

Penclawdd Primary School
Park Road
Penclawdd
SA4 3FH

12/11/2024

Dear Louisa Reynolds-Milnes,

Interim visit: October 2024

A team of inspectors recently visited Penclawdd Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing the recommendation from its core inspection in November 2022. In addition, the team considered the progress the school has made in addressing one of its own improvement priorities over the course of the last academic year.

During the visit the team had the opportunity to observe teaching and learning, look at pupils' work, scrutinise evidence and talk to pupils, staff and leaders.

Below is a summary of progress against both the recommendation and the improvement priority. Leaders should use these findings to reflect on their successes and to support further improvements in these areas.

Focus of visit

Continue to develop the outdoor learning environment so that younger pupils have more opportunities to strengthen their independent skills

- Overall, the school has made strong progress towards this recommendation. Leaders have developed a successful strategy for developing the outdoor environment for younger pupils that takes good account of the views and needs of pupils and staff.
- Leaders carry out robust and honest monitoring, reflective evaluation and clear improvement planning. This helps the school to continue to refine its plans to improve outdoor spaces to effectively support pupils' learning. Across the school, staff recognise the role they play in the development of the outdoor environment and how these developments enrich teaching and learning.
- Professional learning for staff is precise and purposeful. Through robust research and training, they have developed a strong understanding of child development. Overall, staff know their pupils well. They use their well-honed

skills of observation, questioning and teaching to facilitate and modify high quality outdoor learning opportunities that meet the needs of their pupils consistently well.

- Staff skilfully and thoughtfully enhance the outdoor learning spaces with a worthwhile range of equipment and resources. These successfully support pupils to become more independent and curious in their learning. The use of natural and recycled resources promotes sustainability and helps to develop pupils' environmental awareness.
- Nearly all pupils enjoy learning in the outdoors and are keen to talk about their experiences. Their play enables them to refine their social skills, such as turn taking, as well as building resilience as they quietly persevere at an activity until they make progress. Pupils' physical skills benefit from opportunities to run in and explore open spaces, while they enhance their creativity and expression through performing in the woodland and on the various outdoor stages.
- The beneficial work carried out to strengthen outdoor provision for younger pupils is beginning to be adapted purposefully in older classes. Here, teachers take good account of pupils' suggestions, such as to have opportunities to explore and learn through observation and practical experiences. As such, older pupils have built their own raised beds and grown fruit. These activities have helped to enhance their creative, problem solving and physical skills as well as developing their understanding of the natural world.

Refine classroom practice to engage all pupils and develop their skills, knowledge, understanding and experiences to an appropriately high level

- The high quality of leadership at all levels is a strong feature of the school. Leaders have developed an impressive culture of teamwork, high expectations and reflection aimed at delivering the best outcomes for the school's pupils. Teaching across the school is of a consistently high standard and pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding confidently and capably as they move through the school.
- Leaders have established a systematic and robust approach to school improvement. Identification of the school's strengths and areas for improvement is sharp and accurate, and work to move the school forward is effective. For example, the introduction of well-considered provision for Relationships, Values and Ethics has been positive. By the time they leave the school, most pupils reflect thoughtfully on their own, and other people's beliefs, and contribute purposefully to the local community.
- The school makes valuable use of the local area to support and enrich the learning opportunities it provides for pupils. Purposeful visits to local businesses, amenities and areas of note help to develop a strong sense of local knowledge and pride in pupils throughout the school.
- Parents and local community members play an active and beneficial role in supporting and enhancing the school's provision through engaging first-hand learning experiences outside of the classroom. They facilitate valuable opportunities for pupils of all ages to contribute to the local community and to understand the opportunities that are available to them in later life.
- Across the school, staff have developed a successful and beneficial approach to providing pupils with swift and beneficial feedback. Pupils of all ages value

the feedback they receive and use it constructively to take the next steps in their learning.

- Overall, teachers successfully encourage pupils to become reflective learners. They make consistently good use of success criteria to enable pupils to identify what they are doing well and how they can develop their learning further. As a result, most older pupils become confident at assessing the quality of their own work and that of their friends, particularly in writing.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

Overall, the work carried out by leaders and staff at the school has been highly effective. Leaders have a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the needs of the school and the positive impact of the work that the school has carried out. They have interesting and ambitious plans to make further improvements in both areas.

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/6702167>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles
Assistant Director