

Best practice

Llanmiloe C.P. School

Number of pupils:

Age range: **3 - 11 years**

Date of Estyn inspection: **September 2014**



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

Key Question: 1 Outcomes

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Wellbeing

Aspect: 3.2.1 self-evaluation, including listening to learners and others

Context and background to sector-leading practice:

Llanmiloe County Primary School is a small school situated on the outskirts of the village of Llanmiloe, serving the coastal areas between Laugharne and Pendine in Carmarthenshire. There are 28 pupils aged between three and eleven years on roll. Around 7% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is well below the average for Wales (21%). The school has 2 mixed aged classes.

The school strives to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to make focused school improvements by involving them meaningfully in the school's self-evaluation process. Pupils' participation is a strength of the school and underpins the culture within it. Pupils regularly take part in surveys concerned with various aspects of school life and findings from these

feed into the school improvement plan and inform the strategic direction of the school well. Staff take pupils' views seriously and involve them effectively when formulating key school policies. Pupils understand what a policy is, how to write one, how policies provide direction for all stakeholders within a school and why they need to review them regularly. As a result, nearly all pupils feel involved in decision-making at the school and feel highly valued.

Nature of strategy or activity identified as sector-leading practice:

All pupils have a direct opportunity to contribute to the school's self-evaluation process by participating in regular pupil surveys about a range of topics from thoughts about policies to how teachers plan and deliver the curriculum. In using these results, the school is able to develop strategies to ensure that pupils have a strong voice in informing key decisions linked to school improvement and provision. For example, pupils are instrumental in contributing to the design of their curriculum and share their views on how they learn best. This has a positive impact on their learning and their attitudes to school. As a result, pupil engagement in learning is high and they constantly strive to perform at their best.

Pupil participation is strongly evident in the way pupils formulate and write their own policies. The school shows the pupils how to write and implement policies, thus giving a shared understanding of strategic direction. They understand how to formulate the aims of a policy, provide guidelines for users of the policy and the importance of regular monitoring and review.

All staff understand that pupils are at the heart of all decisions the school makes.

Pupils initially helped in developing a 'Pupil Behaviour Policy', which is now deeply embedded in school practice. Through an initial consultation process, it was evident that some pupils felt that not everyone followed the school rules because they did not feel they applied to them nor did they understand the reasons behind them. This led to a discussion based on improving pupils' understanding of the school's expectations regarding behaviour. Pupils felt that writing their own behaviour policy would make it clearer and fairer. The School Council gathered pupils' views on how they should behave to create a safe and happy school. They agreed on rewards for good behaviour and consequences for those who did not follow the 'Golden Rules' of the school. Pupils developed a 'Code of Conduct' which became a key part of their 'Pupil Behaviour Policy' and underpins the expectations of pupils throughout the school. On completion of the policy, the School Council discussed it with the Governing Body and had it ratified. They then made a presentation to the staff and pupils in a school assembly.

Using the skills learnt the School Council went on to involve pupils in developing a 'Pupil Anti-Bullying Policy'. The school implements this very successfully and it has a clear impact on raising standards of wellbeing in the school. The School Council ensures that all pupils are very clear about the definition of bullying and holds workshops in school assemblies. The policy contains guidance on how to recognise bullying behaviour, who to report problems to and the best way to create a school free from bullying, in child friendly language. Once again, they discussed it with governors, and had it approved by the Governing Body. There has been a very positive impact on the safety and happiness of pupils with everyone looking out for each other and no incidents of bullying or related poor behaviours occurring. Older pupils frequently take on the role of negotiators to resolve any misunderstandings and to remind pupils of the school rules.

The pupils have also written a very effective 'Pupils' Equal Opportunities Policy' and are currently working on a 'Pupil Teaching and Learning Policy' and a 'Pupil Raising Attendance Policy'.

Pupils from the School Council write regular

newsletters to pupils and parents, explaining about the policies they have written. They present reports to the Governing Body explaining how these policies affect pupils at the school and make suggestions for any changes. They review policies annually and present them to the governors for ratification.

Impact on provision and learners' standards:

- Pupil participation, and particularly its role in self-evaluation, has improved considerably at the school. The process of writing and implementing their own policies has had a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing, with all pupils stating they feel safe and valued in school. The school implements key policies consistently and successfully as pupils feel they have ownership of them.
- All staff understand that pupils are at the heart of all decisions the school makes. Allowing pupils to contribute meaningfully to the self-evaluation process has enhanced their engagement in learning and their sense of pride in their school greatly. They have an excellent sense of belonging, they feel listened to and, most importantly, that they have been heard.
- The benefits of involving pupils in the self-evaluation process, particularly in formulating pupil policies, are far reaching and include:
 - pupils having a clear understanding of the importance of whole school policies and procedures in forming the strategic direction of the school;
 - improved outcomes and provision for pupils being at the centre of all that the school does;
 - all pupils having a positive attitude to their learning and being involved in making choices about what and how they learn which informs planning and provision well;
 - pupils' behaviour being excellent;
 - all pupils being free from any form of bullying and feeling safe in school;
 - all pupils having a deeper engagement in and a greater sense of responsibility for their learning;
 - improved working relationships between

learners and staff; and

- the education for learners in the school being more democratic, empowering and engaging.

