

## Caerphilly Secondary School : Inspection Reports for RE

### Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School

**Standard inspection – RE was not one of the six subjects inspected.**

**Spiritual and moral:** Acts of collective worship and lessons in PSE and religious education combine to form a good basis for pupils' SMSC development.

**Collective Worship:** Assemblies are clearly planned, to be broadly of a Christian nature, and the assemblies seen were of good quality. However, acts of worship, as 'thoughts for the day', in tutor groups, vary considerably in quality. The guidance given to form tutors for the act of collective worship is inadequate, their practice is inconsistent, the provision is not monitored, and the absence of an act of worship in some groups means that statutory requirements are not met.

#### **Recommendation:**

- Meet all legal and statutory requirements

This recommendation was highlighted as a key issue for action in the previous inspection.

In accordance with the School Inspections Act 2005 the report states that special measures are required in relation to the school.

**Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?**

**Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

128. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees, because there are shortcomings in the:
- low percentage entered for GCSE qualifications;
  - planning, co-ordination and monitoring of key skills as a whole;
  - adverse effects on pupils' personal and social development from a significant amount of unsatisfactory behaviour in class and around the school; and
  - failure to meet statutory requirements with regard to a daily act of collective worship and the teaching of Welsh as a second language at KS4.
129. However, overall, good features outweigh shortcomings in the provision of learning experiences. The impact of some of the shortcomings, in practice, is reflected in the grading of key question 1.

**The extent to which learning experiences meet learners' needs and interests**

130. The curriculum overall meets the needs of pupils and provides opportunity for accreditation. However large group sizes in some subjects, a low entry policy for external examinations overall and in some subjects in particular, and a lack of challenge in teaching in a significant minority of lessons limit the achievement of a significant number of pupils of all abilities. Homework is set inconsistently and does not adequately extend learning experiences.
131. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced in each key stage and provides effective continuity and progression. Pupils in KS4 have a fair choice of GCSE courses, enhanced by a growing range of vocational options in conjunction with other providers, for pupils of lower ability and with SEN in particular. The school does not provide a specialist teacher in Welsh as a second language to all groups in Y11, and does not give sufficient time to specialist Welsh language teaching in Y10.
132. Schemes of work and lesson plans identify where key skills can be taught through the programmes of study. However, key skills are rarely made explicit in planning or sufficiently emphasised in teaching across the curriculum. They are an integral part of the PSE (citizenship) lessons.
133. The use of ICT, however, is well planned across the curriculum and audited. Provision at KS3 and KS4 enables a significant percentage of pupils to gain accreditation.
134. The way in which the physical education department exploits the opportunities offered by very good facilities is a strength of the school. A wide range of sporting activities is available for both boys and girls.



135. In addition, pupils have access to a number of clubs and societies based in subject areas. The lack of activities, currently, in music/drama prevents many pupils developing their talents in those areas. The number of visits is also good and extends pupils' learning experiences effectively.
136. Assemblies and lessons in PSE (citizenship) and religious education combine to form a good basis for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This awareness is not always translated into their day-to-day behaviour, as evidenced by the significant incidence of disruption in classrooms and boisterous behaviour, at times, around the school.
137. Home-school agreements operate and parents and friends of the school are issued with a newsletter of good quality. There are good links with Careers Wales and local employers. Links with partner primary schools and local colleges are effective and transition arrangements operate smoothly. The school's involvement in sporting links with primary schools is a good feature of its provision.
138. Assemblies are clearly planned, to be broadly of a Christian nature, and the assemblies seen were of good quality. However, acts of worship, as 'thoughts for the day', in tutor groups, vary considerably in quality. The guidance given to form tutors for the act of collective worship is inadequate, their practice is inconsistent, the provision is not monitored, and the absence of an act of worship in some groups means that statutory requirements are not met.

**The extent to which the learning experiences respond to the needs of employers and the wider community**

139. Careers education and guidance, work-related education and PSE (citizenship) are closely integrated. Pupils receive appropriate guidance on option choices at the end of KS3, as well as work experience and mock interviews in KS4. Careers Wales and local businesses support the school's careers convention. Overall, work-related education is of good quality.
140. The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* features in schemes of work and is an important part of pupils' learning experiences in several subject areas. Some examples of incidental Welsh, spoken by both staff and pupils, were heard during the inspection. The large size of some classes in Welsh as a second language, and the limited provision at KS4, limit the development of bilingualism.
141. The SSRB enables pupils with SEN to access the curriculum and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation (ASDAN) courses provide good support for pupils who find GCSE courses difficult. However there is insufficient mentoring of pupils in the main school, whose behaviour is challenging. Whilst there are vocationally-based courses for pupils of lower ability and with SEN, there are insufficient vocationally-based courses to meet the needs of differing abilities, aptitudes and interests, particularly boys of average to lower ability. This limits their access to courses in which they will experience success.



142. Pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship are successfully promoted in several subjects, including geography, science and technology. Issues are further developed in preparatory work towards gaining Eco-school status.
143. Participation in the 'Dynamo' project and visits to school from outside speakers broaden pupils' understanding of the workplace and the needs of employers.
144. However, the limited variety of teaching strategies, in a sizeable proportion of lessons, restricts the opportunities to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills.
145. Whilst the school successfully informs pupils of the knowledge, understanding and skills required for lifelong learning, it does not ensure that they are challenged and motivated to take responsibility for lifelong learning.

**Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?**

**Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas**

146. The school awarded itself a grade 1 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees because there are shortcomings in important areas in both the quality of care and guidance to learners as well as in the quality of provision for equal opportunities. These are:
  - insufficient pastoral care and support offered to individual pupils through the pastoral care system;
  - insufficient, constructive monitoring and mentoring of individual pupils' academic achievement across the school, and insufficient support for further improvement;
  - lack of impact, in practice, of the detailed monitoring and analysis of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, together with inconsistent application of behaviour management strategies; and
  - legal requirements not met with regard to reported incidents of racial harassment.
147. Despite these important shortcomings, there is one outstanding feature. This is the SSRB, which provides a safe and secure environment for a number of pupils with complex and severe needs. Attendance levels of 96% highlight the motivation of these pupils. The high quality of teaching and sensitive support provided for pupils allow for positive engagement and planned opportunities to improve their educational attainment. Good standards of behaviour have a positive impact on achievement as well as on personal and social development. The KS4 curriculum in the SSRB has been well planned to provide maximum benefit for Y11 pupils, and they all take part in a successful work-experience placement. Self-help and life-skills are an important aspect in their education. All pupils benefit from a wide range of planned extra-curricular activities that enhance their wider-community experiences. Pupils make very