

St Martin's School
Hillside
Caerphilly
CF83 1UW

06/07/2026

Dear leaders and staff,

Interim visit: June 2026

Thank you for your support with the arrangements for the interim visit to the school on June 9th and 10th. We valued the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils to discuss the school's work on improving their evaluation methods and literacy across the curriculum.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with pupils and hear their feedback about the school.
- Visit a sample of lessons across the curriculum to see pupils and staff undertaking their work.
- Undertake lesson observations and work scrutiny activities alongside senior and middle leaders.
- Speak with senior leaders and middle leaders about your improvement work and strategies to improve literacy.
- Meet with a group of teachers to discuss their experiences in the school and how they plan to support pupils' literacy skills.

Focus of visit

How precise and robust are the school's self-evaluation processes?

During our visit, it was helpful to discuss how leaders are aiming to strengthen the school's self-evaluation and improvement processes. This has included providing leaders with professional learning to help develop a shared understanding of some key principles of evaluation and improvement.

Estyn, Llys Angor, Heol Keen, Caerdydd,
CF24 5JW Ffôn: 02920 446446
ymholiadau@estyn.llyw.cymru
www.estyn.llyw.cymru

Mae Estyn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Bydd gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn y naill iaith neu'r llall yn cael yr un flaenoriaeth.

Estyn, Anchor Court, Keen Road,
Cardiff, CF24 5JW Telephone: 02920
446446 enquiries@estyn.gov.wales
www.estyn.gov.wales

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

It was interesting to hear how leaders at all levels undertake a wide range of quality assurance activities, which enables them to gather some helpful first-hand evidence. It was useful to hear how the school is planning to engage skills coordinators more in these processes in order to improve their understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' skills. When we met with middle leaders, they told us that they value the collaborative approach to evaluation and improvement, which they feel is beginning to support them to develop a broad overview of strengths and areas for improvement in the areas they lead. We agree with the school's view that evaluation does not always focus well enough on the impact teaching has on pupils' knowledge and skills.

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

- How can you strengthen evaluation processes to focus on the impact provision has on pupil progress in their knowledge and skills?
- How can you support leaders at all levels to be more accurate in their evaluations of learning and teaching, so that you can plan more precisely for improvement?

How well does the school support the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills?

It was useful to hear how the school has started to consider how to strengthen their approach to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Leaders have considered how to raise the profile of reading across the school and have begun to implement different approaches to encourage pupils to read for pleasure. This has included introducing reading sessions during form time and English lessons, increasing the use of the school library and visits to national literary festivals.

Leaders explained how they are beginning to provide staff with professional learning and resources to help improve pupils' reading, writing and speaking skills. This includes offering opportunities to share practice to support teachers' planning and to upskill staff in different approaches to supporting pupils' reading skills. It was interesting to hear how refinements have been made to the school's self-evaluation processes for literacy. We agree that improvement planning and professional learning could be refined further by using findings from first-hand evidence more precisely.

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

- How well do leaders prioritise the aspects of literacy most in need of improvement?
- How well do leaders support staff in developing pupils' advanced reading skills across the curriculum?

Thank you for the welcome and the team valued the professional dialogue with the school during the visit. Thank you again for giving up your time to plan and arrange this visit.

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/6764070>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lowri Jones', written in a cursive style.

Lowri Jones

Acting Assistant Director