

Report summary for parents and carers on Cantonian High School

Date of inspection: October 2025

Summary

Cantonian High School is a caring and inclusive community where most pupils feel safe and supported. Staff foster positive relationships and promote the school's values of 'Ready, Responsible and Respectful'. As a result, many pupils behave well and engage positively in lessons. However, attendance is too low, and the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills is a shortcoming.

In many lessons, pupils make secure progress in their learning. Teachers generally have sound subject knowledge and manage behaviour effectively. In the best practice, teaching is well planned and challenging, helping pupils to think deeply and develop their skills. However, in a few lessons, low expectations and weak teaching limit pupils' progress. Feedback is too variable and does not consistently help pupils improve their work.

Numeracy provision is strong with many pupils demonstrating secure skills and applying them across the curriculum. In addition, pupils develop appropriately their digital skills. However, provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is underdeveloped.

The curriculum is broad and includes a suitable range of enrichment activities. Pupils benefit from impartial careers guidance and transition support, including for those with additional learning needs. The Specialist Resource Base provides well-structured and personalised support.

Leaders have secured important improvements, including alleviating the impact of poverty on pupils' attainment, improvements in the provision for the development of pupils' numeracy skills and the promotion of the Welsh language. However, leaders' evaluations lack precision, and staff are not held to account well enough. Governors are committed to the school and provide effective challenge. The school has a significant deficit budget.

Recommendations and next steps

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

- R1 Address the safeguarding concern raised during the inspection
- R2 Ensure that leaders at all levels evaluate effectively the impact of provision on pupils' progress and skills and hold others to account fully
- R3 Improve provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills
- R4 Improve attendance
- R5 Work with the local authority to reduce the school's deficit budget

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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