

Brynmawr Foundation School
Clydach Dingle
Brynmawr
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 4XT

20/10/2025

Dear leaders and staff

Interim visit: October 2025

Thank you for your warm welcome and support during the interim visit to the school on the 8th and 9th of October 2025. We valued the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils and hear more about the improvement work the school has undertaken since the monitoring visit in November 2023.

During the visit, we had the opportunity to:

- Hold discussions with leaders and staff about their self-evaluation and improvement work, and their work to improve teaching and learning
- Talk with pupils and hear their feedback about the school
- Visit a sample of lessons in subjects across the curriculum
- Scrutinise a small sample of pupils' work and of relevant school documentation
- Undertake joint work scrutiny and lesson observation activities with leaders and discuss the main findings from these activities.

Focus of visit

Improve the effectiveness of teaching to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress in lessons

During our visit, it was helpful to hear how the school has maintained a strong focus on improving teaching and learning. Senior leaders continue to work with staff to ensure that the school's philosophy for teaching, 'The Brynmawr Way', is applied consistently in order to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress. During our visit, where teaching was successful, we noted the effective use of these strategies. It was useful to

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hear how senior leaders identify suitably strengths and areas for development in teaching and use this information to plan for improvement. For example, the school has identified the need to improve further how well teachers plan for learning, including opportunities for independent learning, and strengthen their approaches to questioning and assessment. In addition, it was interesting to hear how senior leaders plan professional learning activities intended to support the ongoing development of teaching and learning, including bespoke support where required. We also heard how, in general, middle leaders have developed a secure understanding of their responsibility to improve teaching in their subject areas. In our discussions with staff, it was evident that academic and pastoral leaders work together to consider pupils' well-being and to address any barriers to learning.

Questions for the school to consider

- How well does professional learning support staff to embed highly-effective practice more consistently?
- How well do leaders support those teaching outside of their specialisms to develop subject-specific approaches to teaching?

Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders' ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement

During our visit, we heard how senior leaders have refined their processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning over the last two years, while continuing to develop the skills and capacity of middle leaders. This is helping leaders at all levels to know the school well and have a clear idea of aspects of provision which require further improvement. In general, middle leaders identify important strengths and areas for improvement within their subjects.

We noted that leaders have brought about sustained improvements in important aspects of the school's work such as attendance, pupils' attitudes to learning and a culture of safeguarding. Leaders use a broad range of appropriate strategies to evaluate learning and teaching. We heard that these processes are understood well by leaders at all levels and are helping the school to improve.

We observed that there is a thread running through strategic planning, monitoring and professional learning based on the school's three core priorities. We heard how the school benefits from external support through strategic partnerships but is also now providing support for other schools. Senior leaders consider carefully the potential positive and negative balance of these activities which support the capacity building and sustainability of leadership at Brynmawr.

Questions for the school to consider

- How consistently effective is the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning? How precisely is it focused on desired improvements?
- How do you ensure that monitoring activities allow leaders to evaluate in depth and embed improvements?

Thank you again for all your help in planning and organising our visit. We wish you well with your 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/6775401>

Yours sincerely



Lowri Jones

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