

Joanne Hinds
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27/03/25

Dear Joanne Hinds

Interim visit: March 2025

A team of inspectors recently visited the federation of St Mary Immaculate VRC School and St Teilo's VRC School to consider how the federation has progressed in addressing the recommendations from the most recent core inspection. Below is a summary of progress against the recommendations for St Mary Immaculate VRC School.

During the visit, the team had the opportunity to:

- Observe learning in all classes
- Talk to pupils about their learning
- Meet with teachers and leaders
- Scrutinise documentation

Focus of visit

Ensure that outdoor learning develops pupils' skills effectively and provides a suitable level of challenge for all pupils

- School leaders have invested worthwhile time into the research of effective outdoor learning practices. They have worked with a range of external experts to provide all staff with highly effective professional learning opportunities in the development of outdoor learning. These opportunities have raised staff confidence and contributed to their knowledge and understanding of quality outdoor

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learning. From this, staff have created an exceptional, embedded approach to outdoor teaching and learning.

- Despite the restrictive nature of the school site, leaders find creative ways to utilise every available space to maximise learning opportunities in the outdoors. Leaders and staff are highly proactive in sourcing funding, resources and practical help, including support from families, when continuing to develop the outdoors. Pupils are integral to this work. Their ideas are listened to and included in the school's improvement planning.
- Teachers plan a wide range of authentic outdoor experiences that enhance and extend all pupils' learning across the curriculum. Nearly all pupils are highly engaged in outdoor learning. They have a well-developed understanding of what they learn, how they learn and why they learn, demonstrating their developing independence and resilience as learners.
- Outdoor learning experiences are used well to enable pupils with additional learning needs and those whose first language is not English to make swift progress in developing their language and social skills.

Ensure that feedback from teachers targets the next steps in pupils' learning effectively and that pupils have regular opportunities to improve their own work

- Leaders and staff consider the purpose of feedback and how best to maximise its impact on learning well. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the expected learning intentions by discussing and agreeing upon clear success criteria. They ask focussed questions to elicit pupils' prior understanding and to ensure that all pupils understand how to complete tasks to the best of their ability.
- During lessons, teachers and support staff provide regular oral feedback to pupils. The use of well-timed pit stops during learning activities enables the teacher to highlight good examples, address misconceptions and support pupils to extend their work effectively.
- Teachers use written feedback well to assist pupils in editing their own work. As pupils progress through the school, most learn to evaluate their own work and the work of their peers within lessons independently, adding useful ideas for further improvement. Although pupils engage and act well with teachers' feedback, leaders have rightly identified that the quality of pupils' responses to written feedback is inconsistent within the school and across the federation. Leaders are beginning to address this through the sharing of good practice across both sites.

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

<https://estyn.gov.wales/provider/6683313>

Yours sincerely



Liz Miles

Assistant Director