

A report on

Ruthin School

**Mold Road
Ruthin
Denbighshire
LL15 1EE**

Date of inspection: April 2025

by

Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education

and Training in Wales

About Ruthin School

Name of provider	Ruthin School
Proprietor status	The school is a private limited company owned by Ruthin Education Limited
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent Secondary
Residential provision?	Yes
Number of pupils on roll	239
Pupils of statutory school age	111
Date of previous Estyn visit	21/10/2024
Start date of visit	11/04/2025

School context:

Ruthin School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils from the age of 11 to 18 years. The school is situated on the outskirts of Ruthin, a small market town in the Vale of Clwyd, Denbighshire.

The school is a limited company overseen by the Board of Management. There are currently 239 pupils in the school, of whom 128 are sixth-form pupils. Just over half of all pupils are boarders. Day pupils come from a wide catchment area that includes Denbighshire, Flintshire and Cheshire.

Around three quarters of the school's pupils are from a minority ethnic background, over half of whom are Chinese. There are 141 pupils, including 85 in the sixth form, who speak English as an additional language. A very few pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.

The school selects pupils into the school based on ability and academic attainment. The school requires overseas pupils to have a good level of English before starting any examination course. The sixth form is selective. Pupils are expected to have achieved high grades at GCSE to embark on A level courses.

Around 45% of pupils attending the school receive scholarships or bursaries.

The headteacher has been in post since May 2024.

The school's last core inspection was in October 2024, at which time, it did not meet the requirements for the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

The Welsh Government asked the school to produce a post-inspection action plan to address the areas of non-compliance. To comply fully with these requirements, the school was required to address the issues identified below for each standard:

Standard 3 - The welfare, health and safety of pupils

- Ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order 2005 [14]

Standard 4 - The suitability of the proprietor and staff

- Ensure the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff [20(2a-g)]
- Ensure all staff have a DBS check within the last 3 years [23(a)]

Standard 5 - Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

- Ensure the water supply meets the requirements of the school premises regulations [27(a)]
- Ensure the school has effective site security arrangements for the grounds and building [27(d)]
- Ensure the premises and boarding accommodation are not in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance [27(i)]

A team of HMI visited the school in April 2025 to discuss the school's progress against their action plan and to evaluate their compliance against the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2025.

Main findings

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened processes to ensure that ongoing statutory checks to establish the suitability of staff are completed within the appropriate timescales. All staff now have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check dated within the last three years and the school has a secure system to proactively identify staff whose check is approaching this limit and to ensure that it is renewed in a timely manner. In addition, nearly all staff are registered with the DBS update service. All staff are also now centrally registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC), either as teachers or learning support workers.

At the time of the core inspection, a well-defined and tracked process of pre-employment checks was embedded. Since then, leaders have begun to strengthen their oversight of these pre-employment checks. However, due to inconsistent application the impact of this oversight is limited and requires further development. Overall, the school now has effective systems in place for safer recruitment that address the shortcomings identified during the core inspection.

The school has strengthened its oversight and ongoing management of aspects of health and safety, particularly with reference to fire risk management, water quality, asbestos and site security. Through the adoption and implementation of action plans for asbestos and legionella, the school is managing these risks appropriately. The school recently commissioned a new fire risk assessment and has implemented a suitable schedule of work to address the issues identified. At the time of the visit, most of these actions were completed successfully and the remaining actions are scheduled to be completed within reasonable timeframes. As a result, leaders are proactively managing fire related risks appropriately.

The school has taken suitable steps to ensure the security of the site, including a clear process to 'lockdown' the school in the event of an emergency.

As a result of these actions, there is no evidence that the school does not comply with the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Compliance with the standards for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

This Standard was not considered on this visit.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

This Standard was not considered on this visit.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

This Standard was not considered on this visit.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

This Standard was not considered on this visit.

Recommendation regarding continued registration

When considering this school's registration the Welsh Government may wish to have regard to the following recommendation:

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024.

Inspectors' judgements on this limited inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full Section 163 inspection.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website

(<http://www.estyn.gov.wales>)

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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