



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

13 March 2024

Dear

I am writing in response to your request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to be provided with the monitoring reports for Christ the Word Catholic School, Rhyl.

Under FOIA, Estyn is required to:

- (i) confirm or deny whether it holds the information of the description specified in the request
- (ii) communicate the information requested to the applicant

In response to your queries, I attach the relevant reports.

I hope that this information is helpful to you.

If you are not satisfied with the response Estyn has made regarding your request for information, you are entitled to request that we review the matter. Your request for a review should be addressed to the Feedback and Complaints Manager, and receive no later than 20 working days after the date of this communication.

If you are still not satisfied, you also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House, Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Tel: 01625 545 745  
Fax: 01624 524510  
Email: [enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk)

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

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 9:22 AM

To: Enquiries <[Enquiries@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:Enquiries@estyn.gov.uk)>

Subject: Freedom of Information request - Christ the Word Catholic School, Rhyl

Dear HM Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales,

Please can you publish all of the monitoring reports for Christ the Word Catholic School, Rhyl which have been compiled since its inspection report, dated July 20, 2022, which saw the school placed in special measures?

Yours faithfully,



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**

**Christ The Word School  
Cefndy Road  
Rhyl  
LL18 2EU**

**Date of visit: March 2023**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Christ the Word Catholic School 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. Strengthen safeguarding arrangements and address the concerns identified during the inspection**

Since the core inspection, the school has focused professional learning on creating rigour in its systems and processes for safeguarding and child protection. Leaders have established a safeguarding team and staff are now confident about who they should approach for advice and support. In addition, the local authority has appointed a governor with expertise in safeguarding, with the aim of supporting and challenging the school's leaders.

Staff are clear about who they should report any concerns to and what should be recorded. Senior staff record information thoroughly and refer to comprehensive checklists to ensure that recording consistently meets requirements. Staff are becoming more knowledgeable about preventing radicalisation and how to engage more proactively with outside agencies, for example to provide counselling and therapy for pupils. Staff have not yet had the opportunity to receive training on e-safety issues.

There are regular staff briefings where relevant information is shared appropriately about pupils who may be at risk. In addition, senior leaders remind staff regularly of safeguarding procedures and, together with the local authority, they routinely check their understanding. Safeguarding now appears as a regular agenda item on senior leadership and staff meetings.

Across the school, pupils report that they know who to turn to if they feel unsafe or worried. However, not all pupils, particularly those of secondary school age, feel that the school deals with reported incidents well enough or takes their concerns seriously. These pupils perceive that staff do not listen to or act on their concerns, for example when they say they have been bullied, or when they hear unacceptable language.

The school has strengthened systems to follow up on absenteeism, and most staff understand who has responsibility for dealing with non-attendance. The attendance response team visit the homes of pupils absent in the morning, with the aim of getting them into school for the rest of the day. Leaders now issue fixed penalty notices where necessary. There is a more rigorous and consistent process for recording pupils who are late after registration has closed. However, the recording of attendance in lessons is not consistent enough. Overall, it is too early to see the impact of this work in improving attendance.

Leaders have recently strengthened systems to address pupils' poor behaviour in class and around the school. However, across the school, staff do not follow the school's behaviour management systems consistently and sanctions are not always used effectively. A minority of pupils' behaviour continues to cause concern. Too many pupils choose not to engage with the learning, routinely disrupt other pupils' learning, and waste valuable time during and between sessions.

## **R2. Improve leadership at all levels, including leaders' ability to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

## **R3. Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils of all ages and abilities make strong progress.**

Since the core inspection, leaders have not focused well enough on improving the quality of teaching and classroom practice. As a result, nearly all of the aspects identified during the inspection remain as important and urgent areas for improvement. There is still too much variation and inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school and pupils do not make enough progress.

Across the school there are isolated pockets of appropriate teaching where pupils make suitable progress. In these instances, there are strong working relationships and teachers plan interesting activities that build suitably on pupils' prior learning. In

a very few instances, teachers use questioning well to deepen pupils' understanding, help them recall previous learning and develop their verbal responses.

