



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

**A report on**

**Pontarddulais Comprehensive School**

**Caecerrig Road  
Pontarddulais  
SA4 8PD**

**Date of inspection: December 2023**

**by**

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

## About Pontarddulais Comprehensive School

Name of provider	Pontarddulais Comprehensive School
Local authority	City and County of Swansea
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	852
Pupils of statutory school age	852
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 21.2%)	16.5%
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 14.8%)	20.3%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.8%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	2.4%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2018
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	01/03/2016
Start date of inspection	04/12/2023

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

Pontarddulais Comprehensive School is a dynamic and inclusive school where pupils, regardless of background or ability, thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Typically, pupils enjoy school, and they are polite and courteous as they interact with adults and each other. They are confident, respectful and eager to learn. In general, pupils value their school experiences and want to come to school. As a result of this, pupils' attendance, including for those eligible for free school meals, has recovered well since the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and is substantially above that of similar schools.

Leaders, teachers and support staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those with additional learning needs (ALN). Staff know their pupils well and are adept at providing extensive tailored support to meet pupils' academic and well-being needs. There is a well-established culture of safeguarding, and most pupils feel safe and secure in school. The school's specialist teaching facility (STF) provides exceptional learning experiences for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. These pupils make strong progress in essential independent living and communication skills.

Staff foster positive working relationships with most pupils, who in turn engage well in their learning. In many lessons, consistently good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers plan lessons carefully, linking learning to previous lessons or real-life situations. They use their strong subject knowledge to enthuse pupils to want to know more and give pupils useful feedback on how to improve their work. In the most effective lessons, teachers ask probing questions which promote rich and deep classroom discussions.

Leaders have carefully designed a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum. There is a clear focus on the progressive development of pupils' literacy, numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills. Leaders provide high quality professional learning to teachers, so that they deliver worthwhile opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these skills in most subject areas. As a result, many pupils use these skills confidently in a variety of contexts. Leaders are implementing their approach to Curriculum for Wales with clarity and purpose and are working well with local primary schools to ensure pupils progress appropriately as they move on to secondary school.

The headteacher's principled and visionary leadership, combined with significant levels of trust and professional learning, ensure that all members of the school community share high aspirations for the school. Leaders at all levels, along with governors, maintain a relentless focus on ensuring the best possible experience for pupils. Leaders use regular and robust self-evaluation activities purposefully, to support their drive for continuous improvement. While senior leaders use the views of pupils to inform their self-evaluation well at a whole-school level, the use of pupil voice in areas of learning is less well-established. Despite this, the school's rigorous and cyclical approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning is a notable strength, particularly how it encourages all staff and governors to play an active role in identifying and working together to achieve the school's improvement priorities.

## Recommendations

- R1 Further develop opportunities to gather and use the views of pupils to inform self-evaluation at a subject area level

## 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 in relation to improving attendance and school improvement processes for dissemination on Estyn's website.

## Main evaluation

### Learning

In lessons, many pupils make at least good progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills and around half make particularly strong progress. Many recall prior learning well and apply their knowledge confidently to different contexts. Most pupils with ALN make strong progress in relation to their starting points. Nearly all pupils in the STF develop their communication skills well and acquire important independent living skills. A few pupils overall do not make as much progress as they could, especially when they are not challenged enough by the teacher.

Most pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and each other. They are eager to participate in class discussions and share their ideas enthusiastically in pairs and small groups. Many discuss complex and challenging themes with maturity and evaluate evidence confidently as they reach conclusions. Most pupils respond positively to teachers' questions and a minority readily give detailed responses, using sophisticated vocabulary to convey their ideas. However, a minority of pupils provide only brief underdeveloped responses, often because they are not encouraged to answer in depth. A few pupils have particularly strong oracy skills. These pupils build on the contributions of others, responding confidently and sensitively and asking pertinent questions of their teachers and peers.

