



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: Estyn monitoring**

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

Date of visit: December 2016

by

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

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The monitoring team

Lowri Jones	Reporting Inspector
Heledd Thomas	Team Inspector
Yan James	Local authority representative

Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Uwchradd Caereinion is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2013.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve standards at key stage 4 and reduce the gap between the performance of girls and boys

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2013, the school's performance in nearly all key indicators at key stage 4 has fluctuated and overall progress has been limited. Despite small improvements since 2013, the school's performance has placed it in the bottom 25% of similar schools in terms of eligibility for free school meals for many key indicators for the past four years. Data for 2016 continues to place the school in the bottom 25% or the lower 50% of similar schools for many key indicators.

The school's performance in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics improved slightly in 2016 but remains below modelled outcomes and places it in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the second consecutive year. Performance in the core subject indicator follows a similar pattern.

Data for 2016 indicates that there has been only marginal improvement in the capped points score. The school's performance in this indicator has been below modelled outcomes and has placed it in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the past four years.

Performance in the level 2 threshold places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the fourth successive year.

The school's performance in the level 1 threshold has improved since the core inspection and 2016 is the first year for all pupils to attain this threshold.

Since 2013, there has been a decline in the proportion of pupils gaining five A* - A GCSE grades at key stage 4. The school's performance in this indicator has been well below the average for the family of similar schools in recent years and is generally weak.

Performance in English improved significantly in 2016. This is the best performance in the school's history and places the school in the top 25% of similar schools. Performance in Welsh first language declined significantly in 2016. This performance places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools, having placed it in the top 25% for the previous three years.

Performance in mathematics improved in 2016. However, this performance continues to place the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. The school's performance in science has remained static since the time of the core inspection and continues to place the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools.

The performance of boys in nearly all key indicators at key stage 4 has improved significantly from a low base at the time of the core inspection. However, the performance of girls in many of these key indicators has declined significantly during that time. Therefore, whilst improvement in boys' performance has led to a reduction in the gap between the performance of girls and boys, this is also attributable to the decline in girls' performance.

According to data for 2016, boys have performed better than girls in the school and in line with or better than boys in the family of similar schools in the majority of indicators. However, the performance of girls in the majority of indicators is well below the average for girls in the family of schools.

The performance of boys in the level 2 indicator including English or Welsh and mathematics has increased by over 22 percentage points since the core inspection. This performance is above the average for boys in the family of schools in 2016. However, the performance of girls in this indicator has fallen by nearly 20 percentage points since the core inspection and places the school well below the family average in 2016.

Recommendation 2: Improve attendance

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a beneficial whole-school approach to improving attendance. As a result, attendance rates have improved significantly.

In 2016, the attendance rate of 95.6% places the school in the top 25% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals. The school's performance has been slightly above modelled outcomes and the average for the family of schools for the past two years.

The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved since the core inspection, and is above the average for the family of similar schools in 2016. The

attendance of both boys and girls has also improved. However, whilst boys' attendance is now above the average for boys in the family, girls' attendance in 2016 is below the average for girls in the family and below that of boys in the school.

The percentage of pupils who are persistently absent increased in 2016, having reduced during the previous two years. This rate is well above the family average and was mainly due to persistent absenteeism amongst girls.

School data for the current academic year so far shows that the improvement in attendance rates has been sustained and the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced.

Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching, assessment and the tracking of pupils' performance

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, senior leaders have introduced improved systems and guidance for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. However, there have not been sufficient improvements in the quality of teaching, assessment and tracking of pupils' performance to impact on standards at key stage 4.

Many leaders undertake regular lesson observations and the lesson observation form has been revised to focus appropriately on pupil standards as well as teaching. However, in general, lesson observations do not evaluate pupil progress effectively enough and processes for assuring their quality are at an early stage.

The school has provided helpful training on effective assessment and all leaders undertake regular book scrutiny. As a result, most teachers now apply the school's assessment policy consistently. The majority of teachers provide pupils with worthwhile feedback and specific advice for improvement. In the best examples, teachers and pupils use success criteria effectively to frame their comments. In a minority of subjects, pupils respond constructively to teacher assessment. For example, they re-draft sections of their work beneficially. However, there is still too much variation in the quality of feedback both within and across departments.

The pupil tracking system provides leaders with a suitable overview of pupil progress over time. Leaders use this tracking data appropriately to monitor progress and identify pupils in need of additional support in individual subjects. However, leaders do not use this information well enough to gain a sufficiently clear and comprehensive view of pupil progress in the key performance indicators at key stage 4.

Recommendation 4: Improve the consistency of self-evaluation across the school and ensure that improvement planning includes clear and measurable outcomes

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since September 2015, the school's systems and processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning have been refined and, as a result, there is greater consistency in approach. However, these changes have not had enough impact on standards in important areas such as the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics and the proportion of pupils gaining 5 A*-A at GCSE.

Senior leaders have developed suitably their use of first-hand evidence from self-evaluation processes such as lesson observations and monitoring of pupils' work. However, the revised calendar for self-evaluation activities does not set clear dates and a few activities take place too late in the academic year.

The majority of middle leaders have a secure understanding of the main strengths and areas for development within their area of responsibility. Most departmental self-evaluation reports now compare their performance with that of similar schools suitably. However, a minority of middle leaders do not use evidence from book scrutiny and lesson observations well enough to inform their judgements and identify areas in need of improvement.

The school development plan is a lengthy document that sets out generally appropriate actions to address the school's priorities. It has been revised suitably to include details such as responsibilities and resources, dates for completion and monitoring arrangements. However, the development plan includes too many priorities and lacks measurable outcomes and targets.

The majority of departmental development plans include measurable and suitably challenging targets. However, a minority do not contain appropriate success criteria and actions are not specific enough to improve the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen leadership at all levels to provide greater rigour and secure improvements in standards.

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, the school experienced a period of instability at senior leadership level. Since the appointment of a new, permanent headteacher in September 2015 the leadership team has been more stable and the level of challenge to staff and pupils to improve standards and provision has increased.

Leaders at all levels have received valuable guidance and training on how to fulfil their roles. As a result, they now have a more secure understanding of their responsibilities. In addition, a more robust performance management system is now in place. These developments have led to improvements in important areas such as attendance and performance in English at key stage 4, but have not had enough impact on performance in other key indicators.

The headteacher and the senior team have strengthened the school's leadership systems and provided increased support and challenge to middle leaders. However, the balance of roles and responsibilities within the senior team is not currently equitable.

Meetings between senior leaders and their link departments follow a common format and, since September 2016, take place more regularly. As a result, leaders are now held to account for standards and progress within their areas of responsibility more effectively. Although the level of challenge in these meetings has increased, the extent and rigour of the challenge remain inconsistent.

Middle leaders have valuable opportunities to discuss standards through departmental meetings, and a majority use these well to focus suitably on individual pupil progress. However, the quality and frequency of departmental meeting minutes is variable and leaders do not always identify appropriate follow up actions that can be implemented and monitored.

The role of the governing body is developing well and it now holds senior and middle leaders to account more robustly.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.