

Sharon Davies
Ysgol Penmorfa
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20/02/2025

Dear Sharon Davies

Interim visit: February 2025

A team of inspectors recently visited Ysgol Penmorfa to consider how the school has made progress in addressing two of its recommendations from its February 2023 inspection. During the visit the team had the opportunity to observe teaching and learning, look at pupils' work, scrutinise evidence and talk to pupils, staff and leaders. Leaders and staff at the school have worked well to address these recommendations. Below is a summary of progress against both recommendations. Leaders should use these findings to reflect on their successes and to support further improvements in these areas.

Focus of visit

Improve opportunities for pupils to write extensively in all areas of learning

- Leaders have gathered useful first-hand evidence and deliberated carefully on how they develop pupils writing. When approaches to improving pupils' writing have not been effective enough, leaders have demonstrated the confidence to change these appropriately.
- Leaders, including curriculum leaders, have implemented a clear, coherent approach to developing pupils' writing across the curriculum. This includes schemes of work that explicitly detail how, when, and why pupils will write at length.

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- As a result, planning for pupils to develop their writing skills is structured well. The systematic development of the writing process is generally applied well across the school. In the stronger examples, this is accompanied with good teaching that provides opportunities for pre-writing activities such as discussion, brainstorming, research, and activities that help pupils gather their own ideas.
- Writing activities for pupils align well with the curriculum for Wales and are relevant to pupils' experiences. Many older pupils express that their writing tasks feel purposeful and reflect real-life contexts or audiences. This authenticity boosts their motivation and the general quality of their work.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to write through a good range of genres. They write narratives, reports, persuasive texts, explanations, poems, letters, and digital media content to a good standard overall. Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to write across areas of learning. For instance, pupils produce extended historical accounts in humanities or scientific explanations in science.
- In many classes, high-quality teaching and feedback contribute significantly to pupils' standards. Often, this includes providing clear success criteria and making explicit for pupils what good writing looks like, such as using precise vocabulary, varied sentence structures, and logical sequencing. In the younger years, teachers model and share writing with pupils, demonstrating the writing process well.
- In the majority of classes, timely, constructive and specific feedback, through verbal and written comments, contribute well to improving pupils writing quality. In a few classes feedback is of very high standard and is particularly diagnostic and effective, which helps pupils improve further.
- In most older classes, there are useful opportunities for pupils to draft and structure their writing, such as by using paragraphs and topic sentences. Many older pupils proofread and edit their work effectively, and teachers ensure that pupils are guided to refine grammar, spelling, punctuation, and style.
- Overall, pupils make good progress in their extended writing and many pupils build on prior skills over time, moving from shorter structured tasks to more complex, independent extended writing. Generally, higher-ability pupils are challenged to deepen and refine their writing, while those who need extra support receive appropriate scaffolding. Nonetheless, in a few older classes, a very few learning activities are too structured, which inhibit pupils from writing freely.

Provide effective opportunities for pupils to apply their digital skills across the curriculum

- Leaders have established a successful whole-school approach to meeting this recommendation. They have collaborated with various partners to enhance staff understanding of the digital skills pupils need to develop across the curriculum.
- Leaders have provided a beneficial continuous programme of professional learning for staff, focusing on one digital strand at a time. Staff have had worthwhile opportunities to share evidence of their teaching and pupils' work with other staff each term. This is having a positive impact on the quality of provision and teachers have a better understanding of expectations of pupils' progress.
- In partnership with staff and stakeholders, leaders have collaborated effectively at all levels to map the progression of pupils' digital skills systematically. Through this work, they have established a strong foundation for ongoing improvement in other areas of the Digital Competency Framework, such as developing further pupils' interaction and collaboration skills.
- Across the school, the provision for developing pupils' digital skills is progressing well. Teachers adapt learning experiences well to meet pupils' needs according to their stage of development.
- Overall, pupils develop sound digital skills and apply them effectively across the curriculum. Older pupils are beginning to use artificial intelligence platforms cautiously to refine their answers and enhance their learning.

The school's arrangements for site management give cause for concern and have been brought to the attention of the local authority.

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/6632059>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles

Assistant Director