

**Report following monitoring**

**Level of follow-up: Special measures**

**Risca Community Comprehensive School**

**Pontymason Lane  
Rogerstone  
NP11 6YY**

**Date of visit: July 2025**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Risca Community Comprehensive School 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.Strengthen self-evaluation processes so that leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the school's areas for development and can plan for improvement precisely**

Following the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has strengthened leadership at all levels. The headteacher's decisive reorganisation of senior leadership roles has enabled leaders to work more strategically and make better use of their expertise and experience. This has strengthened the team's capacity to drive improvement and address whole-school priorities.

Self-evaluation systems and processes have been suitably refined, with increased opportunities for leaders at all levels to engage in these activities. This has helped to strengthen their understanding of their roles and is improving their ability to carry them out effectively. The introduction of a clear self-evaluation calendar has ensured that leaders at all levels engage in purposeful quality assurance activities, supported effectively by external partners. As a result, leaders are beginning to produce more precise evaluations of areas for development. However, a few middle leaders continue to require support to evaluate provision with sufficient rigour. Where appropriate, improvement planning increasingly reflects the school's focus on developing teaching and the provision for pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Middle leaders benefit from a range of helpful professional learning opportunities. This includes joint lesson observations and professional learning with senior leaders, coaching, and collaborative work on quality assurance processes. Regular line management meetings maintain a clear focus on whole-school priorities and strike a suitable balance between support and challenge. This has strengthened the accountability of leaders, particularly in relation to teaching, attendance and pupil well-being.

The school has introduced revised professional development review (PDR) arrangements which focus more closely on individual targets and relevant learning opportunities. These objectives helpfully support staff in meeting the school's improvement goals as well as improving within their roles as teacher and leaders.

Governors continue to develop their capacity to support and challenge school leaders effectively. They participate in self-evaluation activities, such as pupil voice, and have a more informed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

## **R2.Improve the effectiveness of teaching to provide sufficient challenge and ensure progression**

In general, leaders have a better understanding of the quality of teaching and learning than at the time of the core inspection. They have adapted their professional learning provision to respond to findings from monitoring visits as well as their quality assurance activities. This has led to a more bespoke programme of training for all staff and has had positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Most teachers have positive working relationships with pupils and are very supportive of them. They have sound subject knowledge. Many create a calm and purposeful learning environment and manage behaviour well.

Many teachers provide clear explanations of important concepts and helpful instructions that support pupils to engage in activities. They provide an appropriate level of challenge, meaning that many pupils make suitable progress in their learning. These teachers plan activities that are suitably scaffolded and respond to the needs of pupils of different abilities.

While the quality of teaching has improved since the core inspection and subsequent follow up visit, in a minority of instances, various shortcomings remain and these hinder the pace of progress. In these lessons, teachers:

- provide repetitive or undemanding tasks that does not stretch and challenge the more able in particular
- do not pause or adapt lessons in response to pupils' progress or misconceptions, and this does not help them to advance their learning enough
- give overly lengthy explanations

Many teachers provide pupils with useful verbal feedback in a timely and supportive manner. They use questioning well to check for understanding and are beginning to probe pupils' understanding and encourage them to explain their thinking.

### **R3.Develop cohesive provision for the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum, particularly their literacy and numeracy skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has made sufficient progress in developing cohesive provision for the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum. In particular, it has strengthened the leadership of this aspect of its work and offered useful professional learning sessions focused on the development of pupils' skills. These sessions have helped staff in relevant subject areas to develop their understanding and teaching of literacy and numeracy skills.

The school has worked hard to promote the importance of developing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum to complement their subject knowledge development. Staff have been provided with a range of professional learning sessions focused on specific aspects of literacy. As a result, there are increased opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their speaking skills in lessons. Many pupils now respond well to teachers' questions and provide extended and thoughtful answers. In humanities subjects in particular, pupils benefit from opportunities to practise their reading skills such as evaluating the reliability of sources. The school is now working to further improve pupils' advanced reading skills. Pupils also benefit from more worthwhile opportunities to produce extended writing and there is an appropriate balance between scaffolding work and developing pupils' independence.

Overall, the school has strengthened its numeracy provision. In particular, leaders have secured suitable improvements to the teaching of mathematics. As a result, the standard of pupils' numeracy skills has improved, and pupils now have a more positive perception of mathematics. In addition, leaders have begun to plan strategically for the progressive development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, they have identified and planned for worthwhile opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these skills in relevant subjects. There is now increased collaboration between the numeracy co-ordinator, the head of maths, and other faculty leaders. This has led to a more cohesive approach to the planning for numeracy development. Whilst there has been an increase in suitable opportunities to develop numeracy skills in relevant subjects, there remain inconsistencies within departments.

### **R4.Strengthen provision to improve pupils' attitudes to learning and attendance**

Since the core inspection, the headteacher has strengthened the strategic leadership to improve pupils' attitudes to learning and attendance. The school has successfully prioritised the implementation of the 'Risca Learning Charter' by both teachers and pupils. Clear protocols for teachers to follow have led to greater consistency in how well they manage pupils' behaviour and engagement. A graduated approach to the use of sanctions includes valuable opportunities for restorative conversations between staff and pupils.

This enables them to discuss what needs to change from both a pupil and teacher perspective. Pupils who have difficulties regulating their behaviour and emotions are well supported through a range of internal and external interventions.

The school's work in this area has secured improvements in both pupils' behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning. Many behave well in lessons and settle quickly to their work. They listen respectfully to their teachers, sustain their concentration well and persevere to complete tasks. However, a few pupils remain passive or are too easily distracted.

Staff promote the importance of good attendance successfully and rewards are used strategically to target periods of the year where rates of attendance have previously fallen. They analyse attendance data rigorously to identify trends in the rates of absence of both individual and groups of pupils. There are clear criteria for escalating concerns about attendance in a graduated approach. The school uses a range of effective interventions to tackle poor attendance. This includes working in partnership with the education welfare officer and families to identify and overcome barriers to regular attendance.

The school's work in improving rates of attendance has had a notable impact. Between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, the school's rate of attendance increased substantially and is now above that of similar schools. Unverified school data for this academic year to date, indicates that there has been a further significant increase in the rate of attendance including the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals. In addition, there has been a notable decrease in the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

#### **R5.Address the health and safety issues identified during the inspection**

The school has addressed the health and safety issues identified during the core inspection.

As a result of the newly erected fence and gates being in place and operational, the school site is now secure. Barriers restrict traffic flow during the day. Duty rotas have been refined to ensure appropriate supervision during break and lunchtimes.

Security for dual use with the leisure centre has significantly improved. Clearly visible signs now direct visitors to public changing rooms.

Regular monitoring of the school's buildings, facilities and wider environment, along with timely updates to all staff, including the governing body, help to ensure that health and safety arrangements remain a clear and ongoing priority.

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