

Meeting of:	Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 31 March 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Learning and Culture
Report Title:	Summary of Estyn inspection outcomes for autumn term 2024 and update on schools in statutory follow-up.
Purpose of Report:	To update Members on Estyn outcomes of schools inspected during the autumn term 2024 and progress of schools in statutory follow-up
Report Owner:	Elizabeth Jones, Director of Learning and Skills
Responsible Officer:	Carys Pritchard, Principal Improvement Partner, Central South Consortium
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Councillor Rhiannon Birch, Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language Morwen Thomas, Head of Standards and Provision
Policy Framework:	The recommendations of this report are within existing policy framework and budget
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estyn inspects quality and standards in education across Wales. A new inspection framework was introduced in September 2024. From September 2024, Estyn will be engaging more regularly with schools. Schools will now have a core inspection and an interim visit within the 6-year inspection period (2024 – 2030). • During the autumn term 2024, two primary schools received a core inspection (Gwenfo Church in Wales Primary and St Athan Primary). One secondary school, Stanwell School, received an interim visit. • None of the two schools that received a core inspection are in statutory follow-up (significant improvement and special measures). • A ‘spotlight’ highlighting interesting or innovative practice is included within the inspection report for Gwenfo Church in Wales Primary, with a focus on partnership and community working. • At the start of the autumn term, two schools from the Vale of Glamorgan, Ysgol Pen y Garth and Pencoedtre High School, were in Estyn statutory follow-up category (special measures) and Llanfair Primary in Estyn Review following their inspection in spring 2023. 	

- As reported to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee in December 2024, Estyn judged Ysgol Pen y Garth in October 2024 to have made sufficient progress in relation to their recommendations. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales has removed Ysgol Pen y Garth from the list of schools requiring special measures.
- In December 2024, Estyn met with leaders of Llanfair Primary and the local authority to discuss progress in relation to their recommendation. Estyn judged that the school has made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations, and they have been removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn Review.
- Pencoedre High School remains in special measures. The progress of the school is monitored by Estyn on a termly basis.

Recommendations

- 1.** That Members consider the inspection outcomes for the autumn term and congratulate:
 - the two schools that received a core inspection as there is no Estyn follow-up activity
 - the progress made by Llanfair Primary resulting in them being removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn Review
- 2.** That Members consider the progress of Pencoedtre High as it remains in special measures.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.** In order that Members are aware of Estyn findings about schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.** In order for Members to be aware of the progress Pencoedtre High is making in relation to its Estyn recommendations.

1. Background

- 1.1** During the spring and summer term 2024, Estyn started to pilot a revised inspection framework with a few schools in readiness for how they will be inspecting education and training from September 2024 and beyond.
- 1.2** Two schools from the Vale of Glamorgan, Rhws Primary and Dinas Powys Primary, were involved in the piloting of the new Estyn inspection framework during the summer term 2024.
- 1.3** A new inspection framework was introduced by Estyn in September 2024. From September 2024, Estyn will be engaging more regularly with schools. Schools will now have a core inspection and an interim visit within the 6-year inspection period (2024 – 2030).
- 1.4** School inspections are governed by the Education Act 2005 and related regulations. Inspections must be conducted by teams of inspectors, led by an HMI, additional inspector or registered inspector, and must result in a written report. Section 28 of the Education Act 2005, says that inspectors must report on:
 - the quality of education provided by the school
 - how far education meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school
 - the educational standards achieved by the school
 - the quality of leadership and management of the school, including whether the financial resources are managed efficiently

