

From: [Robert Gairey](#) on behalf of [Enquiries](#)
To:
Subject:
Date: 31 January 2024 13:19:11
Attachments: [Monitoring report Ysgol Clywedog June 2023.pdf](#)
[Monitoring report Ysgol Clywedog December 2023.pdf](#)
[Monitoring report Ysgol Clywedog October 2022.pdf](#)
[Monitoring report Ysgol Clywedog March 2023.pdf](#)

Dear

As requested, please find attached interim reports for Ysgol Clywedog.

Yours sincerely

Robert Gairey
Swyddog Arweiniol Cyhoeddiadau / Lead Officer: Publications

Estyn
Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi Dros Addysg A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru His Majesty's Inspectorate For
Education and Training in Wales

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Gwefan/Website: www.estyn.llyw.cymru / www.estyn.gov.wales Mae Estyn yn croesawu
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Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Ysgol Clywedog
Ruthin Road
Wrexham
LL13 7UB**

Date of visit: October 2022

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Clywedog is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards across the school

The majority of pupils at Ysgol Clywedog make suitable progress in their learning. They recall information they have learned previously in an accurate manner. Those pupils who do not have sound recall of prior learning struggle to apply their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts, which limits their progress. In a few lessons, pupils make strong progress, such as when they develop their thinking skills, key vocabulary and understanding of nutritional content in technology. However, a minority of pupils make limited progress because teaching is not effective enough.

Many pupils listen respectfully to each other and their teachers. The majority have a suitable basic vocabulary and engage well in class discussions when given the opportunity to do so. A minority speak with a broader, more sophisticated vocabulary and use subject-specific terminology accurately. In the few instances when teachers use questioning strategies effectively, pupils respond well, giving detailed answers

that explain their thinking clearly. Too often teachers' questioning isn't probing enough and as a result many pupils give short basic responses. A minority of pupils are reluctant to answer questions and do not use opportunities to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups well enough to support their learning. A few pupils do not listen carefully enough to their teachers or peers nor sustain their concentration throughout lessons.

Many pupils are able to locate and retrieve basic information from a range of different texts. The majority are beginning to engage with analysis of language and why authors choose particular words. A few pupils analyse the effects of literary devices thoughtfully. However, the majority of pupils tend to spot these devices without considering their relevance or purpose sufficiently. In addition, they do not have a confident grasp of literary and linguistic terminology.

A minority of pupils demonstrate suitable understanding of complex written and visual texts, using inference and deduction, for example when analysing sources about life in Victorian times. However, the majority of pupils struggle to understand more sophisticated vocabulary. Many lower ability pupils do not use reading strategies well enough to help them develop more advanced reading skills. For example, they do not always identify appropriate quotations to support points they are making about characters in texts they are studying.

When writing, the majority of pupils paragraph their work appropriately and use a suitable range of basic vocabulary. They adapt their writing for a range of audiences, showing understanding of its purpose. A minority of pupils produce detailed pieces of writing, for example when discussing whether Churchill was more of a hero than a villain. A few pupils write with fluency and flair, using sophisticated vocabulary, including accurate subject-specific terms. These pupils are able to write independently at length and do not over-rely on their teachers or learning resources. However, many pupils do not write enough or for a broad enough range of purposes and audiences, especially younger pupils. Too many tasks require only brief responses or are constrained by poorly designed worksheets. The majority of pupils make regular basic errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. A minority present work untidily and have handwriting that is difficult to read.

The majority of pupils use basic Welsh vocabulary and sentence patterns suitably when speaking in their Welsh lessons. They are able to read simple words and phrases in Welsh. They write basic short paragraphs, for example about themselves and their hobbies, generally using first and third person forms and the past tense accurately. A minority use Welsh idioms appropriately in their writing. The majority of pupils struggle to speak Welsh spontaneously and lack the confidence to try to do so. A minority do not recall simple sentence patterns securely and are over-reliant on resources.

The majority of pupils have sound data handling skills. They calculate averages and draw sensible conclusions from graphs. Around half have secure basic number skills

and are able to use these in different contexts across the curriculum, such as when calculating the percentage decrease in the biomass of herring between 1960 and 1977 in the North Sea. Around half of pupils have a suitable understanding of measures. For example, more able pupils use Pythagoras' theorem and trigonometry successfully to solve multi-step problems. A minority of pupils have weak basic number skills and consequently struggle to complete numeracy tasks independently in different contexts.

