

Report summary for parents and carers on Chestnut Hill School

Date of inspection: February 2025

This report is also available in Welsh.

Summary

Chestnut Hill provides a nurturing and engaging learning environment where staff demonstrate high expectations and a deep understanding of pupils' individual needs. Strong relationships between staff and pupils foster a happy, safe, and supportive school community.

The school has undergone significant changes in recent years, including leadership changes, transitioning from a residential school to a day school and undertaking major site renovations. Leaders have successfully navigated these developments while maintaining a clear strategic vision and ensuring minimal disruption to pupils' education. Staff have adapted well to these changes, and investment in professional learning has helped to strengthen the effectiveness of teaching and pastoral care.

The school ensures a smooth transition for new pupils, working closely with parents and carers to create tailored learning experiences. Effective home-school communication has a positive impact on pupil engagement, especially for those who have previously struggled to consistently attend school.

The curriculum is broad and well-structured, equipping pupils with essential life skills and preparing them for future destinations. Enrichment activities and the well-resourced learning environment enhance learning opportunities.

Teaching is effective, with most staff using their knowledge of pupils well to plan engaging lessons. Most pupils develop strong communication and social skills, and many make appropriate progress in reading and writing. However, written feedback is inconsistent and, in a few lessons, teaching assistant support is not sufficiently purposeful. Whole-school tracking systems to provide a clear and strategic overview of pupil progress over time are underdeveloped.

Collaboration between education and clinical teams is a significant strength, with therapists working alongside staff to enhance pupil well-being. The school provides personalised support, particularly for pupils with autism and attachment needs, ensuring that most make strong progress towards their learning targets.

Safeguarding is a priority, with clear policies and training in place. Pupil voice is well-embedded, with an active school council influencing decisions. Leadership and governance are strong, with leaders successfully managing recent transitions and improvements. However, opportunities for staff to take on leadership roles to further support school improvement are in the early stages of development.

The school meets the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

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

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On the basis of this inspection, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Further refine and embed whole-school tracking systems to provide a comprehensive and strategic overview of pupil progress over time
- R2 Develop structured opportunities for staff to take on leadership roles across the school to support school improvement and succession planning

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Full Report

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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Publication date: 31/03/2025