

Sector summary

Secondary

2022-2023

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Teaching and learning

What's going well

- As a result of well-planned, engaging teaching, many pupils develop their subject understanding and literacy skills appropriately across the curriculum; a few pupils make strong progress.
- A majority of schools provide pupils with suitable opportunities to practise and develop their literacy skills.
- A majority of schools have developed a clear vision for Curriculum for Wales and are experimenting appropriately with new approaches.
- Many schools provide vulnerable pupils with suitable provision to support their engagement in learning.

What needs to improve

- In a minority of lessons, low expectations and a lack of careful planning reduce pupils' progress.
- In a minority of instances, schools' planning for Curriculum for Wales does not have a positive impact on pupils' learning experiences.
- A minority of schools do not plan well enough for the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills.
- In the majority of schools, shortcomings in provision mean that pupils do not develop their numeracy skills well enough across the curriculum.
- In general, provision for developing pupils' digital skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- In the majority of schools, pupils do not make enough progress in their Welsh language skills or their understanding of Welsh culture and heritage.

Care, support and well-being

What's going well

- Strong pastoral support in many schools.
- Many pupils feel safe in school and know who to ask for support.
- Many pupils engage well in lessons and are independent, resilient learners.
- ALN provision is a strength in many schools.
- Many schools have a strong culture of safeguarding.
- In many cases, pupils benefit from opportunities to influence school life and develop leadership skills.

What needs to improve

- Pupil attendance, especially that of ALN pupils and those from low-income households.
- A minority of pupils remain too passive in lessons, especially where teaching is not challenging or engaging enough.
- A few pupils do not feel that bullying / harassment is dealt with well enough.
- In a few schools, safeguarding processes are insufficiently robust.
- Health and safety issues were noted in around one in three inspections.
- In a minority of schools, opportunities for pupils to have their views heard and take on leadership roles are underdeveloped.

Leading and improving

What's going well

- Many headteachers have a clear vision for school improvement that is well understood by staff.
- In many schools, the allocation of responsibilities and line management arrangements help leaders to discharge their roles suitably.
- In general, schools carry out a range of suitable self-evaluation activities; a few schools have precise, robust improvement processes that have a sustained impact on pupil outcomes.
- Many schools have developed a suitable focus on raising the aspirations and achievement of pupils from low-income households.
- A positive culture of professional learning is a feature of many schools.
- Many leaders have secured a strong culture of safeguarding.
- In general, governors are highly committed supporters of the school, and many challenge leaders appropriately.

What needs to improve

- In the majority of cases, self-evaluation processes do not focus well enough on impact and leaders do not plan precisely enough for improvement.
- A minority of leaders are not held to account robustly enough and do not make enough impact in their role.
- Too often, leaders do not evaluate strategies designed to increase attendance or improve outcomes for pupils from low-income households rigorously enough.
- In a minority of schools, leaders do not ensure that professional learning has a consistent impact on pupil outcomes.

Overview of recommendations from inspections

28

Twenty-eight secondary schools were inspected in 2022-2023

24

Twenty-four (86%) of the schools inspected received a recommendation related to self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, particularly regarding how precisely they focus on the impact of provision on pupil progress.

18

Eighteen (64%) of the schools inspected had a recommendation to improve the effectiveness of teaching.

15

In 15 (54%) of the schools, inspectors recommended that they should strengthen arrangements to improve pupil attendance.

14

Fourteen (50%) of the schools inspected received a recommendation to improve the planning and co-ordination of provision for pupils' skills.

7

Seven (25%) of the inspections identified a health and safety issue that needed to be addressed.

7

Seven (25%) of the schools inspected had a recommendation to improve pupils' Welsh language skills, two of which were Welsh-medium schools.

Reflective questions

Questions to help secondary schools **reflect on their self-evaluation processes**:

- How well do self-evaluation processes focus on the impact of provision on pupils' progress and well-being?
 - How well does the school pay attention to the impact of provision on pupils from low-income households?
 - How well does the school analyse rates of attendance – including that of groups of pupils such as those from low-income households? How robustly do leaders evaluate the impact of strategies to improve attendance?
 - When evaluating teaching, how effectively do leaders focus on how well it helps pupils to make progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills?
 - Does the school have robust systems in place to evaluate the impact that professional learning has on the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership?
 - How well does the school ensure its evaluation of assessment and feedback focuses on how well it helps pupils to improve their learning?
 - How well do leaders understand how to evaluate the impact of their leadership on pupils' learning and well-being?
 - How well does the school know that pupils have sufficient meaningful, challenging opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum?
 - How well does the school adapt and improve the curriculum in light of a range of robust, first-hand evidence?
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Effective practice

To read about individual providers that are working effectively in specific aspects of their work, visit our [effective practice summary page for 2022-2023](#)