Many pupils have secure basic reading skills and are confident reading different text types. They summarise and synthesise information successfully. Around half use inference and deduction skills well. In English lessons, most pupils identify and evaluate the impact of writers' devices effectively, for example when analysing how Dylan Thomas uses language to evoke mood. A few pupils struggle to locate information, particularly when texts are challenging.

Across the curriculum, many pupils write well at length. These pupils organise their ideas coherently, have a sound understanding of grammar and write with technical accuracy. Many pupils edit and redraft their work purposefully, responding positively

to their teachers' feedback. They write confidently for a variety of audiences and purposes and adapt their tone and vocabulary accordingly. For example, in science they structure coherent written explanations of the journey of food through the digestive system, using subject specific vocabulary accurately. A few pupils do not write with sufficient accuracy and rely too heavily on scaffolding provided by the teacher.

Many pupils demonstrate good numeracy skills. These pupils have a firm grasp of number and use the four rules fluently to carry out a wide range of calculations. They have a good understanding of fractions, percentages and decimals. In mathematics, for example, they calculate the amount of tax paid on different levels of income and work out a range of different household bills successfully. Many pupils are developing their understanding of shapes and measures well. They measure accurately and can convert between different metric measures. In science, they apply their understanding of the concept of area successfully when calculating the pressure exerted by different objects. Many analyse data well. They draw a variety of graphs accurately and use these to make predictions or to draw sensible conclusions. For example, in geography, pupils calculate the percentages of the population that work in each employment sector in different countries. They then use these figures to draw pie charts, identifying which countries are lower or higher income countries.

A minority of pupils have notably strong numeracy skills. They make connections between different areas of mathematics and apply their understanding successfully in a range of contexts. For example, they work out independently that for histograms, the frequency is represented by the area, rather than the height of the bar. A few pupils have weak basic number skills. They struggle with concepts such as place value and division, which limits their fluency with number problems, and their ability to apply their numeracy skills in different contexts.

Many pupils develop their digital skills well in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons and across the curriculum. They select the appropriate software to complete a task and use coding and graphics software well when creating games in ICT lessons. In design technology, pupils use computer aided design programmes competently, for example, when designing a racing car as part of the 'Formula 1 in Schools' programme.

Pupils develop their creative and thinking skills well. Nearly all are willing to experiment and try out new ideas, then refine their approaches accordingly. Many analyse a range of resources to help them formulate their own ideas about, for example, the impact of poverty on life in Victorian London. In most subjects, pupils reflect purposefully on their work to consider how it could be improved.

Many pupils develop their physical skills well in their physical education lessons, demonstrating strength and agility. They also engage enthusiastically in drama and dance lessons, where many demonstrate a clear understanding of how gesture and body language can convey a variety of emotions.

In nearly all lessons and around the school, pupils use simple Welsh phrases confidently and naturally when communicating with adults and their peers. In Welsh lessons, most pupils develop a secure knowledge of a range of vocabulary which increases in complexity as they progress in their learning. The majority of pupils

demonstrate a sound understanding when listening to spoken Welsh and are able to respond appropriately. A few can respond more spontaneously and use more adventurous vocabulary and sentence structures. Many pupils use a variety of reading strategies to gather information and improve their Welsh vocabulary. They write using a suitable range of sentence structures, and a few pupils write extensively and are increasingly creative with their vocabulary choices.

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

Most pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school. They are friendly and welcoming towards visitors, engaging readily in conversations to share their views on the school and their learning. Pupils are respectful and warm in their relationships with both staff and their peers. Most feel safe and secure in school. They talk about their school positively and feel they are part of a caring community built on mutual respect.

Many pupils understand the importance of making healthy choices and benefit from health and well-being lessons and personal social education (PSE) sessions where they learn about how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They participate enthusiastically in a broad range of extra-curricular activities which help develop their confidence, creativity and physical skills, such as football, dance, drama, and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Many pupils benefit from the extensive range of support for their well-being and they value the school's pastoral support provision, 'Room 8', which helps them to develop as confident members of their school community. They engage fully in form time activities, discussing maturely the importance of culture and character in helping them to develop important life skills and values.

