

# Best practice

## Penllergaer Primary School, City and County of Swansea

Number of pupils: 373

Age range: 3-11 years



**Area of sector-leading practice which has been identified during inspection and relates to a particular quality indicator:**

**Key Question:** 3

**Quality indicator:** 3.1 and 3.2

**Aspect:** Strategic direction and the impact of leadership

**Context and background to sector-leading practice:**

Penllergaer Primary School serves the growing village of Penllergaer, in Swansea. The school has a diverse catchment area and 13% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has two specialist teaching facilities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Around 24% of pupils are identified as having additional learning needs with about 5% of pupils having a statement of special educational needs. English is the predominant language for all pupils. Around 7% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

This case study is a particularly good example of how a new head teacher has established a common vision and built leadership capacity

very successfully within the school. There is a strong commitment to securing improvement and expectations of high standards in all aspects of school life. As a result, many pupils achieve above expected levels in National Curriculum teacher assessments, standards of wellbeing are excellent and procedures for self-evaluation are highly effective.

The school is a community built around openness, trust, respect and appreciation for others. The new head teacher is an excellent role model who shows great commitment and has very high expectations for all areas of the school's work. She provides clear and astute strategic leadership, particularly in encouraging staff at all levels to show initiative and take responsibility for specific aspects of the school's work.

The factors which support this approach are the:

- very effective communication between members of the senior leadership team and other staff;
- willingness of leaders and staff to adapt and refine strategies and approaches, and to challenge themselves and others to improve provision and outcomes; and
- confidence and knowledge that all individual contributions are valued.

Pupils are given frequent opportunities to undertake leadership roles within the classroom and do so with

confidence. Pupil participation groups are effectively involved in decision making. There are useful mechanisms such as the head teacher message board,

*"Motivational and energetic leadership ensures a whole-school approach and staff commitment to raising standards in all areas."*

cook's comments board, and feelings and suggestion boxes that provide pupils with good opportunities to voice their opinions.

## **Description of nature of strategy or activity:**

The new head teacher viewed her first term as crucial in securing the confidence and support of all colleagues for the improvement strategies she wished to establish. The first step was to share her vision and aims for the school with staff, parents and governors. Stakeholders were consulted in developing a 'Values Policy' and systems that supported this vision. The learning and teaching policy was revised to ensure a common understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning that supports and challenges all pupils to achieve the highest levels.

The existing senior leadership team was reorganised and re-invigorated while a programme of weekly meetings was planned throughout the year, focussing specifically on strategic issues. The school has mixed-aged classes throughout with teachers organised into 'trust trios'. A senior leader is strategically placed in each trio to assist communication and secure a corporate approach to practices and planning. This approach ensures that all members of staff feel that their views are valued and listened to and that changes in practice are implemented quickly and whole-school policies and procedures monitored closely.

The senior leadership team has responsibility for performance management, monitoring, driving school improvement and ensuring all staff access high-quality continuous professional development both within and outside school. Subject leaders' roles were revised and reallocated. There are two leaders per subject, one with responsibility for the Foundation Phase and the other for key stage two. This helps ensure continuity and progression in the subject throughout the school.

All staff share their expertise and provide internal training through meetings, modelling, coaching and supporting other colleagues. For example, teaching assistants model and coach

: others in leading literacy and numeracy 'catch up' groups.

: The school facilitates cross-school peer observation to enable teachers to see best practice and learn from each other. This has increased the level of autonomy of all staff and increased the pace of change in the school, raising everyone's expectations of what is possible.

: The senior leadership team led the process of formulating a new school development plan which outlines the school's priorities for the next three years and focuses in depth on the current year's objectives. These were identified through analyses of data, performance management records and evidence from head teacher, senior leadership team and subject leader monitoring. These objectives also reflect local and national priorities and the results from stakeholder questionnaires. Plans include specific actions that are carefully costed and indicate monitoring timescales and expected outcomes.

: Governors are extremely well informed and receive clear information about school performance from subject leaders and pupil presentations, head teacher reports and feedback from classroom visits and subject-linked governor meetings. A new governing body data committee was established to analyse the school's data to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, track individual and cohort progress and set measurable improvement targets. This committee has been successful in improving significantly governors' understanding of data and raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Governors now challenge senior leaders more rigorously in relation to pupil outcomes.

## **What impact has this work had on provision and learners' standards?**

: Motivational and energetic leadership ensures a whole-school approach and staff commitment to raising standards in all areas. Many pupils express their views on a range of matters confidently and maturely. Many achieve standards above expected levels in numeracy