Overall, leaders have not ensured that teaching challenges pupils to make enough progress. Too often, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. They continue to provide low level activities and worksheets that simply keep pupils busy or activities that are not matched to their needs. In addition, teachers have not established strong enough routines for learning and this means that pupils do not engage well enough in sessions and demonstrate poor behaviour and negative attitudes to learning. Teachers' questioning is often weak, and they accept very brief responses from pupils. This means that teachers do not monitor pupils' progress and understanding closely enough and are therefore unable to adapt their teaching accordingly. In addition, most teachers over direct the learning and do not allow pupils to work independently enough. Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, for example to write at length or practise their numeracy.

There is a significant number of newly qualified teachers (NQT) at the school. While the school requires special measures, it is important that these teachers, in addition to routine mentoring, receive regular well planned opportunities to learn from good practice further afield. Their professional learning should concentrate on developing their classroom management and planning and include observing effective teaching in similar schools.

#### **R4. Ensure that the curriculum provides pupils of all ages with broad, balanced and relevant learning experiences**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

#### **R5. Strengthen the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills**

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**

**Christ The Word School  
Cefndy Road  
Rhyl  
LL18 2EU**

**Date of visit: July 2023**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Christ the Word 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. Strengthen safeguarding arrangements and address the concerns identified during the inspection**

Since the previous monitoring visit, the school has focused suitably on maintaining their systems and processes for keeping pupils safe. Leaders regularly discuss issues regarding safeguarding in staff meetings. Pastoral leaders focus suitably on safeguarding pupils and share information appropriately about individuals when necessary.

Leaders review their safeguarding procedures appropriately and generally respond pro-actively. Currently, not all procedures are suitably robust, for example leaders have recently identified that lockdown procedures are not tight enough.

Staff remain clear about how to report any concerns, for example recent training has supported them to consider how to respond to a wide range of potential safeguarding issues. They record any concerns with suitable details which supports leaders to take further action where appropriate, including referring to other agencies. However, staff



do not always receive confirmation and reassurance that actions have been taken once they have reported a concern.

Staff new to the school receive appropriate training on safeguarding and prevention of radicalisation. Recent training on e-safety has strengthened staff members' understanding of these issues. Consequently, pupils are more aware of how to work safely online, for example they know not to share personal information or enter a chat with an unknown person.

Leaders have continued to monitor staff understanding of safeguarding procedures. They collect the opinions of staff and external agencies on the effectiveness of their procedures and processes to safeguard pupils. As a result, they respond suitably to many areas for improvement. The school informs parents and visitors about safeguarding issues, for example, through leaflets, and a revised page on the school's website.

Overall, pupils' attendance levels continue to decline and are lower than at the time of the previous visit and when compared to this time last year. Middle leaders track individual pupils' attendance carefully. However, leaders do not use attendance data strategically enough to monitor, target and improve attendance for groups of pupils and whole year groups.

The school's work to strengthen procedures to deal with poor behaviour has had a limited impact. Overall, staff and pupils understand the system but not all members of staff apply the behaviour policy consistently. In addition, leaders do not have a strategic overview of the impact of systems to improve and address poor behaviour. The behaviour of a minority of pupils in class and around the school remains a concern. These pupils regularly disrupt the learning of others and are frequently absent from their classes. A few pupils perceive that staff do not deal fairly with their concerns, for example, when they report incidents of poor behaviour or bullying. In addition, the number of exclusions for this academic year is too high, they have increased notably since last year.

## **R2. Improve leadership at all levels, including leaders' ability to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation

## **R3. Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils of all ages and abilities make strong progress**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation

#### **R4. Ensure that the curriculum provides pupils of all ages with broad, balanced and relevant learning experiences**

Following the recent changes to leadership, leaders have taken suitable steps to improve the curriculum provision for pupils in Key Stage 4. For example, since November 2022, leaders have removed a number of undemanding qualifications that did not meet pupils' needs in favour of providing Year 11 pupils with more relevant learning experiences. Despite this, too many Year 11 pupils leaving school this year have not had well planned opportunities to broaden their learning and gain an appropriate number of worthwhile qualifications.

