

**Report following monitoring**

**Level of follow-up: Estyn review**

**Llanidloes High School  
Llangurig Road  
Llanidloes  
Powys  
SY18 6EX**

**Date of visit: February 2026**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and  
Training in Wales**

## Outcome of visit

Llanidloes HS is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity. In accordance with the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school following receipt of the action plan, to ensure that it is suitable and likely to bring about the required improvements. Inspectors will visit the school, in a further four - six months' time, to monitor progress in addressing a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may not be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Ensure that leaders prioritise precisely the aspects of provision that need the most improvement**

Since the core inspection, the school has adapted processes intended to strengthen its quality assurance work and increase the precision of its improvement planning. To help them with this work, much of which is recent, the school utilises a considerable amount of external support. Although a very few of its processes have started to focus suitably upon the link between provision and pupil progress, the school's response to this recommendation has been too slow and largely ineffective.

In the two years since the core inspection, the school, supported by the local authority, has addressed the health and safety issue raised during the inspection, successfully. However, there has been very little progress in other key areas identified by that report, in particular improving the quality of teaching and the coordination of the school's provision for skills. In addition, there has been a decline in pupils' attendance during this time.

Whilst quality assurance processes have started to identify the link between teaching and pupil progress, the evaluations are mostly overgenerous. The school's evaluations do not triangulate evidence from a range of sources such as that from books and lessons or from external verified data well enough and tend to rely too heavily upon the selective use of other data sources. A consequence of this is that leaders do not have an accurate enough understanding of the school's current position and needs. This contributes to a professional learning offer that is too broad and has not had any discernible positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

The recent temporary restructuring of the senior leadership team allowed for roles and responsibilities to be reviewed, but there are several important temporary appointments within it involving significant changes of responsibilities that are not always equitable. Inevitably, the leaders involved in the restructure are still coming to terms with their new roles at a time when urgent, sustainable improvement is required. Currently, several senior leaders have a limited understanding and ownership of their roles. This restructure has not impacted positively enough on the capacity of leaders to drive the improvements required.

The school's leadership retains the desire and willingness to improve. However, their current overreliance upon external support has not led to a sustainable model where they are able to grasp and address the most pertinent issues independently. Overall, since the core inspection, there has not been sufficient progress in addressing this recommendation.

## **R2. Improve the quality of teaching to address the shortcomings noted in the report**

Since the core inspection, the school has aimed to address those aspects of teaching identified during the core inspection as needing improvement. However, there has been very little discernible progress, and the proportion of lessons where pupils make only limited progress has increased slightly since that inspection.

Leaders and teachers have engaged in a range of professional learning, including school visits, local authority-led training and in-house sessions focused on improving teaching. However, the initial introduction of a plethora of strategies stalled meaningful progress and limited the impact on addressing this recommendation. As a result, leaders have

recently refined their approach to focus on five core practices linked to key improvement priorities, although this practice is not yet embedded.

In the lessons observed during this visit, most teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge. They have generally positive working relationships with their pupils and manage behaviour effectively. In many lessons, teachers establish purposeful routines which ensure that pupils settle well to the starter task.

In about half of the lessons seen, teachers often plan meaningful activities and provide clear instructions and explanations to meet the needs and interests of their pupils. They frequently monitor pupils' knowledge and understanding appropriately by circulating the classroom or by asking basic questions. However, in close to half of lessons observed, there continue to be important shortcomings very similar to those seen during the core inspection, that prevent pupils from making suitable progress.

In these lessons, teachers:

- Do not plan well enough to meet the needs of the learners.
- Plan more for what pupils will do rather than what they will learn.
- Do not pose questions to deepen pupils' thinking or encourage them to extend their responses.
- Set undemanding activities which do not challenge pupils well enough to improve their subject understanding and skills alongside each other.

As a result, a significant proportion of pupils do not make enough progress in developing their knowledge, skills or deeper understanding.

In the few most effective lessons, teachers plan well for progress in learning. They carefully match the challenge of tasks to the ability of the pupils and ask probing questions to explore pupils' deeper understanding. This helps them to make secure progress.

The school has taken a sensible approach to improving the quality of feedback, with each department considering the methods most appropriate for supporting pupils' progress. However, despite these developments, the quality of both written and verbal feedback remains too variable. In the majority of cases, feedback is overly generous, frequently effort-related and does not make clear enough to pupils how they can improve their work. This contributes to pupils' responses being inconsistent and often ineffective.

### **R3. Ensure that there is a well-co-ordinated and understood approach to the progressive development of pupils' skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken a few suitable steps to refine its approach to improving the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills. However, leaders have only recently identified key subject areas to provide relevant opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy or digital skills. The majority of staff are beginning to consider how they can provide additional opportunities for pupils to practise these skills. Currently, not all pupils in the Welsh language stream in Years 7-9 go on to study Welsh First Language at GCSE.

Leaders have a broad awareness of opportunities planned to develop pupils' cross-curricular skills through the monitoring activities they undertake with a wide range of external partners. However, while this work identifies general strengths and areas for development, the evaluations are often overly positive and do not identify the most important areas requiring improvement. Continued shortcomings in the coordination and leadership of skills provision do not provide a secure enough understanding that these activities are often not sufficiently challenging and do not develop subject knowledge or skills well enough. This limits leaders' ability to adjust support and provision for skills and too often means that pupils continue to make limited progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

The school has adapted its literacy marking policy to support teachers in identifying errors in pupils' written accuracy. However, the implementation of this is too variable and the use of feedback to help pupils improve their literacy skills remains underdeveloped, even in literacy rich subject areas.

Leaders have provided staff with broadly appropriate professional learning and resources, for example training to support the use of graphs and coding across the curriculum and teaching key terminology. However, this support does not always target the areas most in need of improvement. Teachers do not always embed new approaches before their focus shifts to other aspects of skills development.

### **R4. Improve school attendance**

Since the core inspection, leaders have not acted with sufficient urgency to address weaknesses in attendance. Following a recent restructuring of roles and responsibilities, the school has introduced and strengthened a range of strategies to improve attendance. This includes a more systematic and consistent use of data and the promotion of the importance of attendance to pupils and parents. Internal, unverified data suggests an emerging positive trend, but the overall rate of progress remains too slow.

Pupils' attendance in the academic year 2024-2025 does not compare well enough with that at the time of the core inspection. Although it improved slightly last year, it is lower

than it was two years ago at the time of the core inspection. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has also declined since the core inspection and is now below the average for this group of pupils in similar schools. Rates of persistent absence have varied over this period, but, overall, they do not compare well to those in similar schools.

**R5. Address the health and safety issue identified during the inspection**

Requirements to address the health and safety issue identified during the inspection have been met fully.

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