

Gilwern C.P. School
Cae Meldon
Gilwern
Abergavenny
Monmouthshire
NP7 0AY

13/12/2024

Dear Brady Edwards

Interim visit: December 2024

A team of inspectors recently visited Gilwern Primary School to consider the school's recent progress against two of the recommendations from the inspection in October 2022.

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.

Overall, leaders and staff at the school have worked well to address these recommendations. They have made particularly good progress in developing pupils' reading and writing skills. They have suitable plans to make further improvements in both areas.

Focus of visit

Improve teaching, particularly for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6

- The newly formed senior leadership team have introduced appropriate arrangements to identify strengths and areas for development in teaching. They are beginning to use this information to plan for improvement.
- Leaders and staff have worked effectively to develop a more systematic approach to the teaching of literacy. Staff have continued to receive guidance and professional learning to help them improve their practice. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading and writing.
- Most teachers consider how their environments support pupils' learning and development of skills. Overall, staff make good use of the indoor and outdoor

areas to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in a range of contexts.

- Generally, throughout the school, staff ask questions that prompt pupils' thinking. They model appropriate vocabulary linked to the task that the pupils are engaged in, and this helps many pupils make suitable progress within lessons.
- Teachers are beginning to plan lessons and activities that build well on previous learning and develop skills over time. Many teachers provide pupils with clear learning objectives for lessons, and this helps them to be successful.
- Teachers provide valuable feedback to pupils during lessons, and this is effective in helping them to improve their work in the moment. Where this is most successful, pupils respond well to feedback and identify areas that they need to improve. However, where this is less successful valuable learning time is lost when pupils pause in their work waiting for teachers to respond with their feedback, before moving on.
- Overall, the pace of lessons is suitable. In the best instances, teachers pause learning at appropriate and relevant points in the lesson to check on understanding and allow pupils to reflect on their work. However, where this is less effective, teachers interrupt the learning too often which disturbs pupils thinking and ability to immerse themselves in a task.
- Teachers use levelled challenges to differentiate work, and pupils select the level of challenge that they complete. However, many teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough and do not extend the learning sufficiently.
- Where teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to work with independence they generally cooperate and collaborate well. For example, the youngest pupils work well together using large blocks to build a sleigh for Santa and the oldest pupils discuss maturely and respectfully the social, emotional and financial value of Christmas.

Improve pupils' reading and writing skills, especially from Year 3 to Year 6

- Leaders have implemented a whole school approach to developing pupils' reading and writing skills. Beneficial professional learning has improved staff confidence and professional knowledge when teaching reading and writing.
- Staff have worked collaboratively to raise the profile of reading across the school. As a result, the school is developing a positive reading culture and a love of books amongst its pupils.
- Leaders ensure staff have suitable resources to develop pupils reading skills consistently over time. They have a clear focus on improving pupils' reading skills and building confidence through the systematic development of phonics and the effective teaching of reading strategies.
- Leaders are beginning to monitor how well pupils use their reading skills across their learning.
- In the older classes, teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and comprehension skills, for example through suitably focused group guided activities. Where this is most effective pupils read confidently to an adult and use a range of strategies to establish meaning and discuss in depth what they have read.

- Many teachers use questioning effectively to develop and deepen pupils' understanding of texts. Teachers expose pupils to an increasing variety of genres, which results in an improvement in understanding and responses when discussing the features of different texts.
- Currently independent reading activities are not enabling pupils to practice, extend and deepen their reading skills effectively. The activities do not match to pupils' reading abilities or challenge them well enough. Subsequently, they do not engage pupils well enough or provide them with opportunities to make the progress they could.
- Leaders ensure staff have the knowledge and confidence to teach effective writing sessions.
- Over time, many teachers develop pupils writing skills purposefully. For example, they focus on developing spelling, grammar and punctuation as well as encouraging pupils to improve their work through thoughtful vocabulary choices.
- Staff map out writing genres to ensure pupils develop writing skills well. They use genre appropriate writing structures to ensure that pupils understand, use and apply an increasing range of writing styles effectively and consistently.
- Teachers give clear and helpful feedback to pupils, guiding them on how to improve their writing. Many older pupils actively engage with this feedback and make noticeable improvements in their work.
- Currently, too often, the choice of tasks that pupils complete are not sufficiently challenging. Teachers' expectations of learning do not consistently match closely with pupils' developmental needs. Consequently, pupils do not extend their skills or consolidate their previous learning well enough.

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/6792057>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles
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