



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**

**Casllwchwr Primary School
Castle Street
Loughor
Swansea
SA4 6TU**

Date of visit: November 2015

by

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

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The monitoring team

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Outcome of monitoring

Casllwchwr Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2014.

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

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Phase and raise standards

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has undertaken a detailed audit of the quality of provision in the Foundation Phase. It has used support from the local authority well to review its planning and to improve the quality of provision to meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase. As a result, there is now much better use of continuous and enhanced provision to support the learning of pupils in the Foundation Phase. The school has also introduced specific strategies to improve the quality of pupils' written work and the development of their mathematical skills. These are beginning to have a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils.

Most pupils make good progress in the development of their literacy skills. In Year 2, many pupils write in a range of forms, for example when explaining the life cycle of a caterpillar or writing a letter to a zookeeper on how to look after his lions. Nearly all pupils' spelling is appropriate for their age and ability. A majority of pupils use punctuation appropriately, but a minority do not always use capital letters and full stops correctly. Many pupils make sound progress in improving the quality of their handwriting, and the presentation of pupils' work has improved significantly.

Curriculum leaders have introduced a programme to build pupils' phonic skills as they move through the school. This has been effective in providing pupils with useful decoding skills. As a result, by Year 2, most pupils make good progress with their reading and have the skills they need to tackle unfamiliar words.

Most pupils develop their numeracy skills well. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils solve simple, real-life problems, for example when calculating how many boxes of grapes they can buy for an enterprise week. Most pupils estimate and weigh a variety of objects using standard measures. They use tally charts to record where different animals live and share money accurately between four children.

In many classes, teachers plan imaginative learning experiences for pupils that are effective in meeting planned learning objectives. Pupils direct their own learning well and assess their own progress appropriately. In all classes, pupils access the different learning areas in the classroom regularly and independently. Teachers plan appropriately for the use of outdoor areas as part of pupils' learning. However, pupils' independent use of these areas is still developing.

At the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils' performance in literacy and mathematical development at the expected and higher outcomes over the last four years has varied greatly when compared with levels in similar schools and there is no clear trend.

Recommendation 2: Improve progression in pupils' ability to write at length and to use their numeracy skills in their work in other subjects

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has reviewed systematically the teaching of writing across the curriculum. A plan for the development of pupils' writing skills as they move through the school is now in place and there is consistency of approach to the teaching of writing across the school. Curriculum leaders have audited the confidence of staff in teaching various types of writing and they have arranged extensive staff training. This has drawn upon existing expertise within the school, guidance from the local authority and external trainers. Senior leaders have monitored the effectiveness of these new arrangements carefully by looking regularly at the quality of pupils' work and identifying further areas for staff development and training. Teachers have reduced the use of worksheets considerably. This has increased the opportunity for pupils to write at length independently and for a suitably wide range of purposes.

Staff identify opportunities for pupils to apply and improve their numeracy skills in all subject areas. There is now clear evidence of teachers challenging pupils to use their numeracy skills at an appropriate level outside mathematics lessons. Nearly all pupils apply the skills they have learnt in mathematics lessons well when solving numeracy problems in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 calculate the cost of constructing an Anderson shelter as part of their study of the Second World War. Pupils in Year 5 calculate the travel times for visitors from Lesotho and pupils in Year 2 use a tally chart to record different types of houses in the locality.

Recommendation 3: Improve progress across key stage 2 in pupils' ability to write in Welsh

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Pupils now receive far more opportunities to write in Welsh than at the time of the core inspection. The Welsh co-ordinator, supported well by all staff, has developed the provision for Welsh well and the whole-school emphasis on Welsh has increased greatly. Pupils now have daily opportunities to use oral Welsh and the school has established Welsh ambassadors ('Criw Cymraeg') and 'helpwr heddiw' roles in classes. A purposeful rewards system encourages pupils in their use of Welsh. There is a clear plan for teachers to develop pupils' language patterns as they move through the school and for staff to focus on writing specific text types in Welsh in each year group. Staff have implemented these plans effectively. They have moderated and standardised pupils' work in Welsh thoroughly. They have received relevant training to develop their provision for Welsh through in-house events and valuable input from specialist practitioners from the local authority.

