

An evaluation of Estyn Inspections across Carmarthenshire Schools, Pupil Referral Units and Specialist Settings



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In the two years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, 44 Carmarthenshire schools were inspected-

- 39 primary schools,
- 3 secondary schools,
- 1 special setting
- and the local authority pupil referral unit.

Standards and Leadership were judged good or better in the majority of schools. A minority of schools were in need of improvement and were placed in a follow-up category. Many of the schools inspected in this period were judged good or excellent for wellbeing and attitudes to learning and care support and guidance. This is a notable feature.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the suspension of inspections of schools and Estyn re-started their inspection schedule in March 2022. However, Estyn throughout the pandemic period undertook engagement visits and thematic reviews with schools.

Since March 2022 there is a new inspection framework and Estyn no longer provide summative judgments for individual inspection areas. Inspectors can still place a school into Estyn Review if they judge that the school would benefit from a short period of time to improve a few aspects of their work. The two statutory categories of follow-up remain unchanged. This is where schools need significant improvement or require special measures.

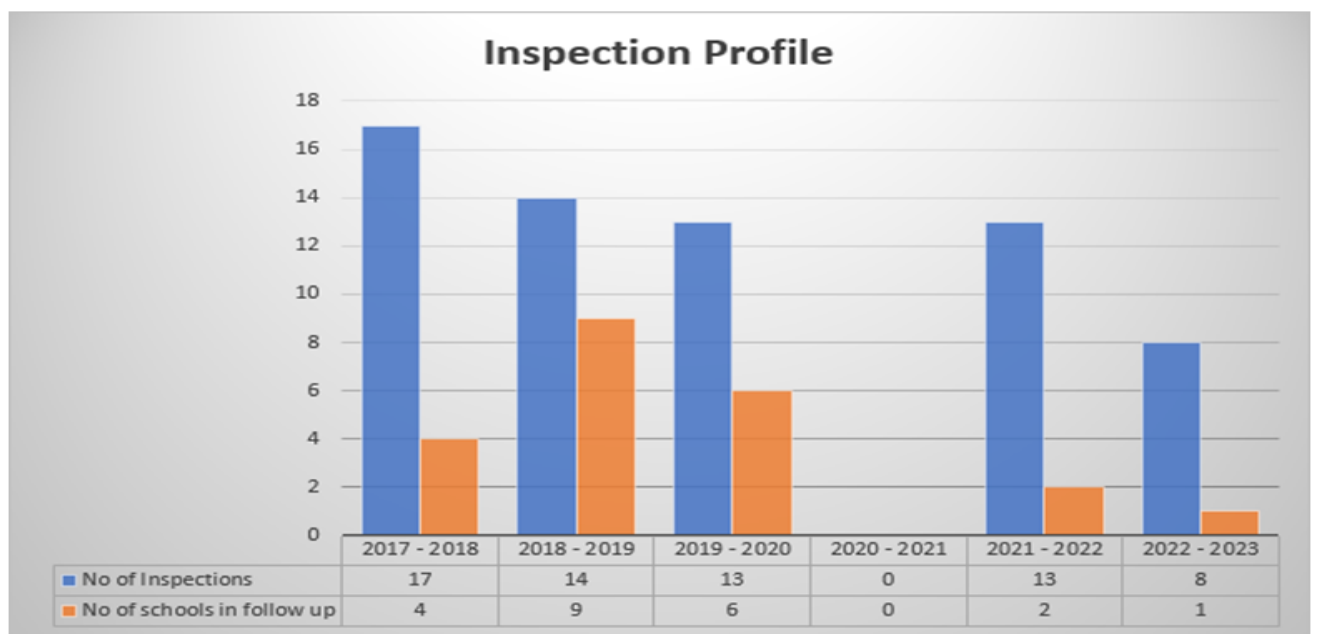
When inspectors identify particularly strong or effective practice, the school is invited to produce a written case study to share with other providers on Estyn's website. Since September 2017, the following Carmarthenshire schools have been invited to prepare a good practice case study for dissemination on the Estyn website.

Year	School	Case Study
2017-18	Llangynnwr	Wellbeing: Intervention programs for pupil wellbeing
2017-18	Ysgol Feithrin Rhydaman	Developing children's early leadership roles
2017-18	Pembrey	Teaching & Learning experiences: developing pupils' independent learning skills
2017-18	Johnstown	Standards: Developing ICT skills across the curriculum
2017-18	Brynsierfel	Teaching & Learning experiences: Provide effective opportunities for pupils to relax their bodies and minds at the beginning of sessions so that they are ready to learn
2017-18	Beca	Curriculum: effect of a creative and practical curriculum on pupils' standards and independence

