

Darren Morris
St Mary's C.I.W. Aided School
School Lane
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15/07/2025

Dear Darren Morris

Interim visit: July 2025

A team of inspectors visited St Mary's C.I.W Aided School recently to consider progress in relation to two recommendations from the previous core inspection. The inspection team took the opportunity to observe teaching and learning, talk with pupils and staff, consider documentation, and look at samples of pupils' work. Below is a summary of the findings from the visit.

Focus of visit

Strengthen provision for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills

- Leaders have clear aspirations for developing pupils' Welsh speaking skills and plan appropriately for their progressive development. Overall, staff support pupils well to acquire a range of suitable vocabulary and sentence patterns as they progress through the school.
- Regular 'Helpwr Heddiw' sessions provide suitable opportunities for pupils to consolidate prior learning and use Welsh appropriately in everyday basic conversation. Welsh language learning walls and prompt cards in classrooms support pupils to extend their vocabulary purposefully.
- Pupils in the 'Cryw Cymraeg' play an active and influential role in promoting the use of the Welsh language across the school. They lead assemblies enthusiastically and take ownership of initiatives to raise the profile of Welsh within the school community.
- Staff provide valuable opportunities for pupils to engage with local Welsh-speaking sports people. This supports pupils' understanding of the importance of bilingualism and raises their awareness of the positive impact that speaking more

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than one language can have on their learning, and possible future career opportunities

- Leaders provide purposeful worthwhile learning opportunities, which include effective collaboration with external partners, that support staff to develop their Welsh language skills appropriately. This is beginning to improve their confidence in using the language and to enhance provision for pupils.
- Leaders collaborate effectively with an external provider to provide worthwhile opportunities for parents to develop their basic Welsh language skills. This initiative is beginning to have a beneficial impact by supporting pupils to use, and reinforce their Welsh language skills, beyond the school environment.
- Leaders monitor the provision for Welsh speaking skills appropriately, making good use of a fluent Welsh-speaking governor to evaluate its impact on pupils' attitudes and incidental use of the language. Leaders recognise the need to further strengthen pupils' confidence and competence in using Welsh beyond lessons and in a wider range of meaningful contexts.

Ensure that the quality of teachers' feedback is focused on the next steps in pupils' learning effectively

- Leaders have prioritised the development of teacher's feedback and developed a clear policy on the school's approach. Overall, the implementation of this policy across the school is inconsistent.
- Leaders regularly monitor the school's progress in this recommendation using activities such as book looks. They provide feedback for staff and identify suitable next steps.
- The school provides a suitable range of professional learning opportunities to improve the quality of feedback. Where teachers apply this consistently, it successfully develops pupils' understanding of how to reflect on their learning, for example through the effective use of detailed success criteria.
- During learning activities, many staff use a range of effective questioning strategies that link well to prior learning and support the assessment of pupils' understanding. Purposeful techniques such as 'pit stops' enable many pupils to reflect well on their learning.
- Where appropriate, staff use written feedback to highlight pupils' successes in their learning activities, and this generally relates well to the identified success criteria. When providing feedback on literacy skills, there is a tendency to focus on spelling and punctuation. Overall, the quality and consistency of written feedback on pupils' mathematics work is underdeveloped.

- Many pupils engage well with their learning and value the feedback they receive from staff, explaining how it helps them to identify and correct their mistakes appropriately. Leaders recognise that, despite this, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the next steps in their learning remains underdeveloped.

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/6653346>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles

Assistant Director