

This letter is also available in Welsh.



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Porthcawl Comprehensive School
52 Park Avenue
Porthcawl
CF36 3ES

06/11/2024

Dear Michael Stephens

Interim visit: October 2024

Thank you for your support to try out our interim visit to the school on the 16th and 17th of October 2024. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils and hear more about the improvement work that the school has carried out since the core inspection in February 2020.

During the visit we had the opportunity to:

- Speak with senior and middle leaders about your self-evaluation and improvement processes, with a particular focus on teaching and learning.
- Discuss the progress the school has made in addressing the recommendation around reducing the variation in teaching, especially with regard to developing pupils' literacy skills.
- Talk with pupils across all year groups and hear their feedback about the school.
- Speak with a group of teachers about their work.
- Conduct a series of joint lesson observations and work scrutiny activities with senior leaders to support your self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Observe a range of lessons.

Focus of visit

Reduce the variation in the quality of teaching and assessment, in particular with regard to the development of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum

Senior leaders are considering their approaches to developing teaching and assessment to align helpfully with their ambitions to develop a 'Curriculum for Porthcawl'. They have collaborated with staff to develop a set of pedagogical principles, which aim to improve consistency and create a culture of high-quality teaching and learning.

Estyn, Llys Angor/Anchor Court, Heol Keen/Keen Road, Caerdydd/Cardiff, CF24 5JW
Ffôn/Telephone 02920 446446
ymholiadau@estyn.llyw.cymru • enquiries@estyn.gov.wales
www.estyn.llyw.cymru • www.estyn.gov.wales

Mae Estyn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Bydd gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn y naill iaith neu'r llall yn cael yr un flaenoriaeth. | Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

A newly appointed team of teaching and learning champions are working alongside middle leaders to further improve the quality of teaching and learning. The champions have focused suitably on delivering professional learning in line with the school's pedagogical principles. They have also developed useful resources, such as the teaching and learning toolkit, to support teachers in developing their practice.

Leaders support departments helpfully to provide pupils with opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. The school has focused on developing a reading culture. For example, staff and pupil literacy leads are working well together to promote the benefits of reading for pleasure.

We think it would be helpful for the school to consider:

- How do staff ensure that any strategies to improve teaching and assessment have a positive impact on pupils' learning?
- How do leaders ensure that all staff fully understand the school's approaches to improving teaching and assessment and how to adapt these strategies to support subject-specific pedagogy?
- How can leaders ensure that all departments have a clear understanding of their responsibility to develop relevant aspects of literacy, and the most effective ways to do so?

Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement planning so that processes focus consistently on the impact of teaching and learning

During the visit, we heard about the substantial amount of work undertaken by senior leaders to revise the processes for self-evaluation and planning for improvement. There is now a stronger focus in this work on learning and teaching. Teachers are supported to improve their practice with a helpful professional learning offer. This includes useful support material for developing teaching. The 'Porthcawl Pedagogical Principles' provides a beneficial framework for evaluation and is helping teachers to develop a shared understanding of the school's strategic approach to teaching and learning.

Senior leaders are providing middle leaders with helpful support and guidance to involve them more fully in self-evaluation. Middle leaders value this collegiate approach to improvement across the school. They are clearer about how the work in their areas of responsibility supports whole-school priorities.

We think it would be helpful for the school to consider:

- How will the school ensure that their approaches to self-evaluation identify accurately the impact of teaching on learning?
- Are there sufficient planned opportunities to review and refine strategies to improve teaching and learning?
- How will the school ensure that middle leaders have the skills and capacity to evaluate teaching and learning effectively?
- How will the school ensure that all leaders consider a full range of robust information to support evaluation?

Thank you again for all your help to plan and arrange our visit.

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/6724080>

Yours sincerely



Catherine Evans
Assistant Director