



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Mary Immaculate R.C. High School**

**Caerau Lane  
Wenvoe  
CF5 5QZ**

**Date of inspection: October 2023**

**by**

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

## About Mary Immaculate R.C. High School

Name of provider	Mary Immaculate R.C. High School
Local authority	Cardiff Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	Estyn does not inspect religious education or the religious content of collective worship when it is a school with a religious character. Instead, the governing body is required by law to arrange for religious education and collective worship to be inspected separately.
Number of pupils on roll	815
Pupils of statutory school age	815
Number in sixth form	
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Secondary is 20.2%)	39.6%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Secondary is 17.8%)	14.2%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	8.5%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2014
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	18/05/2015
Start date of inspection	02/10/2023

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection. Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: [mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

## Overview

Mary Immaculate High School is a warm and inclusive learning community where pupils and staff feel welcome and valued. Pupils enjoy coming to school and parents feel that their children are happy and well cared for, with strong provision for well-being and support. Through the well-considered Bridge provision and partnerships with outside agencies, the school provides strong and effective support for pupils' well-being. The school has well embedded systems to improve attendance, but rates have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. All staff take pastoral responsibility for the pupils in their care. As a consequence, most pupils feel safe, respected and part of the wider school family.

The headteacher, his senior team, staff and governors are passionate advocates for the school and the community it serves. Leaders have a heartfelt commitment to equity and build their priorities around how best to enable all pupils to participate and succeed, whatever their background and social context. This mission underpins the strong supportive systems in the school. The headteacher leads with zeal and vigour, driven by moral purpose. The shared vision and ambition for learners is realised and enacted by a highly effective leadership team.

Staff, pupils and parents have played a role in building an engaging curriculum in Years 7 and 8. In Key Stage 4, pupils choose from a wide range of academic and vocational subjects, and benefit from a rich enrichment curriculum. Pupils also have access to helpful guidance and access to mentors from industry when planning their post-16 choices. Despite these strengths, from Year 9 onwards the breadth of the curriculum is too narrow within departments and across the curriculum. In addition, pupils have too few opportunities in lessons or around the school to develop their Welsh language skills.

Teachers foster a warm and positive learning environment across the school. Staff benefit from a highly beneficial tiered and targeted professional learning offer designed skilfully to improve teaching and leadership. As a result, teachers deploy a range of helpful strategies to enable pupils to make progress. In the main these strategies are effective, but in a few instances teachers do not adapt them well enough to meet the needs of all learners. In addition, teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their work.

Leaders gather a range of evidence to evaluate the school's work. Overall, they have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, the school has sustained improvements in many areas of its work. Although leaders evaluate the quality of teaching, this is not focused well enough on its impact on learning. The school has set a deficit budget for this financial year due to rising utility costs, and agreed a budget recovery plan with the local authority.

## Recommendations

R1 Improve the quality and consistency of assessment

- R2 Improve opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills
- R3 Continue to strengthen processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning, ensuring that they focus sufficiently on the impact of the school's work on pupils' learning

## What happens next

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

Estyn will invite the school to prepare case studies on its work for dissemination on Estyn's website in relation to:

- an effective tiered approach to professional learning
- reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment through a whole school strategic focus on supporting pupils and their families

## Main evaluation

### Learning

Many pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN), make secure progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. They recall prior learning suitably and the majority apply this appropriately in new contexts, such as when they explain the hierarchy in medieval Britain in history. A minority of pupils have a weaker recall of previous learning and need support to link concepts or skills to new learning. In a few lessons where teaching is particularly engaging and challenging, pupils make strong progress, for instance when planning imaginative written pieces in the sci-fi genre.

Most pupils participate suitably when prompted in discussion in class, and a majority are keen to share their ideas. These pupils listen attentively and respond well to teachers' questions, using relevant vocabulary. A minority of pupils do not have a deep enough grasp of subject specific concepts to provide accurate and detailed explanations. In a few lessons, pupils offer extended, well-considered responses, for example when discussing the key features of film theme music and build well on the answers of their peers.

