

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Significant improvement

Caldicot School

**Mill Lane
Caldicot
Monmouthshire
NP26 5XA**

Date of visit: March 2026

by

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

Outcome of visit

Caldicot School is judged to have made sufficient 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 removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1 Address the safeguarding issues raised during the inspection

The school has fully addressed the safeguarding concern identified at the previous inspection. The local authority is in the process of addressing the health and safety matter.

R2 Strengthen strategic leadership, particularly the impact of evaluation and improvement processes

Since the core inspection, leaders have taken appropriate action to strengthen leadership at all levels. The school has reviewed and restructured senior leaders' roles and responsibilities suitably. They are now more sufficiently balanced and equitable, ensuring senior leaders have the time and capacity to carry out the strategic aspects of their work effectively. They demonstrate a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and draw well on a wider range of first-hand evidence to inform their evaluations. As a result, they now scrutinise provision with greater rigour and are beginning to place stronger emphasis on the impact their work has on pupils. Strengthened accountability arrangements ensure that senior leaders are held to account more robustly. In addition, the school actively seeks support and challenge from external partners, which has fostered a more reflective culture amongst leaders.

Over the past twelve months, leaders have secured worthwhile improvements in several important aspects of the school's work, including provision for pupils with additional learning needs, the progressive development of pupils' skills and the effectiveness of middle leadership. However, leaders have been slower to bring about the necessary improvements in the quality of teaching.

In general, curriculum middle leaders demonstrate greater confidence and clarity in leading their areas of responsibility and contribute more meaningfully to whole-school improvement. They engage well in a broad range of self-evaluation activities, including learning walks, work scrutiny, pupil-voice activities and the analysis of performance data. They are beginning to use this evidence to develop an improved understanding of the effectiveness of their departments and identify key priorities for improvement. Middle

leaders benefit from more consistent and rigorous support and challenge as a result of improved line-management arrangements. Middle leaders now review improvement actions regularly with their line managers, ensuring that actions are monitored closely. In the best cases, middle leaders have secured worthwhile improvements in teaching within their areas and now hold their teams to account with greater confidence. However, there continues to be variability in the quality of middle leadership. There remain a minority of leaders who do not focus precisely enough on important aspects in need of improvement in their departments.

Leaders at all levels make productive use of professional learning opportunities. Middle-leadership programmes, coaching, external support and targeted training have strengthened leadership capacity across the school. The revised professional development and review process supports this improvement by aligning professional learning more closely with self-evaluation findings and individual development needs.

Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and have a secure understanding of their strategic responsibilities. They play a more active and purposeful role in challenging and supporting senior leaders to address the school's improvement priorities.

R3 Improve the strategic leadership of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs

Leaders have strengthened the strategic leadership of provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), including within 'The Nurcombe Centre' specialist resource base (SRB). As a result, leaders now work more cohesively, providing appropriate challenge and support. This contributes to a clearer shared strategic oversight of this aspect of the school's work.

Senior leaders have worked purposefully with the local authority to develop their understanding of ALN reform and to improve how the school supports pupils with ALN. This has led to the reorganisation of the SRB to meet the needs of pupils with more complex and physical needs. In addition, leaders have strengthened planning for individual pupils through the introduction of more robust and consistent individual development plans (IDPs). These now align with local authority models and include meaningful consideration of pupil and parent views. Leaders evaluate progress against IDP targets more effectively through regular review meetings.

Leaders have also developed more holistic approaches to tracking pupil progress. These include the purposeful use of baseline assessments, attendance and well-being data, skills-based tracking within the SRB and broader whole-school progress information. Together, these provide leaders with a more accurate understanding of pupils' progress and any barriers to learning. In the SRB, leaders have strengthened the curriculum

appropriately through effective collaboration with the local authority and provision in other schools. The curriculum now focuses suitably on progression, independence and the development of relevant skills for pupils with more complex needs.

Leaders are starting to evaluate ALN provision through a suitable range of quality assurance activities across both mainstream provision and the SRB. However, these activities are not consistently precise enough to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Leaders provide staff with helpful information about individual pupils, for example through regular briefings and better access to ALN documentation. However, there remains variability in how well teachers adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with ALN.

Leaders are beginning to refine intervention strategies, including more targeted provision such as the nurture hub. However, the evaluation of the impact of these interventions is at an early stage.

R4 Improve attendance

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a broad range of purposeful actions to improve pupil attendance. Leaders have further increased staffing capacity to enhance the school's well-being and attendance provision, ensuring that pupils and families receive more timely and focused support. In addition, the use of proactive strategies, such as rewards and inter-form competitions, is having an increasingly positive effect on motivating pupils to attend school regularly. These measures have contributed to a stronger whole school culture in which attendance is clearly prioritised and promoted.

