

COUNCIL: 25 JANUARY 2024

DEPUTY LEADER & EDUCATION STATEMENT

Estyn Inspections

The following five Cardiff schools have been inspected by Estyn and had their inspection reports published between September and December 2023, with none of them requiring any form of follow-up and four of the schools being identified to produce “Interesting or Innovative Practice Case Studies” following their inspections:

- [Rhiwbeina Primary School](#)
- [Llanishen High School](#)
- [Severn Primary School](#)
- [Mary Immaculate R.C. High School](#)
- [Trelai Primary School](#)

A further four schools were inspected by Estyn during this period and are currently awaiting publication of their reports: St Mary’s R.C. Primary School, Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, Whitchurch High School and Gabalfa Primary School. In addition, Ely and Caerau Integrated Children’s Centre has been inspected using pilot arrangements for the new framework to be used from September 2024 onwards.

Of the eight schools which were engaged in follow-up activity from the 2022/23 inspections, three have been removed during the autumn term 2023 – St Francis RC Primary School and Thornhill Primary School have been removed from Estyn Review, and Llanedeyrn Primary School from Significant Improvement. The remaining five schools are due to have their progress reviewed by Estyn later this year – Eastern High School, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr and The Pear Tree Federation (Tongwynlais Primary School and Coryton Primary School) are in Estyn Review and Pentrebane Primary School is in Special Measures.

Universal Free School Meals

Universal Free School Meals were rolled out to pupils in Year 4 from December in addition to pupils in Reception and Years 1, 2 and 3. We are now moving into the next phase, which is the roll-out to Years 5 and 6. This is expected to be in place after Easter.

Little Gigs Programme

The Council is encouraging young people to embrace music in line with the Welsh Government's National Plan for Music Education, and the Little Gigs programme provides pupils from Cardiff schools with the opportunity to develop their own unique musical talents and contribute to the city's vibrant music scene. In line with the Cardiff Music City Strategy, the Little Gigs programme also brings music and musicians right into the heart of schools.

I was pleased to join the Cabinet Member for Culture, Parks & Events in attending the official launch of the Little Gigs programme on 17 January at Llanishen High School. The event included performances by Chroma and Maditronique who each performed short sets in front of more than 100 pupils who had expressed an interest in learning more about the music business, including being part of a band, writing for the music press or becoming behind-the-scenes sound and lighting technicians.

Prior to this week's official launch event, Little Gigs have taken place in six high schools in Cardiff during the current academic year (Willows High School, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, Ysgol Plasmawr, Cardiff West Community High School, and Ty Gwyn and Woodlands Special Schools) and over 1,200 pupils from Years 8-11 have been introduced to acts from the Cardiff music scene, including Wonderbrass, The Successors of the Mandingue and Maditronique. These live performances in schools aim to inspire young people to sign up to the Little Gigs programme of mentorships, training and support from industry partners. This will assist in developing and providing a pipeline of future musical talent, which will ensure that Cardiff's music sector continues to thrive in the future.

Film-making Project

Pupils at St Mary the Virgin Church in Wales Primary School have been collaborating with the Council's Curriculum Team to develop their film-making skills. With support from partners at Buffoon Media and the Arts Council of Wales Explore Fund, Year 3 pupils had incredible hands-on production experience, as they produced their own film on what the city of Cardiff has to offer young people from all backgrounds and communities. Just before Christmas, these pupils and their families were invited to the BBC Roath Lock Drama Village in Cardiff Bay to watch the premiere of their movie. The pupils were then able to tour the studios and gain an understanding of the career opportunities available to them within the creative arts in Cardiff.

Dance Skills Development

The Curriculum Team has been working with Cardiff Metropolitan University and National Dance Company Wales to look at the progression of dance skills and how this fits into a school's curriculum. Twelve schools are involved with the project and will work with partners to offer workshops for pupils, as well as professional development for teachers.

Girls To Golf

The Curriculum Team is collaborating with Wales Golf to offer a programme to pupils, which will enable girls to recognise, articulate and regulate their own emotions in order to safeguard their own emotional health and well-being and to be able to support others with theirs. This programme helps to develop effective communication as a powerful tool to influence others and build healthy relationships.

Cardiff Commitment

The first Specialist Settings Business Forum of the academic year was held in November 2023 and was attended by seven specialist settings and a number of partners. This group has seen teachers creating strong partnerships with employers to enable them to work together to provide targeted approaches in delivering careers and work-related experiences, breaking down sector perceptions and raising awareness of opportunities available for young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN). The group received presentations on work being undertaken by the Council to develop supported internships for pupils with autism, including more supported internships across school kitchens and an opportunity to extend the Dementia Champions project across further settings.

In November, the Cardiff Commitment Team also hosted their first monthly workshop to support contractors and contract managers shape and deliver on existing social value commitments. A website has also been developed to help direct businesses to projects aligned with relevant TOMs (Themes, Outcomes, Measures) to ensure that social value delivery has the impact and desired outcomes for children and young people in the city. Further social value work has seen Horan Construction support Ysgol Gymraeg Pen-Y-Groes to develop a new football pitch and sports area to ensure pupils can enjoy a good outdoor environment and experience all the benefits associated with outdoor activity and play. In addition, through a volunteer day, ISG cleared a space for a micro-greens growing project at Ysgol Glantaf Specialist Resource Base and supported pupils to gain hands-on experience within the construction sector.

In December 2023, 50 partners responded to a “call to action” to provide opportunities for Children Looked After in Cardiff. This was in response to the success of our partnership with John Lewis, which saw four young people participate in work experience placements and led to three of them now being employed by the organisation and one returning to college. The Cardiff Commitment is building on the success of this model and, during the current spring term, a pilot project will see four Children Looked After from Eastern High School participate in scaled insight days and a three-day work experience placement, which will lead to a 12-week supported internship with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board. The Cardiff Commitment Team also met the Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething MS, to share the success of the supported internship model for pupils with ALN and to highlight the programme’s excellent outcomes and cost effectiveness. The Programme Manager has commissioned the Inclusive Growth Network to demonstrate both the short-term gains of this model and the long-term cost savings across Education and Social Services of supporting young people with ALN into employment through detailed economic and financial forecasting.

'Tech We Can' was also launched in December at Trelai Primary School. This project looks to engage the pupils from Year 1 to Year 5 in technology lessons delivered by partners such as PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the NDEC (National Data Exploitation Centre). The autumn term saw pupils from Years 1 and 2 learning about technology which helps people – from rockets to slime robots – and gave the pupils the opportunity to design their own robots which could help people.

TeenTech Festival

The first in-person TeenTech Festival took place in Cardiff on 7 December 2023, which followed a related live online event that took place on 21 November. Supported by AWS, Cardiff University and Network Rail, the events were enjoyed by more than 700 pupils from 12 different primary and secondary schools – Ysgol Gymraeg Coed Y Gof, Allensbank Primary School, St Joseph's RC Primary School, Ysgol Gymraeg Pwll Coch, Gladstone Primary School, Thornhill Primary School, Birchgrove Primary School, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Cathays High School, Llanishen High School, Mary Immaculate High School, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf. Pupils were able to engage with activities organised by organisations such as South Wales Police, BBC Wales, Admiral, CSA Catapult, Airbus, Stable, Arup, and The Urbanists, helping the pupils understand the range of opportunities across the world of digital, science and technology.

Councillor Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Education
19 January 2024