In lessons, many pupils behave well and the majority display positive attitudes to learning. A minority of pupils are slow to settle at the start of lessons or tasks, wasting valuable learning time. A few pupils do not behave well enough in lessons and disrupt their learning and that of others.

R2. Improve teaching, including the level of challenge, questioning, the monitoring of pupil progress and the impact of feedback

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R3. Improve provision to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R4. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R5. Improve attendance and punctuality

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has strengthened its processes for monitoring and supporting attendance. Unverified data shared by the school shows that these processes are having a positive impact. Persistent absence figures have reduced steadily since the time of the core inspection. Despite this, leaders recognise the need to keep focusing on improving attendance since the pandemic. In particular, the attendance of girls is lower than that of boys and persistent absence and lateness among girls is notably higher than among boys. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is notably lower than that of others. There are plans to address this issue, but currently insufficient attention is paid to monitoring and supporting the attendance of these pupils.

The school has a range of useful interventions and strategies to support pupils who are absent. There is also a valuable rewards system to recognise and celebrate good attendance. There are suitable systems to track and monitor attendance and

punctuality. Pastoral team staff work well together, and with external agencies to monitor and promote attendance. Despite early signs of improvements in attendance and punctuality, leaders are not always strategic enough in their overview of the systems and processes in place to improve attendance and punctuality, and roles and responsibilities are not always clear. In addition, the analysis of attendance and punctuality data is not forensic enough. As a result, leaders do not identify patterns in attendance and punctuality or evaluate the impact of their work precisely enough.

The pastoral team work appropriately with families and partner primary schools to support attendance. There are examples of this work leading to improvements in the attendance of individual pupils and strengthened relationships with parents. However, the planning for this work is not sufficiently strategic.

Leaders have also strengthened processes to promote punctuality and this work has had some positive impact. However, punctuality remains a concern.

R6. Ensure robust financial management

Since the core inspection, the business manager, senior leaders and governors have worked effectively to ensure that robust processes are in place to manage the school's finances. They meet regularly to monitor income, expenditure and the projected end of year position. They review all outgoings to ensure that spending is focused on raising standards and provides value for money. They ensure that school leaders and the governing body are provided with the necessary information to enable them to make strategic decisions on spending. These processes contributed to the school eliminating its deficit budget by the end of the 2020-2021 financial year. This position was maintained in 2021-2022 and senior leaders are projecting positive end of year reserves for the current financial year.

The school makes suitable use of grant funding to support vulnerable pupils and to reduce the effects of poverty. For example, the school's use of the pupil development grant has led to improvements in the attainment of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, although their attendance remains a concern.

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Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Ysgol Clywedog
Ruthin Road
Wrexham
LL13 7UB**

Date of visit: March 2023

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Clywedog is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

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Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards across the school

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R2. Improve teaching, including the level of challenge, questioning, the monitoring of pupil progress and the impact of feedback

Since the last monitoring visit when this recommendation was evaluated, the school has introduced new policies for teaching and learning, and marking and feedback. Leaders have provided a range of professional learning opportunities for staff and useful pedagogy sessions where staff share good practice.

Overall, teachers are supportive of the school's efforts to improve teaching and learning and are receptive to professional learning and sharing good practice. However, the strategies and approaches are numerous and this is leading to confusion over which take priority. As a result, there is evidence of some limited

development on a wide range of strategies rather than sustained, significant development on the school's most important strategies for teaching and learning and on fundamental aspects such as planning and modelling.

Many teachers have secure subject knowledge and are sound language models. They develop positive working relationships with pupils and manage pupils' behaviour well on the whole. Many teachers give clear instructions and a majority use suitable resources to support pupils with their learning. A majority generally provide appropriate tasks that help pupils to make suitable progress.

