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Ysgol Uwchradd Glan Clwyd  
Denbigh Road  
St Asaph  
LL17 0RP

03/03/2025

Dear Sian Alwen

**Interim Visit:** January 2025

Thank you for your support in organising our interim visit to the school. We enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils and hear more about the improvement work the school has undertaken since the core inspection.

During our visit, we had an opportunity to:

- Talk to senior leaders about your improvement work and how you support teachers.
- Talk to pupils about their work in lessons and hear their feedback about the school in meetings.
- Visit lessons and conduct learning walks across to school to see pupils and staff undertaking their work.
- Conduct joint observations with senior leaders and discuss what was seen.
- Undertake scrutiny activities on a sample of books with middle leaders and a senior leader.
- Talk to numeracy and literacy leaders about the school's provision to develop pupils' skills.
- Talk to a group of teachers, leaders and support staff about their work to support pupils' well-being.

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## Focus of visit

### **Raise the expectations of pupils and teachers in terms of behaviour and the Welsh language**

#### **Strengths**

Through our conversations with leaders, staff and pupils, it appears that the school has addressed this recommendation appropriately and in a timely manner. It appears that staff have been given clear guidance regarding expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour and the use of the Welsh language in lessons and during non-contact periods. It was encouraging to hear from staff at all levels that the headteacher upholds a strong culture of Welshness and that she reminds staff tirelessly of the importance of maintaining standards of Welsh in all aspects of the school's work. It appears that the school takes advantage of every opportunity to celebrate the Welsh language and Welshness through a variety of activities.

The school has invested in new systems to promote good behaviour and effort and to manage behaviour. It appears that this system is clear to pupils and staff alike and that there is consistency among many of the staff in following the agreed steps. However, we agree with the school that there is a need to ensure that all staff follow the agreed steps when rewarding or responding to behaviour to ensure that the system is fair for all pupils.

Leaders have established clear arrangements for managing and monitoring behaviour support provision, including regular meetings to discuss issues that arise and identify trends. There are also purposeful meetings to plan and then consider the effectiveness of any interventions and support for individuals, groups of pupils and also for staff who need guidance.

We believe it would be useful for you to consider:

- To what extent are all staff clear that they have a personal responsibility to set high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour, listening and engagement in their lessons, along with their participation in the Welsh language?
- Is there enough focus on pupils' attitudes to learning and their efforts in the Welsh language and how do teachers support this during quality assurance activities?

## **Ensure more cohesive provision across the school to develop pupils' skills, particularly their literacy and numeracy skills**

Since the core inspection, leaders have produced a clear strategy to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. During our meetings with a few staff, they were aware of the importance of developing skills and clear about their roles in working towards this priority. Leaders provide staff with regular training and hold beneficial morning sessions to offer guidance and share best practices. There are agreed strategies, such as 'Byw'r Gymraeg', to improve pupils' oral standards. Several examples of this strategy were seen in action in the lessons observed.

The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have worked with specific departments to identify opportunities to develop the skills and they provide support, as necessary. It appears that there are a variety of beneficial opportunities in relevant subjects for pupils to develop their extended writing skills.

Leaders have begun to evaluate the effect of different strategies on pupils' standards of literacy and numeracy. We agree with the school that more good quality opportunities need to be provided for pupils to develop their higher-order reading skills across the subjects and their numeracy skills in relevant subjects. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure further consistency as teachers correct language errors in pupils' work.

We believe that it would be useful for you to consider the following:

- How will leaders evaluate the true effect of strategies to develop literacy and numeracy skills on pupils' standards and progress in lessons and over time?
- How will leaders ensure that teachers plan rich opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills in relevant subjects, along with their higher-order reading skills across the subjects?
- Are all staff clear about their roles in supporting the developments of pupils' oral skills and how teachers can improve pupils' accuracy and expression through agreed strategies?

## **How effective are planning for improvement arrangements?**

It appears that leaders are addressing the recommendations of the core inspection in 2022. It was good to see that the school improvement plan included five sensible priorities and that the school's work was based clearly on these areas for improvement over the year. The subject improvement priorities that were seen are clear and this enables leaders and staff to focus closely on the key issues that are in need of improvement.

The quality assurance procedure is sensible and purposeful activities have been organised throughout the year to enable leaders at all levels to monitor quality and evaluate progress against targets. It is good to note that senior leaders have ensured that middle leaders develop in their roles by being part of quality assurance activities. On the whole, records suggest that leaders place a beneficial focus on aspects of teaching and provision when observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work.

Since the appointment of the headteacher, line management arrangements are clear and there is a better structure to meetings. This allows leaders at all levels to hold staff accountable. Management meetings focus closely on progress against improvement priorities and, in general, actions and responsibilities are clear. It appears that the curriculum and pastoral middle management meetings ('SAS') provide beneficial opportunities for leaders to discuss, share good practice and plan support for each other, and this is valued by them.

We believe it would be useful for you to consider:

- How will leaders refine quality assurance activities to enable them to focus more closely on pupils' standards and progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills?
- To what extent do senior leaders consider the range of attainment and well-being data available to set targets and evaluate the impact of the work of middle leaders?

We wish you well with your future developments. Thank you once again for the welcome we received at the school, for all your help in planning and organising our visit and for the amiable co-operation.

The school's most recent core inspection report and further information on the process and purpose of interim visits can be found on our website:

<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6634020>

Yours sincerely



**Catherine Evans**

Assistant Director