



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: Special measures

**Pentip V.A. C.I.W. Primary School
Pembrey Road
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA15 3BL**

Date of visit: July 2022

by

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

Outcome of visit

Pentip Voluntary Aided Church in Wales Primary School 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 special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve teaching by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve

The school's planning process now ensures that teachers plan work that matches pupils' abilities and builds appropriately on previous skills that they have developed. The system of challenges for pupils to develop their independent learning is embedded well in the school. Pupils are increasingly able to select an appropriate level of challenge and can generally justify their selection. Where pupils repeatedly select tasks that are at too low a level, teachers generally step in and encourage them to attempt work at a more appropriate level for their stage of development.

All teachers have been involved in monitoring the standard of pupils' work. This is helping teachers to consider progress across the school and to identify areas that still require improvement. For example, teachers worked collaboratively to evaluate and improve the learning environment to ensure that it promotes and improves pupils' independence. Feedback from teachers has a positive impact on moving pupils' learning forward.

A focus of teachers' work has been improving their questioning techniques and getting pupils to use a wider range of questions in their learning. This has ensured that teachers challenge pupils' thinking through their questioning. Pupils are now using a wider range of questions to help them to develop a deeper understanding of concepts. Teachers use questioning skillfully to clarify pupils' understanding and to ensure that they make progress in their learning.

The whole school reward system promotes high expectations of all pupils. Teachers use the reward system well to promote desirable characteristics in pupils' learning, such as resilience and perseverance. Pupils understand teachers' expectations of them in terms of their attitudes to their work and their behaviour towards others. Pupils are eager to gain rewards for high performance.

R2. Raise pupils' standards in writing and numeracy across the curriculum and Welsh oracy

The focus on improving standards of pupils' writing and numeracy across the curriculum has been successful and there is now greater emphasis on providing authentic contexts for pupils' learning. The system to support staff to plan

opportunities for pupils' skill development is used consistently across the school. This helps staff to track the teaching of skills across the curriculum effectively.

Staff use a phonics programme to support the development of younger pupils' early literacy skills well. Through focused tasks and targeted support, staff develop pupils' writing skills effectively. For example, many pupils create their own imaginative stories by adapting a well known tale. They use adventurous vocabulary choices and extend their sentences well. Teachers provide suitable contexts and opportunities for pupils to practise their skills independently, such as when pupils write a poem about using their senses at the beach. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for older pupils to write in a variety of genres. The quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum is of a good standard and they now write independently, at length and with a wide range of topic specific vocabulary.

Teachers plan engaging opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. This enables many pupils to improve their numeracy skills in real-life contexts. For example, reception pupils carry out a shape walk in the school grounds and record, on a graph, how many circles, squares, triangles and rectangles they can find. Pupils show increasing confidence and skills in applying what they have learnt in their mathematics lessons as they move through the school. For instance, pupils in Years 4 and 5 use addition and subtraction skills well when calculating the maximum mass allowed on theme park rides, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 use ratio and percentage accurately when creating classification drawings of icebergs to scale. They explain their methods of calculation well and articulate their strategy for drawing to scale successfully.

Staff and governors identified that standards of pupils' Welsh communication skills regressed as an impact of the pandemic. Staff plan opportunities to develop pupils' communication skills in Welsh progressively across the school and timetable daily sessions for pupils to practise their skills. Younger pupils understand instructions and simple sentences. They use a range of language patterns and develop new vocabulary well. For example, they use prepositions to describe the position of a marble in relation to a bucket. Many older pupils use an extended range of Welsh language patterns well. For example, they hold a simple conversation with adults and their peers, explaining who they are, their family members and their likes and dislikes. They are beginning to use a range of tenses appropriately.

R3. Provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop as independent, resilient learners, particularly in the foundation phase

Since the core inspection, staff have improved the quality of the provision for younger pupils to promote pupils' independence and to develop a more active and experiential style to learning. They have adapted classrooms extensively to provide a purposeful indoor learning environment where pupils can use equipment and activities to develop their skills independently. The small outdoor space, that is directly accessible from classrooms, has been developed into an inviting and stimulating area that promotes pupils' independent learning skills well. Teachers plan challenges at different levels thoughtfully, and pupils make sensible choices about what they do, without adult input.

Adults work very well as facilitators of learning. They have developed their practice successfully over the past few terms to ensure that there is an effective balance between child-led and adult-led activities. They know when to stand back, when to question and when to intervene to take pupils' learning forward. These improvements have made a significant difference to pupils' levels of independence.