A minority of teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan their lessons. These teachers have a secure understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses as well as what they want pupils to achieve. They plan their lessons according to what they want pupils to learn rather than what they want them to do. Consequently, they provide an appropriate level of challenge and the pace of learning is suitable. They also check pupils' progress regularly through questioning and monitoring in class. However, too often, teachers plan activities rather than intended learning. They are not always judicious in their use of teaching strategies and do not make effective enough use of assessment information to plan learning intentions. As a result, lessons are not planned carefully enough to meet the needs of individual pupils or provide enough challenge to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable. For example, teachers' expectations of both the quality and quantity of work pupils produce are too low and there are too many low-level tasks such as copying.

A few teachers use modelling effectively to help pupils to develop their skills, to follow the process of learning in action and to see good practice. For example, they make effective use of visualisers to model and exemplify or they jointly work through problems with the pupils.

In a majority of lessons, teachers provide helpful individualised verbal feedback when circulating the classroom. Where relevant, teaching assistants provide helpful support to individual pupils.

A majority of teachers ask appropriate questions to ascertain prior learning and a minority use questioning strategies effectively to engage a wide range of pupils in answering questions. In a few cases, teachers ask probing questions and encourage pupils to develop and extend their answers. Overall, however, many teachers do not use questioning well enough to deepen pupils' learning and a minority do not question pupils to check their prior or ongoing learning.

Following the recent introduction of the new marking and feedback policy there is a more consistent approach to providing written feedback, with the majority of teachers using the WWW/EBI approach to identify strengths and areas for improvement. However, the quality of written feedback remains an area of concern, particularly the advice for improvement, which is often too vague or superficial. In general, many teachers do not make effective enough use of assessment information to plan

lessons, give feedback or provide an accurate picture of pupils' attainment for the school's tracking and reporting system. As a result, pupils are often confused about what they are able to do well and what they need to improve.

R3. Improve provision to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to prioritise suitably the development of pupils' oracy skills. Recently staff have begun to implement strategies to improve pupils' reading skills whilst plans to improve their writing skills are in the early stages of development. There has been a limited focus on the progressive development of pupils' numeracy and digital skills and plans to support them in these areas remain underdeveloped.

Leaders have developed a helpful one-page literacy across the curriculum strategy which supports staff to make connections between different approaches to developing pupils' literacy skills. To underpin this, leaders have provided suitable professional learning and shared helpful examples of these strategies in action from a few subjects across the curriculum. However, generally, progress towards improving the provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills is too slow.

The school is implementing intervention strategies for pupils with weaker skills in reading and spelling and is beginning to introduce intervention strategies to support pupils with the weakest numeracy skills. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in subjects across the curriculum are limited and evaluation of the impact of the interventions is in the early stages of development.

Overall, provision to support the progressive development of pupils' skills is underdeveloped. In addition, leaders' ability to evaluate pupils' skills and plan for improvement in this area is too variable. As a result, it is difficult for them to identify clearly the aspects most in need of improvement.

R4. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels

Recently, the new chair of governors has overseen a helpful restructuring of the governing body in order to utilise governors' experience and skills better and focus on the most important school improvement priorities. The headteacher provides governors with relevant information about aspects of its work, such as the performance management process and 360° reviews. As a consequence, governors are well informed about the challenges facing the school and are able to provide greater strategic direction than in the past. The chair of governors has a good

understanding of the school's context and its developments regarding leadership and teaching.

The headteacher is restructuring the senior leadership team to align roles and responsibilities with members' skills and interests. Since the last monitoring visit, seven further 360° reviews have taken place, including all of the larger departments in the school. Senior leaders use a suitable range of evidence to evaluate the strengths and areas for improvement of each department. They are beginning to hold middle leaders to account appropriately through more robust and accurate evaluations, although the reviews do not focus precisely enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Overall, senior leaders do not evaluate the impact of their improvement work rigorously enough. For example, their evaluations of progress against priorities tend to focus on the completion of activities rather than their impact on provision and standards.

Middle leaders benefit from their involvement in elements of the review process. They are beginning to develop their understanding of how to evaluate teaching, learning, and the impact provision has on pupils' standards. However, there is too much variability in the quality and accuracy of middle leaders' self-evaluations. In general, they talk confidently about the curriculum but not about teaching. They comment on standards in relation to summative assessments rather than the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Middle leaders' planning for improvement focuses on appropriate whole-school priorities but isn't clear enough about what success looks like. As a result, many middle leaders are not able to measure the impact of the strategies they are using to improve teaching and learning.

