

Mrs Susan Witchell
Pengam Primary School
Commercial Street
Pengam
Blackwood
NP12 3ST

11/11/24

Dear Susan Witchell,

Interim visit: November 2024

A team of inspectors recently visited Pengam Primary School to consider the school's recent progress against two of its improvement priorities.

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

Below is a summary of progress.

Focus of visit

Improve opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and effectiveness as learners

- Since the core inspection, leaders have collaborated effectively with staff across the federation to establish a whole-school approach focused on developing pupils' independence and effectiveness as learners. They ensure regular and purposeful professional learning opportunities, enabling teachers to reflect on their practice and its impact on pupil outcomes.
- Staff plan well for a range of foundation learning experiences. Independent learning tasks engage pupils effectively and classroom routines are well embedded, providing pupils with choice in how they practice their skills and carry out their tasks. However, the provision for pupils in the youngest classes is less well developed and does not consistently provide sufficient challenge for pupils to practise and develop their skills independently in engaging contexts.
- Staff are developing valuable opportunities for older pupils to develop their independent learning skills. Pupils are encouraged to plan their learning, discuss ideas, solve problems, and choose how to present information. As a result, many pupils engage purposefully and show resilience in overcoming challenges and sustaining interest in their learning.

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and Welsh. Correspondence received in either
language will be given equal priority.

- Many teachers use strategies appropriately to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning and how to go about their work, for example by modelling tasks and providing opportunities for guided practice.
- Many teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils thinking and provide opportunities for them reflect on their learning. As a result, pupils often talk with confidence and enthusiasm in lessons and enjoy sharing their ideas.
- From an early age, pupils use a variety of strategies and classroom resources effectively, such as working walls or designated classroom 'experts', to support their learning. They collaborate well in small groups, working efficiently to solve problems and exchange ideas. Consequently, many pupils are becoming confident learners who are prepared to tackle more challenging tasks.
- Staff provide effective opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning during lessons. They are embedding strategies that enable pupils to evaluate their own and others' work, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. For instance, many older pupils use success criteria effectively to guide their learning and enhance their work. However, in a few cases, opportunities are missed for feedback and assessment to focus more precisely on helping pupils refine the sophistication and depth of their language, particularly in writing.

Improve pupils' speaking and extended writing skills

- Overall, the federation is making good progress towards this recommendation. Leaders provide strong support for teachers to improve their practice through well planned professional learning and by ensuring there is effective collaboration across the federation.
- An enquiry-based approach to professional learning has enhanced teachers' skills and their understanding of how to use a range of strategies effectively to develop pupils' speaking and writing skills. Many lessons include meaningful opportunities for pupils to practise, develop, and refine their speaking and writing skills.
- Most teachers use questioning and 'rules for talk' consistently to develop pupils' ideas and language skills. As a result, pupils use effective strategies consistently across the school to build up their language and communication skills.
- Younger pupils speak confidently with each other when problem solving and working together on independent learning tasks or in their play and older pupils confidently speak out in front of audiences for a range of purposes. Teachers plan well to ensure pupils have opportunities to expand and develop their language and communication skills.
- Pupils in younger classes are developing their writing skills well. Teachers support this development with a structured approach to building phonic knowledge, word recognition, and sentence formation. Teachers ensure that there is clear link between oracy and writing and effectively weave the development of these skills into their learning experiences and independent tasks.

- In the oldest classes pupils write extended, well-structured pieces of work with independence and confidence. They use modelled examples effectively to understand the features of different types of writing. Many pupils are becoming more confident when writing at length, for different purposes across the curriculum.

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 effective. Leaders are making good progress towards the core inspection recommendations and are working well across the schools in the federation to put in appropriate plans to build on this initial success.

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/6762058>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles
Assistant Director