When reading, many pupils are able to locate, extract and comment appropriately on key ideas and themes. In their English lessons, these pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the themes and characters in set texts and are confident when discussing poetry. A majority of pupils are able to apply reading strategies such as inference well and support their points with relevant evidence and quotations. A minority of pupils do not give sufficient consideration to the style of writing when analysing texts. In a minority of lessons across the curriculum, pupils read aloud confidently when they have the opportunity to do so.

Many pupils structure their written work appropriately, using paragraphs and have a suitable vocabulary. A majority are developing a broader vocabulary and use connectives well to structure their writing. A minority of pupils make spelling, punctuation and grammar errors throughout their work and their handwriting is difficult to read. Overall, pupils are not provided with a sufficiently broad range of opportunities to write in diverse formats and for different audiences across the curriculum.

The majority of pupils have a sound grasp of number concepts. They calculate with fractions, decimals, percentages and numbers expressed in standard form. A few pupils have weak numeracy skills. They have poor recall of basic number facts and, as a result, this hinders their progress with more advanced concepts.

The majority of pupils develop their understanding of shape and measures suitably. For example, pupils use their understanding of speed as the distance travelled in a unit of time to solve problems that involve traveling. They read scales and convert between different metric measures accurately and analyse data appropriately when, for example, comparing population densities in rural and urban areas. A few pupils have strong numeracy skills. They are able to calculate the volume and surface area of 3D shapes and solve equations that include algebraic fractions successfully.

A few pupils draw graphs accurately, choosing appropriate scales and axes independently. Although a minority of pupils draw graphs suitably, they do not routinely use information from them to draw conclusions.

Pupils use their digital skills ably for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. They produce informative presentations using graphic design tools, and research topics such as digital resilience and how to spot fake news. In addition, as part of the enrichment programme, pupils produce and publish popular podcasts.

Overall, pupils develop their creative skills well in engaging contexts, for example when they create and cut out designs on lino for printing. They also develop their thinking skills soundly when, for example, they use jelly laces and raisins to model covalent bonding in science.

In general, pupils develop their physical skills well. Many develop their fine motor skills when making outfits for children in countries across Africa or when honing their keyboard playing skills. Pupils evaluate their power and agility in netball sessions and use this insight beneficially to improve their personal performance.

In Welsh lessons, the majority of pupils locate information suitably in basic texts. They use reading strategies appropriately to work out the meaning of new words. Many pupils are able to recall thematic vocabulary in familiar topics and around half write simple sentences independently. However, the majority of pupils are not confident to speak Welsh in lessons.

### **Well-being and attitudes to learning**

Pupils' behaviour and attitude embodies the values of 'respect, care, compassion and love', which permeate the school. They are happy and proud to belong to the

Mary Immaculate High School community and share readily and positively how the school supports their personal development, and their learning and progress.

Around the school, most pupils interact willingly and respectfully with teachers and visitors. These pupils display positive behaviours in lessons and at break and lunch times, contributing to the calm, kind and friendly school climate. During lessons, pupils engage readily in learning activities and in most cases concentrate well on tasks set. In the main they are resilient and persevere even when they find aspects of the work challenging.

Overall, pupils feel that the school's behaviour for learning policy is applied fairly by staff. Nearly all pupils understand the school's expectations and are very positive about the rewards system and allocation of 'BALANCE' points. Pupils value the praise they receive for good behaviour and attendance, in assemblies and academic review sessions, for example the award for 'Pupil of the Week'.

Most pupils feel safe in school and free from bullying. On the rare occasions that bullying occurs, nearly all pupils feel that incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively by staff.

Many pupils feel that they are treated fairly and that the school listens to their views and acts upon them. Pupils participate in an extensive range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills and play an active part in the life of the school, for example by contributing to decisions in the pupil parliament on uniform changes and the range of sports activities available. In addition, they steer pupil activity and interests, for example as Digital Leaders, Bridge Prefects or in groups such as the eco-club. Pupils who do not hold leadership positions in the school also feel that their views are important and are listened to by their peers.