- the development of the pupils by reference to the four purposes of a curriculum for those pupils
 - the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school
 - whether the provision promotes health eating and drinking
 - the contribution of the school to the wellbeing of pupils
- 1.5** With the new Estyn inspection framework introduced in September 2024, there are three inspection areas. They are:
- teaching and learning
 - well-being, care, support and guidance
 - leading and improving
- 1.6** Inspection reports from September 2024 will also now include a section with additional information at the end of the report. This section will include statements on the following items:
- safeguarding arrangements
 - healthy eating and drinking
 - school funding
 - health and safety issues (safety on the site)
- 1.7** When conducting school inspections, the main forms of evidence considered are:
- samples of pupils' work
 - discussions with pupils, staff, leaders, managers, governors, parents /carers and others
 - observation of teaching and other activities, including evidence gathered through learning walks
 - pre-inspection questionnaire responses
 - documentary or electronic evidence, e.g. information on pupils' progress
 - relevant information from the local authority/regional consortium
 - professional dialogue
- 1.8** The reporting inspector is responsible for producing a final inspection report that is clear to a lay audience and helpful to the school. There is a report for the school and also a version for parents/ carers published.
- 1.9** The notice period for a school receiving a core inspection is ten working days.
- 1.10** During all core inspections, the inspection team will consider whether the school needs any follow-up activity.
- 1.11** With the new inspection framework introduced in September 2024, there are two types of follow-up category:
- significant improvement

- special measures
- 1.12** All follow-up work involves activity by Estyn inspectors. The activity involves increasing levels of intervention in proportion to need.
 - 1.13** A new feature of the inspection framework introduced in September 2024 is the interim visit led by Estyn. An interim visit will be a single day for most primary schools and for most secondary schools the visit will last two days. For larger primaries, the visit can be extended up to two days.
 - 1.14** The notice period for a school receiving an interim visit by Estyn is five working days.
 - 1.15** The purpose of interim visits is to support schools with their self-evaluation and improvement plans.
 - 1.16** Following an interim visit, feedback will be provided to the headteacher. A short letter will be published on the Estyn website summarising the outcome of the visit. The letter will outline feedback to support the school with the next steps in their improvement process.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** Two schools from the Vale of Glamorgan received a core inspection by Estyn during the autumn term 2024: Gwenfo Church in Wales Primary and St Athan Primary.
- 2.2** A summary of the inspection findings for the two schools is appended to this report (Appendix 1).
- 2.3** No follow up work was identified by Estyn in relation to the two primary schools who received a core inspection during autumn term 2024.
- 2.4** Where inspectors identify any interesting or innovative practice that is worthy of sharing more widely, Estyn include a short 'spotlight on...' within the report. For Gwenfo Church in Wales Primary there is a spotlight highlighting their partnership and community work.
- 2.5** One school, Stanwell School, received an interim visit. The visit focused on their Estyn recommendations following their previous inspection in February 2022. A copy of the interim visit letter can be found [here](#).
- 2.6** At the start of the autumn term, two schools from the Vale of Glamorgan, Ysgol Pen y Garth and Pencoedtre High School, were in Estyn statutory follow-up category (Special Measures) and Llanfair primary in Estyn Review following their inspection in spring 2023.
- 2.7** As reported to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee in December 2024, Estyn judged Ysgol Pen y Garth in October 2024 to have made sufficient progress in relation to their recommendations. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales has removed Ysgol Pen y Garth from the list of schools requiring special measures.

- 2.8** In December 2024, Estyn met with leaders of Llanfair Primary and the local authority to discuss progress in relation to their recommendations. Estyn judged the school to have made sufficient progress in addressing their recommendations, and they have been removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn Review.
- 2.9** Pencoedtre High School remains in special measures. The progress of the school is monitored by Estyn on a termly basis.
- 2.10** For Pencoedtre, as a secondary school in special measures, a multi-agency panel has been established that includes an Estyn HMI, representatives from the school, local authority and regional consortia. Two meetings of this panel were held during the autumn term 2024.
- 2.11** Estyn undertook a monitoring visit to Pencoedtre in December 2024 with a particular focus on:
- Recommendation 2: Improve the provision and strategic approach to supporting pupils' attendance and behaviour
 - Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment
- 2.12** Estyn acknowledged that there are now clear lines of accountability for improving attendance; however, it is too early to evaluate impact.
- 2.13** Leaders use attendance data for planning of interventions, although there is inconsistency in how well leaders use data strategically.
- 2.14** There is a clear graduated response for addressing absences and a suitable range of strategies used to promote good attendance. However, there is inconsistency in how leaders carry out their roles in tackling pupils' absences and promoting good attendance.
- 2.15** Pupils' behaviour has improved and there is now a calmer school environment.
- 2.16** While internal truancy has reduced, it remains an area of concern.
- 2.17** Four separate provisions are now in place that offer suitable graduated support for pupil behaviour. They provide appropriate activities to allow pupils to regulate their behaviour; however, these activities do not support pupils' academic progress.
- 2.18** The school has effectively adapted its curriculum to support pupils with challenging behaviour and works closely with external agencies. However, it has not yet evaluated the impact of these specific provisions.
- 2.19** In terms of the quality of teaching and assessment, leaders have introduced a beneficial range of professional learning opportunities and a new coaching model to support improvement. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these initiatives.
- 2.20** Estyn report that the new expectations for lesson components have helped teachers to put in place purposeful routines.