Pupils that attend the STF are attentive and work very effectively in small groups and where appropriate, individually. Established routines and relationships create an environment where pupils feel safe to express themselves freely and happily. They participate joyfully in a range of engaging activities, such as boccia and sensory storytelling.

Many pupils have a high level of trust in their teachers. They feel supported and respected and value being part of a community that prioritises compassion and fairness. Instances of bullying are rare, and pupils have confidence that their teachers will address any incidents that occur. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school during break and lunch times.

Most pupils participate actively throughout their lessons, and many are curious and eager to explore new learning, asking questions to deepen their understanding. They persevere with challenging tasks and work well independently and in groups and pairs. Many pupils take pride in their work.

Pupils of all ages and backgrounds take on leadership roles successfully. Pupil governors and members of the 'Pupil Parliament' carry out their leadership roles with pride and maturity. They are proud of the differences they have made, such as informing changes made to the whole school behaviour policy, organising a rota for the use of the new 2G pitch, and promoting healthy choices in the canteen. They are

impressive role models to their peers and actively support other pupils to develop their leadership skills. Pupils also take on additional responsibilities such as 'Bont Buddies' who ensure a smooth transition for new Year 6 pupils, and 'Curriculum Ambassadors' who represent subject areas.

Pupils feel valued and cared for as individuals and enjoy their learning experiences. As a result, they want to come to school. This is a notable strength. Between the academic years 2018-2019 and 2022-2023, the school's rate of attendance fell by a notably smaller amount than that seen nationally. Last year it was substantially above that of similar schools, although it remains slightly below pre-pandemic levels. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. So far this year the school has maintained and further improved pupils' attendance levels.

### **Teaching and learning experiences**

Pontarddulais Comprehensive School is a hive of activity and positive energy. Staff are dedicated to providing pupils with high quality learning experiences within lessons and beyond.

A strong feature of teaching at Pontarddulais is the positive working relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well and succeed in creating a calm and purposeful learning environment. Most have high expectations of both pupils' behaviour and engagement and have effective routines which reinforce these expectations and help pupils to focus closely on learning during lessons. These teachers have secure subject knowledge and are good language models, who focus well on building pupils' vocabulary and model the use of subject-specific terminology effectively.

In many lessons, teaching is consistently effective, ensuring that pupils make at least good progress. In these lessons, teachers plan well for learning and use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to ensure that there is a suitable level of challenge. They provide pupils with a series of activities that build well on each other and highlight any links to pupils' prior learning and real-life scenarios. These teachers use helpful resources and explain complex concepts effectively. They share purposeful success criteria with pupils and where appropriate, model their expectations clearly so that pupils know what good work looks like. In these lessons, teachers ensure that there is a good balance between them leading the learning and pupils working independently or in small groups. They ensure that the pace of the lesson is effective and matched well to the ability and needs of the pupils.

Many teachers use a variety of strategies to monitor pupils' progress closely. They provide pupils with helpful feedback, which ensures that they progress in their learning. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers to provide strong support for pupils who have additional learning needs.

In a minority of lessons, teaching is of particularly high quality. These teachers have notably high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. They use their expert subject knowledge to foresee what pupils will find difficult and the possible misconceptions they might make, and plan activities accordingly. These teachers ask probing questions that require pupils to provide extended and well-reasoned

responses. They adapt the level of challenge and the pace of teaching in response to their close monitoring of pupils' progress. This ensures that pupils are challenged to think throughout the lesson. They ensure that there is a careful balance between the development of pupils' skills and their subject knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, teachers use the information provided by the ALN department to utilise the most efficient strategies to support pupils with ALN. As a result of these factors, nearly all pupils make rapid progress in these lessons.

In a few lessons, there are shortcomings in teaching which lead to pupils not making as much progress as they could. These include an inappropriate level of challenge or teachers not adapting the pace of the lessons well enough in response to pupils' progress.