Across the school, pupils demonstrate a strong sense of fairness and equality. They show an understanding of the importance of diversity and valuing different cultures, through, for example, the instigation of a Culture Day. Pupils have chosen their house patrons such as Josephine Bakhita and Oscar Romero to ensure that pupils from a range of backgrounds feel represented and included.

In general, pupils understand how to make healthy meal and lifestyle choices. They enjoy access to a comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities, such as Chill Club, textiles and craft and cookery clubs. These activities are well attended, and all groups of pupils are represented.

Pupils attend school more regularly this year compared to last year and the number who are persistent absentees has reduced. The difference between rates of attendance for pupils eligible for free school meals and those not eligible has narrowed. However, attendance is still below pre-pandemic levels.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Teachers are highly committed to the 'Super 6' core principles of teaching promoted by the school. They are eager to improve and develop their practice, and benefit from the comprehensive professional learning programme.

Across the school, teachers have strong working relationships with their pupils and have created a positive and safe environment that promotes learning within their classrooms. They have developed effective routines to ensure that pupils settle to their work quickly.

Many teachers are enthusiastic and act as good language models. They ensure that pupils build their own terminology suitably within their subjects. Many teachers plan carefully suitable sequences of helpful activities that build purposefully on previous learning and support the pupils to make progress. They provide useful and appealing resources and use a variety of approaches that engage pupils well. This develops both pupils' subject understanding and their skills. These teachers provide clear explanations, explain concepts effectively and model their expectations successfully. Many teachers question pupils' knowledge suitably to check recall of prior learning and develop understanding.

Overall, teachers implement consistently the teaching strategies adopted by the school. In the best cases, teachers use the strategies sensibly to enable the pupils to deepen and extend their knowledge and understanding. However, in some instances, teachers do not focus well enough on the impact of their chosen strategies on learning, and do not select from the available range carefully enough. In a few cases, teachers do not give sufficient guidance to pupils and, as a result, this hinders pupils' progress.

Where teaching is most effective, teachers plan imaginative lessons and provide challenging and interesting tasks that motivate pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Their questioning is probing and supports pupils to extend and deepen responses, encouraging them to develop their ideas. More able pupils in particular benefit from ambitious activities that enable them to make strong progress.

In a few cases, the pace of the teaching does not match the pace of the learning, thereby not enabling pupils to sustain their progress. For example, tasks do not offer pupils a suitable level of challenge or support. In a very few instances, teachers spend too little time on tasks to ensure pupils' understanding before moving on. These teachers are not responsive to the attainment of the pupils and do not adapt the work effectively.

Many teachers circulate the class purposefully to monitor progress and provide encouraging and valuable verbal feedback that helps pupils improve their work. In the best examples, teachers draw pupils' attention to mistakes, including language and spelling errors, and provide valuable comments and beneficial suggestions on how to improve including helpful digital clips. However, feedback does not always lead to an improvement in pupils' work. It is too variable within departments and across the school. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to respond to their comments in order to refine their work.

The school has strong systems for tracking and monitoring pupil progress. Reports to parents include valuable information on their child's progress and whether they are performing to the best of their ability. They also contain helpful personalised comments and targets for improvement.

The developments linked to the Curriculum for Wales are aligned closely with leaders' vision for developing teaching and learning. Leaders have consulted with pupils, parents and staff to decide what is taught and have worked together effectively to plan the development of skills alongside the content of lessons. Work with partner primary schools on developing the curriculum from Year 6 to Year 7 is in its infancy.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides a variety of subjects that meets the needs of the pupils successfully. The curriculum offer includes a range of vocational options including construction, sports' coaching and business retail. Alongside their subject option choices, all pupils follow an enrichment programme. This is a noteworthy feature. Pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment opportunities including British Sign Language, gardening, patisserie, basketball and special effects make-up. Despite the benefits of the enrichment programme, the breadth of the curriculum is reduced both within subjects and across the curriculum in Year 9 when pupils begin to follow their examination courses.

