Dros ddysgwyr, dros Gymru
For learners, for Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

Treorchy Comprehensive School

Pengelli
Treorchy
Rhondda
RCT
CF42 6UL

Date of visit: November 2026

by

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

Outcome of visit

Treorchy 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. Improve the approaches used by all staff to support pupils' behaviour

Since the core inspection, senior leaders have carried out a strategic review and strengthened the whole-school approach to supporting pupils' behaviour. As a result, there are now clear and consistent expectations of pupil behaviour which are well understood by pupils and staff. Leaders have developed a sensible, graduated response to any instances of poor behaviour. This provides staff with a structured and consistent framework and has led to improvement in classroom management and standards of behaviour. However, there remain some inconsistencies in how well a few teachers apply it. Pastoral and curriculum middle leaders now take greater responsibility for behaviour within their areas of responsibility, using data suitably to identify concerns and implement targeted actions.

Leaders regularly evaluate this aspect of the school's work and have identified and responded to initial challenges with suitable provisions for pupils to reflect on their behaviour. This helps to ensure an appropriate use of the school's internal exclusion facility which is aligned with the school's pupil-centred vision. There is now systematic use of behaviour data to identify trends and emerging issues, enabling leaders to support departments and individual staff more effectively.

Leaders have provided useful professional learning, including training on holding difficult conversations and pupil-centred approaches, which is beginning to bring greater consistency of approach. However, leaders recognise that not all staff use these strategies well enough. The school's continued focus on positive behaviours, including a rewards system which celebrates success, helps to promote the 'Team Treorchy' ethos.

A strengthened pastoral team and greater visibility of senior leaders have improved behaviour around the school. Most pupils behave well in lessons and are courteous towards staff, visitors and their peers. Many listen respectfully to teachers and to the contributions of others and show positive attitudes to learning.

Although a very few pupils continue to present challenges, leaders respond appropriately and provide effective support to staff to manage these behaviours. As a result, a positive culture of behaviour is becoming increasingly well-established across the school.

R2. Refine the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders to enable them to carry out their roles more strategically and be held to account for securing improvement

Since the core inspection, the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders have been revised suitably to ensure that there are clear lines of accountability. As a result, there is greater equity between the responsibilities of senior leaders, with roles being suitably aligned to leaders' specialisms and experience. Senior leaders now have an appropriate understanding of their roles and provide suitable strategic direction within their areas of responsibility. Since his recent appointment, the interim headteacher has made further refinements to roles to ensure that senior leaders have fewer operational responsibilities, enabling them to focus more effectively on their strategic responsibilities. Line management arrangements have been revised suitably to focus more clearly on school priorities. There are now regular calendared line management meetings at all levels where structured discussions focus suitably on relevant priorities such as pupils' learning and well-being, findings from quality assurance activities and progress against improvement plans. There is appropriate continuity between meetings with suitable actions being set and reviewed systematically. Line management arrangements include regular beneficial meetings between the headteacher and senior leaders, where the headteacher provides bespoke challenge and support for these leaders. This has strengthened their capacity to carry out their roles independently.

Both curriculum and pastoral middle leaders understand their roles well and are generally providing suitable leadership within their areas of responsibility, although there remains some variability in their effectiveness. They value the support provided by their line managers and the opportunities to contribute to decisions. Middle leaders are challenged appropriately, and this is helping them to become more effective in their roles.

Leaders at all levels are involved in accelerated improvement board meetings where governors, local authority representatives and school leaders engage in constructive professional dialogue. These meetings provide an effective balance of support and challenge and help leaders to maintain a sharp focus on agreed priorities.

As a result of these changes, levels of accountability are substantially stronger than at the time of the core inspection. Leaders now hold those that they manage to account suitably for the quality of provision and pupil outcomes in their areas of responsibility.

