



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**

**Ysgol Brynhyfryd  
Mold Road  
Ruthin  
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LL15 1EG**

**Date of visit: September 2016**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Hywel Jones	Reporting Inspector
Gareth Kiff	Team Inspector
Margaret Davies	Team Inspector
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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Brynhyfryd is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2015.

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

### **Recommendation 1: Improve standards at key stage 4.**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has made strong progress in improving performance in all of the key indicators at key stage 4. Unverified data for 2016 shows that the school has made solid improvement in those indicators which include English or Welsh and mathematics in particular.

Unverified data for 2016 shows that performance in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics has improved on the static performance of the previous three years. This data indicates an improvement of nearly 10 percentage points on 2015 figures.

Unverified data indicates that performance in the core subject indicator in 2016 has improved by over 12 percentage points on both 2014 and 2015 figures. Outcomes in this indicator have placed the school in the bottom 50% of similar schools in each of the three years between 2013 and 2015.

Unverified data for 2016 shows that performance in the level 2 threshold has also improved significantly on previous years' figures. The data indicates that outcomes in 2016 are around 13 percentage points better than in 2015 when performance placed the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools.

Based on unverified data, performance in the level 1 threshold in 2016 is the school's strongest performance in the last four years.

Unverified data indicates that the school has reversed the declining trend in recent years in the proportion of pupils gaining five A\*-A grades. Performance in this indicator has improved by nearly eight percentage points since 2015.

During the last four years performance in the core subjects individually has been variable. Unverified data for 2016 shows that performance has improved well.

Unverified data shows that the performance of both boys and girls has improved in nearly all indicators in 2016. Boys' performance in English has improved and the gap in performance has narrowed. However, girls have made more gains than boys in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics.

Unverified data shows that the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved significantly since the time of the core inspection. All of these pupils attained the level 1 and level 2 thresholds in 2016 and most gained the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics. All pupils eligible for free school meals gained a level 2 qualification in mathematics.

Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and display a positive attitude towards their work. They maintain concentration well and move easily between tasks.

In many lessons, nearly all pupils recall prior learning effectively and build on this to make further progress and deepen their understanding. They use subject terminology confidently and make valuable progress in their subject knowledge and skills. In a few lessons, where pupils make exceptional progress, they apply newly gained knowledge and skills creatively.

Many pupils listen attentively in lessons and are confident when speaking in class and in pairs.

Many pupils write accurately for a wide range of purposes. In a majority of cases, pupils develop their thinking skills well and succeed in writing extended pieces of work. A few pupils develop strong, independent and creative writing skills, which engage the reader effectively.

Many pupils across the range of ability are competent readers. A minority of pupils develop higher order reading skills successfully and are able to support their opinions with sound evidence.

In general, pupils make sound progress in numeracy in lessons. However, pupils make insufficient progress in developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the provision for skills, particularly literacy and information and communication technology (ICT)**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to restructure the leadership and provision for skills. This has led to greater consistency and clarity in the implementation of skills across the curriculum.

The literacy co-ordinator provides beneficial guidance and support to staff. As a result, there are suitable opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills within key stage 3 learning programmes and across the school. However, the process for tracking pupils' progress in literacy across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

The school has recently made appropriate arrangements to enhance the opportunities for pupils in key stage three to improve their reading skills. In addition, the school has introduced a targeted reading programme for pupils who require additional support. However, it is, too early to measure the impact of these initiatives.

The school has very recently appointed an ICT co-ordinator. However, the provision for ICT across the curriculum is at a very early stage of development.

**Recommendation 3: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and written feedback**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken positive steps in order to improve consistency in the quality of teaching within and across subjects. When planning and evaluating teaching, the school's attention is now firmly focused on the progress that pupils make during lessons. The school has developed carefully planned learning programmes, which clearly identify the skills, knowledge and understanding to be developed in all lessons.

In nearly all lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. In most lessons they plan effectively for pupils' learning and communicate clear learning outcomes.

In many lessons teachers, provide beneficial examples of work so that pupils understand fully what is expected of them. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills suitably by modelling key terminology and aspects of language that are important to their subjects. Many teachers establish good pace to their lessons and make effective use of questioning in order to reinforce learning.

In the majority of lessons, teachers provide work that is sufficiently engaging and challenging for pupils. However, in a few lessons, teachers provide too much support for more able pupils, which restricts the development of their ability to think and write independently.

