

Queen Elizabeth High
Llansteffan Road
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Carmarthenshire
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05/11/2025

Dear Leaders and Staff

Interim visit: November 2025

Thank you for your support with the arrangements for the interim visit to the school. We valued the opportunity to meet with you, your staff and pupils to discuss the improvement work the school has carried out since the core inspection.

During our visit, we had the opportunity to:

- Meet with pupils and hear their feedback about the school.
- Visit a sample of lessons across the curriculum to see pupils and staff undertaking their work.
- Undertake lesson observations and work scrutiny activities alongside senior and middle leaders.
- Speak with senior leader and middle leaders about your improvement work and how you have worked to address the recommendations from the core inspection.

Focus of visit

Strengthen improvement planning processes

During the visit, it was helpful to hear how the school has adapted its evaluation and improvement processes with the aim of reducing the focus on compliance with school policies. We heard about how leaders continue to use a suitable range of activities to support them in evaluating aspects of the school's work. It was interesting to hear how middle leaders are more involved in gathering first hand evidence than they were at the time of the core inspection. Middle leaders told us they value their professional learning, and they feel that there is a more collaborative approach to evaluation and improvement

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planning. Although leaders identify broad strengths and areas for improvement, the school recognises that there is still too much variation in how well leaders at all levels evaluate their work based on its impact on pupils' learning and well-being. As a result, improvement planning is not always as precise as it could be.

It may be helpful for the school to consider:

- How can you support leaders at all levels to consistently evaluate teaching by its impact on pupils' progress?
- How can you strengthen the support for leaders to help them be more accurate in their evaluations of learning, teaching and well-being, so that you can plan more precisely for improvement?

Strengthen provision to reduce persistent absence and improve the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals

During the visit, we noted that the school has taken a range of actions to strengthen provision to reduce persistent absence and improve the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM). It was useful to hear how leaders have introduced a clear graduated response to support pupils with poor attendance, and that there is clarity around roles and responsibilities in this important area of the school's work. In addition, senior leaders have increased the capacity of the pastoral team, particularly in relation to attendance, and reviewed the school's rewards scheme to celebrate good attendance. We heard how senior leaders meet regularly with heads of year to review individual pupils and agree next steps. They have developed a useful dashboard to analyse attendance at whole-school level.

It was positive to hear that leaders have prioritised support for eFSM pupils in all aspects of school life. Strategies to improve the attendance of eFSM pupils include detailed tracking, one-to-one form tutor sessions and targeted support from the family engagement officer. It was pleasing to see how these approaches have helped improve the attendance of these pupils.

It was interesting to hear how leaders recognise the link between well-being and attendance and have introduced a range of interventions such as community outreach projects for particularly vulnerable pupils. However, in our discussions it was agreed that a greater strategic focus on reducing persistent absenteeism would be useful, to benefit a greater number of pupils in this category. Despite the school's continued focus on attendance leading to some improvements, whole-school attendance remains below that of similar schools, and the rate of persistent absence continues to be a concern.

It may be helpful for the school to consider:

- How can the school ensure that its strategic planning focuses more robustly on reducing persistent absence?
- How can leaders develop precise success criteria and monitoring arrangements to evaluate the impact of specific interventions on attendance?

The team valued the welcome and the professional dialogue with the school during their visit. Thank you again for your help to plan and arrange this visit.

The school's latest 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/6694063>

Yours sincerely



Lowri Jones

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