

Maesyrrhandir C.P. School
Plantation Lane
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1LQ

18/12/2024

Dear Caroline Bufton

Interim visit: December 2024

A team of inspectors recently visited Maesyrrhandir CP School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its core inspection in June 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.

Leaders and staff have made focused improvements to address aspects of both recommendations. They recognise that there are important elements of teaching and self-evaluation activity that could improve further. Below is a summary of the team's findings. Leaders should use these to support further progress.

Focus of visit

Improve monitoring and evaluation activities and ensure that they focus clearly on pupils' learning

- Leaders have carried out a focused cycle of monitoring activity since the core inspection. The acting headteacher has more recently refined this process to gather useful information across a broader range of the school's work. For example, through whole school moderation activity and termly pupil progress meetings.
- Leaders meet termly with teachers to discuss the progress and holistic development of individual pupils. They use these meetings well to highlight where they believe pupils make strong progress and where they may benefit from additional support. They review the impact of current provision, including within school intervention and specialist support appropriately. However, leaders do not align this activity to robust monitoring of the quality and quantity of pupils' work. This limits their ability to evaluate the impact of teaching objectively or to set suitably ambitious expectations for pupils' progress and achievement.

- Leaders and governors make worthwhile use of learning walks and individual observations of teaching and learning to monitor the implementation of agreed teaching strategies. This practice has a positive impact on improving aspects of teaching. For example, teachers are beginning to make consistent use of relevant success criteria to build on pupils' previous learning and develop their skills appropriately.
- Leaders use their evaluation of the quality of teaching to inform individual development priorities for teachers. However, they do not identify clearly enough common aspects of teaching that require improvement across classes. For example, leaders have not focused sufficiently on the need to improve the pace of teaching or to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can do for themselves.
- Leaders make worthwhile use of training to support the professional learning of staff and to promote whole staff collaboration on the school's identified priorities. Leaders and staff engage in beneficial professional discussion about changes to teaching and learning and are reflective about their practice. However, they have little opportunity to observe effective practice in other schools and this constrains their ability to make accurate evaluations about the effectiveness of their own teaching or the quality of wider aspects of the school's provision.

Ensure that teachers provide learning experiences that challenge pupils appropriately and support skill development

- The school is making steady progress in working towards this recommendation. Leaders recognise the need to improve teaching further so that tasks consistently challenge pupils to make as much progress as they are able.
- Since the core inspection, staff have used the opportunity to review and improve specific aspects of teaching. For example, they have introduced a more systematic approach to using success criteria within lessons. This helps pupils to know what skills they are developing and how to apply them to their learning effectively.
- Teachers have a sound understanding of pupils' needs. They use this to set clear goals for learning and to ensure that pupils feel confident to engage in tasks. However, in too many instances, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not ambitious enough and staff over-direct their learning. This slows the pace of lessons and hinders pupils' ability to develop their independence.
- Teachers have engaged in worthwhile professional development that is beginning to improve aspects of teaching. For example, teachers have benefitted from focused training to develop their digital skills. This has impacted positively on the range and quality of learning experiences they provide for pupils. Leaders recognise the need to provide further professional learning to improve the quality of teaching overall.
- Teachers have begun to make greater use of authentic contexts for pupils' learning. For example, younger pupils develop their entrepreneurial skills through a fundraising activity and older pupils use their digital skills to promote the school to parents and the local community. These experiences motivate pupils well and enable them to see the value in their learning.

- In many classes, teachers ask useful questions to assess pupils' understanding. In the most effective examples, they make timely interventions to address misconceptions and encourage pupils to reflect on and extend their thinking beneficially.

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/6662060>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles
Assistant Director