

Dyffryn Taf School
North Road
Whitland
Carmarthenshire
SA34 0BD

24/02/2026

Dear leaders and staff

Interim visit: February 2026

Thank you for your support with the interim visit to the school on the 3rd and 4th of February 2026. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils and hear more about the work that the school has carried out since the core inspection in November 2019.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with senior and middle leaders to discuss their work on improving the quality and effectiveness of assessment and feedback, as well as your approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning
- Speak to teachers about how they are contributing to school improvement priorities
- Talk with pupils and hear their feedback about the school
- Visit a small sample of lessons to see pupils and staff undertaking their work
- Scrutinise a sample of pupils' work
- Look at relevant school documentation
- Undertake joint work scrutiny and lesson observation activities with leaders and discuss the main findings from these activities

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

Focus of visit**How effective are the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes?**

During our visit, we spoke to senior leaders about their whole-school self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. We heard how senior leaders are providing middle leaders with support and guidance to involve them more fully in self-evaluation activities. Together, they analyse data and use a range of quality assurance activities to inform whole-school and departmental self-evaluation reports. Middle leaders told us they value the support and challenge they receive through line management and the collaborative approach to self-evaluation. However, we discussed with senior leaders that the current systems for gathering information do not always focus well enough on the progress pupils are making in their learning.

We heard how leaders use a range of evidence to plan for improvements. The school has broadly identified appropriate priorities for improvement, which reflect national and local concerns. However, leaders agreed that in general, these plans are not precise enough to identify the exact aspects on which they need to focus. In addition, they do not always outline clearly enough what they aim to improve and how exactly they will do this.

We believe it would be beneficial for the school to consider:

- How can senior leaders ensure that leaders at all levels evaluate the quality of teaching by its impact on learning?
- How will senior leaders refine self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, so that they identify accurately and precisely the specific aspects of teaching and learning that most require improvement?
- How will leaders at all levels consider precisely how they will bring about improvements and how they will monitor progress in key priority areas?

To what extent has the school improved the quality and effectiveness of assessment and feedback?

During our visit, we noted that senior leaders have recently taken steps to review assessment practices. It was interesting to hear that the school has revised its whole-school feedback policy and is aiming to put pupils' learning at the centre of this work. We heard how teachers are asked to use success criteria to 'deep mark' key pieces of work and provide pupils with actionable feedback to help them improve. We also heard that leaders are starting to recognise the importance of assessing pupils' literacy skills. We learnt that staff feel they have benefitted from a few suitable professional learning opportunities to help them develop their practice in these areas, for example, through weekly teaching briefings.

We saw some examples where this work is beginning to have an impact, such as when pupils engage purposefully with teacher feedback to improve their work and develop their understanding. However, senior leaders recognise that this work is at an early stage of development. We agree that there is still too much variation in the overall effectiveness and impact of teacher feedback on pupils' learning. From the small sample of pupils' work and lessons considered, we noted that this is because it is not always sufficiently precise or focused well enough on learning to be helpful. Additionally, in general, pupils do not engage well enough with feedback for it to be impactful.

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

- How can leaders ensure their vision for assessment and feedback is understood clearly and implemented effectively by all teachers?
- How can professional learning further develop teachers' understanding of effective assessment and feedback practices?
- How will teachers ensure that pupils engage meaningfully with helpful feedback so that its impact on pupil progress can be maximised?

Thank you again for all your help in planning and organising our visit.

We wish you well with your future developments.

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/6694512>

Yours sincerely



Lowri Jones

Acting Assistant Director