Leaders considered pupils' views appropriately and increased the number of subjects on offer at Key Stage 4 from September 2023. However, the current curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 does not have sufficient breadth or depth of experience. For example, pupils in these year groups currently study a range of subjects for only a limited time, on a carousel. As a result, the school is only currently able to offer two options blocks and the curriculum in Key Stage 4 remains too narrow.

Additionally, leaders have revised the Year 8 and Year 9 curriculum for implementation in the autumn term. This aims to provide all pupils with enough time to enrich their learning across an appropriate range of subjects, taught primarily by specialist teachers. However, it is too early to measure the impact of this change in improving the quality of the curriculum for these pupils.

Work to strengthen the primary curriculum is in the very early stages of development. Overall, the curriculum currently provided to pupils in the lower school is unsatisfactory and does not support pupils' progress well enough. Since the core inspection, leaders have been too slow to improve the curriculum offer available to pupils.

Overall, there is not a coherent shared vision for the curriculum across the school and there is no shared understanding of the pedagogy required to develop confident, capable and curious learners. Since the core inspection, professional learning to support staff to improve their understanding of curriculum design to enable pupils to make effective progress has had a limited impact. As a result, pupils do not receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced education, in line with the Curriculum for Wales.

#### **R5. Strengthen the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation

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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**

**Christ The Word School  
Cefndy Road  
Rhyl  
LL18 2EU**

**Date of visit: December 2023**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Christ The Word Catholic School 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. Strengthen safeguarding arrangements and address the concerns identified during the inspection**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

### **R2. Improve leadership at all levels, including leaders' ability to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning**

Since her appointment, the interim headteacher has redefined roles and responsibilities and increased the size of the senior leadership team. This has helped to distribute responsibilities more equitably. However, senior leaders are not held to account robustly enough for securing improvement in the aspects they lead or for supporting middle leaders to improve their work. Overall, leaders have not developed a strategic enough approach to improvement and their impact on improving important aspects of the school's work, for example the quality of teaching and pupils' attendance, is limited.

Leaders at all levels now meet more regularly to discuss aspects of school improvement. However, generally these meetings focus too heavily on operational issues and do not support leaders well enough to think about how they will plan for,

and secure, improvements in pupils' learning and the quality of teaching. They mainly focus on what activity has been planned rather than the impact it will have. Although senior leaders meet with middle leaders, they do not support and challenge them well enough to improve. As a result, middle leaders are not held to account sufficiently and have not improved their leadership skills well enough.

Middle leaders have benefitted from suitable support to improve their use of data to consider pupil attainment. This is beginning to help them identify pupils that require additional support and to monitor pupil performance. However, this information is not used effectively enough to support leaders to evaluate and improve the quality of provision and teaching.

Leaders have recently introduced processes to enable them to gather first-hand evidence to evaluate aspects of the school's work, including through learning walks and the scrutiny of pupils' work. These activities do not focus well enough on the impact that teaching and provision have on pupils' progress. They often focus too heavily on superficial aspects of provision, such as how well pupils underline titles in their work rather than on how teaching impacts on pupils' progress. As a result, leaders at all levels do not have a clear enough understanding of the strengths or areas for development and are not able to plan precisely enough to secure improvements. Overall, leaders' understanding of the impact of teaching and assessment on the standards pupils achieve remains underdeveloped and professional learning is generally having a limited impact on improving practice across the school.

The school's approach to improving pupils' attendance is not planned strategically or evaluated effectively and has not led to tangible improvements. Attendance rates, including persistent absence and the poor attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals continue to cause serious concern.

