

From: [Robert Gairey](#) on behalf of [Enquiries](#)
To:
Subject: 03 24 03 Gwernyfed inspection reports - response
Date: 09 May 2024 09:49:39
Attachments: [Monitoring report Gwernyfed High School 2023 - November.pdf](#)
[Monitoring report Gwernyfed High School 2023 - June.pdf](#)
[Monitoring report Gwernyfed High School 2023 - February.pdf](#)

Dear , as previously requested, please find attached monitoring reports for Gwernyfed School.

Yours sincerely

Robert

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 gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Bydd gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn y naill iaith neu'r llall yn cael yr un flaenoriaeth.

Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

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From: **Sent:** Wednesday, May 8, 2024
9:49 AM **To:** Enquiries
<Enquiries@estyn.gov.uk> **Subject:** RE:
Gwernyfed inspection reports

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Dear Robert

I would like to make a FOI request to see all the reports shared with the school and the LA since the last published report of October 2022. Please could you advise on how I go about doing that.



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

**Gwernyfed High School
Three Cocks
Brecon
Powys
LD3 0SG**

Date of visit: November 2023

by

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

Outcome of visit

SM remain

Gwernyfed High 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. Improve the progress that all pupils make in lessons, including in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills and Welsh language development

In lessons observed and books seen during this visit, a majority of pupils make suitable progress in their learning and recall their prior knowledge appropriately. A few demonstrate a strong understanding of their prior knowledge and skills and apply this to more complex and challenging tasks, such as when developing the arguments for and against re-joining the European Union in humanities. A minority of pupils make less secure progress. They do not develop their thinking or independent learning skills sufficiently well. In the main, this is when teachers' expectations of pupils' progress and engagement are not high enough.

Most pupils listen appropriately to the teacher and their peers. Many provide brief answers to teachers' questions and, a minority, when encouraged, can express their views on various topics more fully. More able pupils provide thoughtful, well-developed responses, for example when discussing dystopian literature and how current events link to those themes. Overall, however, too many pupils provide simplistic answers or do not extend their responses sufficiently. On the few occasions

where pupils have opportunities to work in pairs and groups they do so confidently. A few pupils are hesitant to participate in whole-class discussions.

When reading, many pupils use appropriate strategies to locate relevant information from suitably challenging texts. For example, they identify reasons why Merthyr became an attractive settlement for Jews in the nineteenth century. In their English lessons, many pupils highlight key features in visual or written text appropriately and make helpful notes. They select relevant quotations and express their ideas suitably about the impression they create. More able pupils identify a wide range of complex literary features accurately. A majority of pupils summarise text appropriately and explain their opinion of what they have read; a few pupils synthesise information well from a range of texts. Across all subjects, when given the opportunity, pupils read aloud with reasonable fluency but not always with suitable expression.

Many pupils plan their writing appropriately using prompts from their teachers. However, these scaffolding structures sometimes narrow the opportunities for pupils to write independently at length. In English, many pupils structure their writing suitably in paragraphs. A majority of pupils write at length, planning their work well and incorporating information effectively from sources of evidence. These pupils use a broad range of vocabulary and stylistic features in their writing. More able pupils structure their writing well and make good use of features to engage the reader. Across the curriculum, a majority of pupils make regular spelling errors, including sometimes familiar words. They make regular errors in punctuation and grammar, for example, with capitalisation and subject-verb agreement.

Many pupils recall basic number facts and use the four operations suitably. They use these appropriately when calculating the volume of regular cuboids or practising trial and improvement methods to solve equations in mathematics. Despite this, many are not able to apply these skills across the curriculum independently. As a result of the school's focus on graph work, many pupils draw graphs accurately including bar charts, scatter graphs and line graphs. They label axes correctly when directed by the teachers, and a few choose the correct scales for their graphs independently. A majority of pupils interpret and analyse straightforward graphs to draw suitable conclusions. A few draw more sophisticated conclusions from graphs where they compare the validity of information and discuss the limitations of the data, for example when they consider the impact of earthquakes. In mathematics, a majority of pupils make sound progress, with an appropriate level of challenge.

Many pupils have sustained the positive attitude towards learning the Welsh language seen in the last visit. In Welsh lessons, a majority of pupils make good progress. They recall their prior knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and sentence patterns appropriately and can apply their understanding in increasingly complex contexts. For example, pupils discuss fashion and shopping in the first and third person successfully. A few pupils make strong progress and can express themselves fluently using idioms and sophisticated vocabulary to enrich their verbal and written responses. Pupils benefit from a range of worthwhile opportunities to develop their understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales. For example, they study the importance of contemporary Welsh music artists in Welsh and if Wales is a nation or state in humanities.

R2. Improve attendance overall and the attitudes to learning of a few pupils

A majority of pupils display positive attitudes to learning, engaging well with their work and showing resilience when it is particularly challenging. Most behave well in lessons, although a very few sometimes talk over their teachers and peers. Many pupils act promptly on their teachers' instructions and take pride in their work. However, a minority are too passive in lessons and are slow to start tasks. A few pupils do not persevere well enough or complete enough work in the time available. They are reluctant to respond to teachers' questions. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not challenge these attitudes sufficiently robustly.