Leaders use a wide range of information to set pupils aspirational targets. They have strong arrangements to track pupils' progress over time which allows them to swiftly identify pupils who are underachieving. The school provides comprehensive support for these pupils' individual needs.

In the STF, staff plan learning experiences carefully and sensitively to meet the individual learning needs of the pupils. They use skills such as signed speech and sensory approaches effectively to engage with pupils and provide beneficial experiences to stimulate engagement and enjoyment of learning. As a result, pupils are happy and fully engaged in their learning.

The school's curriculum is a particular strength. It is broad, balanced and inclusive and has been planned carefully to encapsulate the school's motto of 'Learn to live, live to learn'. The Key Stage 4 curriculum offers a wide range of subjects to ensure that pupils can follow their chosen pathway. Leaders work responsively and successfully in partnership with local colleges to ensure pupils have access to a range of vocational qualifications. Pupils are provided with beneficial information and guidance to make informed choices about their next steps in education. The curriculum is enriched by a vibrant programme of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils during and after school hours such as debate, chess and coding clubs.

For the most vulnerable pupils, the school combines the expertise of its own staff with that of external providers to provide a valuable alternative curriculum in 'Tŷ Dysgu'. With the support of this highly nurturing setting, nearly all pupils complete their education at Key Stage 4 and move on to further education or employment.

The school has a clear vision for the Curriculum for Wales that is based firmly on developing pupils' skills and knowledge through rich experiences. Leaders have approached the design and adoption of the curriculum with innovation and enthusiasm. They consider progression at different stages of the curriculum and staff work purposefully with partner primary schools to ensure that the curriculum builds beneficially on pupils' previous learning.

The provision to develop pupils' skills is a notable strength. There are many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these skills progressively and purposefully. Teachers are provided with useful professional learning and resources to enable them to support the development of pupils' skills effectively, for example to develop a whole-school approach to producing and evaluating graphs.



Leaders make effective use of range of data to plan a successful programme of literacy and numeracy interventions that support many pupils to improve these skills. The school also offers a range of enrichment opportunities for more able pupils through its partnerships with universities and activities designed to broaden pupils' horizons.

The PSE programme is comprehensive, relevant, and responsive to pupils' needs. Delivered through a combination of form period activities, discrete lessons and PSE sessions, it focuses sensitively on a range of appropriate themes such as kindness, body image and healthy relationships.

Leaders have high aspirations for the development of pupils' Welsh language skills and promoting the status of Welsh across the school. Developing the use of Welsh across the curriculum is a whole-school priority and is an integral part of the school's drive to improve pupils' skills. Nearly all pupils are entered for a qualification in Welsh at the end of Key Stage 4. There are beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of Welsh heritage and culture through whole-school events such as 'Diwrnod Shwmae? Su'mae?' and curricular activities such as 'Who are the Welsh?' in humanities. The school is also working to ensure that the curriculum reflects the diverse nature of Wales and the wider world.

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

Pontarddulais Comprehensive School is a warm, caring and nurturing school with an inclusive and supportive ethos. This creates a sense of belonging where everybody matters. It is this inclusive culture, alongside an engaging curriculum, high quality teaching and learning, extensive support and effective communication with families, which has ensured that pupils want to attend school regularly.

Staff apply the school's positive behaviour policy consistently and work with pupils calmly, confidently and with compassion. They promote character and culture during form tutor time and encourage pupils to demonstrate behaviour that is 'Ready, Respectful and Safe' around the school and in lessons. The school provides a high level of care and support through an extensive range of well-being and learning support. Staff know their pupils very well and are sensitive to their individual needs. This is a notable strength of the school.

Leaders and the wider pastoral team monitor pupils' progress in learning, well-being, attendance and behaviour closely to identify those who need additional support. Staff work purposefully with families and relevant external agencies to plan tailored interventions for pupils in relation to learning needs, social issues, or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Effective communication with parents and carers ensures that any concerns are shared in a timely manner.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There is a commitment to personal development which is meaningfully underpinned by the strong relationships and mutual respect between staff, pupils and the wider community. The PSE programme addresses issues that are current and relevant to pupils in the school, with topics ranging from the dangers of social media platforms to making healthy choices.

