



Report summary for parents and carers on Willows High School

Date of inspection: November 2024

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

Summary

Willows High School is a welcoming community where diversity is celebrated. Leaders have secured a clear and well understood vision that all pupils should 'belong, believe and achieve'. The positive relationships between pupils and staff are a notable feature of the school. Through well-established routines, staff share high expectations for pupils' engagement and behaviour and this positive ethos permeates every aspect of school life.

Staff, pupils, parents and visitors feel welcome at Willows. There is a positive safeguarding culture where most pupils feel safe. Clear processes for monitoring and supporting pupils' attendance have helped to improve rates of attendance faster than they did nationally last year and these rates, particularly for pupils who are eligible for free school meals, continue to improve well.

A notable feature of the school's broad and balanced curriculum is the way in which they develop pupils' understanding of diversity and other cultures. There is a positive focus on improving pupils' reading and generally pupils develop these skills well across the curriculum. In many lessons, teachers help pupils to make sound progress in their knowledge understanding and skills. In a few lessons, highly effective teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress in their learning and skills. In a minority of lessons, whilst pupils engage in learning and often acquire new knowledge, teachers do not ensure that all pupils are challenged to develop their understanding and skills, including their ability to work independently. In addition, pupils do not develop their Welsh speaking skill sufficiently.

Leaders at all levels use their evaluation and improvement processes appropriately to establish an understanding of the school's broad strengths and areas for improvement. However, leaders do not focus precisely enough on the impact that provision has on pupil progress and well-being.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1** Ensure that teaching consistently challenges pupils to make strong progress and develop their skills well.
- R2** Ensure that self-evaluation processes are precise and focus on impact and that all leaders use these processes effectively to plan for and secure improvement.
- R3** Increase the number of pupils who complete a Welsh language GCSE qualification and improve pupils' Welsh language speaking skills

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

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

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