



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: Significant Improvement**

**Caereinion High School  
Llanfair Caereinion  
Welshpool  
Powys  
SY21 0HW**

**Date of visit: May 2018**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and  
Training in Wales**

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Uwchradd Caereinion is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4 and reduce the gap between the performance of girls and boys**

Overall, pupils make strong progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in many areas of the curriculum. They recall prior learning well and apply this successfully to new contexts.

Many pupils listen with attention and respect to their teacher and peers. They contribute clearly and confidently to class discussions, making effective use of subject specific vocabulary. A few pupils do this very well. For example, when studying 'Romeo and Juliet' in English, they maturely and articulately compare the relationships between Juliet, Lady Capulet and the nurse. However, a few pupils provide brief, underdeveloped verbal responses to teachers' questions.

Many pupils read well and are confident in skimming and scanning a range of texts to extract useful information. For example, in history, pupils successfully locate and evaluate information from a range of sources when investigating the death of the Tollund man.

Overall, many pupils write with appropriate technical accuracy in both Welsh and English. They produce well-structured extended writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences. For example, in Welsh, pupils successfully use a range of writing styles when expressing their opinion on the flooding of the Tryweryn valley. However, a few pupils do not structure their extended writing effectively enough. These pupils make repeated errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Many pupils demonstrate suitable numeracy skills. They present data accurately in graphs. For example, in geography pupils draw a graph to show the increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere over time and successfully interpret their findings. However, their numeracy skills are not as well developed as their literacy skills. Many pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to present their work appropriately.

Since the core inspection, pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4 has improved overall, and is now above that of similar schools in most indicators.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics, and the capped points score has increased for the last two years, and in 2017 was in line with that of similar schools.

The performance of pupils in the indicator that includes five GCSE grades at A\* to A or equivalent declined in 2015 and again in 2016. In 2017, performance in this indicator increased significantly, and is now above that of similar schools.

Girls' performance in the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics has generally been in line with that of girls in similar schools for the last four years. Over the same period, the performance of boys has improved and now compares well with that of boys in similar schools.

Overall, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is in line with the performance of their counterparts in similar schools.

## **R2. Improve attendance**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a range of beneficial strategies to improve pupils' attendance. These include suitable rewards systems to encourage good attendance and the involvement of parents when pupils' attendance falls below target levels.

Overall, these strategies have led to improvements in attendance since the time of the core inspection. In 2015 and 2016, the school's attendance compared favourably with that of similar schools. Attendance decreased in 2017 but remains in line with that of similar schools.

Since the core inspection, there has been a sustained improvement in the attendance of girls and it is now in line with that of girls in similar schools. In three of the last four years, the attendance of boys and of pupils eligible for free school meals compares favourably with that in similar schools.

The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased since the core inspection, although in 2017 it was still slightly higher than levels in similar schools.

Unverified attendance and persistent absence data for the current academic year shows that there have been improvements from 2017 levels in both rates of attendance and persistent absence.

## **R3. Improve the quality of teaching, assessment and the tracking of pupils' performance**

Since the time of the core inspection, senior leaders have implemented a suitable range of measures to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and assessment across the school. These include useful initiatives to share good practice in teaching

between teachers and to support valuable teaching and assessment development work. As a result of these initiatives, the quality of teaching and assessment has improved since the time of the core inspection.

Most teachers have productive working relationship with pupils. Many are enthusiastic for their subjects and deliver engaging lessons. They have suitably high expectations of what pupils should achieve.

Many teachers provide pupils with a series of worthwhile activities that build successfully on prior learning, including beneficial opportunities to write at length. However, in a minority of instances, teachers do not plan well enough to maintain the engagement of all pupils and to challenge pupils of all abilities.

In lessons, many teachers monitor pupil progress effectively. They provide useful verbal feedback and questions that support pupils to develop their understanding.

Many teachers provide valuable written feedback to pupils, helping them to understand how to improve their work. These teachers ensure that pupils engage well with follow-up tasks to develop specific aspects of their work. Many teachers identify and address spelling and grammatical errors within pupils' work appropriately.

Leaders have implemented thorough systems for tracking pupil progress across the curriculum. They use assessment information well to measure progress against targets and identify groups of pupils at risk of underachieving. This enables the school to implement suitable support measures to address potential underperformance in a timely manner.

#### **R4. Improve the consistency of self-evaluation across the school and ensure that improvement planning includes clear and measurable outcomes**

Since the core inspection in 2013, the school has developed suitably its arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning to ensure consistency of approach and better quality. Leaders now have a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses in standards, provision and leadership and have been able to address shortcomings appropriately. In particular, this has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and outcomes at the end of key stage 4.

The calendar for self-evaluation activities sets dates that allow the school to evaluate aspects of its work at appropriate times throughout the year. Senior leaders have developed well their use of first-hand evidence such as lesson observations and monitoring of pupils' work to support self-evaluation and improvement planning. The school considers and acts upon the views of pupils and parents when appropriate but it is only beginning to formalise arrangements to capture their views.

Most middle leaders have a secure understanding of the main strengths and areas for development within their area of responsibility. Nearly all middle leaders use data well to compare the performance of their department with that of similar schools. A few middle leaders do not identify or use evidence from book scrutiny and lesson observations well enough to identify areas in need of improvement in important aspects such as pupils' progress and standards.

The school development plan sets out generally suitable actions to address all recommendations from the core inspection. It includes relevant details such as responsibilities and resources, dates for completion and monitoring arrangements. Targets are suitably ambitious and appropriately challenging.

Departmental development plans are consistent in format and most plans include measurable and appropriate targets. They include suitable priorities such as improving the quality of teaching. However, the actions to achieve these are often not detailed enough and the success criteria in most plans are too vague.

#### **R5. Strengthen leadership at all levels to provide greater rigour and secure improvements in standards.**

Since the core inspection, there have been significant changes in senior leadership. The senior leadership team work together efficiently to ensure improvements in key aspects of the school's work.

Responsibilities of the senior leadership team have been revised to align more closely with the school's priorities for improvement. The school has strengthened lines of accountability through effective line management arrangements. In link meetings, leaders focus suitably upon pupil progress and generate appropriate action points. In general, leaders follow up these action points suitably. Senior leaders identify and challenge underperformance competently. These developments have led to improvements in important areas such as attendance and many of the performance indicators at key stage 4.

The school has provided middle leaders with appropriate guidance and training on how to fulfil their roles. This has led to greater rigour in the work of middle leaders and more consistency in their effectiveness. They use regular departmental meetings to focus suitably on individual pupil progress, and many identify appropriate improvement actions for teachers to implement and monitor.

Governors are committed fully to supporting the school and understand their roles well. They have useful links with specific departments and an appropriate awareness of the main strengths and areas for improvement.

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