Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

Pentrebane Primary School

Beechley Drive
Pentrebane
Cardiff
Cardiff
CF5 3SG

Date of visit: June 2025

by

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

Outcome of visit

Pentrebane Primary School is judged to have made sufficient 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 removing the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

R1.Address the safeguarding issues identified during the inspection

Leaders continue to work suitably to address the safeguarding recommendations identified during the inspection. They have ensured a clear focus on improving procedures for managing the site safety. For instance, leaders meet regularly with the school caretaker to ensure the site is well-maintained and that any concerns are promptly resolved.

The school has established clear procedures for the safe entry and exit of pupils from the school grounds. Senior leaders monitor the school gates at the beginning of the day, and staff ensure that pupils are handed back to their parents calmly and in an orderly manner. The headteacher works closely with the local authority to identify areas where further improvements are necessary. The school has improved the security of the site, for instance, by ensuring that staff lock doors and gates at appropriate times and by installing temporary fencing to prevent unauthorised access.

However, while leaders have put in place suitable temporary measures to ensure pupil safety and the security of the site, more permanent measures are yet to be implemented.

R2.Establish an effective leadership and governance structure that evaluates the impact of teaching and assessment on raising pupils' standards appropriately

The headteacher leads with strength and purpose, showing clear determination to address the school's recommendations. She collaborates effectively with the local authority and governors and has established clear structures so that all staff understand their roles. The deputy headteacher and senior leaders form a cohesive team and access valuable professional learning that sharpens their leadership skills. Together, they foster a growing culture of reflection and shared accountability for improving teaching and learning.

The headteacher delegates leadership effectively. Senior leaders take ownership of their roles and use a range of monitoring approaches to gather reliable first-hand evidence about teaching. Self-evaluation is now central to the school's improvement journey, with

all staff contributing purposefully to this work. As a result, leaders have a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are strengthening their understanding of the aspects of teaching that require the greatest improvement, which enables them to align professional learning more effectively.

Leaders plan monitoring and evaluation systematically, with a clear timetable and sharp focus on improving provision across the school. Senior leaders evaluate the impact of actions and communicate key messages clearly to staff. For example, their robust monitoring cycle has strengthened the provision for writing and mental maths. Staff now apply a consistent and progressive approach to these areas of the curriculum, and as a result many older pupils now write effectively at length and across genres.

Since the core inspection, governors have enhanced their understanding of their role by engaging with external support. They receive regular updates from senior leaders and now challenge them suitably. Committees monitor progress against the post-inspection action plan and help the school meet its statutory duties. The chair and vice-chair maintain a visible presence in the school and stay well-informed about progress and ongoing challenges, including financial pressures and health and safety matters. Governors are beginning to link more directly with senior leaders and in a few instances, visit classrooms to gain deeper insights. For example, the additional learning needs (ALN) link governor works alongside the deputy headteacher to visit the special resource base (SRB) to gain an understanding of provision for pupils with ALN.

The headteacher has strengthened performance management arrangements. All teachers now work towards clear objectives linked to school priorities and engage in research projects that respond to pupils' needs. As part of their development, senior leaders are beginning to take part in managing performance, improving their leadership skills and deepening their understanding of strategic improvement.

Leaders collaborate effectively with other schools. They give staff valuable opportunities to observe strong practice in other settings and deepen their understanding of effective teaching and curriculum development. They also offer individual support, modelling expectations and mentoring staff to improve their practice. Leaders identify strong practice within the school and use it to exemplify expectations, such as recent work to improve feedback. Where teaching is less effective, leaders provide well-targeted support and maintain clear expectations to help secure improvement.

R3.Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupils make appropriate progress, particularly in writing, numeracy, ICT and Welsh

Since the core inspection, leaders and staff have worked with determination and focus to significantly strengthen the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers plan lessons more purposefully and provide greater levels of challenge. As a result, many pupils, including those who require additional support, now make strong progress from their starting points, particularly in their writing.

Most staff reflect regularly on their teaching, and in the strongest cases, use this to inform next steps effectively. For example, they annotate planning to highlight successful strategies and identify what needs further attention, noting next steps for individuals and groups of pupils.

Teachers have developed a stronger understanding of appropriate expectations for the progression of pupils' skills. They use this effectively to design activities that build successfully on pupils' prior knowledge more. They differentiate tasks with greater precision, ensuring most pupils engage with suitably challenging work. Staff in the SRB adapt environments and plan learning carefully to meet individual needs. This supports pupils with ALN to make good progress from their starting points.

Many teachers are beginning to model learning effectively. In the best cases, they break tasks into manageable steps, explain strategies clearly, and provide structured opportunities for pupils to practise skills. This helps pupils gain confidence and apply their learning independently. However, in a few lessons, modelling lacks precision. Teachers in these cases rely too heavily on verbal explanations, which reduces pupil engagement and their understanding of how to complete tasks.

