

Amanda Veater

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Bridge Achievement Centre
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24/03/2025

Dear Amanda Veater

Interim visit: March 2025

A team of inspectors led by Hayley Smith HMI, recently visited the Bridge Achievement Centre to consider how the PRU has made progress both in addressing the recommendations from its core inspection in March 2018 and its current priorities for improvement. The team would like to thank the staff and pupils at the PRU for their cooperation with this visit and for the warm welcome they received.

During the visit we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with senior leaders and teachers
- Undertake learning walks
- Scrutinise school documentation

General comments

The centre manager provides calm and assured leadership. She articulates a clear curriculum vision and is aspirational for the pupils at the PRU. Since the last inspection, she has established an experienced leadership team. Together they provide clear strategic direction and have secured important improvements at the PRU, most notably in pupils' well-being, progress and skills development.

Staff at the PRU create welcoming and positive environments which support pupils' learning successfully. They are strong role models who approach their work with humour and energy. There are strong relationships between staff and pupils with clear

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expectations for behaviour and learning. Pupil well-being remains a central focus of the work of the PRU. Pupils benefit from the trusting and supportive relationships of staff who, know pupils and their needs, very well. As a result, most pupils are well behaved and engage well in lessons. During their time at the PRU, pupils develop positive attitudes to learning.

The PRU provides a broad and balanced curriculum offer. Leaders articulate a clear and purposeful vision for the PRU which is effectively captured in the beneficial curriculum statement and detailed schemes of learning. Further, leaders have strengthened the range and quality of professional learning for both literacy and numeracy across the PRU. As a result, teachers across all subjects and phases provide beneficial opportunities which enables pupils to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Focus of visit

Planning and provision for skills, with a focus on learner progress in English and literacy

There is a purposeful approach to developing pupils' literacy skills, in relation to pupils' needs and abilities. The lead for literacy has developed and implemented a range of coherent, high-quality and structured plans for developing pupils' oracy, reading and writing skills. She has also established a suite of useful interventions to support pupils in developing their language and literacy skills. As a result, most pupils develop and improve their literacy skills well from when they start at the PRU. A few pupils make exceptional progress. This is a notable strength.

Pupils develop their oracy skills well during their time at the PRU. Supported by a well-planned curriculum, a range of useful interventions and a wealth of beneficial speaking frames, pupils learn to adapt their use of language to suit the context. They talk about their work and progress with increasing confidence. Pupils generally respond enthusiastically to visitors and readily share their thoughts and feelings about the positive impact of attending the PRU.

Pupils make strong progress in developing their reading skills. For example, younger pupils use picture cues and their knowledge of phonics to decode unfamiliar words. They talk about the plot and the main characters in stories with increasing confidence and accuracy. Older, more able pupils, make strong or very strong progress in their higher-level reading skills. For example, when reviewing 'Of Mice and Men', pupils describe the author's intent and how the writing conveys their meaning. They skim and scan, for

example, identifying the key factors which led to the renaming of the Colston Hall in Bristol to the Bristol Beacon as part of their work on 'Black Lives Matter'.

Pupils make strong progress, in a relatively short period of time, in developing their writing skills. For example, younger pupils write simple recipes, when making pancakes to celebrate Shrove Tuesday. Older, more able pupils write at length. For example, when writing a story about a flood, pupils organise their work into paragraphs and vary their writing to engage the reader.

Pupils generally make strong and often very strong progress in developing their spelling and grammar skills during their time at the PRU.

Staff know and understand pupils well. They have a flexible approach and adapt learning experiences well in response to the needs and well-being of pupils. Staff make effective use of pupils' individual targets to plan purposeful learning opportunities. They personalise and adapt learning tasks and resources successfully through bespoke plans, which meet individual pupils' needs successfully.

Nearly all staff continue to provide pupils with effective verbal and written feedback. Most staff are skilled in providing feedback that supports pupil progress and reminds pupils of their next steps.

Opportunities for pupils to direct their own learning are developing well. Teachers across the PRU provide beneficial opportunities for individual pupils to plan topics and activities that interest them. For example, researching and presenting information about the second world war or Vincent Van Gogh. As a result, pupils across the PRU generally engage well with their learning, take pride in their work and are developing into confident learners.

