

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

Christ The Word School

Cefndy Road

Rhyl

LL18 2EU

Date of visit: March 2025

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

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

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 last monitoring visit, leaders have introduced a new teaching and learning policy that sets out basic expectations, such as of teachers' planning for learning, assessment and feedback. Relevant leaders have worked with external partners to deliver professional learning on aspects of teaching. This includes work to develop stronger foundation learning practices, such as making more effective use of the outdoors to support pupils' learning. Middle leaders are now evaluating the quality of teaching and assessment, but this work is at an early stage of development. Compared with the last visit, there are improvements in a few aspects of teaching, but across the school there remain significant shortcomings.

Many teachers have sound subject knowledge and use terminology accurately. A few teachers have strong subject knowledge. They model and exploit key vocabulary and subject terminology purposefully. Overall, teachers are beginning to develop a stronger understanding of how to provide the youngest pupils in the lower school with effective learning experiences that meet their needs. They are starting to consider how to use the outdoors more effectively to engage pupils and provide them with purposeful learning experiences. However, this is still at an early stage of development.

In the majority of cases, teachers know their pupils well and manage their classes appropriately. They have suitable expectations of pupils' behaviour, and this helps maintain a positive working relationship. However, in other cases, there are shortcomings in teachers' classroom management skills and in the way they respond to pupils' poor behaviour or lack of effort. They do not apply the school's agreed behaviour management strategies suitably and this hinders pupils' learning and progress.

In around a half of cases across the school, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and the extent of their participation in activities. For example, teachers talk or present for too long and this results in pupils being passive for long periods of time. In these cases, activities and learning experiences are unengaging which hinders pupils' progress and independence.

In a few cases, teachers consider thoughtfully what they want pupils to learn and identify suitable steps and purposeful learning activities to achieve this. They give clear instructions and explanations, and model their expectations suitably. However, in other lessons, teachers provide unclear instructions, weak explanations or limited support for pupils. As a result, pupils do not understand well enough what teachers expect of them

and do not make enough progress in their learning. In the lower school, teachers still focus too often on keeping pupils active without considering carefully enough the knowledge or skill they want them to develop.

Many teachers question pupils suitably to check how well they recall previous work and understand new information. In a few cases, teachers ask more probing questions to encourage pupils to think more deeply and expand on their thoughts and ideas.

Very recently there have been improvements in the quality and usefulness of teachers' written feedback. In a few cases, teachers now give helpful and clear feedback on the quality of the work and often include relevant suggestions on how to improve. However, in other cases, feedback is too general, superficial or overly positive. Overall, pupils' response to written feedback is too variable.

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

Leaders have made beneficial changes to the upper school curriculum to ensure that pupils now access a suitably broad and balanced range of subjects. This includes the introduction of modern languages and the removal of a carousel curriculum for humanities. In addition, the school has disbanded the Year 7 hub to strengthen subject specialist teaching across the curriculum. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and enjoyment. The school now offers a wider choice of options at Key Stage 4 that cater suitably for the different needs and abilities of pupils. Leaders evaluate, review and adapt the curriculum to support improvements in provision. As a result, pupils now benefit from courses that are more useful and closely matched to their interests and needs.

In the lower school, teachers are now using curriculum plans that are more coherent and in line with the expectations of Curriculum for Wales. In the upper school, senior leaders have ensured that teachers and middle leaders have medium term plans in place to drive the delivery of the curriculum. However, the school has not established its own vision for Curriculum for Wales and its implementation is limited. For example, leaders do not plan effectively enough for pupils' progression or ensure that the curriculum relates meaningfully to the school's local context. Additionally, teachers and middle leaders do not have a secure enough understanding of curriculum development.

The school has conducted a helpful review of its careers and work-related education provision to inform improvement planning. Nonetheless, the school's approach to developing this area of the curriculum remains underdeveloped and does not support pupils' understanding of future education or employment opportunities well enough.

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

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

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