

Meeting of:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	18 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	UPDATE REPORT IN RELATION TO INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY AT MAESTEG SCHOOL AND PENYBONT PRIMARY SCHOOL
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	LINDSAY HARVEY CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report provides an update in respect of action taken by Maesteg School and Penybont Primary School following recommendations by internal audit.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) with an update in respect of recent Internal Audit recommendations following visits to Bridgend schools, and the subsequent actions taken by those schools, during the 2024-2025 school year.

2. Background

- 2.1 Internal Audit has identified issues in respect of Penybont Primary School and Maesteg School which resulted in each school receiving a 'limited assurance' opinion. An analysis of the audit areas which these recommendations relate to is in the table below.

Audit Area	Penybont		Maesteg	
	High	Medium	High	Medium
Budgetary Control	0	0	0	1
Governance	0	1	1	0
Private/ Unofficial Fund	0	4	0	2
Purchasing (inc Pcard)	0	7	1	3
Safeguarding	1	1	0	2
School Income	0	1	0	4
Total	1	14	2	12

Penybont Primary School

2.2 The following issues were identified during the audit:

- the level of expenditure, using a Council purchasing card, was extremely high when compared to other Bridgend schools;
- records were not fully maintained including the retention of receipts and invoices (which meant that independent checks of the purchases were not being undertaken as expected);
- purchased items were not being securely stored or recorded on an inventory; and
- some school governors had not participated in the necessary safeguarding training.

Maesteg School

2.3 The following key issues were identified during the audit:

- only the headteacher has a delegated expenditure limit at the school;
- the purchase of a minibus did not have the required three quotes or authorisation by the full governing body available;
- the school's private fund had not undergone an independent audit for at least two years and records of cash received were not available for the two years up to September 2024;
- there was no breakdown of expected miscellaneous income in the school budget;
- letting fees charged to hirers had not been agreed by the governing body and inadequate records had been maintained, and
- some new members of staff had commenced their roles without Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance or appropriate risk assessments in place.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The schools agreed all of the recommendations made. The schools now need to implement the recommendations made in relation to these issues to improve the controls to achieve a better outcome.

3.2 To date, **Penybont Primary School**:

- has implemented the high-priority recommendation in respect of safeguarding training;

- has implemented 11 of the 14 medium-priority recommendations; and
- has agreed to implement the 3 remaining recommendations (relating to the school's private fund) by 30 September 2025.

3.3 To date, **Maesteg School**:

- has implemented the one high-priority recommendation in respect of delegated spending limits;
- has worked on the recommendation in respect of high-value purchases and has produced a financial procedure guide (which will be approved by the school's governing body in October 2025), (and hopes to fully address the recommendation during the autumn term 2025); and
- has implemented 10 of the 12 medium-priority recommendations (with improved controls to mitigate any risks identified).

3.4 Internal Audit will revisit Maesteg School by 31 October 2025 and will revisit Penybont Primary School by 31 December 2025 to monitor each school's approach.

3.5 It is hoped that assurance will then be provided confirming that the recommendations have been fully implemented.

3.6 Internal Audit will monitor the schools' progress and will provide further information to GAC during the final quarter of 2025-2026.

4. **Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report; therefore, it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. **Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people.

5.2 The well-being objectives are designed to complement each other and are part of an integrated way of working to improve well-being for the people of Bridgend.

5.3 It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of the well-being goals or objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 One of recommendations made by Internal Audit relates to safeguarding training for school governors. This recommendation has now been satisfied.

7.2 There are no corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 These are reflected in the body of the report.

9. Recommendations

9.1. It is recommended that the GAC notes the contents of this report.

Background documents

None