

Helen Burgum
Bishop Gore School
De La Beche Road
Sketty
SA2 9AP

06/05/2025

Dear Helen Burgum

Interim visit: April 2025

Thank you for your welcome during the interim visit to the school on the 8th and 9th of April 2025. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils and hear more about the improvement work that the school has carried out since the core inspection in April 2023.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to:

- speak with senior and middle leaders about your self-evaluation and improvement processes.
- discuss the progress the school has made in addressing the recommendations around ensuring that teaching provides a sufficiently high level of challenge for all pupils and refining self-evaluation so that it focuses on the impact of actions to identify precisely any aspects of teaching and learning that need improvement.
- talk with pupils across year groups 8,9 and10 and hear their feedback about the school.
- speak with a group of teachers about their work and hear about their work.
- conduct a series of joint lesson observations and work scrutiny activities with senior leader and middle leaders to support your self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- observe a range of teaching and learning sessions, including in English, Welsh, mathematics, science, design technology, geography, history, sociology and physical education.

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Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

R1: Ensure that teaching provides a sufficiently high level of challenge for all pupils

Since the inspection, the senior leadership team has provided a clear focus on improving teaching and learning. A well-established teaching and learning group contribute to staff development and share examples of good practice suitably. Professional learning is well-planned and makes use of external partners where appropriate. Staff report that professional learning is relevant and offers useful opportunities for collaboration. The interactive resource toolkit and weekly teaching and learning bulletins offer practical, subject-specific examples to guide and support teachers. Staff are also supported through a bespoke coaching model. Teachers demonstrate increasing confidence in using a few strategies such as cold calling and no hands up to challenge pupils suitably. As a result, these actions are beginning to create a reflective culture in the school where staff are willing to develop their practice further. Overall, the school is continuing to work to improve the level of challenge in lessons. This includes developing more effective use of questioning to explore and deepen pupils' understanding, improving the consistency and quality of verbal and written feedback, the development of pupils' advanced reading skills across the curriculum, and providing pupils with a clearly sequenced approach to learning.

R2: Refine self-evaluation so that it focuses on the impact of actions to precisely identify any aspects of teaching and learning that need improvement

The school has made sensible changes to strengthen its self-evaluation processes in response to the inspection recommendation. As part of this, specific 'Review and Development' (R&D) and curriculum area review activities are calendared throughout the year as part of the self-evaluation cycle. These activities allow leaders at all levels to gather a range of beneficial evidence that links sensibly to the school's main improvement priorities. Leaders carry out a comprehensive range of appropriate quality assurance activities, including lesson observations, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work, including their skills, and gathering pupils' views. Generally, leaders use findings from these monitoring activities effectively to prepare suitable reports. This enables them to share effective practice or address areas for development, while using the information to plan improvement work and provide beneficial professional learning for all staff. Leaders make effective use of these processes to address recommendations.

We wish you well with your future developments. We think it would be helpful for the school to consider:

- Do teachers have a clear enough understanding of how to ensure sufficient challenge?
- Are professional learning opportunities focusing well enough on developing challenge in lessons?
- Are pupils provided with sufficient meaningful opportunities to work independently?
- Do teachers understand the specific aspects of learning pupils need to improve to employ the right teaching strategies?
- How well are leaders developing a precise understanding of the specific aspects that require development?
- Are senior leaders providing suitable support and challenge for middle leaders to evaluate accurately the impact of their work on pupil standards?
- Where support is not having sufficient impact, how robustly are leaders challenging ineffective practice?

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/6704044>

Yours sincerely



Catherine Evans
Assistant Director