



Report summary for parents and carers on St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School

Date of inspection: April 2024

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

Overview

At St. Richard Gwyn Catholic High School leaders and staff have nurtured a caring and inclusive environment with a strong community spirit. As a result, most pupils feel safe, know who to turn to and say that staff care about them. In lessons and around the school, most pupils are friendly and welcoming and their behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and work well with staff. From an early stage, staff work closely with partner primary schools to get to know pupils before they transition to the secondary. A particular strength is the support provided to pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) during this transition. Leaders take a person-centred approach to providing additional support to vulnerable pupils and there is beneficial tailored support available such as the nurture group in Year 7. However, there is limited intervention available for other pupils who might need additional support with weak literacy and numeracy skills.

In lessons, many pupils, including those with ALN, make at least suitable progress in their learning. In these cases, teachers know the pupils well and have forged positive working relationships with them. In a few cases when teaching is most effective, learning intentions are clear, lessons are planned well, and pupils are given good feedback to help them to improve. In a very few cases, teaching is particularly effective and pupils in these lessons make strong progress. These teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils to think independently. However, in a minority of lessons teaching is less effective and there are significant shortcomings in key aspects to support pupils' progress. These teachers have low expectations and do not plan well enough to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result, a significant minority of pupils do not make as much progress as they should.

At key transition points, staff provide pupils with beneficial support to make informed decisions about their future. In Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form, the school provides a broad choice of academic and vocational courses, which meet the needs of nearly all pupils. The responsive nature of the personal and social education programme ensures that pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities to develop their understanding of key issues such as tolerance, respect and diversity. These are all underpinned by the deep-rooted Catholic values, which are visible in all aspects of school life. Although leaders and staff have collaborated well to plan for and implement their Curriculum for Wales pupils have limited opportunities to develop their Welsh language skills outside their Welsh lessons. In addition, opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills are in the early stages of development.

Leaders and staff at all levels have worked collaboratively to ensure that a strong culture of safeguarding is central to the school's work. A strong sense of teamwork has led to positive progress in developing a whole-school approach to prioritising pupils' well-being. Although leaders pay appropriate attention to a few key national priorities, there remains significant work to be done to see the required impact on aspects such as the progressive development of pupils' skills, provision for Welsh and teaching. In addition, whilst self-evaluation and improvement processes provide opportunities for leaders to gather first-hand evidence, this is not done with sufficient focus and precision in relation to teaching and learning. As a result, leaders do not always plan appropriately to make improvement in certain aspects of teaching.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve the quality of teaching to improve engagement and pupils' progress in learning to address the shortcomings identified in the report
- R2 Ensure that self-evaluation and improvement processes focus more precisely on improving teaching and its impact on pupils' progress
- R3 Develop a strategic approach to planning, evaluating and improving the progressive development of pupils' skills for all pupils
- R4 Ensure that all pupils have full access to provision to develop their Welsh language skills

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	St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School
Local authority	Flintshire County Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Secondary
Religious character	Catholic
Number of pupils on roll	806
Pupils of statutory school age	719
Number in sixth form	86
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%)	19.3%
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%)	15.9%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	1.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	8.8%
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2019
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	17/05/2016
Start date of inspection	29/04/2024

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Publication date: 08/07/2024

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