

Archbishop Mcgrath Catholic High School
Oak Tree View
Brackla
Bridgend
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23/03/2026

Dear leaders and staff

Interim visit: March 2026

Thank you for your support during the interim visit to the school on the 4th and 5th of March 2026. We valued the opportunity to meet with you and pupils and hear more about the improvement work the school has undertaken since the core inspection in November 2019.

During the visit, we had the opportunity to:

- hold discussions with leaders and staff about their self-evaluation and improvement work, and their work to improve the provision for pupils' numeracy skills
- talk with pupils and hear their feedback about the school
- visit a small sample of lessons in subjects across the curriculum
- scrutinise a sample of pupils' work
- scrutinise a small sample of relevant school documentation
- undertake joint work scrutiny and lesson observation activities with leaders and discuss the main findings from these activities

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Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

Focus of visit

How well does self-evaluation identify precisely any aspects of teaching and learning that need improvement?

During our visit, it was pleasing to hear about the changes leaders have made since the core inspection to promote and embed a supportive culture of self-evaluation and reflection. Middle leaders shared how much they value participating in a wide range of appropriate self-evaluation activities, including data analysis and collecting first-hand evidence. They also appreciate the support from senior leaders in conducting joint activities, such as learning walks. As a result, the middle leaders we spoke to reflected on their increasing confidence in evaluating the quality of teaching within their departments.

Middle leaders also shared how they are challenged and supported through line management meetings, which regularly focus on teaching, pupil progress and the modelling of good practice.

We also heard how all staff are offered the opportunity to participate in observation activities during the school's 'Standards Weeks'. Staff shared how this contributes positively to promoting a more collaborative approach to evaluation and improvement. Staff noted that aligning these activities with opportunities for immediate professional discussions, targeted professional learning and the sharing of practice is having a positive impact on specific aspects of their teaching.

It was also useful to hear how you use your findings to inform your improvement plans and further embed teachers shared understanding of good teaching and its principles. For example, your school improvement plan includes the development of responsive teaching and appropriate subject feedback.

It may be helpful for the school to consider:

- Do leaders always consider well enough the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make when evaluating the quality of provision?
- Do Department Improvement Plans (DIPs) and Well-being Improvement Plans (WIPs) always reflect well enough the findings from self-evaluation?

How successful is the school's work to strengthen provision for the progressive development of pupils' numeracy skills?

During our visit, we heard how the school has continued to focus on improving the provision for the progressive development of pupils' numeracy skills. Leaders explained how they have thoughtfully prioritised the development of numeracy in curriculum areas where it is most relevant and arises naturally. From the small sample of books and lessons observed during the visit, it was good to see that most opportunities provided for pupils to

develop their numeracy skills are purposeful, as they also enrich learning within those subjects. For example, in Year 7 geography, pupils have the opportunity to analyse population pyramids, showing the age distribution of the population of Wales in 2011 and 2021. From this, they consider the reasons behind the ageing of the population and the implications this may have for the country.

It was also interesting to hear how leaders of numeracy work in partnership with subject leaders to ensure that opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills are progressive and offer a suitable level of challenge. Leaders explained how they undertake regular and robust analysis of assessment data to identify pupils who have weaker basic numeracy skills. They then use this information to provide appropriate support for these pupils.

Leaders of mathematics and numeracy explained how they are regularly involved in quality assurance activities. They analyse data and identify the main strengths and areas for development in provision.

It may be helpful for the school to consider:

- When teaching mathematical and numerical concepts, do teachers always use formative assessment strategies effectively enough to check for pupils' understanding?

Thank you again for all your help in planning and organising our visit. We wish you well with your future developments.

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/6724601>

Yours sincerely



Lowri Jones

Acting Assistant Director