

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

Ysgol Clywedog

**Ruthin Road
Wrexham
LL13 7UB**

Date of visit: June 2026

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Clywedog 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 special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards across the school

Over the last two years, leaders have taken a range of beneficial actions to raise expectations, improve pupils' attitudes to learning and to increase the effectiveness of teaching. This has had a positive impact on the standards that pupils achieve in lessons. Outcomes at the end of Year 11, including those of pupils eligible for free school meals, have fluctuated over the last three years, but in general they have been below those of similar schools.

In lessons, many pupils make sound progress in their learning. They recall their prior learning well and apply it appropriately to new contexts. A few pupils make only limited progress. This is often because they are set tasks that are insufficiently demanding, and are not challenged to work with a suitable level of independence.

In discussion activities, the majority of pupils express themselves with suitable clarity, using an appropriate vocabulary. They listen respectfully to their peers and respond thoughtfully. A few pupils explain their ideas articulately, using a wide range of general and subject-specific terminology. A minority provide only brief, underdeveloped responses to their teachers' questions.

The majority of pupils structure their extended writing suitably and express themselves with appropriate clarity. A few write at length fluently and with sophistication, varying their sentence structure and thinking carefully about their language choices to make their writing engaging. However, the majority of pupils are prone to careless mistakes, particularly with spelling, and a minority make frequent basic errors. These pupils lack control in their writing and do not consider their language choices well enough.

In general, pupils select relevant information from suitably challenging texts with appropriate accuracy. Many make relevant comments on, for example, writers' choice of language or the bias and reliability of historical sources.

They support their points with suitable quotations and use inference appropriately. A minority show a sound grasp of authorial devices and produce thoughtful responses to written texts, demonstrating a broad vocabulary. A minority produce only limited, superficial responses to reading tasks, and are often over-reliant on teacher support.

Many pupils have sound basic number skills. They use these appropriately when, for example, calculating a fraction of an amount or solving basic equations. A few pupils develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding well. They recall their prior learning and apply it to new contexts successfully. A minority of pupils have weak number skills. They struggle to recall prior learning independently and are too reliant on the use of their calculator. These pupils do not organise their workings out well enough, and this limits their ability to identify errors.

In Welsh lessons, many pupils develop their oracy skills well. The majority read short sentences aloud clearly and accurately. Many pupils locate relevant information confidently. They make suitable progress in writing in Welsh, and a majority write paragraphs in Welsh accurately using the past tense, connectives and idioms accurately

R2. Improve teaching, including the level of challenge, questioning, the monitoring of pupil progress and the impact of feedback

Since this recommendation was last evaluated in autumn 2025, the school has continued to deploy a range of beneficial strategies to improve the quality of teaching. Strengthened processes for self-evaluation have enabled leaders to plan for improvement more precisely and put in place worthwhile professional learning that targets the aspects of teaching most in need of development. As a result, overall, teaching is now more consistently effective than it was at the time of the core inspection.

In many cases, teaching supports pupils to make sound progress in their learning. In these lessons, teachers have appropriately high expectations and set suitably demanding tasks. They plan sequences of activities that engage pupils and promote an appropriate pace of learning. They provide clear explanations and helpful modelling. In these lessons, teachers ask suitable questions to gauge pupils' understanding. They monitor pupils' progress appropriately, providing helpful feedback, and adapt their teaching where necessary. In a minority of lessons, teachers use questioning well to help pupils develop their responses and deepen their understanding.

In a few cases, shortcomings in teaching continue to limit pupils' progress. In these lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to meet pupils' individual needs. They either set tasks that are too challenging, or they plan undemanding activities that do not help pupils to develop their understanding well enough. In particular, they often over-scaffold work, which limits pupils' independence in their learning. In a few instances, teachers do not address pupils' passivity and limited engagement well enough.

Overall, the impact of written feedback has increased since the last time this recommendation was evaluated. However, its effectiveness still varies too much both within and across subject areas. In a minority of cases, pupils make meaningful improvements to their work in light of their teachers' feedback. This is because these teachers provide clear guidance and have suitable expectations regarding how pupils respond. Where feedback is less effective, it is often because it does not provide clear enough guidance on how to improve and teachers are too accepting of limited responses.

R3. Improve provision to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)

Over the last two years, the school has reviewed and refined its approach to developing pupils' skills. It has provided helpful professional learning for staff that has focused on specific strategies, for example how to develop pupils' ability to analyse, evaluate and interpret texts. As a result, the quality and impact of skills provision, especially literacy, is improving well.

In English and other relevant subjects, reading activities are in general suitably challenging, and the texts used are appropriately demanding. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to summarise and synthesise information from multiple sources, for example when evaluating religious views towards the death penalty. Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to develop their subject specific vocabulary. The improved use of questioning in lessons is having a positive impact on the quality of the majority of pupils' verbal responses.

