Sector summary

All-Age

2022-2023

Estyn

All-Age
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Teaching and learning

What's going well

- The implementation of aspects of Curriculum for Wales, in particular the use of the local area (Cynefin) and outdoor opportunities, is developing well.

- In the few best cases, planning to develop pupils' skills across the age range is a strength.

- In a few schools, teaching is consistently good. Where this is the case, pupils make strong progress and develop a sound understanding of complex concepts and improve their subject knowledge significantly. Common strengths in teaching include strong working relationships between pupils and staff, strong subject knowledge, appropriate pace of learning and meeting the needs of individual pupils.

What needs to improve

- In most schools, planning to develop pupils' skills is not always co-ordinated well enough.

- In around a half of schools inspected, there are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

- The quality of teacher feedback varies too much and is often not helpful for pupils to improve their work.

Care, support and well-being

What's going well

- Most pupils feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they require support and advice.

- In general, pastoral care and support for pupils' well-being are a strength. Schools have focused purposefully on addressing well-being issues following the pandemic.

- In most schools, the provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) leads to pupils making sound progress.

What needs to improve

- Work to improve attendance has not led to a marked increase in attendance, especially that of pupils eligible for free school meals.

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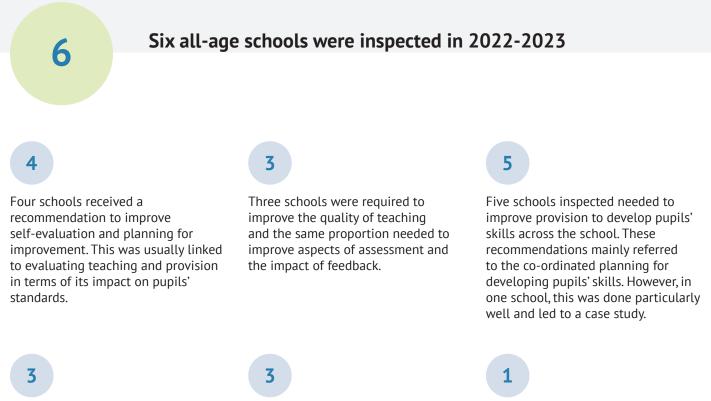
Leading and improving

What's going well

- Leaders consider the whole age-range within school policies (not separate primary and secondary policies).

- Increasingly, more leaders have whole-school responsibilities that span the whole age-range.

- In most schools, professional learning arrangements are tailored to individual and school needs.

- Generally, schools have overcome the initial hurdles of establishing as new schools and staff morale has improved.

- Leaders have a sound understanding of the potential benefits of an all-age school and are beginning to realise some of that potential.

- Leaders in most schools address national priorities suitably, particularly in mitigating the effect of poverty on pupil well-being and attainment.

What needs to improve

- In a majority of schools, leaders do not use self-evaluation and improvement processes well enough.

- In a few instances, governors are not always informed well enough to be able to challenge school leaders.

- In a few cases, primary and secondary phases are considered as separate entities and do not reflect the true nature of an all-age school.

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Overview of recommendations from inspections

6

Six all-age schools were inspected in 2022-2023

4

Four schools received a recommendation to improve self-evaluation and planning for improvement. This was usually linked to evaluating teaching and provision in terms of its impact on pupils' standards.

3

Three schools were required to improve the quality of teaching and the same proportion needed to improve aspects of assessment and the impact of feedback.

5

Five schools inspected needed to improve provision to develop pupils' skills across the school. These recommendations mainly referred to the co-ordinated planning for developing pupils' skills. However, in one school, this was done particularly well and led to a case study.

3

In three schools, the amount and variety of courses offered in Key Stage 4 were limited, in particular the time allocated for personal and social education (PSE).

3

Since the pandemic, attendance levels have decreased significantly. Attendance levels in three of the schools inspected need to improve despite the sound provision and procedures they had in place.

1

Only one school received a recommendation pertaining to health and safety and a well-being letter issued.

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Reflective questions

Questions to help schools **reflect on teaching and the skills**:

- How well does teaching challenge and engage pupils of all ages and abilities?
- How accurate is the evaluation of the quality of teaching? How well does the evaluation of teaching consider its impact on pupils' progress?
- What impact does professional learning have on the quality of teaching?
- How well does the school plan for the progressive development of pupils' skills across the school?
- How well does the school ensure that pupils have sufficient meaningful opportunities to practise and develop their literacy, numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills?
- How well does the school evaluate the impact of this planning for skills on pupils' literacy, numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills?
- Does the curriculum meet the needs of pupils to prepare them for their next stage of learning?

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