Overall, the headteacher's vision and refining of practices around teaching, assessment and behaviour, are supported by many staff. However, the impact of new practices has been limited, partly because of their inconsistent implementation by a minority of staff.

R5. Improve attendance and punctuality

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R6. Ensure robust financial management

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

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Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Ysgol Clywedog
Ruthin Road
Wrexham
LL13 7UB**

Date of visit: June 2023

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Clywedog is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

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Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards across the school

The majority of pupils at Ysgol Clywedog make suitable progress in their learning. They recall what they have learnt previously and apply it appropriately in new contexts. They use subject terminology securely to explain their thinking. Where teaching is particularly strong, many pupils make good progress. For example, they explain the differences between swing and straight rhythms in music and demonstrate understanding of classification and binomial names in science. However, a minority of pupils do not make enough progress, sometimes because of poor behaviour or motivation and sometimes because of weaknesses in teaching.

Many pupils respond positively to lessons that are well planned. They show pride in their work. Overall, the majority of pupils behave well. However, the proportion varies considerably from class to class. A minority work well independently with sustained concentration and do not over rely on their teachers. The majority, however, find it difficult to focus on their tasks without support. A minority are slow to settle to work and do not always engage well enough with their learning. A few pupils are too passive in lessons and do not take responsibility for their own learning. A very few

pupils present extremely disruptive behaviour, such as making noises, ignoring the teacher's instructions, or wandering around the classroom. This behaviour has a negative impact on their own progress and that of other pupils.

The majority of pupils listen well to each other and their teachers. When questioning is probing, a few provide detailed explanations of their thinking, such as when discussing the relevance and impact of a quotation from a novel. Overall, many pupils do not make best use of the opportunities to develop their speaking skills. They do not work effectively with a partner in oral tasks, and a few are reluctant to answer questions. A minority of pupils miss important instructions and information because they are talking when they should be listening, which hinders their progress.

Many pupils locate information successfully from a suitably challenging text. They highlight important ideas and information within a text and a minority annotate the text helpfully to demonstrate their understanding. For example, a minority of pupils identify the causes of the Gresford mining disaster well from source material in history. A few demonstrate good understanding of media and multi-modal texts, for example when considering where our food originates from in geography. The majority of pupils struggle to use advanced reading skills, such as analysis, inference and appreciation of a writer's style.

When given the opportunity, more able pupils produce extended writing of a good quality. They organise and construct it skilfully, connecting and developing ideas for a range of purposes and audiences. For example, in science they compare the impact of different pandemics or discuss the effectiveness of home insulation intelligently. The majority of pupils structure their writing coherently in paragraphs and can incorporate relevant quotations appropriately when expressing their ideas about characterisation and authorial intent. However, overall, the majority of pupils do not develop their writing well enough. They make regular errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, including repeating basic mistakes. Less able pupils do not always write in full sentences when they are required to and use a limited range of vocabulary.

In maths lessons, more able pupils develop their numeracy skills well. For example, they use Pythagoras' theorem and trigonometry successfully to calculate unknown lengths and angles in triangles. In science, they calculate the number of moles of a substance in a solution accurately given the volume and concentration. In general, many pupils can draw graphs suitably when given the scale and axes. The majority of pupils have a suitable understanding of shape and measure. They calculate area and volume confidently, such as when calculating the volume of differently shaped boxes in technology.

Many pupils create digital content suitably, for example to persuade people to attend imaginary music festivals. They use design tools, music and hyperlinks appropriately and justify the reasons for choices they make. Many use coding securely to create games, including characters, and a few make suitable choices when considering

features of different fantasy worlds. A minority of pupils create and use queries successfully to search a database or design their own website effectively to publicise their favourite sport.

A few pupils demonstrate careful reasoning, such as when explaining their perspective on whether having a tattoo is a good idea or not. A few use their thinking skills well, for example to discuss the link between plastic waste and its impact on marine life. Pupils use their creative skills beneficially when performing a swing rhythm with enthusiasm using different percussion instruments.

