

Blaenavon Heritage Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Blaenavon Community Campus
Middle Coed Cae Road
Blaenavon
NP4 9AW

17/12/2024

Dear Anna Britten

Interim visit: December 2024

A team of inspectors recently visited Blaenavon Heritage Voluntary Controlled 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

Challenge all pupils through consistent and effective teaching

- Since the last core inspection, leaders have worked effectively with staff to address the inconsistencies in teaching across the school. They have established a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and have strengthened the curriculum to ensure it supports pupils to build their skills and knowledge more systematically.
- Teachers create calm and productive classroom environments where nearly all pupils engage purposefully in their tasks. Learning activities are appropriately challenging and provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum. For example, following on from a piece of creative work where Year 3 pupils modelled dinosaur eyes from clay, they wrote instructions to share the process they had been through with other pupils.
- Teachers plan engaging topics that connect learning to meaningful, real-world contexts. For example, older pupils write persuasive letters to animal welfare leaders about the ethical implications of zoos.

- Staff encourage pupils to choose how to present their topic work, fostering a sense of care and pride that often leads to high-quality outcomes across the curriculum.
- Teachers are developing effective assessment for learning strategies, which are applied with growing consistency across the school. They provide good opportunities for pupils to engage thoughtfully with written feedback and questioning, for example to demonstrate their understanding or explaining their reasoning when solving mathematical problems.
- Teachers provide success criteria that help pupils understand how to complete tasks. Pupils are beginning to use these suitably to identify their next steps or to redraft or improve aspects of their work. Leaders recognise the need to continue to refine assessment for learning strategies to further improve their impact on pupil progress.
- Support staff are effective in their roles to enable learning, providing valuable support to ensure all pupils are able to access challenging tasks.

Ensure that relevant professional learning improves provision and pupils' outcomes

- Since the core inspection, leaders have made strong progress in addressing recommendations by establishing a robust culture of professional learning. This has led to significant improvements in teaching and learning and greater consistency in practice across the school.
- Leaders use a range of self-evaluation activities including lesson observations that identify strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning. They respond strategically by providing professional learning opportunities that address identified needs, such as improving classroom behaviour management strategies to enhance pupil engagement in lessons.
- Leaders provide a broad range of professional learning that supports school improvement successfully. Recent professional learning has led to improvements to the quality of teachers' feedback and to pupils developing effective independent learning skills.
- Leaders plan strategically to create time for staff to engage in valuable professional learning, for example by ensuring that there are regular opportunities in staff meetings to share good practice and reflect upon school improvement priorities.
- Leaders use professional development reviews purposefully to enable staff to reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Staff are beginning to carry out their own action research linked to their personal goals and share the impact with colleagues. For instance, research on effective learning environments has improved the opportunities for younger pupils to engage more productively in learning tasks.
- The school fosters a strong culture of collaboration with other schools. For example, staff work alongside subject specialists from their local secondary school to share expertise and collaborate with primary colleagues to observe and further develop good practice such as in the teaching of mathematics.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly, addressing underperformance swiftly through tailored support and professional learning opportunities. Staff benefit from observing good practice and meeting

regularly with leaders to monitor progress against personalised targets, ensuring ongoing improvements in teaching and learning.

Overall, leaders and staff have worked diligently and effectively to address the recommendations from the previous inspection, resulting in notable improvements across key areas of teaching, learning, and professional practice. As a result, the school is making strong progress and has a clear understanding of the next steps in its improvement journey.

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/6783028>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles
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