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St Alban's R.C. High School
The Park
Pontypool
Torfaen
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10/12/2025

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

Increase the range of opportunities for pupils to practise their Welsh language skills

In our discussions, we heard that increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills inside and outside the classroom is a key priority for the school. Since the time of the core inspection, there have been increased opportunities for pupils to participate in Welsh cultural events, such as the school's St David's Day Eisteddfod and national Eisteddfodau. We also noted how the school has strengthened relationships with external organisations, such as the Urdd, by organising residential visits to Llangrannog

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for Year 7 pupils. Pupils can join the 'Criw Cymraeg', and this pupil group works productively with leaders to promote the use of the Welsh language. Members of the 'Criw Cymraeg' decide on the phrase of the week and produce a fortnightly podcast to celebrate the Welsh language and culture.

Additionally, leaders have worked productively with local primary schools to plan for the progressive development of pupils' Welsh skills. We heard that the school has begun to support staff to develop their Welsh language skills to ensure that they are confident when incorporating Welsh phrases and commands in their lessons. Leaders told us that pupils have positive attitudes towards developing their skills in Welsh, and nearly all pupils gain a Welsh Second Language GCSE qualification by the end of Year 11.

Overall, the school has introduced valuable strategies to promote pupils' appreciation of the Welsh language.

It may be helpful for leaders to consider:

- How can leaders work strategically to further develop and evaluate this area of the school's work?
- How can the school ensure that all staff model the Welsh language effectively as part of daily routines?
- How can the school develop pupils' appreciation of Welsh history and culture across the curriculum to strengthen their understanding of the language's background?

Strengthen improvement planning processes

During the visit, we heard how senior leaders have streamlined the school's self-evaluation processes to help them identify the most important areas in need of improvement. During our discussions, the school explained how a constructive and collaborative approach between senior and middle leaders supports the focus on reviewing progress made against improvement priorities.

It was interesting to hear how leaders at all levels participate in a wider range of self-evaluation activities, such as whole-school work scrutiny, joint learning walks and evaluations of well-being data. It was also useful to hear about the school's involvement with its local primary schools and external partners. In addition, we heard about the school's strategies to embed the Welsh language and Cymraeg within curriculum planning, teaching practices and day to day school life. Leaders described how this work is supporting them to have a clearer understanding of expectations for pupils' work, enhance provision and share good practice.

We noted the steps you have taken, through coaching in line management meetings, to develop accountability in middle leaders, for example, they lead their own monitoring activities and contribute to whole-school professional learning. Middle leaders told us they value the support and professional learning they receive. However, despite this work, there is too much variation in how well leaders at all levels evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

It may be helpful for the school to consider:

- How can you ensure that leaders and teachers have a clear and shared understanding of the expected progress pupils should make?
- How do senior leaders ensure all middle leaders evaluate the impact of teaching on learning precisely?
- How can well-being information be used to further enhance curriculum provision?

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/6784603>

Yours sincerely



Lowri Jones

Acting Assistant Director