

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

Cilffriw Primary School

**Main Road
Cilfrew
Neath
SA10 8LF**

Date of visit: December 2025

by

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

Outcome of visit

Cilffriw 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. Strengthen safeguarding arrangements and address the safeguarding and health and safety issues identified during the inspection

Senior leaders and governors have worked relentlessly with staff to raise the profile of safeguarding at the school. As a result, there is now a strong culture of safeguarding where keeping pupils safe is seen as everybody's responsibility. All staff are clear about the roles and responsibilities that they have. Leaders undertake regular checks to ensure that staff know the correct process to follow should they have a concern. The many posters around the school help remind all staff and visitors of the school's designated safeguarding officers and what to do if a child makes a disclosure to them. Daily 'bore da' meetings for staff ensure that everyone is aware of any current safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

The school has robust processes for recording any concerns regarding safeguarding, child protection, bullying and behaviour using an electronic system. The records include details of the school's actions following an incident.

School staff at all levels receive regular and relevant safeguarding training. Senior leaders ensure that training records track when training needs to be renewed. New staff, visitors and volunteers receive information about the school's procedures to follow upon arrival at the school. Senior leaders have undertaken training with staff about what to do in the event of a lockdown and they practice the agreed process with pupils regularly.

Governors have a thorough understanding of their role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils at the school. The headteacher shares safeguarding information with them at every full meeting. Governors ask appropriate questions to challenge any data shared. Governors play an active role in monitoring safeguarding practices at the school. For example, they recently checked pupils' and staff awareness of procedures to report concerns, as well as the school's approach to managing incidents of bullying.

Governors work with staff to undertake termly site inspections to identify and address any risks and hazards across the school. This helps to ensure a safe environment for all stakeholders.

R2. Improve strategic leadership at all levels

The headteacher leads the school with great drive and enthusiasm. She has a strong focus on continuing school improvement and is well respected amongst staff and parents. Since her appointment, all members of the school community have benefitted from more regular communication and greater involvement in school decision making.

Members of the school's senior leadership team work collaboratively and are confident in carrying out their work. They use their professional learning beneficially to help them understand their roles as strategic school leaders. They have a sound understanding of their individual responsibilities in securing school improvement. Senior leaders both support and challenge other members of staff to improve successfully.

Senior leaders have shared out responsibilities fairly and appropriately. All members of staff have job descriptions that clearly outline their duties as well as their specific roles and responsibilities linked to their post. This helps senior leaders hold other members of staff to account for the quality of their work.

Senior leaders use a range of self-evaluation activities to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve. The beneficial annual plan outlines how and when they will monitor aspects of the school's work. The plan is flexible and enables senior leaders to revisit areas of the school's work that they identify as needing further development to check that staff have made the agreed improvements. Activities include regular observations in classes, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' work. Senior leaders link the focus of their work appropriately to their current priorities for improvement. They ensure that they evaluate the impact of teaching on improving pupils' outcomes. As a result of this work, the school has an accurate understanding of the next steps in their journey of improvement.

Governors have a secure knowledge of the school including its strengths and areas to improve. They provide a high level of challenge and support to senior leaders, including when monitoring aspects of the school's work during their regular visits. For example, governors have recently worked with staff to consider improvements in literacy.

Senior leaders recognise the important role that well-targeted professional learning plays in supporting individual members of staff to improve. This includes regular opportunities

to visit other providers. They ensure that they link training to addressing whole school priorities as well as individual areas for improvement. There is a strong emphasis on professional inquiry and educational research. As a result, Cilffriw Primary School is developing well as a reflective learning community.

Leaders seek the views of stakeholders, such as parents and pupils, on a regular basis. Pupils feel that their voice in the school is strong and that adults listen and act upon their suggestions. The school uses information from stakeholder consultation to inform self-evaluation appropriately.

R3. Improve teachers' use of on-going assessment to inform appropriate next steps in pupils' learning and to challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability

All staff now have high expectations of the progress that pupils should make. Teachers use a suitable range of ongoing assessment approaches to check pupils' understanding and to inform their teaching. They record pupils' progress daily in 'Reflection Journals' and use this information effectively to adapt their short-term planning and to identify next steps in pupils' learning. Teachers provide pupils with suitable challenge in lessons, enabling most pupils to make secure progress in developing their knowledge and understanding across a range of contexts.

The school's approach to capturing pupils' progress over time is developing well. Teachers have improved the way that they record and use assessment information. The school has recently introduced regular pupil progress meetings. This is beginning to help teachers and senior leaders to develop a clearer, shared understanding of pupils' progress over time and individual ways forward. This work is at an early stage, and the school recognises the need to embed these arrangements fully to ensure that they inform the next steps in pupils' learning consistently across the school.

Teachers adapt their teaching approaches flexibly to meet the needs of all pupils. Staff use effective questioning to deepen pupils' thinking and to extend their vocabulary. Teachers share learning objectives and 'steps to success' purposefully so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Pupils refer to these steps successfully as they complete their work. They are beginning to use the learning language modelled by staff to reflect on their progress accurately. Teachers provide timely and beneficial feedback to pupils during lessons. As a result, most pupils make strong progress during lessons.

R4. Improve provision for the teaching of and the progressive development of pupils' skills

Senior leaders have developed an engaging, bespoke curriculum. There are notable strengths in language, literacy and communication (LLC), Welsh, mathematics and numeracy, and digital competence. Through a purposeful programme of professional learning, senior leaders enable teachers to take increasing ownership of their roles as leaders of areas of learning and experience (AoLEs). This strategic approach to curriculum design, alongside valuable development opportunities, has strengthened teachers' planning and delivery. As a result, learning experiences support pupils to make more systematic progress in developing and applying their skills.

Staff teach literacy with increased confidence and consistency. The school has established a coherent, whole-school approach to strengthening pupils' oracy, reading and writing skills. The recently introduced phonics programme, for example, is supporting pupils across the school to make suitable progress in developing their phonic knowledge and skills. These approaches are having a positive impact on the improved progress that many pupils make.

The school has strengthened its provision for developing pupils' Welsh-language skills. Teachers use effective techniques to support many pupils to acquire vocabulary and basic sentence patterns. Improved teaching, alongside the enthusiastic work of the Criw Cymraeg and weekly Welsh assemblies, is fostering increasingly positive attitudes towards learning Welsh among pupils. However, pupils' Welsh oracy skills remain too variable.

In mathematics lessons, teachers plan tasks that build well on pupils' prior knowledge and skills. Professional learning opportunities and the introduction of the use of beneficial resources, support staff well to teach key mathematical concepts. In the younger classes, pupils develop their mathematical skills well through practical activities. Staff model approaches clearly and reinforce learning through the purposeful use of mathematical language. Across the older classes, teachers provide pupils with interesting mathematical activities that engage them well. Throughout the school teachers ensure that they provide pupils with appropriate challenge. However, there are still inconsistencies in how often pupils have opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in other areas of learning.

The school has introduced a scheme of work which includes plans for the progressive development of pupils' digital skills. This provision has started to improve pupils' digital competence.

The school has developed a purpose-led and authentic curriculum overview. Senior leaders ensure that professional learning supports staff to understand progression, expectations and coverage across all areas of learning and experience. As a result,

teachers are beginning to plan inquiry led opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills across different contexts. This has strengthened the relevance of learning for many pupils and has helped staff to focus more clearly on progression over time.

Recent curriculum developments have started to improve pupils' understanding of diversity and is supporting them to develop as ethically informed citizens. The school recognises the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about other aspects of the curriculum such as Welsh history and culture and personal and social development.