



Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Calon Cymru

Date of inspection: October 2022

by Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Overview

Ysgol Calon Cymru provides a calm, caring and enriching learning environment where many pupils develop as happy, confident and respectful individuals. Many pupils behave respectfully towards each other, develop positive relationships with school staff and are friendly with visitors. Pupils who attend the school's Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) centre make strong development in their social and life skills and cope well when they attend mainstream lessons with support. Well-established pupil-led action groups, such as the 'Cryw Cymraeg' the LGBTQ+ group and the 'Male Mental Health Group' play an important role in helping to develop the school's inclusive ethos. However, pupils, including pupil governors and 'class captains' do not have enough opportunities to share their opinions on other important aspects of the school's work, such as the quality of teaching.

The school provides a wide and relevant range of subject choices for pupils in Key Stage 4 and for those in the sixth form. This enables pupils to follow courses and gain qualifications in their areas of interest and also prepares them well for employment, further education or training and for life beyond school. Although the broad curriculum offer is a strength of the school, the range of subjects available for pupils who wish to study through the medium of Welsh is narrow.

Pupils benefit from an array of extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities. Many thrive because of the school's strong provision for pastoral care, support and guidance. There are appropriate arrangements for the development of pupils' personal, health and social education within the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 3. However, there are insufficient opportunities for older pupils to learn about and talk about important issues which affect them, such as relationships, health and well-being, financial education and life skills.

The school opened in September 2018 and was still in its initial stages of existence when the global pandemic broke out in March 2020. The headteacher was appointed to a permanent post in 2021 and the new and complete senior leadership was formed very recently. Senior leaders have shared a clear and ambitious vision with pupils, parents, staff and governors. Although there is now more stability in the school, there are inconsistencies in the quality of middle leaders, in particular their ability to plan for improvements. Although leadership has had a positive impact on standards of well-being and on the quality of pastoral care, it has not yet had sufficient impact on improving teaching and learning and on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

Despite clear strengths in the school's processes to safeguard children and young people, inspectors identified shortcomings in the standards of health and safety on both campuses.



Recommendations

R1 Improve the quality of teaching

R2 Strengthen the provision for literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum

R3 Strengthen improvement planning processes

R4 Address the health and safety issues identified during the inspection

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress.

Due to the health and safety issues identified during the inspection, Estyn will issue a well-being letter to the school and local authority and ask them to provide an action plan to respond to the issues identified. Estyn will seek assurance that they are addressing the shortcomings suitably.



School context

Name of provider	Ysgol Calon Cymru
Local authority	Powys County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Secondary
Number of pupils on roll	989
Pupils of statutory school age	857
Number in sixth form	132
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Secondary is 18.5%)	15%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Secondary is 23%)	28.8%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	5.7%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.2%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/03/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	03/10/2022
This is the school's first inspection.	

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Publication date: 05/12/2022