Very recently governors have started to visit the school more frequently to discuss specific aspects of the post inspection action plan.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils of all ages and abilities make strong progress.**

Since the core inspection, despite a few improvements, the quality of teaching remains too weak overall and does not enable pupils to make sufficient progress. The headteacher and a representative group of staff have developed a set of clear expectations for pupils and staff. These give suitable guidance to help teachers establish routines to start lessons and build positive relationships. This is beginning to have an impact in the classroom, especially at the beginning of lessons.

Overall, learning spaces for foundation learners are now more defined. In a few cases, the activities delivered in these areas are sufficiently challenging, and pupils choose to engage with them purposefully. In a few cases, pupils develop skills in the outdoor areas suitably, although overall this aspect remains underdeveloped.

In the lessons observed and pupils' books scrutinised during this visit, a few teachers deliver engaging activities. In these cases, pupils display a positive attitude to work and make suitable progress. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 receive beneficial opportunities to collaborate with peers in their learning. In these activities, pupils engage well and are active in their learning throughout sessions. In general, teachers across the school do not have high enough expectations of pupils, and too many sessions lack challenge. In many cases, teachers do not plan well enough for pupils' learning and provide too many undemanding tasks. A majority of teachers question pupils to test their recall of previous learning. However, questioning rarely probes or deepens pupils' understanding or encourages them to develop their verbal responses.

The school has very recently introduced brief guidelines for frequency of marking and feedback, but this has had a limited impact on the quality and effectiveness of assessment. In a very few cases, teachers' comments provide pupils with useful guidance about how to improve their work. Too often, inaccurate work is marked as correct, and comments only relate to presentation or completion of work. These comments do not help pupils improve their work or develop their understanding. They are not followed up by the pupil or teacher and pupils' work too often remains incomplete.

Overall, leaders and teachers are starting to appreciate their responsibilities for supporting improvements. However, they do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the quality of teaching in their areas.

#### **R4. Ensure that the curriculum provides pupils of all ages with broad, balanced and relevant learning experiences**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

#### **R5. Strengthen the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills**

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**

**Christ The Word School  
Cefndy Road  
Rhyl  
LL18 2EU**

**Date of visit: January 2024**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Christ The Word School 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. During this visit, we evaluated Recommendation 5. Due to the very limited progress, we propose a more focussed approach to improving pupils' skills. We have agreed with the school to tailor our next monitoring visit accordingly.

During the next monitoring visit, we intend to evaluate the school's progress in planning for and implementing improvements to the provision of reading.

We will evaluate:

- leadership - the strategic planning and monitoring of that specific aspect (Recommendation 2)
- the teaching pedagogy in relation to that specific aspect (Recommendation 3)
- the extent to which that work has contributed to improving pupils' skills progression and its impact on learning outcomes (Recommendation 5)

It would be beneficial for the school and the local authority, working together, to review this aspect of their post inspection action plans.



## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Strengthen safeguarding arrangements and address the concerns identified during the inspection**

Overall, since we last monitored progress against this recommendation, the school has maintained the improvements made to safeguarding processes. As a result, most staff have a suitable understanding about the steps they should take if they have a safeguarding concern. However, despite receiving training, not all staff are clear about their responsibilities with regards to the Prevent duty. Leaders continue to develop a process for reacting to the threat of intruders on the school site and are refining lockdown procedures following an initial trial. Governors have a sound understanding of the progress and matters for further development relating to safeguarding.

Rates of attendance remain a significant concern. Between the academic years 2018-2019 and 2022-2023, the school's rate of attendance fell by a much larger amount than seen nationally. Last year it was substantially below that of similar schools. The notably high rate of persistent absence and the poor attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals are of particular concern. The current rates of attendance are above the same period last year in the primary phase, but are slightly lower than last year in the secondary phase. Very recently, the headteacher and governors have raised expectations about the need to tackle poor attendance with greater urgency and are working more purposefully with the local authority. Recently, leaders have started to analyse attendance data in greater detail. For example, they have identified particular concerns about attendance in Year 7.

