

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

Birchgrove Primary
Heol Nant Bran
Birchgrove
Swansea
SA7 9LS

06/01/2025

Dear Matthew O'Brien

Interim visit: December 2024

A team of inspectors recently visited Birchgrove Primary School to consider how the school has made progress in addressing two of its own improvement priorities over the course of this academic year. During the visit the team had the opportunity to observe teaching and learning, look at pupils' work, scrutinise evidence and talk to pupils, staff and leaders. Below is a summary of progress against both improvement priorities. Leaders should use these findings to reflect on their successes and to support further improvements in these areas.

Focus of visit

Improve understanding of how children make progress by exploring the relationship between curriculum and assessment

- Staff have established a clear and well-articulated vision for their curriculum, prioritising the wider development of pupils' learning within meaningful contexts. This vision aligns closely with the ethos of the Curriculum for Wales. For example, staff clearly define the purpose of learning experiences and how these provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills through engaging topics.
- Staff plan carefully for the progression of knowledge and skills they aim for pupils to achieve in individual lessons and over time. They work effectively together to refine strategies for observing and assessing pupil progress, as well as sharing insights into pupils' learning. Leaders provide staff with regular and purposeful opportunities to reflect on the quality of their teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers are developing as thoughtful and reflective practitioners who evaluate pupils' progress carefully and adapt their teaching to meet individual needs effectively.
- Staff provide effective support to help pupils understand what they do well and how they can make improvements. They have high expectations of what

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pupils can achieve and, as a result, most pupils respond well to feedback and often make meaningful improvements to their work. Staff are beginning to develop strategies that further enhance pupils' engagement in reflecting on their own progress and independently identifying their next steps for learning.

Promoting team learning and collaboration amongst staff through the implementation of unseen observations

- The school has developed a trusting space where teachers feel safe to be open and honest about their practice. Leaders allocate appropriate time for collaborative working and collective learning prior to unseen observations, where no external person enters the teacher's classroom to observe the teaching. Teachers use this time well to discuss their lessons and predict the intended impact of their selected teaching techniques. They feel comfortable when seeking advice from each other, and value the opportunity to learn from one another within and across phases and areas of expertise.
- The practice of using unseen observations provides teachers with useful opportunity for in-depth discussion and exploration of one aspect of their practice. Teachers are beginning to work together as triads effectively to discuss and reflect on individual teaching practices. As a result, they are developing a deeper understanding of their own practice and how to improve. Staff value the time they have to reflect together on how to make their own learning more powerful and effective.
- Unseen observations have enabled teachers to reflect on and evaluate their own practice. As a result, they are starting to make tweaks to their provision or practice that influence their ability to support pupils. For example, staff of younger aged pupils have adapted the way they observe pupils to develop a better understanding of how pupils use and apply their skills in their play.

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/6702236>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles
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