Staff now monitor attendance more closely. They utilise effective processes for tracking patterns of absence and they identify pupils who need support. Leaders analyse attendance data, including for specific groups such as pupils eligible for free school meals, regularly. This allows the school to identify concerns at an early stage and implement targeted support more promptly. These improvements are starting to impact positively on rates of attendance.

Leaders have benefitted from effective partnership working with the local authority, both at a strategic level and when working with individual pupils and their families. Furthermore, leaders are now held to account for their work to improve attendance. However, leaders do not evaluate well enough the impact of specific strategies to improve attendance.

Since the core inspection, staff have a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities to improve attendance. They communicate the importance of regular attendance clearly through assemblies and form periods, helping pupils to recognise the impact of attendance on their learning and progress. The pastoral team works

collaboratively, identifying and eliminating the barriers that pupils and their families may face in securing good attendance.

Whilst overall attendance improved slightly in 2024-2025 compared with the previous year, the rate of improvement is below that of similar schools. Additionally, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has declined over the past three years. However, unverified school data indicates improved attendance for this academic year, including the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

R5 Improve the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills and address the shortcomings identified in teaching, particularly with regard to supporting pupils with weaker skills

Since the core inspection, leaders have focused suitably on professional learning to improve teachers' planning for progression. In addition, they have prioritised improving written and verbal feedback.

Overall, teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and use this well to support pupils' understanding. They establish positive, purposeful working relationships that help pupils feel confident and ready to learn.

In the few lessons where teaching is most effective, teachers motivate and inspire pupils to engage positively in their learning. They plan skilfully, with a clear focus on what they want pupils to learn and how they will achieve this. In these lessons, teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' achievement. They use questioning purposefully to deepen pupils' understanding and adjust the pace of learning adeptly in response to pupils' progress. As a result, in these lessons, pupils make strong progress.

In a majority of cases, teaching enables pupils to make expected progress. In these lessons, teachers share suitable learning intentions and provide clear explanations and instructions that help pupils understand new concepts. They manage behaviour well and establish consistent routines that enable learning to start promptly. They plan sequences of well-structured activities that build appropriately on prior learning and model learning effectively, so that pupils understand what they are working towards. They promote the correct use of subject specific vocabulary in pupils' verbal responses. In addition, these teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and give helpful verbal feedback that supports improvement.

However, in a minority of instances, shortcomings in teaching result in pupils making more limited progress. In these lessons, teachers:

- have low expectations and do not plan well enough to meet the needs of all pupils
- do not match the pace of learning well to pupils' needs
- provide tasks to keep pupils busy rather than advancing their learning
- do not always address persistent low-level disruption
- question mainly to elicit short answers rather than deepen understanding,
- do not monitor pupils' understanding well enough to move learning on or provide timely support.

In the SRB, teachers know their pupils well and adapt their teaching effectively for pupils with complex needs. Teachers work effectively with support staff to ensure that individual pupils make progress in relation to their starting points.

Where written feedback is effective in supporting pupils' progress, teachers offer valuable guidance following assessments. Pupils benefit from worthwhile opportunities to redraft and improve their work. Where written feedback is less effective and does not help pupils make progress in their knowledge and understanding, pupils are given insufficient information on how to improve their work. Teachers do not always provide appropriate feedback on pupils' technical accuracy.

Since the time of the core inspection, leaders have strengthened the strategic planning for the progressive development of pupils' skills, though this work is at an early stage. Skills coordinators contribute appropriately to the school's self-evaluation activities and have introduced a range of suitable interventions for pupils with weaker literacy and numeracy skills. They work effectively with literacy, numeracy and digital 'coalitions' - groups of subjects working together - to ensure that these cross-curricular skills are developed appropriately. However, a few activities do not enhance subject understanding or provide appropriate challenge.

Leaders have prioritised improving pupils' literacy skills, with a specific focus on developing advanced reading skills. As a result, the majority of pupils now synthesise information from a range of texts effectively, such as when evaluating the impact of the industrial revolution on Wales. Leaders promote a strong reading culture, and the new school library provides a vibrant space that supports reading for pleasure. Leaders' work with literacy coalition departments has also increased opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum for example when producing travel writing. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills in lessons. In addition, the school has strengthened opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the Welsh language and culture, and, generally, pupils show a positive attitude towards learning Welsh.

In mathematics, a majority of pupils develop their mathematical skills appropriately. However, a minority of pupils do not recall prior learning well enough and do not show their workings clearly when solving problems.

There are now worthwhile opportunities in a few relevant subjects across the curriculum for pupils to apply their numeracy skills, for example to present and analyse data. This is starting to have a positive impact on how well pupils develop their numeracy skills.

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