



Dear parent/carer

As you will be aware, Whitchurch High School was inspected during the week beginning the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, with a core team of ten inspectors carrying out a range of activities including lesson observations, work reviews, scrutiny of documents and meetings with students, parents, governors, teachers, support staff and leaders.

Our full inspection report has been published today along with a parents and carers inspection report. Both can be accessed through the following link <http://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6815403>. We are pleased that the report captured many aspects of the positive work going on within our school community and that the inspection team highlighted clear confidence in our direction of travel, moving forward with implementation of the new curriculum for Wales. The following extracts provide a flavour of their findings from the overview section of the report:

*'Whitchurch High School is a caring and inclusive community where pupils feel safe, and staff feel valued. Although a large school, staff regard pupils as individuals. The school tailors its care, support and guidance effectively and provides a wide range of courses and pathways that meet the needs of nearly all. Support for pupils' wellbeing and the provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) are significant strengths. Pupils who attend the local authority specialist base, Ty Calon, enjoy school, make strong progress and achieve well.'*

*'The recently appointed headteacher, and his senior leadership team are leading the school purposefully through a period of change. While retaining the well-established good practice in many areas of the school's work, senior leaders are enhancing and developing structures and processes to ensure that the curriculum and teaching meets the needs and ambitions of pupils.'*

We were particularly pleased with how well the care, support and guidance that we have in place came through, along with our focus on well-being, as highlighted in the extracts below:

*'Underpinned by a warm and caring ethos, Whitchurch High School provides a high level of care, support and guidance for its pupils and staff.'*

*'The school fosters an inclusive ethos based on positive relationships and respect. All members of the school community take pride in the part they play in the life of the school.'*

*'The school provides comprehensive support for all pupils' emotional, physical, and mental health needs and well-being. The support provided for the well-being of vulnerable pupils is a particular strength.'*

*'All pupils are provided with comprehensive support and guidance to make informed decisions on their future studies and pathways, supported by school staff, local employers and academic institutions. The support and opportunities they provide for sixth form pupils who are applying for their next steps in education, employment and training is a notable strength.'*

*'Pupils' views are canvassed widely and as a result, pupils have a positive impact on aspects of the support and guidance offered by the school, such as identifying pertinent topics to explore within the well-being programme. This ensures that students benefit from learning about topics most relevant to their age group and those causing them most concern.'*

Estyn were also supportive of our ongoing plans, working with the Local Authority to improve site security and traffic management across our split site school and have included the following recommendation:

*'Continue to work with the Local Authority to address the health and safety concerns discussed during the inspection week.'*

We are eager to work with the Local Authority across both sites to improve the separation between traffic and pedestrians, to create secure access points during the school day and to reduce the number of occasions that our upper school students need to commute to the lower school site. Our plans, which were shared with Estyn would achieve all of these aims, however significant investment is required across both sites. Support from Estyn will extend to them reviewing the progress that we make in partnership with the Local Authority over the next twelve months.

A copy of our outline plans to address these health and safety concerns can be viewed in the following document linked to our school improvement plan which was published at the start of the academic year: [https://www.whitchurchhs.wales/Governors/Reports/SIP\\_2023\\_2024\\_Priority6.pdf](https://www.whitchurchhs.wales/Governors/Reports/SIP_2023_2024_Priority6.pdf)

The document also outlines actions that have already been taken. Through dialogue with the Local Authority, it is hoped that we can agree clear timelines for the work to be completed. This information will be added as and when it becomes available, following confirmation of the required investment.

We are pleased that all of Estyn's recommendations are consistent with our own priorities and ongoing work as highlighted in our school improvement plan:

[https://www.whitchurchhs.wales/Governors/Reports/SIP\\_2023-2024.xlsx](https://www.whitchurchhs.wales/Governors/Reports/SIP_2023-2024.xlsx)

I would like to take this opportunity to commend our dedicated staff body who work with passion and care every day to provide the best possible opportunities for our students. My sincere thanks to our students for everything that they bring to this school and to you as parents/carers for your ongoing support. Thank you also to our governing body for their outstanding contribution to our school and its community.

If you have any questions after reading the report, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Yours faithfully



Nick John  
Headteacher