

# **Report summary for parents and carers on Welshpool High School**

**Date of inspection: May 2025**

This report is also available in Welsh.

# Summary

---

At Welshpool High School, leaders and staff are dedicated to creating a caring environment and supporting pupils' well-being through tailored interventions. The school has a strong safeguarding culture and quickly addresses any issues, which results in most pupils feeling safe in school. The recently revised approach to supporting good behaviour and engagement has successfully reduced low-level disruptions in lessons. Pupils receive helpful guidance and mentoring to support their learning and personal development, with strong arrangements in place to support pupils well-being when they move from primary to secondary education.

Overall, the quality of teaching is too variable. Nearly all teachers possess secure subject knowledge and act as effective language models, establishing warm and supportive relationships with pupils. However, in half of lessons, shortcomings in teaching result in pupils not making the progress they are capable of. Teachers in these lessons often lack high expectations, provide insufficiently challenging activities, and fail to adapt their teaching to support pupils with weaker skills. Teachers, in general, do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills. Additionally, written feedback in a minority of cases lacks precision and does not effectively support improvement.

The school is taking a thoughtful approach to implementing Curriculum for Wales, aiming to improve teaching and encourage collaboration across different learning areas. The curriculum for older pupils is broad and balanced, shaped by pupil voice, and designed to meet their general and vocational goals. However, the level of challenge varies across learning areas, and the tracking and monitoring of pupil progress in younger years is underdeveloped, making it hard for leaders to evaluate the impact of the curriculum and know whether pupils are making suitable progress. In addition, the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills requires improvement.

Despite leaders' commitment to raising the achievement of all pupils, over time leadership has had insufficient impact on important aspects such as the quality of teaching and skills development. Whilst whole-school attendance is slowly improving, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals in particular, is of concern. Senior leaders support the headteacher, but their work is not monitored or evaluated well enough. Furthermore, leadership responsibility is not evenly distributed and too often overlaps leading to unclear lines of accountability.

Governors are enthusiastic and committed supporters of the school, beginning to challenge leaders appropriately. The headteacher, together with the business manager and governing body, manages the school's finances carefully, contributing to a significant reduction of the deficit budget. However, the school's use of pupil development grant (PDG) funding has not always been appropriate and has not had sufficient impact on the attendance and attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals.

# Recommendations and next steps

---

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

- R1 Strengthen leadership to ensure that roles and responsibilities are equitable and clear and ensure that leaders at all levels evaluate their work accurately and robustly, and secure the improvements required
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching to ensure appropriate challenge for all pupils
- R3 Improve cross-curricular planning to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills progressively
- R4 Improve attendance, in particular that of pupils eligible for free school meals
- R5 Increase the opportunities that pupils have to use Welsh outside of Welsh lessons

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. This is the most intensive level of statutory follow-up. Estyn will monitor the school's progress on a termly basis following the publication of the inspection report.

## Full Report

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

---

© Crown Copyright 2025: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 22/07/2025