



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**

**St David's High School
St David's Terrace
Saltney
Chester
Flintshire
CH4 0AE**

Date of visit: June 2018

by

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

Outcome of visit

St David's High 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 significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards at key stage 4

Since the core inspection there has been an improvement in pupils' standards and progress. In lessons, the majority of pupils recall previous work well. They apply their new knowledge successfully, for example when identifying persuasive techniques in various texts. A few pupils make strong progress.

Many pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to other pupils. The majority speak confidently using short phrases with sound subject-specific vocabulary. They engage well in discussion activities. A few pupils explain effectively how their current work relates to the broader topic studied. However, in a few cases, pupils do not listen to teachers' explanations and the views and opinions of others well enough.

Many pupils extract appropriate information from sources and present the evidence clearly. This is exemplified by their work in analysing recruitment posters to join the British army during World War 1 and studying the conditions in the trenches as described in the poem 'The Green Fields of France'. The majority of pupils make appropriate inferences and deductions and identify the key features of different text types, for example when analysing the content of poems such as 'Dulce Et Decorum Est', 'The Soldier' and 'All together Now'.

Most pupils generally structure their written work coherently. Many write short summaries independently and accurately. More able pupils write with appropriate sophistication, for example when arguing against poaching wildlife in Africa. Many pupils demonstrate a sound grasp of purpose and audience when, for example, writing persuasively to argue that the internet has improved the lives of many. A few pupils only produce short pieces of writing, do not choose language that is suitable for the purpose of the task, and make frequent spelling and grammar mistakes.

Many pupils display competent number skills and solve simple every day numerical problems successfully for example, when working out proportions to use in recipes. Most plot information in suitable graphs and analyse them appropriately. They use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills confidently for basic tasks such as producing slides for presentations, searching for information from the internet and editing text.

Since the core inspection, performance in key stage 4 has improved in the majority of indicators and now compares more favourably with that in similar schools.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics improved significantly in 2017. It is above that the average for similar schools for the first time in four years. Performance in the capped points score has declined since the core inspection and is below the average for similar schools. In general, pupils make better progress in many indicators from one key stage to another than at the time of the core inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A*-A has improved slightly since the core inspection but remains below the average for similar schools.

At key stage 4, girls' performance in most key indicators is below that of girls in similar schools. Boys' performance in 2017 is in line with or above that of boys in similar schools in many indicators.

R2. Improve attendance and reduce the disruptive behaviour seen in a minority of lessons

The school has developed suitable strategies to address poor attendance, including the appointment of a designated attendance officer and reviewing arrangements for care, support and guidance. As a result, the school now monitors attendance closely and provides valuable support for pupils with poor attendance. This has had a positive impact on the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Since the core inspection attendance, rates of attendance have improved very slightly but remain below those of similar schools. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in the same period. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent increased and remain above average for similar schools.

The school has strengthened its arrangements for dealing with pupils' poor behaviour, including a re-launch of the behaviour policy and establishing a valuable alternative provision centre. This provides pupils with opportunities to receive suitable support for their behavioural, social and emotional needs and to alter their attitude towards learning. These arrangements have effectively reduced the number of incidents of disruptive behaviour.

In lessons, many pupils show a positive attitude towards learning. They behave well, show respect towards adults and are polite. A majority of pupils carry out tasks swiftly and maintain their concentration well. When given the opportunity, they work productively in pairs and small groups to form opinions and draw conclusions. A very few pupils demonstrate poor attitudes to learning and show limited interest in their work.

R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a new teaching and learning policy, which supports the identification and sharing of good practice. This is beginning to have an impact on a few areas such as the impact of feedback and assessment. However, overall, the quality of teaching is inconsistent within departments and across the school.

In the majority of cases, teachers plan a suitable range of carefully-sequenced tasks and use resources effectively to engage pupils. They set specific learning objectives and success criteria that help pupils to understand clearly the requirements of tasks. In a few instances, teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils that help them to make strong progress in their learning.

In a minority of cases, teachers do not plan effectively enough to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils spend too much time on undemanding tasks, the pace of learning is slow and pupils do not make enough progress. In a few instances, teacher introductions to activities are too long. As a result, a minority of pupils lose interest and do not develop their independent learning skills well enough.

In the majority of instances, teachers provide helpful and constructive verbal feedback to pupils. Many teachers make effective use of assessment forms ('pink sheets') to provide useful written feedback that shows pupils clearly how to improve their work. Many pupils respond positively to this feedback, and use it productively to improve their work.

The school has a suitable tracking system to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. It uses this information well to identify any underperformance and to plan effective interventions for those pupils in need of additional support.

R4. Ensure that self-evaluation processes are robust and used effectively for improvement planning

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened suitably self-evaluation and improvement planning processes by introducing appropriate quality assurance and monitoring activities. Systems to monitor and track progress made towards identified targets for improvement are suitable and developing well.

Senior leaders have provided beneficial training and guidance to teachers regarding target setting and monitoring. This now means that staff are able to set challenging and achievable targets for pupils, monitor their progress and swiftly identify any underachievement. As a result of these improvements, performance has improved in the majority of key indicators at key stage 4.

Senior and middle leaders analyse accurately overall pupil performance at the end of key stage 4 and make suitable comparisons with performance in similar schools. However, leaders do not evaluate other important aspects such as pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the provision for skills consistently enough.

The school has introduced a well-planned annual quality assurance calendar, which sets out clearly relevant monitoring activities for monitoring pupil progress and provision. Regular scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and learning walks enable leaders at all levels to gain worthwhile information on the quality of the school's work. Senior leaders have made effective use of these activities to improve a few aspects of provision, such as the quality of assessment. However, leaders at all levels do not make sufficiently comprehensive use of the evidence gathered from these activities to fully evaluate pupils' standards in skills or the quality of teaching across the school.

The school has successfully strengthened its processes to gather the views of pupils and parents. Leaders make productive use of findings from regular questionnaires to make beneficial changes to provision. For example, results from parental questionnaires highlighted weak communication. As a result, the school introduced a newsletter for parents and now regularly shares interesting news about its work through its new social media accounts.

Governors know the school very well, provide strong support to the school's improvement strategies and provide robust challenge to any underperformance. Members of the governing body play a valuable part in the school's quality assurance work. For example, they conduct learning walks, interview pupils about aspects of the school's work and scrutinise pupil books. They hold middle leaders to account well through the newly-formed standards committee.

R5. Fulfil the statutory requirements of providing a daily act of collective worship and reporting to parents on pupils' progress in numeracy

The school has taken prompt action to ensure that it provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. A structured and valuable programme of reflections and questions for use in daily tutor time has been introduced. The school monitors the delivery of the programme closely. Assemblies link suitably with the weekly themes, which make effective use of current events.

Pupils' progress in numeracy is reported on appropriately.

R6. Eliminate the deficit budget

Since the core inspection, the headteacher, business manager and governors have continued to monitor the budget rigorously. They have acted prudently in ensuring

that spending is affordable and beneficial for pupils. An example of this is securing funds for alterations to the changing facilities, upgrading the school hall and purchasing additional computers.

The school has an agreed recovery plan with the local authority to address the deficit budget over five years. Substantial restructuring and changes to staffing have resulted in significant sustainable savings.