was helpful to hear how senior and middle leaders are now conducting joint quality assurance activities to develop skills and further improve consistency in this important area of the school's work.

We believe it would be beneficial for you to consider:

- How do senior leaders ensure that all middle leaders evaluate accurately the quality of teaching by its impact on learning in their areas of responsibility?
- Do middle leaders review the progress they are making in relation to their departmental improvement priorities well enough?
- Does the school's professional learning and coaching support middle leaders to develop the leadership skills they need to be more effective in their roles?

Whole-school self-evaluation and improvement planning processes

During our visit, we spoke to senior leaders about their whole-school self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Senior leaders use an appropriate range of activities to evaluate the school's work. As a result, they reach generally sound conclusions about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school has appropriate priorities for improvement, which reflect national and local concerns.

We believe it would be beneficial for you to consider:

- Does whole-school evaluation focus enough on learning and the impact of teaching on pupil progress?
- Is the link between whole-school self-evaluation and improvement planning clear enough?
- How do senior leaders ensure that success criteria for improvement plans are specific and measurable wherever possible?

Thank you again for all your help in planning and facilitating our visit. We wish the school well with its future developments.

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/6684512>

Yours sincerely



Catherine Evans
Assistant Director