

# **Report summary for parents and carers on Crickhowell High School**

Date of inspection: 23/02/2026

# Summary

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Crickhowell High School is a caring and inclusive community where pupils show a strong sense of pride and belonging. Most pupils feel safe and know whom to approach if they have concerns. Leaders have established a well-embedded culture of safeguarding and respond promptly and appropriately to issues that arise. Attendance has improved over the last two years, reflecting leaders' focused efforts, but it remains below pre-pandemic levels and that of similar schools.

The headteacher provides clear direction for the school and has strengthened its culture while addressing important aspects of its work. He places a strong emphasis on securing high standards in behaviour and teaching and has refined senior leaders' roles to build greater strategic capacity. Leaders have introduced clearer quality assurance processes and suitable professional learning opportunities. However, self-evaluation and improvement planning do not focus sharply enough on the impact of provision on pupils' progress and well-being. Leaders and governors monitor the school's finances carefully and have implemented an agreed recovery plan. Despite prudent decision-making and careful oversight, the school's deficit budget continues to rise in the current financial climate.

Most teachers have strong subject knowledge and use subject-specific terminology confidently to support learning. Many plan suitably challenging lessons and give clear guidance that help pupils build on what they already know. Consequently, many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make at least suitable progress. In a few cases, high expectations and probing questions enable pupils to make strong progress. However, in a minority of cases, expectations are too low and activities lack sufficient challenge. In these instances, pupils' independence is not developed well enough, and a few make limited progress overall.

Many pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. Most listen attentively and read and write with suitable competence, although opportunities to develop advanced reading skills and to write at length across the curriculum are limited. Many apply numeracy skills suitably in mathematics, but these skills are not applied widely enough in other subjects. The majority of pupils make adequate progress in Welsh, although very few opportunities to speak the language limit their confidence.

The school has developed a broad curriculum and a comprehensive personal and social education programme that supports pupils' well-being effectively. Provision for equality and diversity is purposeful, and pupils benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities. However, curriculum planning is too variable across areas of learning. Overall, planning does not support the progressive development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills well enough, and pupils do not have enough meaningful opportunities to apply these skills across the curriculum. In addition, the introduction of the options process at the end of Year 8 narrows the curriculum in Year 9 and limits pupils' access to the full range of learning experiences at this stage.

# Recommendations and next steps

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## **We have made six recommendations to help the school continue to improve:**

- R1 Develop self-evaluation and improvement planning so that they focus more precisely on the impact of provision on pupils' progress and well-being.
- R2 Improve teaching to ensure that expectations are always sufficiently high and that all pupils receive appropriate challenge.
- R3 Improve attendance.
- R4 Strengthen the provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in relevant subjects across the curriculum.
- R5 Ensure that pupils have access to the full range of learning experiences until the end of Year 9.
- R6 Ensure robust management and monitoring of the budget.

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

## Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

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