



# Report summary for parents and carers on Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School

**Date of inspection: March 2023**

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

# Overview

Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School is a caring school where staff know pupils well and make them feel valued and safe. Pupils are welcoming and friendly, and many behave well. They benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer and the pupils involved in the various Senedd groups value the opportunities they have to contribute to the life of the school. However, pupils' attendance is notably low, particularly that of those eligible for free school meals or with additional learning needs (ALN) and the approach to improving attendance is not sufficiently strategic.

Strong working relationships between staff and pupils are a feature of most lessons. In the majority of lessons, teaching enables pupils to make sound progress. In these lessons, teachers plan helpful, suitably challenging activities and monitor pupils' progress well, providing useful verbal feedback. In a minority of cases, teaching is not effective enough, often due to teachers' low expectations. In these cases, pupils do not make enough progress and a minority complete very little work. Although feedback is helpful in a minority of instances, overall feedback and assessment does not provide pupils with sufficient guidance.

Leaders have developed an ambitious strategy for the development of the Curriculum for Wales, though this has not been sufficiently underpinned by a consistent enough focus on improving the effectiveness of teaching. In general, pupils have an appropriately broad curriculum in Years 7 and 8 and a suitable range of options in Key Stage 4. However, provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills is underdeveloped and a few more able pupils in Year 11 do not have suitable provision for English from January onwards. While there is valuable personal and social education (PSE) provision for younger pupils, this is more limited for older pupils.

The Secondary Education Nurture Centre (SENC) is a Local Authority provision for pupils from across Neath and Port Talbot, which is managed by the school. It provides a safe, constructive environment for pupils with significant social, emotional and mental health needs. These pupils develop useful skills and positive attitudes to learning at the centre, and they generally attend well. Staff in the centre provide a bespoke curriculum for each pupil and work effectively with external agencies to support them.

The school's caring ethos, where every child matters, is promoted successfully by leaders. There is a sound culture of safeguarding and valuable provision for pupils with ALN, such as the Year 7 nurture class. In light of the pandemic, leaders recognised the need to develop their own range of provisions to meet the changing needs of pupils. As a result, there is a broad range of provision to meet the well-being needs of pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable.

The headteacher and other leaders display a heartfelt commitment to the school and its community and have been successful in promoting the well-being and safeguarding of pupils. Despite this, leadership has not had enough impact on other important aspects of the school's work. These include attendance, the quality of teaching and assessment, the provision to develop pupils' skills and access for all pupils to a suitably broad curriculum. Overall, leaders do not evaluate the impact of their work rigorously enough or focus consistently enough on core aspects of their work. As a result, their actions to effect improvement are not sufficiently precise or effective. In addition, there is too much variation in how robustly senior leaders hold middle leaders to account or support them to develop their leadership skills.



# Recommendations

- R1 Strengthen leadership, by improving the rigour and precision of self-evaluation and the effectiveness of improvement planning in particular
- R2 Improve the processes and strategic planning to improve attendance
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment
- R4 Ensure that all pupils have access to the full breadth of provision, particularly the provision for Welsh, English in Year 11 and PSE in Key Stage 4

## What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations. A small team of Estyn inspectors will visit the school to monitor progress about 12-18 months after the publication of the inspection report.



## School context

Name of provider	Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School
Local authority	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Secondary
Number of pupils on roll	834
Pupils of statutory school age	834
Number in sixth form	n/a
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%)	28.0%
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%)	19.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.6%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2013
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	16/03/2015
Start date of inspection	20/03/2023

© Crown Copyright 2023: This report may be re used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

Publication date: 25/05/2023

Please note that the photographs displayed may not be of the school that is the subject of this report.