R2. Improve teaching, including the level of challenge, questioning, the monitoring of pupil progress and the impact of feedback

Since the last monitoring visit, senior leaders have restructured and streamlined teaching and learning responsibilities helpfully. They have reviewed their strategies and approaches to teaching to focus sensibly on four main priorities. Leaders have provided a suitable range of professional learning aligned to these priorities and opportunities for staff to discuss and share good practice across the school. In general, teachers continue to engage positively with the school's efforts to improve teaching.

Senior leaders have conducted full reviews of most departments. These reviews include an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning through a suitable range of self-evaluation processes including lesson observations, book scrutiny and canvassing opinions of pupils. This is beginning to give senior leaders a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning. However, middle leaders are not fully involved in the reviews. As a result, they do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the quality of teaching in their departments in order to identify and drive the necessary improvements.

Many teachers develop positive and encouraging working relationships with pupils. They have sound subject knowledge and use subject terminology well. They provide clear instructions and explanations and establish an appropriate pace of learning. The majority of teachers plan a variety of interesting and suitably challenging activities and provide helpful resources to support pupils' learning.

A few teachers use effective strategies to support many pupils to make strong progress. They establish a purposeful pace which matches pupils' learning and challenges the most able pupils well. They model work effectively and provide useful examples which help pupils understand the expected standard of work..

Most teachers use questioning suitably to check pupils' understanding. A majority ensure that a wide range of pupils contribute to answering questions. A few teachers ask well-crafted questions, probing pupils' understanding, encouraging them to develop their answers or to explain their thinking. However, in general, teachers are too ready to accept brief and underdeveloped answers.

In a minority of lessons, the pace of learning is too slow, and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not sufficiently high. In these lessons, teachers' explanations are not always clear and they do not model expected outcomes well enough. In a few instances, teachers do not use classroom management strategies successfully to engage pupils fully in their learning. A few do not always plan purposeful tasks which develop pupils' learning. For example, they plan tasks which lack suitable challenge and are designed to keep pupils busy, or the activities are rushed so pupils don't have a clear understanding of what they need to learn. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their advanced reading skills across the curriculum.

Most teachers use the school's feedback strategy appropriately to identify suitable strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' work. A minority provide pupils with specific and helpful feedback. However, in general, comments focus too much on the pupils' effort rather than what they need to do to improve their work. In a few subjects, teachers are beginning to provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to respond to their comments. However, this important aspect of the feedback strategy is not being implemented consistently. In addition, teachers' assessment of literacy is inconsistent across the curriculum.

R3. Improve provision to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R4. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R5. Improve attendance and punctuality

Since the last monitoring visit, the headteacher has beneficially restructured the senior leadership team. An assistant headteacher now has responsibility for attendance and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment. Leaders are currently reviewing the attendance policy and associated practices and staff are presently trialling new processes for monitoring and supporting improved attendance and punctuality. The school has helpfully added extra capacity to tackling poor attendance by appointing assistant pastoral leads for each year group. It is too early to see the impact of these recent changes.

Attendance overall has fallen notably in comparison with the previous year and persistent absence has increased despite a range of well-intended actions and interventions. The attendance of girls remains lower than that of boys and persistent absence and lateness among girls is far higher than among boys.

Pastoral leaders and officers now identify vulnerable pupils appropriately and track their attendance suitably. Overall, however, this work has not resulted in improved attendance or punctuality for these groups of pupils. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is notably lower than that of others. Overall, the analysis of attendance and punctuality data is not sufficiently detailed or forensic. As a result, leaders do not identify patterns in attendance and punctuality clearly enough or evaluate the impact of their work well enough.

The school has an appropriate range of supportive interventions and strategies to encourage pupils to attend more regularly. These include a long-standing rewards system to recognise and celebrate good attendance. The school is acting beneficially on pupil feedback to provide incentives to make the rewards more engaging and relevant to pupils.

Pastoral staff work closely as a team and liaise suitably with external agencies to monitor and promote attendance. They work appropriately with families to support attendance. As a result, there have been improvements in the attendance of a few individual pupils and strengthened relationships with these parents. Despite this focused work, the school's systems and processes have not led to sufficient improvements in attendance and punctuality overall.