The school provides valuable information and guidance on future careers and pathways when pupils are choosing their GCSE subjects and post-16 education. Representatives from local businesses conduct helpful mock interviews for pupils in Year 10 and the school also offers pupils the opportunity to be mentored by professionals working in a wide variety of industries.

Teachers employ a range of effective strategies to develop pupils' literacy skills. They provide useful opportunities for pupils to apply speaking and listening skills in different contexts across the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and extended writing skills across the curriculum are less well developed.

Where relevant, teachers provide helpful opportunities for pupils to develop their basic numeracy skills. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop higher order numeracy skills in suitable contexts. There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to use a range of digital skills across the curriculum.

The school offers a range of additional enrichment opportunities for more able pupils. They include visits to Oxford and Cardiff Universities, attending workshops to develop higher level speaking and listening skills and creating a song to celebrate the school during a music workshop.

The school provides pupils with valuable opportunities to develop as responsible citizens. They raise money for a range of charities and improve their local environment by engaging in beach cleans in Barry and local parks.

The daily extra-curricular programme of after-school activities provides pupils with valuable opportunities to develop their skills in sporting activities, drama, creative writing and chess. The school organises a late bus so that all pupils are able to access these after school activities.

The personal and social education provision is structured well and supports the development of pupils' social and emotional skills sensitively. The school adapts this provision carefully in response to local and national issues.

Pupils have a few opportunities to develop their appreciation of Welsh culture and heritage. The pupils learn about the Welsh male voice choir tradition in music, the tragedy of Aberfan in drama and medieval Wales in history lessons. The provision for developing pupils' use of the Welsh language outside of the classroom and their understanding of Welsh culture and history is underdeveloped.

### **Care, support and guidance**

Mary Immaculate High School provides a nurturing environment where removing barriers to pupils' learning, and providing enabling experiences to prepare them for adult life, is paramount. The school supports a strong sense of safety and well-being, and the values of respect, care, compassion and love underpin the actions of all staff. Their dedication to this ethos helps them to secure a calm and peaceful atmosphere throughout the school.

Pastoral teams and the staff who oversee the ALN and well-being provision have robust processes for identifying pupils' well-being and learning needs. School staff know their students well and work together effectively to offer comprehensive and tailored support. There are clear entry and exit criteria for interventions and communication between staff is regular, timely and detailed. This allows them to meet pupils' needs or, when required, adjust support swiftly. Processes for tracking and monitoring the progress made by pupils with additional learning and well-being needs are comprehensive and robust. Staff use this information well to measure impact and inform the next steps.

Identifying and supporting pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged contexts, and children at risk of significant harm or disengagement, is a strength of the school's work. The school provides equipment and uniform to all pupils who need it. 'The Bridge' team offer high-quality interventions to support pupils' well-being. For example, they provide bereavement counselling, access to a mental health nurse, and other extensive interventions to help address pupils' social and emotional concerns. School staff work well with a wide range of external agencies, such as the police, youth justice teams, Families First, and the education welfare service, to ensure that children remain in education and thrive.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding that underpins all aspects of the school's work. An effective team approach to safeguarding and a shared understanding of its pivotal importance supports pupils well.

The school has made good progress in implementing the requirements of the ALN Tribunal Act (ALNET). An effective person-centred planning process is informed by the needs and wishes of the pupil and information from other sources, stakeholders and experts. Individual development plans (IDPs) and one-page profiles are helpful documents that outline a pupil's overall objectives and identify suitable improvement targets. Teaching staff have access to a range of beneficial strategies that they can use to support pupils with ALN in their classes. Teaching assistants take an active role in developing and reviewing pupils' IDPs and track pupils' progress in curriculum subjects rigorously.

The ALN team, including a dedicated ALN transition co-ordinator, work proactively with primary school staff to identify additional learning needs provision before pupils

join the school. In addition, the team works well with partners such as Careers Wales, employers and local colleges to ensure that pupils with ALN progress to meaningful destinations.

The school organises beneficial events in collaboration with local colleges, businesses and organisations to help pupils make informed decisions about their options and to support them in preparing for adult life. These are planned well and reviewed for impact. Staff monitor pupils' future plans continuously to secure the most appropriate education or training placements. They also continue to support pupils when they leave school to ensure that they settle well in their place of learning.