Across the curriculum, there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to write at length for a few different purposes and audiences. The use of 'structure strips' is helping pupils to plan their writing more coherently. However, overall, there is not enough variety in the type of writing activities, and more able pupils are often too reliant on the 'structure strips'. In many cases, pupils receive suitable opportunities to improve their work following their teachers' written feedback. Although pupils frequently re-draft their written work successfully, in a few instances they spend time copying out substantial sections of the original piece. Overall, written feedback has insufficient impact on the technical accuracy of pupils' writing.

The school identifies pupils with weaker literacy skills appropriately and provides helpful interventions. Leaders track the progress of these pupils suitably, and many make appropriate progress from their starting points.

Across the curriculum, there are a few relevant and worthwhile opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills. However, the quality and level of challenge of these activities remains too variable. Improving the coordination of this provision remains a priority for the school.

Provision across the curriculum for developing pupils' digital skills has focused on reliability of online resources, and staff have received useful guidance on this aspect. Pupils have a few suitable opportunities to use their digital skills across the curriculum, for example developing spreadsheets in science and animations in language lessons. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 promotes pupil engagement and progress suitably through a blend of interesting and contemporary topics. Many curriculum areas encourage pupils to consider matters that relate to their locality as well as global events.

Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve the strategic planning for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). They use information from a range of sources to build a clear picture of pupils' specific strengths and barriers to learning. This is beginning to help them plan provision that is matched to pupils' individual needs. Staff are provided with helpful information about pupils with ALN and are beginning to utilise these strategies appropriately to support their lesson planning.

R4. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels

Since his appointment two years ago, the headteacher has had a notably positive impact on the culture of the school. He has created a working atmosphere characterised by calmness, trust and collaboration. This has had a positive effect on staff morale. The senior leadership team has been strengthened both by new appointments and by roles and responsibilities being refined so that they make best use of leaders' skills and experience. During this period, leadership has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching. More recently, it has started to secure improvement in pupils' attendance. However, it has not had sufficient impact on pupil outcomes at the end of Year 11.

Middle leaders now have a much more secure understanding of their role, and value the support and challenge provided by strengthened arrangements for line management, as well as beneficial professional learning to develop their leadership. They are carrying out their roles with increasing confidence and autonomy. However, there remains too much variation in how effectively they bring about timely improvements in their areas of responsibility.

The school has taken a range of well-considered actions to strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Senior leaders now have a secure understanding of the school's specific strengths and areas for improvement. As a result of senior leaders' support, many middle leaders now carry out this aspect of their role appropriately, and consequently have a sound understanding of the main areas for development in their areas of responsibility. However, they do not always focus precisely enough on the impact of provision on pupils' progress, and this reduces their capacity to plan for improvement effectively.

Governors continue to be ardent supporters of the school. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and provide senior leaders with valuable challenge.

R5. Improve attendance and punctuality

In the academic years 2022-2023 to 2024-2025, the school made insufficient progress in addressing low rates of attendance. In 2023-2024, attendance declined, and in the following year there was only a modest improvement. However, over the course of this academic year, the school has taken purposeful steps to strengthen the school's approach to attendance.

Leadership of this aspect of the school's work has been strengthened, and the school has established a clear strategic framework to improve attendance, based on support, challenge and action. Better communication with parents, targeted support by specialist staff and more systematic data tracking have all contributed to a more effective approach to improving attendance. As a result, unverified school data indicates that overall attendance, including that of pupils eligible for free school meals, has improved well this year. However, leaders recognize that improving attendance further is a significant priority.

Pupils' behaviour, punctuality and attitudes to learning have shown a marked improvement over the last two years. During this monitoring visit, inspectors observed most pupils behaving maturely and sensibly around the school and arriving to lessons punctually. Many demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in class. They settle to tasks quickly, maintain concentration well and participate willingly in whole-class and group discussions. A minority of pupils, however, are too passive in lessons and are often reluctant to contribute to class discussion or group activities.

R6. Ensure robust financial management

The headteacher, business manager and governors continue to manage the school's finances robustly. They monitor spending closely, which enables them to make informed decisions and respond appropriately to emerging pressures. They ensure that resources are used purposefully to support pupils' learning and well-being.

The school has maintained a surplus budget over the last four years, although this has reduced significantly as financial pressures have increased. Leaders align the budget carefully with the school's strategic priorities and ensure that expenditure links directly to the objectives within the school improvement plan. Despite these strengths, the projected deficit linked to declining pupil numbers and reduced funding presents a significant challenge.

The business manager monitors grant allocations closely, while senior leaders oversee specific grants such as the pupil development grant (PDG). The school uses this funding appropriately to support these pupils' learning and wider experiences. For example, PDG funding provides beneficial support for targeted pupils and enables access to valuable cultural experiences, which enrich their learning. Leaders evaluate this spending suitably, ensuring that it links to intended outcomes.

Governors maintain a strong strategic overview of the school's finances. Through regular meetings of the Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee, they scrutinise financial information and challenge leaders' decisions appropriately. Governors receive accurate and relevant information, which enables them to make informed decisions about budget setting and staffing structures. This effective governance contributes to the school's ability to manage its financial position carefully and respond to emerging challenges.

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