As a result of these developments, the quality of pupils' writing in Welsh is now good overall. Pupils in Year 2 complete simple sentences and communicate basic ideas about themselves in Welsh effectively. In Year 4, pupils use a suitably broad range of vocabulary and sentence patterns in their written work in Welsh across the curriculum. For example, they write about the Celts and Tudors in history and about the work of Kyffin Williams in art. In Year 6, the standard of the best work in Welsh is very good, with pupils extending and varying their sentences well. Pupils write in a wide range of genres, such as play-scripts, letters, recounts and book reviews. They regularly undertake written work in Welsh to support their learning across the curriculum, for example in history and geography.

Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment, especially the quality of marking and meeting the needs of pupils of different ability levels in classes

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

In many cases, the quality of marking by teachers is good. Teachers indicate clearly and regularly the next steps for pupils to improve their skills. Nearly all pupils respond appropriately to written comments from teachers and make improvements as a result. Across the school, regular opportunities for all pupils to assess their own learning and that of their peers have a positive impact on the progress that pupils make.

Teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Staff use assessment information well to ensure that activities for pupils challenge them appropriately. They use an electronic tracking system effectively to record progress. They use the information appropriately to plan activities that target the specific needs of groups of learners.

School leaders have strived to develop teachers' knowledge and understanding of statutory assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2. They have established termly meetings for teachers to consider pupils' work and to agree the National Curriculum levels they have achieved. The school works well with other schools in its local cluster to moderate and standardise teachers' judgements on pupils' work. As a result, staff have an improved understanding of the features associated with each level. Overall, the arrangements for assessing pupils' work at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 are now far more robust and secure than at the time of the core inspection.

Recommendation 5: Develop the leadership roles of leaders at all levels

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

There is a clear leadership and management structure in the school. The headteacher, who took up his post immediately after the previous inspection, provides strong leadership. He has established effective management systems and processes. Staff understand their roles and undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. The senior leadership team, comprising the headteacher and deputy headteacher, works well as team. Members of the wider senior management

team also contribute well to school development priorities. The headteacher supports staff well in developing their capacity for leadership and managerial duties through informal coaching and mentoring. Performance management arrangements are secure and link closely to the school's strategic priorities.

Middle managers are now far more engaged in setting and taking forward strategic priorities than they were at the time of the core inspection. Regular management meetings focus well on key areas for development. Leaders outside the senior leadership team have identified important priorities for improvement as a result of more effective involvement in self-evaluation processes. For example, the Foundation Phase leader and literacy co-ordinator identified gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge and have brought about significant change to the curriculum as a result. The numeracy coordinator identified issues in pupils' ability to subtract and put appropriate actions in place to develop pupils' skills further.

The governing body provides more focused support than in the past. For example, learning walks undertaken by governors now link effectively to specific priorities in the school development plan. There is a formal process to feedback findings from the learning walks to other governors and to leaders within the school. The governing body has scrutinised progress in delivering the actions within the post-inspection action plan regularly and identified governors have monitored the delivery of specific actions. Governors provide a sound level of challenge to leaders and managers.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that lesson observations and book scrutiny identify accurately areas for improvement that lead to clear priorities to raise standards in the school development plan

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school now has a well-established annual cycle of self-evaluation activities. Leaders and managers gather first-hand evidence through listening to learners, scrutinising pupils' work, monitoring teachers' planning and observing lessons. Coordinators receive appropriate management time to develop position statements on the strengths and areas for development within subjects and learning areas. These inform school development priorities well. The observation of lessons provides purposeful feedback to staff. The scrutiny of pupils' books is evaluative and thorough. These self-evaluation activities have ensured a high level of consistency in the delivery of key policies and initiatives.

There is much better analysis of performance outcomes now than at the time of the core inspection. Staff use the electronic tracking system more effectively and it influences their teaching more in terms of the skills they plan to develop with pupils.

Staff have undertaken visits to a wide range of local schools to broaden their experience, improve their understanding of self-evaluation and raise their expectation of what pupils can achieve.

The school's self-evaluation report provides a fair, honest and evaluative picture of the school's current strengths and areas for development. The outcomes of

selfevaluation link well to priorities in the school improvement plan. The plan is well organised and sets out clear actions, timescales and resource allocations. There is careful monitoring of progress in implementing the actions. Staff know the school's priorities and understand how they can contribute to achieving them.

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.