R6. Ensure robust financial management

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit



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His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Ysgol Clywedog
Ruthin Road
Wrexham
LL13 7UB**

Date of visit: December 2023

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Clywedog is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

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Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards across the school

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R2. Improve teaching, including the level of challenge, questioning, the monitoring of pupil progress and the impact of feedback

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R3. Improve provision to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R4. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels

Ysgol Clywedog has faced a particularly challenging term, made worse by high levels of staff absence and the difficulty of recruiting specialist staff to certain posts.

Recently, the local authority, governing body and senior leaders agreed to pause work on other priorities in order to focus attention on strengthening the arrangements to improve pupils' behaviour. Senior leaders consulted with staff and drew up a behaviour plan to address these concerns, but it is too early to evaluate how successful this is. Leaders have also recognised the pressure that staff are under and are taking steps to find out what they can do to improve staff well-being.

Since the last monitoring visit, the governing body has increased its capacity and broadened its skills. For example, it is now better placed to take into account the views of pupils and to handle budgeting and staffing challenges. Governors provide a high level of support, scrutiny and challenge to senior leaders which helps them to keep their attention on the school's most urgent improvement priorities.

The headteacher has begun to strengthen the school's performance management process to provide staff with focused support and challenge. Consequently, leaders are beginning to hold their teams to account suitably.

This term, senior leaders have undertaken joint lesson observations with middle leaders to develop subject leaders' evaluation skills. Middle leaders have also been involved in worthwhile collaborative work scrutiny and have benefitted from support to sharpen their improvement planning skills. As a result, many curriculum leaders now have a better understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in their teams, including the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, there remains too much variability among middle leaders in terms of the accuracy of self-evaluation and their understanding of the precise impact of teaching on learning.

Since the last monitoring visit, leaders have provided a wide range of beneficial professional learning, for example about school priorities, teaching and learning, and behaviour management. However, staff do not always implement recommended strategies well or consistently enough. Consequently, overall, leaders at all levels have not had enough impact on important aspects of the school's provision, such as improving standards of pupils' work, the consistent quality of teaching, or pupils' attendance and behaviour.

R5. Improve attendance and punctuality

Senior leaders reviewed the attendance policy last term and implemented a new policy from September 2023. This is providing staff with clear expectations, valuable guidance and well-defined roles. The recently appointed attendance officer is beginning to work closely with pastoral leaders to apply this policy appropriately.

Together, they are starting to track and analyse attendance data suitably. However, these systems and procedures are in their infancy and are often reactive. There is limited collaborative planning for a whole-school approach to improving attendance that includes teaching and learning, behaviour and the curriculum.

The pastoral team has identified groups of pupils who are persistently absent from school and is providing beneficial targeted interventions for them. Senior leaders and heads of year are beginning to use attendance data strategically and tutors are provided with weekly analysis reports for their forms. The introduction of 'Tracker Tuesday' during form time is starting to raise the profile of attendance across the school. Heads of year refer regularly to attendance in year group assemblies and pupils are rewarded for consistently high or improved attendance.

Pastoral staff work suitably with families, with the support of the local authority, the youth service and other relevant agencies, to improve the attendance of a few hard-to-reach pupils. Although there are a few examples where this engagement has been successful, overall, the impact is limited and there remains an over-reliance on external support. The recently introduced free breakfast club provides an opportunity for pupils to have a more positive start to the school day. It is too early to measure the impact of this provision on attendance and punctuality.

Between the academic years 2018-2019 and 2022-2023, the school's rate of attendance fell by a larger amount than seen nationally. Last year it was below that of similar schools. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average for this group of pupils and has reduced further so far this year. The low attendance of girls and Year 8 pupils is of particular concern. Attendance for this academic year to date is below the figure for the equivalent period in 2022-23 and there is a downward trend in attendance in each year group over the last month.

Currently, a minority of pupils are persistently late, and internal truancy is a concern. Although staff record punctuality to lessons and heads of year follow up on persistent lateness with weekly sanctions, this strategy is not having the desired impact on improving punctuality. The school has recently implemented a 'behaviour reset' to tackle poor behaviour. This has led to a high number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions this year in comparison with last academic year and this continues to have a negative impact on attendance. Overall, attendance and punctuality remain a significant cause for concern.

R6. Ensure robust financial management

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

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