- 2.21** Around a half of teachers do not deal decisively with pupils' lack of engagement and low-level behaviour; they do not use the school's behaviour management strategies appropriately.
- 2.22** Many teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge, although they do not always encourage pupils to use subject vocabulary well enough.
- 2.23** A majority of teachers plan a range of relevant and challenging activities. However, too often teachers' planning does not meet pupils' needs well enough.
- 2.24** In a few lessons, teachers use probing questions to deepen understanding. However, in many lessons, teachers do not question pupils well enough, and this limits opportunities for pupil engagement and does not deepen their thinking.
- 2.25** In a minority of lessons, teachers circulate the classroom well and provide purposeful verbal feedback that enables pupils to improve their work in a timely manner. However, in the majority of instances, teachers' feedback does not enable pupils to know precisely what they need to do to improve their work

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 3.2** Support for learners contributes to the Council's Wellbeing Objectives drawn from the Corporate Plan 2020-25. There is specific alignment with our wellbeing objectives to work with and for our communities and to support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth.
- 3.3** This report recognises the importance of identifying best practice in learning, provision and leadership in schools which will meet the needs of young people over the long term.
- 3.4** The report recognises the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the outcome and those people reflect the diversity of the area which the report addresses. All relevant stakeholders have been involved in the consultation process through this report.
- 3.5** This report supports the objectives listed in the Service Plan for Standards and Provision 2024-25.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** There are no climate change and nature implications resulting from this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

5.1 There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

Employment

5.2 There are no employment implications arising from this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

5.3 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. Background Papers

None.

Appendix 1

School Inspections Autumn 2024

School	Gwenfo CiW Primary School	Head Teacher	Miss Nicola Starke
Date	9 October 2024	Reporting Inspector	Jackie Roome
Report	Gwenfo CiW Primary 2024		

Recommendations and context for recommendations
1. Improve self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning to ensure that the focus is on the most important areas in need of improvement
Reason/Context for recommendation Leaders develop suitable self-evaluation and monitoring process to identify the schools' strengths and areas for improvement. However, leaders tend to try to address too many priorities at the same time and this limits the progress of improvement work.
2. Ensure that teaching and feedback provide pupils with the right level of support and challenge
Reason/Context for recommendation In a few classes, older pupils do not always follow instructions well enough and do not understand what they need to do to be successful in their learning. Teachers' use of feedback to support pupils' learning is inconsistent.
3. Improve the curriculum to ensure that there are purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
Reason/Context for recommendation There are limited opportunities for pupils to use these skills in their work across the curriculum to the standard they are capable of.
4. Improve pupils' attendance, especially for those eligible for free school meals and with additional learning needs (ALN)
Reason/Context for recommendation Leaders monitor pupils' attendance appropriately. However, rates of attendance remain too low, especially those for those pupils with ALN and pupils who are eligible for free school meals
5. Improve the financial management at the school
Reason/Context for recommendation Leaders and governors do not have robust enough arrangements in place to manage the school's significant deficit budget.

Follow-Up Category: No follow up

Have Estyn highlighted any 'spotlights'? Yes – partnership and community working.

School	St Athan Primary School	Head Teacher	Mrs Louise Davies (Acting – 4 days) Mrs Louise Haynes (1 day a week)
Date	23 October 2024	Reporting Inspector	Mr Peter Owen
Report	St Athan Primary 2024		

Recommendations & context for recommendations
1. Address the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
Reason/Context for recommendation In a few lessons, staff do not challenge pupils suitably to make the progress they could. Teachers do not generally use the outdoors suitably to challenge all pupils at a high enough level.

Follow-Up Category: No follow up

Have Estyn highlighted any 'spotlights'? No