



Report summary for parents and carers on Ysgol Garth Olwg

Date of inspection: March 2023

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

Overview

As they move through the school, many pupils make strong progress in their Welsh communication skills. Only a few of the school's youngest pupils speak Welsh fluently on entry to the nursery or reception class. Over time, they develop a sound vocabulary and understanding of the language and its syntax and this enables them to express themselves clearly both orally and in writing.

Most pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and treat each other, teachers and visitors to the school with respect. However, a very few pupils, mainly in Years 9-11, do not behave well and show negative attitudes to learning and towards others. Although many pupils feel safe at school, they note that the behaviour of some pupils during break times and lunchtimes causes them distress. Attendance rates, including the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, have remained low since the pandemic.

There is a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to take part in and contribute to school life through a large number of clubs, drama activities and discussion forums. These include sports and drama clubs, in addition to the 'Siop Siarad' sessions, the Welshness Forum and the Equality Forum. As a result, many pupils make strong development in their social skills and understanding of human rights and other important issues. Sixth-form pupils develop valuable personal skills by leading the forums and volunteering to help younger pupils in their physical education lessons and in sessions to reinforce learning.

Learning experiences up to Year 8 are broad and balanced, on the whole. A rich range of academic and vocational courses are provided for pupils in the sixth form. However, the curriculum for pupils in Years 9-11 is too limited, particularly for more able pupils in Year 9 and pupils with poor engagement in Years 10 and 11.

The headteacher and his leadership team have prioritised Welshness and improving pupils' well-being as a result of the challenges of the pandemic. This has had a positive effect on standards of Welsh and pupils' attitudes to learning, particularly lower down the school. However, strategic leadership to improve a few other aspects of the school's work is not robust enough. This includes provision to develop numeracy skills and digital skills, improving the standards of well-being of a very few older pupils and ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.

Leaders provide a range of valuable opportunities for teachers to discuss, plan and research together to improve their practice. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school is good and this has a positive effect on pupils' progress in their subject knowledge and literacy.

Leaders set appropriate improvement priorities for the whole school and for individual areas of learning and experience. However, they do not give enough consideration to expected outcomes when devising actions. As a result, they do not evaluate the success of any actions according to their effect on pupils' standards and progress.

Recommendations

- R1 Sharpen self-evaluation and improvement planning so that there is better consideration of the effect of provision on pupils' standards and progress
- R2 Strengthen strategic leadership for the areas for improvement that have been identified in the report, including provision to develop pupils' numeracy and digital skills
- R3 Expand curricular experiences in key stages 3 and 4 to meet the needs of all pupils and ensure that they engage positively with their learning
- R4 Improve attendance

What happens next

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



School context

Name of provider	Ysgol Garth Olwg
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	Welsh
Type of school	All age
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	1249
Pupils of statutory school age	1064
Number in nursery classes (if applicable)	54
Number in sixth form	131
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 all-age schools is 21.6%)	8.3%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in all-age schools is 12.7%)	6.7%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	36%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	0.0%
Date of headteacher appointment	02/09/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	
Start date of inspection	20/03/2023

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