The school has strong systems to monitor and secure improving attendance. This includes the school's attendance officers working well with partner primary schools to promote good attendance with specific families.

There are effective procedures for promoting positive and respectful behaviours. The information from the school's monitoring systems is used well by pastoral and wellbeing staff to support individuals and groups to manage their behaviour and interactions with peers and staff constructively. Pupils have shaped the school's anti-bullying policy, and all form groups have taken an anti-bullying pledge. Most pupils are confident that any incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

There are suitable curricular arrangements to educate pupils in making healthy life choices. In addition, the school canteen provides a range of healthy meals and drinks. Through the enrichment programme and after school clubs, pupils have the opportunity to plant and grow seasonal vegetables in the school garden and learn how to use them in the kitchen.

The school develops pupils' spiritual, social, and moral values positively and purposefully. Academic review sessions provide daily opportunities for pupils to reflect deeply on moral, religious, and ethical issues. Pupils contribute to the development of these sessions by, for example, writing meaningful prayers. The school's personal and social education provision focuses regularly on 'big questions', such as 'why is gaining consent essential?' These are chosen with pupils to help them explore and understand a range of issues, including equality and diversity. In addition, events such as the 'Culture Week' provide engaging and worthwhile opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to share, celebrate and embrace different cultures.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular trips and activities that support learning and provide opportunities to broaden their experiences and develop further skills. This offer includes sports clubs, arts and crafts, trips to businesses or retreats to local areas for outward-bound activities. The annual school musical provides an opportunity for students to develop their confidence by performing for the local community, including partner primary schools. Pupils in Key Stage 4 choose from an extensive series of enrichment activities, which enable them to experience a wide range of valuable educational, creative and life experiences. For example, pupils can take courses in first aid, British sign language, podcasting, gardening and stage make-up. The school subsidises some of these activities through grant funding.

There is an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to influence the school's life positively. The school parliament is a comprehensive body that provides pupils with valuable leadership experiences in a committee structure. Prefects support younger or vulnerable pupils with their well-being and a pupil chaplaincy team works closely with staff to organise community events in local parishes.

## **Leadership and management**

All leaders demonstrate a heartfelt commitment to improving the life chances of pupils and providing them with experiences of the highest quality, underpinned by Catholic values. This commitment is embraced fully by staff and governors, who share this vision and understand the important difference that a positive school experience can make to the lives of the young people under their care.

The headteacher is an assured, passionate leader. He strives for the highest standards in all aspects of the school's work. The senior leadership team supports him very effectively. Their responsibilities are clear and distributed sensibly. Senior leaders rotate their areas of responsibility, enabling them to gain valuable experience of a range of leadership roles. Secondments to the senior team and extended senior leadership posts provide valuable professional learning opportunities for middle leaders and support the work of senior leaders well. There is a clear focus on developing and nurturing future leaders, and succession planning is strong.

The school addresses the national priorities of alleviating the impact of poverty on educational attainment, Curriculum for Wales, securing a strong safeguarding culture and ALN effectively. Leaders' strategic approach to reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment is of particular note and underpins all the school's work. There is a sensitive understanding of the considerable challenges facing the pupils and the local community. This is coupled with a determined effort to work strategically to mitigate the impact of these barriers.

Leaders work purposefully to engage with parents and the local community. They have established regular communication with parents and a programme of events that encourages pupils' families to visit the school and understand more about its work.

There is a programme of regular senior leadership, line management, departmental and pastoral meetings. The set agendas for these meetings ensure that leaders focus regularly on important matters such as progress against improvement plans, pupils' attainment, and the quality of teaching. Overall, line management processes, including meetings, support and challenge middle leaders and staff well. However, there are inconsistencies in the way these processes are carried out and arrangements can be too informal at times.

Leaders know the school well and have a secure understanding of its strengths and areas of development. There is a strong track record of effective leadership having a positive impact on many areas of the school's work including improving attendance and behaviour, the quality of teaching and learning, provision for care, support and guidance and leadership development.

