

Richard Brown
Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services
Pembrokeshire County Council
County Hall
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 1TP

27 November 2020

Dear Mr Brown

Re: Post-inspection Improvement Conference in Pembrokeshire County Council

On 11 & 12 November 2020, Sarah Lewis HMI chaired a post-inspection improvement conference in Pembrokeshire County Council.

The purpose of the post-inspection improvement conference was to ensure that the authority understood the reasons for the inspection judgements, and that it is developing appropriate plans to address shortcomings. Due to the time that has passed since the inspection, and taking COVID-19 into account, our discussions focused on the actions taken to date alongside future plans.

The conference focused on the recommendations in the most recent inspection report:

- R1 Raise standards in schools, particularly in literacy, numeracy and Welsh second language
- R2 Improve the outcomes for all groups of learners, including those eligible for free school meals and those who are more able
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of the authority's work to improve teaching and school leadership
- R4 Strengthen the quality of evaluation by officers at all levels to improve the precision of planning for improvement

During the conference, the local authority demonstrated that it has identified and understood the current issues appropriately. Senior elected members demonstrated a clear commitment to addressing the issues that were raised during the inspection. They are aware of and are realistic about any barriers to progress and associated risks. Overall, the authority has identified sufficient resources to implement its plans.

The conference enabled participants to determine elements of improvement activity which would benefit from being strengthened. These include to build into the plans more specific success criteria, timescales, and monitoring and evaluation processes, and to capture more precisely the connections between the work to address different

recommendations. Participants also discussed the benefits of ensuring that the more detailed plans that underlie the overarching action plan are suitably robust and relate closely to the post-inspection action plan. The local authority link inspectors for Pembrokeshire will contact the authority soon to discuss the suggested improvements in more detail.

We will formally review the authority's progress in around 6 to 12 months. This is a shorter timeframe than in the guidance because this conference itself was delayed from March 2020. The most appropriate timing for the review will be discussed with the local authority link inspectors and it will be in the form of a progress conference. The purpose of the progress conference is to consider the extent to which the local authority has progressed its plans in addressing the recommendations identified by the inspection. In light of our view of the progress made by the local authority at that stage and its plans for further improvement, we will consider how likely it is the authority could be removed from follow-up in a year's time. If we think that it is likely that the authority will be able to demonstrate enough progress to be removed from follow-up, we will plan a monitoring visit. However, if we think that the authority will require more time, we will facilitate a second progress conference.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Phillips', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Clive Phillips
Assistant Director