Leaders have begun to escalate concerns about individual pupils' attendance with a greater degree of consistency. In addition, they have started to develop suitable strategies to promote good attendance. For example, very recently leaders have introduced attendance rewards systems for the lower and upper schools. A few pupils benefit from alternative curriculum arrangements that improve their engagement with learning. However, the impact of these strategies is variable at present.

Punctuality at the start of the school day in both phases and at the beginning of lessons in the upper school remains a concern. At times, staff are too accepting of pupils being late to lessons and disrupting the learning of others. Some steps previously taken to attempt to address this issue, such as moving form time away from the start of the school day are under review. The behaviour support team are beginning to tackle in-session truancy, for example by challenging pupils who remain in circulation areas during lesson time and escorting them to their classes. However, pupils leaving the classroom is a common feature of too many lessons.

**R2. Improve leadership at all levels, including leaders' ability to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

**R3. Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils of all ages and abilities make strong progress.**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

**R4. Ensure that the curriculum provides pupils of all ages with broad, balanced and relevant learning experiences**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

**R5. Strengthen the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills**

Since the core inspection, very little progress has been made in providing well-planned and cohesive opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. Consequently, the progressive development of literacy, numeracy, digital skills and Welsh across the school remains weak. Strategies are not well planned or co-ordinated, and pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in relevant contexts.

Staffing issues, especially regarding the teaching of mathematics, remain an impediment to addressing the current situation. Although individual coordinators work diligently, there is no shared understanding or expectations of what is required. The benefits to pupils' skills development provided by isolated pockets of coherent thinking such as the teaching of reading and oracy skills in Years 5 and 6, is not supported well enough by current arrangements for Year 7.

There are recently devised interventions for older pupils preparing for public examinations in maths and English, for example, to support pupils who may be disadvantaged by current staffing turbulence. However, it is too early to identify whether these have a positive impact on improving pupils' skills.

The monitoring of pupils' skills through lesson observations and work scrutiny remains underdeveloped and teachers' marking for literacy largely ineffective. The number of leaders involved whose roles and responsibilities are unclear, creates a further impediment to progress.

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His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

## **Report following monitoring**

**Level of follow-up: Special measures**

**Christ The Word School  
Cefndy Road  
Rhyl  
LL18 2EU**

**Date of visit: June 2024**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Christ the Word School 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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Following the last monitoring visit and due to the very limited progress, we proposed a more focussed approach to improving pupils' skills. We agreed with the school to tailor this monitoring visit accordingly.

We evaluated the school's progress in planning for and implementing improvements to the provision of reading as follows:

- Leadership - the strategic planning and monitoring of that specific aspect (Recommendation 2)
- The teaching pedagogy in relation to that specific aspect (Recommendation 3)
- The extent to which that work has contributed to improving pupils' skills progression and its impact on learning outcomes (Recommendation 5)

The next monitoring visit will revert to evaluating progress against whole recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Strengthen safeguarding arrangements and address the concerns identified during the inspection**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve leadership at all levels, including leaders' ability to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning**

Since the last monitoring visit, with support, leaders have introduced new schemes for phonics and guided reading in the lower school. The structure and implementation of a systematic, progressive phonics scheme for the youngest pupils is helpful. Where it is taught well, it is beginning to ensure that pupils get off to a suitable start in learning to read and write. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work in improving pupils' outcomes.

In Years 3 to 6, leaders have begun to focus on improving the school's reading culture and promoting a love of reading. For example, many teachers have introduced worthwhile class book corners and class reading monitors. Many pupils enjoy a whole class novel linked to their topic. Daily guided reading sessions provide a structured scheme to support teachers to teach reading skills.

There are pockets of strong practice in the lower school, where teachers have implemented useful early improvements to the teaching of reading. However, overall, leaders' monitoring is not sufficiently robust to identify accurately the areas most in need of improvement. As a result, too many pupils across the lower school do not make the progress they could or should in reading.

Leaders have provided staff in Key Stages 3 and 4 with training in using reading ladders and teaching reading skills, for example through comprehension and annotation tasks. However, not all staff understand the agreed strategies or implement them consistently to support their pupils well enough.