Across the school pupils take responsibility for their learning. They use the 5Bs (brain, board, book, buddy, boss) system to find solutions when they get stuck with their work. Nearly all pupils have a firm understanding of this, and older pupils use it without prompting to help them to complete more challenging work. Older pupils use a learning toolkit independently to generate ideas for their work, for example to find more imaginative vocabulary choices. Through the use of a reward system, teachers encourage pupils to develop a more resilient approach to problem solving and to persevere when solutions do not come quickly. Over time, this has developed consistently throughout the school.

R4. Develop leadership capacity at all levels

In September 2021, there were significant changes to the school's leadership team. This included the appointment of an executive headteacher as part of a partnership agreement with another local school. In addition, a senior leader from the partner school moved to Pentip VA CIW School as assistant headteacher and to lead key stage 2. He acts as the teacher in charge when the executive headteacher is not on site. The senior leadership team now consists of the executive headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the foundation phase leader. This arrangement provides leadership stability for the school. The new team has improved communication and introduced systems to promote consistency. Leaders now involve all staff in self-evaluation activities and decision making. As a result, staff feel valued and listened to and there is a strong team ethos in the school.

To help develop leadership at all levels, the executive headteacher undertook a leadership review to identify the strengths of individual members of staff. Based on his findings, he reorganised leadership responsibilities to better support the school on its improvement journey. Phase leaders have received suitable leadership training to support them in their roles. In addition, they receive beneficial leadership guidance from the experienced executive headteacher and the local authority. The school's recent work on developing leaders' understanding of Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act has been effective. In particular, leaders have worked collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a vision for the curriculum that reflects the school's context well.

Leaders use performance management appropriately to agree objectives for all teachers, and they are beginning to ensure that objectives are measurable and that phase leaders have an objective linked to developing their leadership capacity. Leaders have developed helpful links between the two partnership schools. This has included opportunities for staff to plan together and share good practice as part of a larger group of staff.

The school is developing the leadership skills of its pupils well. Recently, pupils have played an important role in developing the school's vision for the Curriculum for Wales.

The governing body has established a core team of governors who focus on monitoring school improvement. Governors have resumed visits to the school, as COVID-19 restrictions have eased, to gain first-hand information and a better understanding of the school's progress against its priorities. Individual governors use their skills well to support the school, for example to improve pupils' Welsh communication and reading. Governors have improved their ability to challenge leaders. They ask appropriate questions of school leaders in relation to school improvement. Governors are now acting as more effective critical friends of the school.

R5. Improve the effectiveness of monitoring and self-evaluation processes and planning for improvement

Since the core inspection, leaders have revisited the post inspection action plan at regular intervals to reflect on their progress towards targets and to agree the next areas for improvement. They are now addressing wider priorities based on their self-evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development.

There is an annual programme of appropriate self-evaluation activities. Staff use these activities purposefully to identify strengths and areas to improve. Monitoring includes talking to pupils, lesson observations, and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Staff agree the focus of any monitoring in advance of each activity and are often involved in this work alongside governors. For example, staff and governors have visited classrooms to consider how learning environments can best support pupils' learning.

When considering pupils' work, leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of the work and progression across the school. Through this work, leaders identify strengths and areas to improve, which they share appropriately with other members of staff. They usefully identify where there are gaps in pupils' learning and ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop new skills. They also use these monitoring activities to highlight good practice within the school. For example, through their focus on assessing the quality of teachers' questions, leaders identified good practice in Years 5 and 6 and shared this with other members of staff. This has had a positive impact on the quality of questioning across the school.

Members of the governing body are included in the self-evaluation process appropriately. Following monitoring activities, those governors involved share their findings with the rest of the governing body. This ensures that governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and helps them to provide a suitable level of challenge and support.

R6. Improve procedures for assessing and tracking the progress of all pupils, notably of groups of vulnerable pupils

The school has reviewed its systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress to prepare for the introduction of Curriculum for Wales. Teachers have considered what information will be most useful to them to identify areas where pupils excel and where they need further support. They have clear plans to develop their systems further to focus on key elements of pupils' learning.

There are effective processes to record on-going pupil assessments and to note additional contextual information. This helps teachers to build a comprehensive picture about each pupil. The school uses the system effectively to analyse the achievement and progress of individuals and groups of pupils including the most vulnerable. This helps staff to identify pupils at risk of underperformance and to target additional support appropriately.

R7. Improve pupils' attendance

Monitoring pupils' attendance has a high priority at the school. The assistant headteacher monitors pupils' attendance and meets with the local authority education welfare officer regularly to discuss pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and to devise suitable intervention strategies.

The school has effective systems to engage with families when no reason for absence is provided or when a pupil's level of attendance falls below acceptable levels. Pupils' attendance is improving slowly, but has still not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

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