

Bethan Moore
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14/01/2025

Dear Bethan Moore

Interim visit: December 2024

A team of inspectors led by Huw Davies HMI, recently visited Crownbridge School to consider how the school has made progress in addressing the recommendations from its core inspection in March 2022.

During the visit we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with senior leaders and teachers
- Undertake learning walks
- Scrutinise school documentation

General Comment

The school has taken a range of thoughtful actions to address both recommendations of the core inspection and, as noted in the core inspection, Crownbridge school continues to provide highly effective education for children and young people with complex and multiple learning needs.

Pupil well-being remains a central focus of the work of the school. Pupils are respectful of one another and enjoy the company of their classmates. They benefit from the trusting and supportive relationships of staff who, know pupils and their needs, very well.

Pupils are happy at school, and this couldn't be more evident than in the secondary and post-16, Christmas Concert and Fayre. The efforts of pupils over the autumn term culminated in a highly successful and engaging Christmas concert. Pupils sang and narrated with confidence and enthusiasm that captivated the audience. Pupils clearly enjoyed seeing themselves in entertaining videos of "mock up" performance

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to modern Christmas pop songs. Pupils sold, in addition to the products from the school tuck trolley, a variety of hand-made Christmas goods, ranging for tree decorations, reindeer poo and festive pastries. Pupils, with the sensitive support of staff, engaged with visitors. They explained what they had made, how much products cost and dealt with money, including mentally calculating the correct amount of change. The small staff brass ensemble provided festive music that added to the occasion suitably.

Focus of visit

Continue to ensure that the skills of staff are well matched to the needs of pupils

Since the core inspection two years ago, the extension to the school, known as Mynydd, has been completed. The extension includes six new classrooms, a kitchen for pupils to use, changing rooms, office spaces, and a hall. Outdoor equipment includes a wheelchair accessible roundabout and balance rail and a sunken trampoline. As a result, the school has been able to admit new pupils.

Leaders have taken a series of actions to facilitate a smooth transition for pupils and staff. Older pupils have been gradually moving into Mynydd with clear aim of establishing this area of the school for older, including post-16 pupils.

Leaders have been thoughtful in sensitively accommodating the increased number of pupils and the impact that this has had across the school. They continue to carefully consider the needs of pupils and the skills of staff. New classes have been created for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and for pupils in key stage 3.

To accommodate the increase in the number of pupils the headteacher has completed a review of the role of senior leaders and appointed new staff including leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. All staff are clear about their responsibilities. New teachers have benefited from an extended period of induction. During this time, they have shadowed teachers and got to know pupils and become involved in various professional enquiry groups. Newly appointed staff have a range of relevant experience and qualifications. They recognise and appreciate the knowledge and expertise of staff at Crownbridge. Higher level teaching assistants for example, lead on whole school initiatives and provide valuable professional learning for the staff team.

In addition, the Pont department has been established. Classes within this department cater for pupils with more complex communication needs. Staff work collaboratively, share resources and experiences in meeting the needs of pupils.

Ensure that feedback is purposeful and relevant, and that it allows pupils to progress

The school provides purposeful and relevant feedback on pupil progress to parents, pupils and the staff team. The school has a number of Professional Enquiry groups (PEG) which focus suitably on areas of teaching and learning. The PEG which focusses on feedback, is reflective on current national and international practices and has undertaken research on varied methods of feedback. As a result, staff have an informed understanding of different approaches.

Staff have a clear understanding of the progress pupils make and this enable them to provide a clear and holistic overview of pupil progress at annual review meetings, termly reviews and within their planning.

Feedback is person centred and bespoke to the needs of the learners. Feedback may include written responses, verbal praise, the use of body signing and visual cues. Written feedback on pupil progress to inform staff is generally used well to inform the planning of pupils next steps in learning.

Leaders have established clear systems for moderating the feedback provided by staff to pupils. In addition, feedback is used at both class and whole school level to celebrate the achievements of pupils.

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/6787012>

Yours sincerely



Dyfrig Ellis
Assistant Director