

Newton Primary School  
Slade Road  
Newton  
SA3 4UE

09/12/2024

Dear Paula Ketcher-Murrell

**Interim visit: November 2024**

A team of inspectors recently visited Newton 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**

**Ensure that older pupils develop their writing skills progressively to an appropriately high level**

- Leaders across the school have worked effectively to improve the provision for developing pupils' writing skills. They have worked well alongside staff to develop more consistent approaches to teaching and higher expectations for pupil's learning. For example, they have prioritised high-quality oracy opportunities which inspire and enhance pupils' writing.
- Most pupils show strong progress in developing their writing skills for a range of purposes, including play scripts, and descriptive texts. Writing tasks effectively combine learning from across the curriculum, making them purposeful. For example, pupils create performance scripts to communicate scientific information for a children's TV programme.
- Teachers design meaningful writing activities that engage pupils in authentic contexts, such as drafting persuasive letters to local councillors to advocate for the installation of defibrillators at sports venues. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the purpose for their writing and as a result, most pupils approach their work with energy and enthusiasm and are developing as confident and capable writers.
- Pupils edit and refine their work well using clear feedback from teachers and peers. These approaches support pupils effectively to refine their writing skills.

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For example, pupils draft more engaging introductory paragraphs when producing instructional texts, based on their class topics.

- In a few instances, pupils are not given enough opportunity to write at length or further refine and redraft their work. As a result, older pupils do not always produce more extended and sophisticated creative pieces that challenge them to apply and demonstrate their skills at the level they are capable of.
- Teachers across the school have established strong classroom routines and clear expectations that support the development of writing skills. Teachers employ effective strategies such as peer assessment, success criteria, and whole-class feedback to help pupils improve their work. Pupils confidently use classroom resources such as vocabulary mats and connective boards to enhance their writing.

### **Improve the quality of feedback to pupils so they understand their next steps and use this feedback to move their learning forward**

- Since the core inspection, leaders and staff have collaborated effectively to improve feedback practices that support learning. Teachers have actively participated in professional development opportunities, strengthening their understanding and consistency in implementing effective approaches across the school. For instance, staff have created a 'menu' of targeted feedback strategies, enabling them to monitor and support pupil progress both during lessons and over time.
- As a result, most staff now use a range of useful strategies competently throughout lessons or when responding to pupils' work to gauge their understanding and move their learning on. In the best instances, teachers challenge pupils to reflect on the skills they are developing and identify the strategies that are most helpful in moving their learning on. As a result, many pupils respond well to feedback and successfully identify their next steps and make meaningful improvements to their work.
- Staff establish clear objectives for learning that older pupils use effectively to reflect on their own progress and that of their peers. By carefully fostering pupils' skills in providing constructive feedback, staff successfully nurture a positive and supportive classroom culture where pupils appreciate and benefit from each other's guidance and encouragement.

Overall, the work carried out by leaders and staff at the school has been effective. Leaders and staff are making strong progress towards the core inspection recommendations.

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/6702092>

Yours sincerely



**Liz Miles**  
Assistant Director