



Report summary for parents and carers on Ruthin School

Date of inspection: November 2024

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

Summary

Since the headteacher's appointment, significant progress has been made in building trust and collaboration among staff, pupils, and parents, fostering a strong belief in the school's vision. While the school has strategic plans supporting this vision, many initiatives are still in the early stages of implementation, making it premature to assess their overall impact on the work of the school.

Pupils enjoy being part of a diverse community, with opportunities for leadership roles and they enjoy a broad, balanced curriculum. Programs such as electives and co-curricular activities enrich pupils' personal and social development. This is a strength of the school.

Lessons are generally focused and well-structured, fostering good pupil-teacher relationships, though around half of lessons lack opportunities for independent learning. The school's assessment practices provide timely feedback to pupils. However, these do not always indicate what pupils need to do to make further progress.

Most pupils demonstrate strong writing and analytical skills, effectively completing tasks such as annotating texts and creatively expressing ideas through diary entries. Listening skills are generally good, although oracy skills are less well developed, with many pupils hesitant to engage in detailed responses. In mathematics, pupils show advanced ability, progressing from basic algebra to complex problem-solving. Pupils' physical, artistic and musical skills are nurtured, including independently exploring creative projects. While pupils have strong digital skills their use across subjects is underdeveloped.

Safeguarding practices are robust, with a dedicated team overseeing pupil welfare and regular training ensuring staff are well-prepared to address concerns. However, ongoing suitability checks for staff do not comply with recent legislative changes.

Governance structures are sound. However, with the high number of leadership changes in recent time the Board of Management has not maintained a robust scrutiny of the work of the school, resulting in some compliance issues remaining unaddressed.

The school does not comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Strengthen governance to ensure that the school fully complies with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024**
- R2 Establish a shared understanding of pupil progress and ensure that teaching and assessment supports this**
- R3 Embed newly established approaches to ensure that they impact positively in all areas of the school's work**

Since the school does not meet the standards required for registration, the Welsh Government will require the proprietor to submit an action plan within a specified period of time. This plan will set out the steps that the school will take to meet the standards, and the timescale within which it will complete each step. Welsh Government may then request Estyn to support the school through an improvement process.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order 2005 [14]

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets almost all of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff [20(2a-g)]
- Ensure all staff have a DBS check within the last 3 years [23(a)]

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Although the school meets most of the regulatory requirements for this standard, in order to comply fully with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024 the school should:

- Ensure the water supply meets the requirements of the school premises regulations [27(a)]
- Ensure the school has effective site security arrangements for the grounds and building [27(d)]
- Ensure the premises and boarding accommodation are not in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance [27(i)]

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

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