2018-19	Strade	Wellbeing: supporting pupils emotional wellbeing https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/improving-pupils-emotional-wellbeing
2019-20	Penrhos	Wellbeing: Staff at Ysgol Penrhos Primary School have been trained to support pupils facing challenging social issues within the school's catchment area. https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/developing-additional-expertise-within-school-support-pupils-wellbeing
2019-20	Penygroes	Independent Skills: a case study on the school's work in relation to success in developing pupils' independent learning skills.
2019-20	Ysgol Y Model	Teaching and Learning: work in relation to the impact of the foundation phase pedagogy in key stage 2
2019-20	Dyffryn Aman	Wellbeing: wellbeing and improving pupils' resilience https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/support-wellbeing-during-transition-primary-secondary
2021-22	Bro Myrddin	Case Study 1: How pupils influence aspects of school life https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/opportunities-are-available-pupils-influence-aspects-school Case Study 2: Promoting strong Welsh culture. https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/promoting-strong-welsh-culture
2021-22	Brynteg	Wellbeing: how the school is supporting pupils and parents' mental health. https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/supporting-mental-health-school-community
2022-23	Gwenllian	Curriculum: the school's work in relation to developing the Curriculum for Wales. Fostering pupils' pride in the Welsh language and deepening their local knowledge https://www.estyn.gov.wales/effective-practice/fostering-pupils-pride-welsh-language-and-deepening-their-knowledge-local

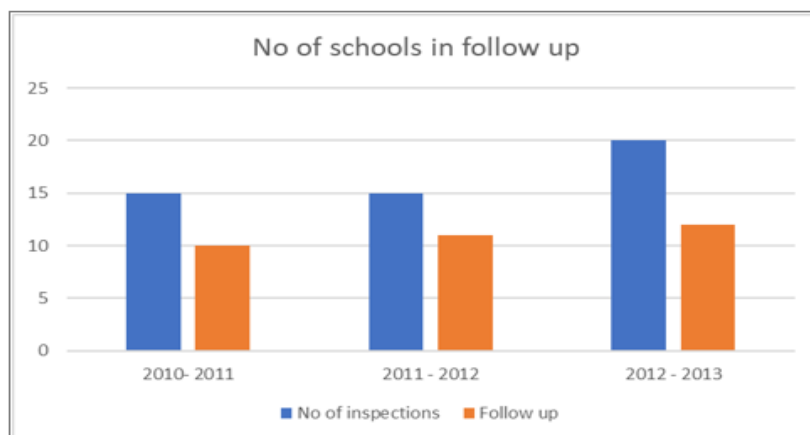
Overview of Estyn Outcomes 2017 – 2023

Academic Year	Number of schools inspected	No Follow up	Estyn Review	Significant Improvement	Special Measures
2017-18	17	13	3	1	
2018-19	14	5	6		3
2019-20	13	7	6		
2020-21 (Covid)	No Inspections	—	—	—	—
2021-22 Inspections Re-start New framework	13	11		1	1
2022-23	8	7	1		



When the Local Authority were last inspected in **March 2012**, we had the following recommendation to address: **R1 ensure that the proportion of schools requiring follow-up activity as a result of inspection is reduced.**

The number of schools in follow up in 2012 are noted in the graph below.



SUMMARY OF ESTYN OUTCOMES Post Pandemic March 2022 (based on published reports)

OUTCOMES	Number of schools Inspected (March 2022 – February 2023)
No follow up	18 schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Secondary schools 16 Primaries including 2 Federations (4 schools in total)
Estyn review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Primary
Significant Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Secondary
Special Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Primary

Since Estyn have started to inspect schools post Covid in March 2022, many of our schools have had no follow up with a very few in a category. In nearly all case there is close alignment between Estyn outcomes and the departments understanding of schools strengths and areas of improvement.

The below 5 schools were inspected March 2023 - April 2023 but their reports are not yet published-

- Coedcae
- Mynydd y Garreg
- Penygaer
- Pontyberem
- Llangadog

How do we support our schools, referral units and settings?

Estyn outcomes influence our improvement strategies, our ways of working and Professional Learning support programme. For example, we have a rigorous focus on improving quality of challenge in learning and in ensuring that effective feedback moves the learning on.

Improvement strategies are routinely addressed in the Strategic Focus Groups for Teaching and Learning, Leadership, Wellbeing Inclusion, Cymraeg, Sustainability and the Department business planning.

The School Improvement Strategy is robust and aligns well with the support required in our schools, overtime.

The department supports the school community before, during and post inspection. All schools receive support depending on their individual needs and most schools produce good outcomes.

Since March 2022 the following areas have been identified by Estyn as recommendations for our schools:

Inspection Area (IA)	Recommendations
IA1 Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Writing and Reading in both languages. • Improve standards in Welsh Oracy and Cymraeg Ail Iaith • Improve application of numeracy and problem solving
IA2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop pupils Independence
1A3 Teaching and learning experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve teaching so that it makes a consistent impact on pupils' learning. • Ensure that teaching provides enough opportunities for pupils to make choices more independently across the school. • Improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment. • Improve the curriculum and provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills. • Expand opportunities for pupils to practice and apply their basic and creative skills both inside and outside the classroom. • Expand opportunities to pupils to make decisions in relation to their learning. • Provide regular opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum.
1A4 Care support and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Safety (2) • Safeguarding (1) • Attendance- strengthen provision to reduce persistent absence (1) • Additional Learning Needs - recently adopted practice needs to be embedded (1)
1A5 Leadership and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation processes: Strengthen leaders' ability to evaluate the quality of provision according to its effect. • Strengthen the leadership of, and provision for, the progressive development of pupils' skills. • Roles and responsibilities to be clearly defined. • Ensure consistency and stability in leadership

The Professional Learning offer and sharing events coupled with tailored school support are key in driving forward improvements. Estyn recommendations and cases studies are routinely used to inform the support provided to our School, thus minimising the number of schools requiring follow up.

April 2023