The ALN team is passionate and determined to ensure the best possible care and support for pupils with ALN. These pupils benefit from numerous powerful interventions to support their academic and social development. There are robust processes for tracking and monitoring the progress of ALN pupils, with clear entry and exit criteria for interventions that focus suitably on pupil progress. The school regularly reviews and refines its provision for pupils with ALN to ensure that they support them effectively.

Staff use a variety of helpful approaches to support pupils that are matched well to their needs and consider the views of pupils, parents and external agencies. ALN pupils benefit from an enhanced transition programme, providing the most vulnerable pupils with additional opportunities to visit the school before they join in Year 7. Pupils with ALN play an important role in influencing the life of the school through their active participation in the 'Pupil Parliament'. The ALN team share valuable teaching and learning strategies to help staff support pupils with ALN. In the best lessons, teachers use this guidance well to make appropriate adaptations, which supports pupils to access the curriculum successfully, although this information is not used consistently by all teachers.

Staff in the STF take great care to meet the personal and learning needs of their pupils. They treat their pupils with dignity, respect and great sensitivity. Interventions to support pupils who attend the STF are timely and appropriate to their needs. Leaders ensure that support is carefully planned and focuses appropriately on the development of important life skills, for example in making appropriate decisions and avoiding risky behaviours.

The school has developed highly effective provision to support pupils' well-being. 'Room 8', the school's pastoral support centre, is a valued haven for pupils where the caring staff work tirelessly to build positive relationships with pupils and their families. 'Tŷ Dysgu' provides beneficial support to the most vulnerable pupils and aims to overcome potential barriers to learning and attendance. This is particularly effective in supporting pupils who have been persistently absent to attend school more regularly. Staff work effectively with a variety of outside agencies to offer a comprehensive and agile range of interventions, such as counselling and emotional support, to help pupils overcome challenges.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are well trained to identify and refer pupils who may be at risk of harm. There are clear processes for reporting and recording safeguarding matters. These are understood well and used appropriately by all staff. Staff address the very few instances of bullying that occur promptly and effectively.

The school's work to improve attendance has had a substantial impact. Leaders and staff promote the importance of good attendance in assemblies and form tutor sessions to ensure that all pupils are aware of the importance of attending school daily and are ready to learn. The school has robust procedures to monitor attendance and uses an extensive range of helpful interventions to support pupils with low attendance to improve. There is a strong team of support staff who work with families to encourage engagement. As a result of these robust processes combined with the school's nurturing ethos and rich learning experiences, good attendance is a notable feature of the school's success.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher is a highly principled leader who leads with wisdom and humility. He provides clear strategic direction grounded in strong moral purpose. His mission is for the school to be the very best so that pupils can fulfil their potential as learners and develop as kind, responsible citizens. This is rooted in a heartfelt commitment to the school's community coupled with a relentless pursuit of excellence. This vision is embraced wholeheartedly by all members of the school community.

School leadership is distributed in the truest sense. All staff and governors understand and take proud ownership of the contribution that they make to leading the school, whether they have a formal leadership responsibility or not. A high level of trust is placed in staff and there is a clear emphasis on continuously developing the professional attributes and leadership skills of all staff and governors. This has led to a palpable ethos of teamwork and collective responsibility for achieving the school's aims.

Leaders have a strong sense of purpose and strive collaboratively for the highest quality in all aspects of the school's work. Their knowledge of the school is comprehensive and their attention to detail is meticulous. The school's leadership systems and line management processes are extremely organised and consistently applied. This ensures that the school runs efficiently and that there is clear oversight of its work at all times. A combination of sharp strategic working underpinned by genuine care and compassion for others is emblematic of leaders' approach. Highly effective leadership has resulted in maintenance of consistently high standards over time, as well as continuous improvement and development. Notable examples of this are ensuring high quality teaching and learning, securing substantial improvements in attendance, providing extensive learning experiences and fostering a strong safeguarding culture.