Most teachers provide effective feedback that supports improvement. They offer clear written comments that guide pupils to refine vocabulary, improve sentence structure, and correct basic errors. Pupils respond well to this guidance and often make meaningful improvements during redrafting. Teachers also give timely verbal feedback to clarify expectations and address misconceptions. In a few instances, teachers overuse success criteria, and pupils focus narrowly on ticking these off, rather than developing a deeper understanding of quality and how to improve their work.

Teachers are developing more confidence in applying and understanding a wider range of effective teaching strategies. In mathematics, they use practical and visual resources, such as bead strings, number lines and fraction bricks, to help pupils understand key concepts and improve mental calculations. Many use whiteboards and visualisers effectively to check understanding and adjust challenge in real time. In the best cases, these responsive approaches sustain engagement and support progress within lessons.

Teachers are beginning to embed digital skills more consistently. They provide opportunities for pupils to use digital tools to record, present, and organise work, particularly in science and topic tasks. Staff increasingly identify meaningful opportunities to apply technology in their teaching, such as using AI-generated avatars to inspire writing about pupils' future selves.

Staff make good use of assessment information to inform teaching and target support. During pupil progress meetings, they evaluate a range of evidence to review progress and adapt provision. Teachers use this information to adjust groupings and plan targeted interventions. Teaching assistants deliver structured intervention programmes with increasing effectiveness, for example in supporting improvements in early reading and phonological development.

Professional learning has contributed well to improvements in classroom practice. Staff have benefited from focused development in modelling, assessment and progression, particularly in writing and mathematics. They apply this learning with increasing confidence and consistency, helping to raise the overall quality of teaching across the school.

R4. Develop an effective curriculum that engages all pupils and supports the progressive development of their skills across the curriculum

Leaders have designed a well-structured curriculum that engages pupils and supports the progressive development of their skills across all areas of learning. They work closely with staff to embed 'golden threads' across the curriculum, promoting consistency and continuity in pupils' learning. These themes link meaningfully to pupils' developmental stages and interests, and staff apply them thoughtfully when planning across year groups.

Staff use medium-term plans to set out clearly what pupils need to know and do over time. These plans specify the knowledge and skills for each unit and highlight opportunities for pupils to apply literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Staff are beginning to revise plans more regularly to improve provision and create relevant, engaging contexts. They ensure the curriculum reflects local, national, and global perspectives, including Welsh history and culture. Staff provide engaging opportunities for pupils to share their curriculum work with parents and carers through showcase events. These events help raise parents' awareness of what their children are learning, reinforcing the value of pupils' work and enhancing their sense of purpose and motivation.

In literacy, staff structure learning carefully to support the systematic development of pupils' skills. Teachers begin sequences of learning with diagnostic tasks, using the outcomes to plan next steps and build towards extended writing. They cover a suitable range of genres and revisit key skills such as vocabulary, sentence structure and

organisation. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 construct effective persuasive arguments that appeal to both logic and emotion.

Staff also build purposeful opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, they plan extended writing tasks in science, history and health and well-being that support pupils to communicate findings, express opinions and present research clearly and effectively. As a result, older pupils now engage well with their learning and show interest in producing high-quality written work that has clear purpose and relevance.

In mathematics, staff follow a published scheme to develop pupils' mathematical skills in line with Curriculum for Wales. They map key milestones to ensure progression in number, shape, space and data, and introduce more advanced concepts, such as algebra, for older pupils. However, the current provision does not yet build pupils' confidence in using a range of strategies for the four operations well enough. Many rely on a single standard method, which limits their flexibility, particularly in mental calculations.

Staff are beginning to plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum. For instance, pupils draw line graphs to represent data collected during science investigations and solve problems using money in historical contexts. Overall, these cross-curricular tasks are at an early stage of development. In the most effective examples, they are beginning to help pupils approach numeracy tasks with greater confidence and interest, particularly when links are made between wider topic work and the skills developed in maths sessions.

R5.Improve pupils' attendance

School leaders place a strong emphasis on the importance of attendance across the whole school community. They set high expectations as soon as children join the school, including those in the nursery provision. This proactive approach enables staff to identify and support pupils and families who may need additional help at an early stage.

Leaders have established effective systems to track and monitor pupil attendance across the school. They implement clear first-day response procedures, including phone calls and emails when parents do not make initial contact to explain their child's absence.

Leaders make effective use of detailed tracking systems to monitor attendance and respond promptly to patterns of prolonged or irregular absence. They maintain direct contact with families and provide targeted support where appropriate. A notable strength of the school is the wide range of supportive interventions it has introduced to promote regular attendance. Family engagement activities and pupil-led events contribute well to creating a welcoming school environment, reinforcing positive messages about attendance and fostering strong relationships with parents.

Staff work well together and liaise effectively with external agencies to monitor and encourage good attendance. The school also works productively with other local schools to ensure a consistent, strategic approach. This includes the development of a shared cluster-wide attendance policy, the setting of clear targets, and close collaboration with the Cluster Attendance Lead.

Attendance across the school has improved significantly. Strategies to support more vulnerable pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, are particularly effective and have led to a notable reduction in the attendance gap between these pupils and their peers.