

Graig-Y-Rhacca Primary and Nursery Community School
Addison Way
Machen
CF83 8WW

10/10/2024

Dear Miss N Thain

Interim visit: September 2024

A team of inspectors recently visited Graig-Y-Rhacca Community Primary School to consider how the school has progressed in addressing two of the recommendations from its core inspection in November 2018. Below is a summary of progress against those recommendations. Leaders should use these findings to support further improvements in these areas.

Overall, leaders and staff at the school have worked well to address these recommendations. They have made particularly good progress in developing pupils' reading skills. They have suitable plans to make further improvements in both areas.

Focus of visit

Ensure that pupils use a wide range of reading strategies to improve their reading

- Since the core inspection, leaders have developed a systematic approach to developing reading across the school with clear expectations set out for all staff. They use these strategies consistently to support pupils to improve their reading skills.
- Across the school, staff have received professional learning on the effective use of group guided reading sessions. This has had a positive impact on improving the teaching of reading and on pupils' progress as readers.
- As they move through the school, many pupils develop their reading skills well. By the end of Year 2, many pupils are beginning to read confidently. They use suitable strategies to read with accuracy and show a good understanding of what they read.
- Many older pupils develop a good level of fluency in reading in line with their age. Teachers have exposed pupils to an increased variety of genres, and

this has resulted in an improvement in their understanding and responses when discussing the features of different texts.

- Teachers dedicate time to reading stories to pupils and many take advantage of opportunities to enrich pupils' vocabulary and comprehension during these sessions.
- Throughout the school, there is a clear emphasis on developing pupils' love of reading. For example, through celebrating World Book Day, developing cosy reading areas and organising book fairs. The school's provision supports most pupils to develop positive attitudes towards reading.
- Leaders use a range of monitoring activities successfully to ensure there is consistency in teaching across classes. For example, they observe reading sessions and track pupils' reading progress carefully against a range of criteria.

Improve spelling, handwriting and presentation across the school

- Leaders ensure that approaches to teaching spelling and handwriting are clear as pupils move through the school. Professional learning opportunities for staff have had a positive impact. For example, teachers from Year 3 to Year 6 now ensure that the teaching of spelling matches pupils' individual needs.
- Across the school, staff have developed their understanding of how to use a range of approaches to develop pupils' spelling skills. For instance, in the Nursery and Reception class, staff focus well on developing pupils' early sound discrimination skills. Higher up the school staff support pupils to use strategies such as mnemonics, spelling rules and artwork to help them improve their spelling.
- Younger pupils spell many three letter words and key words accurately and by Year 2 many apply simple spelling rules effectively such as adding 'ed' to regular verbs. By the time pupils reach Year 6, many spell most words correctly in their writing including polysyllabic words. However, pupils' vocabulary is not always as adventurous as it could be which can limit the scope of pupils' spelling experience and their progress in this area. Leaders have recognised this and are currently prioritising pupils' language development.
- Throughout the school, teachers model correct letter formation on a regular basis and provide opportunities for pupils to practice forming and joining letters. In the Nursery and Reception class there is a strong emphasis on physical development and many opportunities for pupils to explore mark making. This supports pupils early writing skills well.
- As pupils move through the school, they learn to form letters with correct orientation and size. By Year 6, many pupils develop a cursive style and produce fluent legible handwriting. However, across the school, teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting are inconsistent leading to fluctuations in the presentation of pupils' work.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern.

The school's latest core inspection report and further information on the process and purpose of interim visits can be found on our website:

www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6762328

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles
Assistant Director