R3. Improve the precision of self-evaluation and improvement planning

Since the core inspection, leaders have made strong progress in addressing this recommendation. Purposeful mentoring and support have strengthened senior and middle leaders' ability to evaluate the school's work accurately and identify priorities for improvement precisely.

The school has established a strong culture of collaborative self-evaluation. Senior leaders work closely with middle leaders through joint quality assurance activities, including lesson observations and work scrutiny. This has strengthened leadership capacity across the school and has fostered a shared responsibility for school improvement. Middle leaders feel valued and appreciate the opportunities to contribute to evaluative processes alongside senior leaders.

The school has strengthened and streamlined its quality assurance processes. A thoughtfully planned calendar of quality assurance activities is shared with staff and leaders ensure that expectations of all are clear and consistent. There is now a suitable emphasis on evaluating the quality of teaching and wider provision by considering its impact on pupils' progress and well-being. This has helped leaders to identify specific areas for development and implement improvement strategies. Leaders at all levels make suitable use of performance information alongside first-hand evidence to identify underachievement and determine where improvements are needed.

Many leaders now have a secure understanding of the effectiveness of provision and the priorities that require the most attention. However, although the variation in the quality and precision of leaders' evaluations is reducing, practice is not yet fully consistent in terms of quality across all areas. In a few instances, leaders continue to focus too heavily on compliance with processes rather than evaluating the impact of provision on pupils' progress and outcomes.

R4. Improve teaching to ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged well and make suitable progress in their learning

Leaders have suitably evaluated the quality of teaching, identifying key aspects that need to improve. They have refined their teaching and learning model to make it more straightforward and easy to use. The '3Ps' model' (pupils' needs, planning, progress) provides clear expectations for teachers and a helpful framework for evaluating teaching and learning. Leaders provide professional learning to strengthen staff's understanding of the model and support its implementation in classroom practice. Teaching and learning is now a regular agenda item in departmental meetings, providing opportunities for staff to discuss and reflect on their practice.

Staff have responded positively to these approaches and generally have a clear understanding of how effective teaching supports pupils to make good progress.

There is a developing culture in which teaching and learning is a priority, with an increasing focus on improving classroom practice and raising expectations.

In most lessons observed during the visit, teachers develop positive working relationships with pupils and use suitable classroom management strategies to establish a purposeful learning environment. They use basic questioning appropriately to check pupils' recall and knowledge and circulate the classroom during lessons, providing suitable verbal feedback to support pupils' learning. In many lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations that help pupils understand what is expected of them. They plan a variety of interesting and suitably challenging activities and maintain an appropriate pace to learning, which supports pupils to make suitable progress.

In the majority of lessons observed, teachers plan suitable opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, where appropriate. They use questioning effectively to probe and develop pupils' understanding, encouraging a wide range of pupils to contribute to discussions. In a few particularly effective lessons, teachers combine strong subject knowledge with skilful assessment to monitor pupils' progress closely and adapt their teaching in response. They plan learning carefully to provide appropriate challenge for the most able pupils while supporting those who need additional help. These teachers use well-crafted questions and probing follow-up questions to deepen pupils' thinking and understanding, encouraging pupils to justify their responses.

In a minority of lessons observed, weaknesses in teaching limit pupils' engagement and progress. In these instances, teachers do not always maintain an appropriate pace of learning, for example by allowing too much time for activities, which leads to pupils not working with sufficient urgency. In these lessons, teachers do not always check pupils' understanding rigorously enough or adapt their teaching accordingly. As a result, pupils are introduced to new learning before they have secured a sufficient understanding of prior concepts.

In many instances, teachers provide helpful written feedback to pupils. This includes beneficial targets on how to improve aspects of their work or follow-up questions to develop the quality and accuracy of their answers. In addition, teachers generally draw attention to key vocabulary that is misspelt. Overall, teachers provide helpful opportunities for pupils to respond to feedback and make suitable improvements to their work.

