Dros ddysgwyr, dros Gymru
For learners, for Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Significant improvement

Ysgol Calon Cymru

College Road
Builth Wells
Powys
LD2 3BW

Date of visit: October 2026

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Calon Cymru 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. Improve the quality of teaching

Since the core inspection and last monitoring visit, leadership reorganisation has brought clarity and direction to the school's strategy for improving teaching and learning. Leaders have recently provided beneficial professional learning for staff focusing on key aspects of their teaching and learning policy such as questioning, modelling and use of learning intentions. Many teachers have now opted for the coaching programme which has supported them to make improvements in their teaching. This has also allowed leaders to identify strengths and areas for improvement in teaching, and which aspects require further professional learning. The school has worked closely with external partners and other schools to enhance their practice. Leaders have developed beneficial best practice manuals for staff containing examples of pupils' work, with useful annotations to exemplify and explain their expectations.

In most lessons, teachers establish positive working relationships with pupils. They have secure subject knowledge and model subject vocabulary effectively. In many lessons, teachers have established useful classroom routines. They share learning intentions successfully and often revisit them to measure pupil progress. They plan purposeful, logically sequenced activities that develop pupils' subject knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, expectations and challenge are appropriate and pace of learning is suitable.

In many cases, teachers provide clear instructions, explanations and model work effectively. Teachers use questioning suitably to check understanding and explain their responses. They provide useful individual support and verbal feedback while circulating the classroom. Overall, these improvements in teaching have contributed towards many pupils making expected progress.

In a few lessons, where teaching is particularly effective, teachers are enthusiastic and deliver their lessons with verve that engages the whole class. These teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work independently on tasks that are increasingly difficult. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

They question skilfully; probe pupils' thinking and meet the needs of nearly all pupils. This ensures that pupils make strong progress in their subject knowledge and understanding.
In a few cases, pupils do not make enough progress. In these lessons, teachers plan activities that do not challenge pupils enough, the pace of learning is too slow, and tasks do not meet pupils' differing needs sufficiently well. These teachers often offer lengthy, vague or confusing instructions that leave pupils uncertain about tasks and expectations. In addition, they do not probe pupils' responses well enough or identify misconceptions and difficulties promptly. A few teachers do not address low-level disruption effectively or ensure that pupils remain focused, which limits their learning. In Welsh medium lessons, teachers' expectations of pupils' use of the Welsh language are not high enough. In a few cases, Welsh medium resources do not offer pupils an accurate language model.

In many cases, teachers offer useful written and live feedback to help pupils improve their work. Pupils generally have time to respond to written feedback, and this supports their progress. However, the school's strategy to improve spelling, punctuation and grammar is inconsistently applied. In a minority of cases, feedback lacks precision or focuses on presentation rather than learning.

R2. Strengthen the provision for literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum

Since the core inspection, leaders have maintained a focus on improving the provision for pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum. Leadership structure and roles of this area is now clear, and leaders have established a sensible approach to developing skills through 'champion subjects', working closely with external partners to support their work. However, the co-ordination of the provision for llythrennedd, numeracy and digital skills remains at an early stage.

Leaders have worked appropriately with staff to strengthen opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. They use information from personalised assessments suitably to identify strengths and areas for development and use this to inform aspects of literacy provision. This has been supported by whole-school and targeted professional learning to help staff understand how to plan progressive opportunities for pupils to read and write across subjects. As a result, there are now more suitable opportunities for pupils to write at length for different audiences and purposes. However, in a few relevant subjects, opportunities for extended writing are limited and pupils do not develop their advanced reading skills outside English lessons well enough. A minority of pupils continue to make basic errors in their writing.

The majority of pupils that follow subjects through the medium of Welsh are not provided with enough opportunities to enhance the quality and accuracy of their written work.

As a result, a minority of pupils are not making sufficient progress in their command of the Welsh language.

Since the previous visit, leaders have strengthened aspects of their approach to developing pupils' numeracy skills. They use personalised assessment information appropriately to identify areas for development and inform aspects of form-time provision and the mathematics curriculum. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills in a few relevant subjects outside mathematics. However, in a few instances tasks do not contribute effectively enough to pupils' subject-specific learning. Professional learning for staff, such as providing a common approach to graph work, is beginning to support teachers in planning for numeracy,.

Progress in strengthening provision for pupils' digital skills remains limited. Leaders have recently invested appropriately in much-needed improvements to the school's information technology infrastructure, addressing an important barrier identified previously. However, curriculum planning remains at an early stage and opportunities for pupils to develop their digital skills to an appropriate level, both within information and communications technology lessons and across other subjects, are limited. Professional learning and practical resources to support staff are also at an early stage and have not had sufficient impact on classroom provision.

R3. Strengthen improvement planning processes

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has strengthened its approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning. Leaders now have a clearer and more systematic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and there are stronger links between evaluation, improvement priorities and professional learning. Overall, this work has contributed to tangible improvements in teaching and notable recent gains in examination performance. A few aspects of improvement planning remain underdeveloped, and leaders do not always evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' learning and progress sharply enough.

Leaders have established a systematic approach to self-evaluation across the school. A planned programme of quality assurance activities, together with clear guidance and support for leaders, promotes consistency across both campuses. This helps senior leaders maintain effective oversight of improvement work. In general, the leadership structure supports effective communication between the two campuses.

Many senior and middle leaders gather a suitable range of first-hand evidence to evaluate teaching and learning, including through joint lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. These observations help leaders identify strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and provide an appropriate basis for setting targets and coaching individual staff.

Pastoral leaders are beginning to evaluate their work more systematically to identify which approaches are having the greatest impact.

Subject leaders are increasingly involved in data analysis. They now use a wide range of performance information, with a stronger focus on the outcomes of specific groups of pupils. Most make effective use of item-level data. However, their scrutiny of pupils' work is less effective. It focuses too heavily on checking compliance with school policies and does not evaluate the progress pupils' make well enough. Leaders are beginning to evaluate how well pupils develop their skills, but this remains at an early stage.

The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities and addresses the main areas identified during the core inspection and through ongoing self-evaluation. Many areas of learning and experience leaders are beginning to draw suitably on evidence from self-evaluation to inform their planning. However, the quality of their planning is variable.

Leaders align professional learning closely with the school's improvement priorities. Professional development reviews provide staff with appropriate objectives linked to their areas of responsibility and identified areas for improvement. These arrangements provide a clear link between findings from self-evaluation, improvement priorities and professional learning. A well-considered programme of tailored coaching has supported improvements in aspects of teaching. The impact of this is particularly evident in how teachers set learning intentions and use questioning and modelling.

R4. Address the health and safety issues identified during the inspection

Since the core inspection and monitoring visit, the school, with the support of the local authority, has successfully addressed the health and safety issues identified. Fencing around both the Llandrindod and Builth sites is now complete. There are appropriate arrangements in place to identify and ensure the safety of sixth form pupils, including lanyards and electronic sign-in arrangements. The leisure centre is closed to the public during school hours. The school's traffic management arrangements have been strengthened. As a result of these improvements, the school site is now more secure.

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