

Report summary for parents and carers on St Richard Gwyn R.C. High School

Date of inspection: May 2025

This report is also available in Welsh.

Summary

St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School is a welcoming and inclusive community where the Catholic ethos strongly underpins school life. Staff are deeply committed to the school's vision of nurturing kind, successful, and resilient pupils, and they provide strong support for pupils' well-being. Many pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, behave appropriately, and engage well in lessons. There is variation in the quality of teaching across departments. In the majority of lessons, teachers' planning ensures that pupils make suitable progress. In a few lessons, teaching is strong and, as a result of skilful planning, high expectations and probing questioning, pupils make significant progress. However, in a minority of lessons, teaching lacks the necessary challenge, structure, and responsiveness to meet pupils' needs, particularly for those with weaker skills. This results in a minority of pupils making limited progress.

Because of strengths in English teaching, many pupils demonstrate suitable reading, writing, and oracy skills but opportunities to develop beyond these lessons are underdeveloped. The school has made some progress in the development of the provision for literacy, but leadership lacks strategic planning and evaluation. The provision for developing pupils' numeracy and digital competence outside of mathematics and information technology lessons is also underdeveloped.

Pupil well-being is a notable strength of the school. Staff know pupils well, and systems to support their personal and emotional needs are effective and well-structured. The school's approach to promoting inclusion and responding to bullying is clear and largely effective. As a result, pupils report feeling safe and valued.

The provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) includes providing useful support information for teachers. However, the impact of the provision is not evaluated rigorously, and there is insufficient training for staff to enable them to plan effectively for meeting the needs of ALN pupils. Consequently, a minority of ALN pupils do not make sufficient progress.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school rooted in Gospel values as well as focusing on supporting pupils' personal development. This vision is shared widely with the school community and underpins many aspects of the school's work. While leaders at all levels participate in self-evaluation activities and improvement planning, processes lack precision and do not focus sufficiently on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Strategic planning by senior leaders does not always identify or address the most pressing priorities well enough. Accountability structures across the school are underdeveloped and do not support staff to improve the quality of their work.

Professional learning opportunities are varied and engaging, and staff benefit from the school's involvement in initial teacher education. However, there is insufficient evaluation of the impact of professional learning on practice.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Improve the consistency of quality teaching across the school
- R2 Strengthen the strategic leadership of skills so that pupils have challenging and progressive opportunities to improve their literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum
- R3 Improve the planning and provision for pupils with ALN
- R4 Ensure that school improvement processes focus precisely on the impact of provision on pupils' learning and progress
- R5 Strengthen accountability at all levels

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. A small team of Estyn inspectors will visit the school to monitor progress about 12-18 months after the publication of the inspection report.

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: 22/07/2025