R5. Strengthen processes to improve pupils' attendance

Leaders have maintained a clear focus on improving attendance. This is supported by the sensible use of a wide range of data to identify patterns and respond promptly to concerns. Their overview of attendance is becoming increasingly precise, enabling them to track trends, compare groups and implement targeted interventions.

Strengthened leadership capacity, including the development of key roles and improved staff collaboration, has led to more effective communication, better coordination and more timely responses. Systems and processes are now generally consistent, with clear accountability and more regular line management meetings contributing to an overall upward trend in attendance.

The school has established a tiered approach to intervention, including personalised plans, home visits and targeted support. Leaders take a proactive approach to addressing barriers to good attendance. They use survey data suitably to inform targeted strategies to improve pupils' attendance, including support for well-being and engagement. There is a suitable focus on those pupils at risk of persistent absence, with tailored approaches leading to a generally improving trend over time for these pupils. Communication with parents of pupils with poor attendance is regular, and leaders use a graduated approach to reinforce expectations and promote better attendance. The use of rewards and incentives further supports positive engagement. Actions to improve punctuality are also having a positive impact.

During the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, the school's attendance fell by a far larger percentage than that seen nationally. Over the period between 2022 and 2025, whole-school attendance improved more rapidly than the national rate although there was a fall in attendance during the academic year 2025-2026. Unverified data for the academic year to date suggests that the school's attendance is higher than that for the same period last year. Since the pandemic, rates of attendance for pupils who are eligible for free school meals have improved, although they remain below the rates of their counterparts in similar schools.

R6. Improve the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills

The school has strengthened its leadership capacity to provide strategic direction for the provision for the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum. The skills team undertake a range of purposeful self-evaluation activities, drawing on first-hand evidence to identify appropriate priorities for improvement.

Leaders are making suitable progress towards improving the provision for developing pupils' literacy skills.

Teachers have benefited from helpful professional learning opportunities focused on developing pupils' reading and oracy skills. In addition, leaders are working purposefully with a few subject areas to provide tailored support for planning. As a result, pupils are experiencing increasing opportunities to develop their reading skills in meaningful, age-appropriate contexts. Despite these improvements, there remains too much variation in how effectively advanced reading skills are developed progressively.

This limits the overall impact on pupils' progress. While opportunities for pupils to speak and listen have increased, the quality of their verbal responses remains too variable.

Pupils are beginning to benefit from more worthwhile opportunities to write at length across the curriculum. The majority structure their writing suitably, using paragraphs, punctuation and spelling accurately, and incorporate relevant subject-specific vocabulary effectively. For example, in science, many pupils produce well-structured written explanations when comparing aerobic and anaerobic respiration. However, a minority of pupils struggle to develop their writing independently, often producing brief responses that lack and contain basic spelling and grammatical errors. Initiatives such as the 'Treorchy high five' support a few pupils to organise their work and explain their ideas more effectively.

Leaders have taken sensible steps to review and refine provision within mathematics lessons. They have a clear understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in their mathematics and numeracy skills, with a helpful focus on the four rules of number. Teachers use this information to inform aspects of their planning appropriately. They have introduced a suitable range of purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in relevant contexts, and this is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes in this area.

Across the curriculum, there are a few relevant opportunities for pupils to practise their numeracy skills. Generally, these tasks support the development of pupils' subject knowledge and understanding appropriately. However, overall, leaders do not have a secure overview of how well these opportunities support the progressive development of pupils' numeracy skills.

In information and communication technology lessons there are a few suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their data and computational skills. However, authentic and appropriately challenging opportunities for the progressive development of pupils' digital skills across the wider curriculum remain at an early stage of development.

R7. Address the health and safety concerns shared with the school during the inspection

Leaders have addressed the safeguarding issues identified during the core inspection and subsequent follow-up visits. Arrangements for monitoring pupils entering and leaving the school site are now secure and effective, with no outstanding safeguarding or well-being concerns relating to these aspects of the school's provision.

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