

Report summary for parents and carers on Olchfa School

**Date of inspection: September
2025**

Summary

Olchfa School provides a nurturing and inclusive environment underpinned by strong relationships between staff and pupils. Generally, teachers have high expectations and use their subject expertise to support pupil progress effectively. In many lessons, teaching is well planned and there is a good balance between teacher instruction and independent learning. Where teaching is particularly strong, lessons are sequenced carefully, teacher questioning is probing and pupils make rapid progress. However, in a few instances, there are shortcomings in planning and teacher questioning which impacts on pupils' progress as they are not challenged enough.

The curriculum is broad, engaging and rooted in the school's vision of 'Cynefin', fostering a sense of belonging. Pupils benefit from worthwhile opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy, digital and wider skills. Many pupils read widely and write with a secure standard of accuracy. In a few instances, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their advanced reading skills. Many pupils have sound number skills and they apply their mathematical knowledge effectively to solve problems. In a minority of instances, some pupils struggle with graph work. The promotion of the Welsh language, alongside authentic cultural experiences, is a strength. An array of extra-curricular activities and enrichment programmes support pupils' wider development effectively.

The school places well-being at its core. Programmes such as the 'CHAT' peer-mentoring scheme and the 'NEWID' hub provide valuable support. Sixth-form pupils make a valuable contribution to the life of the school and have mature social skills. Safeguarding arrangements are robust, positive behaviour is promoted effectively and incidents of bullying are rare. Attendance is improving, although this remains below pre-pandemic levels, particularly for pupils eligible for free school meals.

Provision for pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) is comprehensive, with well-planned interventions, enhanced transition arrangements and meaningful partnerships with external agencies in place. Pupils who attend the newly established specialist teaching facility say they feel safe and well supported.

Leaders are thoughtful and pro-active and governors provide effective support and challenge. National priorities, such as reducing the impact of poverty, are addressed effectively, with pupils eligible for free school meals achieving well. While leaders' self-evaluation is generally accurate, there are instances of overgenerous judgements of some aspects of teaching and pupils' attainment. Staff and leaders benefit from a range of valuable professional learning opportunities to continuously improve their practice.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made two recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Share the good practice in questioning to ensure that all teachers use questioning to deepen pupils' understanding and encourage them to explore their thinking.
- R2 Sharpen some aspects of self-evaluation and line management, so that leaders have a consistently detailed and fully accurate picture of all aspects of the school's work.

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#)

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