



Report summary for parents and carers on Elfed High School

Date of inspection: April 2023

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

Overview

Elfed High School (EHS) achieves an effective balance between academic attainment and supporting the well-being of its pupils and staff. The school's core values of 'honesty, integrity, respect, high aspirations and self-belief' are at the heart of what it does. Many pupils have a strong sense of belonging, which is reflected in their good behaviour, courtesy and the pride they exhibit in the school. Many have a positive attitude to learning and engage well in lessons, demonstrating maturity when discussing sensitive issues. They participate enthusiastically in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. The support for pupils' well-being is a particular strength of the school. Although, overall, attendance is improving, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals remains a concern.

The headteacher has a clear vision focused on ensuring every student leaves EHS ready to thrive in the wider community. He has developed and shared the vision well in collaboration with staff, pupils and parents. Staff and governors are passionate about the school and are clear in their intention to provide a good education for all pupils. Leaders collect a broad range of first-hand evidence to evaluate their progress. However, in their evaluations and improvement planning, they focus too closely on operational matters and not precisely enough on the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning.

In the majority of lessons, teachers plan suitably for learning and ensure that activities build well on each other. They have appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve, provide clear explanations, model learning well and support pupils helpfully so that the majority make at least sound progress. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not ensure that pupils make enough progress in their learning. This is mainly because they do not challenge pupils effectively to develop their knowledge and skills or because they overly structure their lessons and limit pupils' opportunities to work independently. The school's curriculum is inclusive and provides an appropriate range of academic and vocational courses at Key Stage 4. The specialist resource base, 'Hafan', is a safe, calm and supportive learning environment in which many of its pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy skills, but there are fewer opportunities for them to develop other important life skills.

Overall, the majority of pupils at EHS make good progress across the curriculum in writing, speaking and listening. They also demonstrate strong physical skills in PE lessons. Pupils do not make as much progress in their reading, numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills across the curriculum because opportunities for them to do so are underdeveloped. Leaders do not monitor the progress of pupils with additional learning needs carefully enough to be certain that all these pupils are making appropriate progress towards their targets.

Recommendations

- R1 Refine self-evaluation and improvement processes so that they focus sharply on teaching and its impact on pupils' learning
- R2 Improve teaching so that all pupils make the progress they are capable of
- R3 Strengthen processes to monitor the progress of pupils with additional learning needs
- R4 Strengthen the progressive development of reading, numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills across the curriculum
- R5 Improve the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will work with the local authority to review the school's progress. This is the lightest touch of follow-up, as it is not statutory.



School context

Name of provider	Elfed High School
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Secondary
Number of pupils on roll	912
Pupils of statutory school age	911
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Secondary is 20.2%)	20.6%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Secondary is 17.8%)	8.5%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	1.9%
Date of headteacher appointment	09/04/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	09/02/2015
Start date of inspection	24/04/2023

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