In many lessons teachers provide valuable feedback that gives pupils clear direction on how to improve their work. Written feedback on pupils' work accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement and pupils respond positively to this. In addition, teachers effectively plan the next step in pupils' learning by providing them with challenging extension questions. As a result, pupils make further progress in their learning.

The school has implemented a clear policy on marking pupils' work and the quality of written feedback. As a result, there is now a high degree of consistency across all subjects. The school has developed a very useful tracking system, which enables leaders to analyse pupil progress at regular intervals. The implementation of these new systems has had a significant impact on outcomes at key stage 4 in 2016.

**Recommendation 4: Improve provision for pupils with additional learning needs across the curriculum**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, the school carried out a thorough review of its procedures to support pupils with additional learning needs. It has introduced robust

baseline assessments for all pupils on entry to the school. This has enabled the school accurately to identify pupils' needs and provide timely and appropriate support to meet their individual needs. The additional learning needs register is now accurate and up to date and the school has developed a useful wider matrix to identify pupils in need of additional pastoral support. The school has effective arrangements for regularly monitoring and tracking the progress of pupils on the additional learning needs register.

The individual development plans (IDP) are detailed documents, which contain a range of useful information to support pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream lessons. Most targets link well to pupils' identified needs. However, the targets in many of these are neither specific nor measurable. A few plans have clear success criteria. However, most teachers do not use the strategies in the IDP or access strategy document well enough to support pupils with additional learning needs in lessons.

The school has developed appropriate provision to support most pupils' literacy and numeracy skills during morning tutor sessions. The school makes effective use of specialist services to provide support for pupils with specific and complex needs. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for individual pupils in lessons. There is suitable provision for pupils with specific learning needs and complex needs in mainstream lessons.

At key stage 4, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress across nearly all performance indicators.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of leadership and ensure that there is rigour and consistency in improvement planning so that leaders at all levels are fully accountable for all aspects of provision and standards within their areas of responsibility**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, there has been a significant re-structuring of both senior and middle leadership, governance and the curriculum at Ysgol Brynhyfryd. The newly appointed headteacher places a very strong emphasis on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. He articulates a clear and precise vision for the school's improvement and is well supported by the effective senior leadership team. Leaders at all levels have been inspired by this vision, which focuses relentlessly on attempting to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

The wider distribution of leadership responsibilities now ensures that lines of accountability are clear. Underperformance is identified quickly and challenged robustly. Middle leaders play a particularly powerful role in securing improvement. The new faculty structure provides clarity and consistency in the implementation of school improvement strategies and effective accountability for progress and outcomes. Staff are held fully accountable for their own performance and heads of faculty provide effective support and challenge to teachers in their teams. As a result, there is a strong sense of team work and a common pursuit of improvement.

Whole-school self-evaluation and quality assurance processes are comprehensive and thorough. Leaders have identified correctly the strengths and areas for development and have prioritised those areas that require most urgent improvement. As a result, there has been a significant improvement in outcomes in key performance indicators at key stage 4 in 2016. The school's analysis of its current performance is honest and accurate, and leaders recognise that progress in a few important areas has been slow. However, there are well-considered plans to address these shortfalls.

Middle leaders' contribution to self-evaluation and quality assurance processes is developing well. New faculty team improvement plans are of consistently good quality and include a detailed and transparent schedule to monitor progress. The school's curriculum leader monitors developments closely through regular and focused line management meetings.

In a short period of time, the school has implemented a range of policies that have secured improvements in teaching and learning. These include well-planned subject learning programmes, a clear assessment calendar and a sophisticated pupil tracking system.

#### **Recommendation 6: Strengthen partnerships with parents**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened relationships with parents. There is a clear communication strategy and parents are now notified of all new developments at the school. The recent appointment of a communications officer ensures that parents and the local community are well informed about the life and work of the school.

The school now actively encourages parents to be involved in their child's learning. The learning programmes inform parents about their child's learning in lessons and through homework and how they will be assessed every half-term. The school places a strong emphasis on responding to parental feedback and concerns. For example, it has recently reviewed its approach to target-setting in response to concerns raised by parents.

Parents make a valuable contribution to improvements at the school. The parent forum effectively strengthens the link between the school and parents. A wide range of well-attended open evenings makes sure that parents are firmly supported in helping their children move on to the next stage in their learning.

#### **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.