Planning and provision for skills, with a focus on learner progress in mathematics and numeracy

Leaders at the PRU have implemented a thorough and systematic approach which clearly identifies the steps needed to strengthen significantly the planning for the progression of pupils' numeracy and mathematics skills.

The PRU uses a range of appropriate and beneficial resources. These resources, along with bespoke plans and the skilful support of staff ensure that pupils make suitable progress in developing their conceptual and real-life numeracy and mathematical skills, for example, when calculating the cost of electricity consumed by calculating unit costs and adding standing charges. Bespoke pupil plans outline learning programmes well for pupils. Pupils

are confident in using these to track their progress in relation to the learning programme and to capture their thoughts on the topic area being studied.

Assessment arrangements are robust. Teachers ensure that learning activities build effectively on prior learning, are well planned and tailored to meet the needs and interests of individual pupils. The PRU undertakes timely initial assessments of pupils' abilities. This information is skilfully used to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to set suitable targets for individual pupil improvement. Tracking systems are thorough, progress is monitored carefully, used to inform next steps in learning and communicated with parents at regular intervals throughout the year.

When appropriate to do so, the PRU enters pupils for external examinations in a suitable range of subjects. Over the past two years, very few pupils left with no qualifications. Nearly all of pupils entered for qualifications achieve at least a level one qualification. The number of pupils achieving entry level qualifications in English, mathematics and science has generally increased. On average, over the past two years, around a quarter of Year 11 pupils have been entered for a certificate in personal growth and wellbeing and GCSEs in English and mathematics. In addition, just over half of pupils have been entered for a qualification in personal finance.

The PRU may wish to consider how it collates the information it has on the full range of qualifications achieved by pupils during their time at the PRU had how this important information is shared more widely including with the management committee.

Improving attendance and strengthening the procedures to monitor attendance

Senior leaders promote attendance as a key priority for all staff at the PRU. Attendance is accurately identified as a priority for improvement on the PRU development plan.

Leaders have clarified the roles and responsibilities of the attendance team. This avoids duplication in roles and allows a targeted approach to prioritise resources to support pupils and families effectively. In addition, all staff have an increased awareness of their role in supporting and identifying trends in attendance for their groups of pupils. These changes are beginning to positively impact improvement in the overall attendance levels across the PRU. From December 2023 to December 2024 overall attendance increased from 45.4% to 52.5% and rates of attendance continue to improve. Overall, attendance rates remain too low.

Processes and systems to monitor and track pupil attendance have been significantly strengthened. As a result, there is a robust evidence base to evaluate the progress individual pupils make in their attendance rates during their time at the PRU. In depth attendance data analysis by category, provision, timetable offer and at an individual pupil

level, whilst at the early stage of development, provides staff with evidence of trends in attendance in a timelier manner. Swift action is taken by staff to address any potential barriers to attendance. For example, at weekly senior leaders' meetings, individual pupil attendance concerns are identified and may result in changes to provision and the curriculum offer to remove potential barriers.

Attendance letters have been updated as part of the joint working with a local secondary school. The PRU have introduced a clear timeline and criteria to issue letters to parents and carers. This is closely monitored by the attendance officer and reviewed at bi-weekly meetings with the education welfare officer. Pupil well-being is at the heart of the work of the PRU so in addition to letters issued, a well-being meeting is arranged to support families. As a result, this effective collaboration between the PRU and parents and carers is positively impacting improvements in attendance rates.

Overall, the number of pupils on part-time timetable arrangements has significantly reduced from the last visit. Leaders have identified increasing the number of pupils accessing full-time educational provision as an area for improvement. The PRU has continued to show a reduction in the amount of time lost through fixed term pupil exclusions. There have been no permanent exclusions since the core inspection in 2018.

We think it would be helpful for the PRU to consider increasing pupil involvement in the setting of attendance targets to strengthen pupil voice and develop their ownership of personal goals for improvement.

The school's/PRU'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/6801103>

Yours sincerely



Dyfrig Ellis

Assistant Director