

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

James Mansfield
Headteacher
Stanwell School
Archer Road
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13/12/2024

Dear James

Interim visit: November 2024

Thank you for your support during the interim visit to the school on the 25th and 26th of November 2024. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils and hear more about how the school has responded to the three recommendations made by Estyn during the core inspection in February 2022.

During the visit we had the opportunity to:

- discuss with leaders the progress the school has made in addressing the recommendation around improving teachers' use of questioning to develop pupils' ability to think independently;
- discuss with leaders the progress the school has made in addressing the recommendation around ensuring that pupils get enough time during the school day to relax, socialise or pursue their own interests;
- discuss with leaders the progress the school has made in addressing the recommendation around increasing the range of opportunities that pupils have to practise their Welsh;
- meet with heads of year to hear about how pupils' well-being is supported;
- talk with pupils across year groups and hear their feedback about the school;
- speak with a group of teachers about the impact that professional learning opportunities has had on their practice;
- conduct a series of joint lesson observations with senior leaders to support your self-evaluation and improvement planning;
- and observe a range of lessons

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Focus of visit

Improve teachers' use of questioning to develop pupils' ability to think independently

Following the core inspection and extensive consultation and reflection, the school has implemented a beneficial programme of professional learning activities to develop staff questioning and encourage pupils' independent thinking. The teaching and learning team have a clear understanding of pedagogical approaches to improve teachers' questioning. They have developed a supportive programme of professional learning which includes engaging all staff in action research. Leaders evaluate the impact of this support through coaching, lesson observations and peer support. During the visit we visited a small number of lessons. While there were opportunities to see teachers using a variety of questioning techniques suitably, for example to check pupils' recall, there was some inconsistency in the effectiveness of teachers' questioning.

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

How can the school ensure that all teachers adopt the most effective questioning techniques to develop pupils' ability to think independently and provide sufficient challenge?

Ensure that pupils get enough time during the school day to relax, socialise or pursue their own interests

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has doubled the number of well-being lessons. In addition, it has planned a range of valuable activities within these lessons for pupils to work with one another in physical and mental games or to enjoy one another's company during well-being walks. There is also an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities available after school and participation rates are high, as well as opportunities to take part in musical shows, cultural events and trips. The school has not altered break or lunchtimes significantly, however, the use of a biometric payment system has improved efficiency within the canteen. As a result of the school's initiatives, pupils spoken to during the visit now feel that they have sufficient opportunities to relax, socialise and pursue new interests.

Increase the range of opportunities that pupils have to practise their Welsh

The number of Welsh lessons for Year 7 and 8 pupils has been increased and nearly all pupils gain a Welsh Second Language GCSE qualification by the end of Year 11. The Welsh department has been successful in promoting the study of Welsh as an option subject in the sixth form. When opportunities arise across the curriculum, teachers use Welsh words and phrases during lessons and, in a few cases, teachers encourage pupils to respond in Welsh.

The school has increased opportunities for pupils to take part in the annual school Eisteddfod by including more year groups. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to celebrate the language and culture of Wales during events such as diwrnod 'Shwmae Su'mae.' In addition, the Welsh department organises valuable opportunities for pupils to visit Glan Llyn.

Overall, the school has been successful in promoting the appreciation of the Welsh language. As a result, leaders told us that pupils have positive attitudes towards developing their skills in Welsh. There are opportunities for members of staff, who express an interest in developing their Welsh skills further, to attend sessions run by the Welsh department after school.

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

How can the school encourage pupils to practise their Welsh language conversational skills with their peers outside of Welsh lessons?

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

The school's/PRU'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/6735400>

Yours sincerely



Catherine Evans
Assistant Director