



# Report summary for parents and carers on Mary Immaculate R.C. High School

**Date of inspection: October 2023**

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

# 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



## School context

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
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

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