Overall, the leadership of reading is not developed well enough. A few senior leaders observe lessons. Leaders across the different phases of the school have begun to monitor pupils' books. Middle leaders have begun to collect data, including baselines, and draw basic conclusions from the results of tests. These are used, for example, to identify pupils who would benefit from targeted intervention to improve their reading skills. However, leaders' analyses are at an early stage, and are not triangulated well enough with other monitoring activities to support improvements to pupils' outcomes. For instance, leaders identify from the data where different groups of pupils achieve and where progress dips. However, they have not used this information strategically and evaluatively enough, for example to support teachers to better focus their teaching on the underperforming groups. Following monitoring activities, leaders feed

back shortcomings to their colleagues, but this does not always bring about the required improvements in a timely manner. Overall, leadership at all levels has not had the impact required on improving pupils' progress.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils of all ages and abilities make strong progress**

Since January, the school has focused on the way that teachers develop pupils' reading skills. Leaders have provided staff with professional learning around how pupils develop their early reading skills and strategies to develop pupils' comprehension and analysis of texts. Where these strategies are being used appropriately and consistently, they are beginning to have a positive impact on improving pupils' reading skills.

In the lower school, the majority of teachers provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to read and enjoy texts together. These teachers model good reading and provide purposeful activities for pupils to apply their reading skills through a range of worthwhile tasks. In many classrooms, there is an accessible bookcase with a broad selection of appropriate books in a comfortable environment, which are the first steps in promoting a reading culture. Overall, teachers in the lower school generally use strategies to develop pupils' reading skills more successfully than teachers in the upper school.

In the upper school, teachers in a range of subjects plan a few relevant tasks which require pupils to use basic reading skills, such as skimming and scanning, to locate information and make use of this in their writing. A few teachers develop pupils' advanced reading skills suitably, for example by using inference and deduction to explore layers of meaning within a short extract from a class novel.

Since January, pupils across the school receive more regular opportunities to read, discuss and annotate a variety of texts in a range of subjects. However, teachers do not always choose texts which are appropriate for pupils' ages, abilities and interests, especially in the upper school. In addition, teachers often use texts without explicitly teaching the specific skills pupils need to read and understand them. As a result, too many pupils struggle to access texts in lessons and do not always receive the support they need to do so. In general, teachers too often miss good opportunities to develop pupils' vocabulary and reading fluency. In the lower school, a few teachers do not have the knowledge and skills required to teach pupils to read effectively. In general, teachers in the upper school do not have the skills to support pupils to make suitable progress in their reading, particularly those who require additional support. Across the school, staff sometimes over-direct sessions to develop pupils' reading skills and this limits the opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning.

#### **R4. Ensure that the curriculum provides pupils of all ages with broad, balanced and relevant learning experiences**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

#### **R5. Strengthen the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills**

Since the last monitoring visit, limited progress has been made to strengthen the provision for pupils to develop their reading skills. There is no clear strategic approach to this aspect of the school's work, which is currently limited to a number of basic strategies that are at an early stage of development. As a result, too many pupils across the school do not make as much progress as they could in developing reading strategies to support their learning.

In the lower school, teachers are beginning to plan cohesively for the teaching of reading skills although this is inconsistent. For example, teachers plan together, and the school has recently introduced a phonics and a guided-reading programme. However, the co-ordinated planning of activities to develop reading is at a very early stage and it is too soon to evaluate the impact on pupil progress.

In the upper school, staff generally have not yet recognised or understood well enough how to meet their responsibility in contributing to the development of pupils' literacy skills overall, including reading. This is a particular concern in the Hub as pupils transition from lower school and other partner schools.

Leaders have started to promote a positive reading culture although this is inconsistent across the school. Generally, younger pupils have much more positive attitudes towards reading than older pupils which reflects the relative importance given to promoting reading.

Overall, provision for the progressive development of pupils' reading skills across the school remains weak. Strategies are not sufficiently well co-ordinated and there are too few meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills across the curriculum.