



Report summary for parents and carers on Ferndale Community School

Date of inspection: October 2024

by Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Summary

Ferndale Community School combines high quality care, support and guidance with effective teaching and learning experiences. As a result, most pupils engage positively with their teachers and peers, and many make secure progress in their learning. The school is highly inclusive and has a range of successful alternative provisions, such as the 'Gorsaf Wên' additional learning needs (ALN) class. Positive and trusting working relationships, between all members of the school community, are a notable feature of the school's success.

Leaders and teachers provide pupils with a carefully designed curriculum. In collaboration with its partner primary schools, the school has developed a clear vision for the development of its Curriculum for Wales. The importance of high-quality teaching is central to this vision. In general, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to encourage pupils to want to know more and give pupils useful feedback on how to improve their work. In the most effective lessons, teachers ask probing questions that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. While there are opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills during lessons, the strategic planning for this aspect of curriculum remains underdeveloped.

The school's focus on supporting pupils' well-being is a notable strength. Leaders have forged strong links across the local community and the school works effectively with a range of partners to enhance the support available to pupils. In recent years, leaders have focused their efforts appropriately on improving pupils' attendance through a range of positive strategies. While this has led to some improvements, the rate of attendance remains too low.

The headteacher, supported by governors and his newly appointed senior team, has created an environment of high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Leaders focus purposefully on addressing national priorities, such as reducing the impact of deprivation. Self-evaluation and improvement planning activities are well-embedded across the school. However, a few aspects of self-evaluation are not precise enough to support improvement fully. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding, which permeates all aspects of the school's work.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

R1 Improve attendance

R2 Strengthen the strategic coordination for the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum

R3 Refine self-evaluation and improvement planning processes so that they have a consistently sharp focus on the impact of provision on pupils' learning and well-being

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

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