A few middle leaders demonstrate a particularly mature understanding of their leadership role and most are enthusiastic about their work. They know their areas of responsibility well due to their involvement in valuable self-evaluation activities. For example, pastoral middle leaders conduct learning walks and drop ins to form periods and analyse attendance and behaviour data carefully on a regular basis. Curriculum middle leaders have a sound understanding of the quality of provision and teaching in their areas, though their understanding of the impact of their work on pupils' standards and progress is less developed.

There is a clear calendar of regular, purposeful self-evaluation activities that involve all leaders and teachers. All leaders are confident in their analysis of data and use this well to inform their self-evaluation. They are beginning to make better use of pupil views. Lesson observations that involve both senior and curriculum leaders are focused helpfully on pupils' progress and skills development, as well as the quality of teaching. The majority provide clear targets for improvement. These leaders are also involved in scrutiny of pupils' work, though this process is more focused on compliance and provision than on pupils' learning. In addition, the formal scrutiny of the work of pupils in some year groups happens late in the academic year. Currently, curricular middle leaders' role in this process is informal, making it difficult for them to take ownership of this process.

Each year, all curriculum middle leaders complete helpful teaching and learning reviews. These enrich their self-evaluation process, providing evidence on the quality of teaching and taking staff views into consideration. Faculty and thematic reviews led by senior leaders provide useful evaluations of specific areas of the school's work. In these reviews, there is a stronger focus on evaluating pupils' learning from lessons and books, as well as analysing data and evaluating provision. This balanced approach enables senior leaders to draw valuable conclusions and provide helpful targets. Overall, however, leaders do not always focus sufficiently on evaluating their work in light of its impact on pupils' standards from lessons and books and tend to focus too much on Key Stage 4 data.

At whole-school and middle leader level, improvement priorities are sensible, relevant and generally align well with the findings from self-evaluation activities. The school has recognised that, currently, the improvement planning processes and systems, especially for middle leaders, can be onerous and lack clarity.

Performance management targets reflect and support the personalised, bespoke approach to professional learning. There is helpful guidance and a clear expectation that targets reflect staff's stage in their career, the school's priorities and the personal professional development needs of individuals. Currently, support staff are not involved in the performance management process.

Professional learning is a notable strength. The school invests in and trusts the staff, who are committed to the 'MI way'. There is a culture of sharing and celebrating ideas, innovation and good practice.

Leaders plan professional learning strategically to drive improvements in priority areas, particularly the quality of teaching and the development of leadership at all levels. Teacher reviews also inform the professional learning themes for the year. There is a tiered approach to professional learning, which ensures that individual and

whole-school needs are met. Leaders evaluate the impact of the offer in light of its impact on teaching and leadership and, increasingly, on pupils' learning.

Staff benefit from a wide range of training and development opportunities and resources though there is an expectation that they take responsibility for their own professional learning, especially through conducting research. There is a particular focus on developing staff's leadership skills.

The school is a lead school for Initial Teacher Education. This provides useful leadership opportunities for all staff who use the most pertinent aspects of their own professional learning programme to upskill students.

Governors understand the school and its context well. They are very supportive of the school, but also offer an appropriate level of challenge. They reflect regularly on their own effectiveness as a governing body and are keen to improve in order to support the school as best they can. There is a suitable structure of sub-committees on specific areas of the school's work, though the standards committee focuses solely on Year 11 standards. Governors have a sound understanding of their role in ensuring a strong culture of safeguarding and in promoting healthy eating and drinking. For example, they place a high priority on ensuring that the canteen provides meals that are both healthy and affordable.

Over time, leaders have managed the school's finances effectively. There is a clear rationale for financial decisions and governors monitor the school's spending carefully. All spending, including that of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG), is focused on providing high quality experiences for pupils and alleviating the impact of the challenges that many face. However, due to current financial pressures the school has a deficit budget for 2023-2024. This has been approved by the local authority and there is a plan in place to address this.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee, where appropriate
- visit a broad sample of lessons, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the 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 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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

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