The school is developing a beneficial and responsive health and well-being programme which contributes positively to promoting good attendance and addressing negative attitudes to learning.. Pastoral leaders use a wide range of appropriate strategies to promote good attendance and to improve the attendance of pupils below the school target of 96%. For example, they have recently introduced a termly reward trip for those with high rates of attendance, high numbers of merits and low numbers of behaviour points.

Pastoral leaders analyse in detail attendance data and information about why individual pupils are attending less well. They put in place interventions based on the individual needs of pupils and work with a wide range of external partners to provide beneficial support to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils. However, leaders' evaluations of strategies to promote and improve attendance are at an early stage.

Between the academic years 2018-19 and 2022-2023, the school's rate of attendance fell by a much smaller amount than seen nationally. Last year it was slightly above that of similar schools, although it remains below pre-pandemic levels. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals was well above the national average for this group of pupils. So far this year, the attendance of these pupils has improved more than their peers and the gap between these groups has narrowed.

R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and assessment

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during the visit.

R4. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels, particularly by strengthening improvement processes

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during the visit.

R5. Address the health and safety issues raised during the inspection

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during the visit.



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

**Gwernyfed High School
Three Cocks
Brecon
Powys
LD3 0SG**

Date of visit: June 2023

by

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

Outcome of visit

Gwernyfed High 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. Improve the progress that all pupils make in lessons, including in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills and Welsh language development

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R2. Improve attendance overall and the attitudes to learning of a few pupils

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has refined its approaches to improving teaching sensibly. 'Teacher learning experience' sessions on topics such as the setting of appropriate learning objectives are giving staff a greater understanding of the specific aspects of classroom practice. Staff value this support and are embracing this new culture positively. However, it is too early for

these strategies to have impacted significantly on the quality of teaching, and shortcomings remain that restrict pupils' progress.

Most teachers form positive working relationships with their classes and know their pupils well. They demonstrate secure subject knowledge and are good language models. In the majority of cases, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions, and give pupils useful verbal feedback.

In a few particularly effective lessons, teachers plan sequences of activities thoughtfully using logical steps in order to maximise learning. These teachers plan engaging and stimulating activities that challenge and enthuse pupils, and match the pace of the learning to pupils' progress carefully.

Too often, however, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. They do not plan activities that are suitably demanding, challenge any lack of engagement sufficiently or use questioning well enough to develop pupils' thinking. In these lessons, the pace of learning is often too slow. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress or develop enough independence and resilience in their learning.

In a few instances, teachers provide pupils with written feedback that helps them to improve their work. However, expectations regarding how pupils should respond to feedback are unclear, and in some cases, pupils are set generic targets that do not focus well enough on the specific aspects they need to improve. Overall, the impact of feedback on pupils' progress remains limited.

A few teachers provide pupils with helpful opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills alongside their subject understanding. However, provision to develop these skills across the curriculum remains underdeveloped.

R4. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels, particularly by strengthening improvement processes

The new headteacher has quickly established a secure and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. She has formulated a clear vision for improvement which has a strong focus on raising expectations and ensuring that the school's work is consistently pupil focused. This vision has been communicated clearly and is well understood by most staff. As a result, staff have a renewed sense of purpose and collegiality. Although it is too early to see the impact, she has put in place a range of well-considered strategies to raise pupil outcomes, improve teaching and strengthen leadership.

Senior leadership roles have been reorganised and redefined appropriately in order to make best use of leaders' skills and experience. Middle leaders are given suitable support to improve their effectiveness. Consequently, they are developing a much clearer understanding of their role in securing improvement, although there remains considerable variation in how effectively they discharge their responsibilities. Refreshed approaches to line management focus suitably on raising standards and improving teaching. As a result, leaders are beginning to hold staff to account.

Quality assurance processes have been strengthened appropriately, and leaders are beginning to carry out suitable activities to gather first-hand evidence. They are starting to use an appropriate range of data to identify pupil underperformance and are beginning to focus more closely on the impact of provision on pupil outcomes. These developments are giving leaders a more realistic picture of the school's areas for improvement and are helping them to plan for improvement more precisely. However, this work is at too early a stage to impact significantly on pupil progress.

The professional learning programme focuses suitably on developing more effective classroom practice and is starting to support improvements in teaching. Several operational issues have been appropriately addressed in order to assist school improvement. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's main strengths and improvement priorities and provide the headteacher with helpful support.

R5. Address the health and safety issues raised during the inspection

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

SM PIAP Visit

Gwernyfed High School

Three Cocks

Brecon

Powys

LD3 0SG

Date of visit: February 2023

by

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

Outcome of visit

Thank you for your post inspection action plan, which meets requirements. We are pleased to note that suitable action is in progress or planned in relation to the issues arising in the report.

Please send a copy of this post inspection action plan to sarah.fulthorpe@gov.wales

What happens next?

You will be aware that, under the requirements 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 post inspection action plan.

Please note that, in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines, newly qualified teachers cannot normally undertake their induction period in schools requiring special measures. The school, therefore, should not appoint any newly qualified teachers without seeking advice from Estyn.

Estyn will re-visit in about four to six months in order to monitor whether the school is making progress in implementing the action plan. A letter summarising the findings of each monitoring visit will be sent to you and submitted to the Minister for Education.

The school will normally be informed about two weeks in advance of any visit.