

St Mary's R.C. Primary School
Wyndham Crescent
Canton
CF11 9EF

09/12/2025

Dear leaders and staff

Interim visit: November 2025

A team of inspectors visited St. Mary's R.C. Primary 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

Ensure that teaching challenges all pupils, including the more able, to develop their independent learning skills

- Leaders have taken a thoughtful and thorough approach to developing a whole-school culture and vision that fosters pupils' independence. They articulate a clear, cohesive vision that promotes pupils' independence and provides appropriate challenge.
- Leaders have improved classroom provision systematically, enabling pupils to work in calm, well-organised environments and to take increasing responsibility for specific aspects of their learning.
- In the early years, staff engage in professional learning that sharpens their practice, with a clear focus on designing enriched, open-ended learning experiences that develop pupils' independence and confidence.
- In the older classes, teachers are beginning to establish stronger learning behaviours and to provide more appropriate levels of challenge. Teachers reflect

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on how pupils learn best and adapt their teaching and provision to meet pupils' needs more effectively.

- Well-organised environments ensure that pupils can access the materials, tools, and resources they need to complete tasks. Carefully chosen seating and desks enable pupils to work comfortably and flexibly throughout the classroom. This approach supports pupils' varying learning needs and preferences effectively.
- Teachers make increasingly effective use of strategies such as challenge tasks, open-ended questioning and structured reflection tools to extend pupils' learning. These approaches help pupils think more deeply, explain their ideas clearly, and respond thoughtfully to others' ideas.
- Staff are increasingly acting as facilitators. They observe pupils closely, model effective learning behaviours and provide timely prompts. This helps pupils become more resilient and independent. However, practice is not yet consistent across classes.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of strengths and variability in independent learning and challenge across the school. They take purposeful action to address inconsistencies to strengthen whole-school practice.

Provide opportunities for pupils to make choices in their learning to develop a more engaging curriculum

- Leaders work purposefully with staff to refine the curriculum so that it reflects the school's context, meets pupils' needs and provides engaging experiences that respond to pupils' interests. This is beginning to promote a culture where pupils can influence aspects of their learning.
- Well-focused professional learning strengthens staff's understanding of curriculum design and teaching approaches. As a result, teachers are beginning to plan more consistent opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how they learn and present their work.
- The curriculum offers appropriate breadth and depth with increasingly relevant opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers are beginning to make valuable cross-curricular links that allow pupils to make informed choices, follow lines of enquiry and form meaningful connections in their learning.
- In lessons, pupils regularly reflect on their progress, and staff are beginning to provide more structured opportunities for them to choose how they approach tasks. Pupils are beginning to gain greater influence over what they learn, and many respond with increased enthusiasm, although this remains variable across classes.

- Engaging learning activities, including purposeful offsite visits, encourage pupils to pursue their own questions and interests while strengthening their understanding of Welsh culture and the local area. These experiences enhance the relevance and authenticity of learning.
- The school makes growing use of its diverse, multicultural community to enrich the curriculum. Teachers encourage pupils to explore aspects of their own and others' heritage and to make relevant links with the wider world, deepening their understanding of how past events shape modern-day Wales and global society.

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/6813330>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles

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