The headteacher is supported ably and with dedication by the headship team, whose roles and responsibilities are distributed wisely, making best use of individual skills. Leaders work successfully to address national priorities in a way that is bespoke to the context of the school and its community. This includes highly effective work to promote pupils' use of the Welsh language, to develop progressively pupils' skills and to plan strategically for Curriculum for Wales.

The school works purposefully to alleviate the impact of poverty on educational attainment. Staff focus strategically on raising the aspirations and broadening the horizons of pupils through providing high quality teaching and learning experiences. They also work to remove financial and material barriers in a wide range of ways, such as considering the costs and sourcing of ingredients for cookery lessons and subsidising music lessons. In addition, the school plans the spending of the pupil development grant carefully to focus on the needs of individual pupils, families and the local community. This work has resulted in improved provision and strong outcomes and attendance for pupils impacted by poverty.

The cohesive, continuous cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning is central to the consistently positive impact of leadership. Self-evaluation processes are rigorous and regular, enabling leaders at all levels to identify precisely strengths and aspects that require improvement. The active involvement of staff and governors

in the shaping of the school's priorities and the strategies to achieve them is a notable strength and contributes to the strong sense of collective responsibility.

All leaders and teaching staff are involved in valuable quality assurance activities, including lesson observations and work scrutiny. Generally, these provide helpful feedback and there is an appropriate focus overall on pupils' standards and skills. Leaders are particularly confident in their analysis of a broad range of data and use this wisely to identify aspects that require improvement. In general, they triangulate findings from a range of evidence successfully.

Leaders use pupil and parent views well to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning at a whole-school level, such as to adapt the PSE provision over time. Pupil 'Curriculum Ambassadors' are passionate advocates for subjects, especially when presenting to governors and parents. Whilst some subject areas do glean the views of pupils, middle leaders do not always use this information precisely enough to identify improvement priorities.

The self-evaluation work at whole-school and middle leader level is supplemented usefully by additional processes. Collaborative work with three local secondary schools gives a beneficial external perspective and enables the sharing of good practice. Internal whole-school reviews provide helpful insights into specific aspects of whole-school provision. Both these processes provide valuable professional learning opportunities for staff to develop their leadership skills, especially at middle leader level.

There is a vibrant culture of professional learning where all staff are trusted to innovate to refine and improve their practice. Senior leaders plan professional learning opportunities strategically in response to their self-evaluation findings and to support the school's improvement priorities. A notable strength is the strong and well-established focus on developing leadership at all levels through in-house provision, such as the aspiring middle and senior leaders' programmes. Staff benefit from worthwhile opportunities to share good practice and there are many examples of effective partnership working with other schools. Senior leaders evaluate professional learning activities robustly and focus suitably on the impact on teaching and learning and pupils' well-being.

Leaders at all levels use findings from self-evaluation carefully to identify priorities and plan focused actions to address them. This action planning is underpinned by strong professional learning and a performance management system that is both challenging and developmental. Actions are monitored regularly and evaluated thoroughly by leaders. All systems are interrelated and align successfully to achieve the school's aims.

Governors are astute critical friends of the school. They have a detailed knowledge of the school's work and a sound understanding of their roles, including their responsibility for healthy eating and drinking. Their interactions with pupils in order to improve their understanding is of particular note.

The resources manager, headteacher and the governors' personnel and resources sub-committee monitor the school's finances carefully. They ensure that any

spending, including that of the pupil development grant, is focused clearly on the school's priorities and securing improvements for pupils and staff.

The STF is exceptionally well led and meets the needs of its pupils very effectively. Its leaders have a comprehensive understanding of strengths and areas for development. There are suitable and detailed plans for improvement, and these are recognised in the whole-school improvement plan and in pupils' individual plans. The school and wider community benefit from the expertise of staff from the STF who deliver training to professionals in other settings

## 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.

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Publication date: 08/02/2024