



Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all

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 Dewi Sant
St David's
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA62 6QH**

Date of visit: October 2014

by

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

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The monitoring team

Mark Champion	Reporting Inspector
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Outcome of monitoring visit

Ysgol Dewi Sant is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2013.

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

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve the quality of teaching to enable pupils across the ability range to make good or better progress during lessons

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Since the core inspection, pupils of all abilities make good progress during many lessons and excellent progress in a few.

To improve the quality of teaching the school has appropriately focused on:

improving lesson planning to ensure that teachers plan with high expectations for all abilities;

increasing the range of effective teaching activities to successfully stimulate learning and enable pupils to make good progress;

developing teachers' questioning skills to stretch pupils' thinking; and

increasing the consistency and quality of teachers' assessment and the opportunities for learners to assess their own and others' performance.

Many lessons observed during the monitoring visit are structured well and teachers make effective use of a range of activities to engage pupils successfully. They use skilful questions to probe understanding and extend pupils' thinking. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Most teachers and teaching assistants support pupils well and, in around half of lessons, work is adapted very effectively to meet the needs of all learners. Many teachers encourage pupils to assess their own and the work of others and around half of these teachers guide pupils well to assess their own and the work of others competently.

Due to improvements in teaching, many pupils are engaged in their learning and achieve well in lessons. These pupils speak and write confidently and use a wide range of vocabulary effectively. In a few highly effective lessons, pupils work very well independently and in groups to develop their thinking and as a result make rapid progress.

In a few lessons, teaching is not focused enough on the progress of pupils. In these lessons, the range of teaching activities are not used or explained well enough, nor

do they link well enough together to support the learning objectives.

New procedures have helped to improve the consistency of marking and many teachers now provide clear feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' work with specific guidance on how to improve. A very few teachers pose additional challenging questions in their marking to successfully encourage pupils to extend their responses. A minority of teachers do not consistently follow up written feedback to pupils. For example, where spelling errors are identified, these teachers do not check that pupils correct their work. The presentation of a few books is still poor.

Senior and middle leaders have introduced effective systems to review lessons and pupils' books. They have used this information well to build a useful profile of the school's strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and assessment. This has provided leaders with the information they need to challenge and support teachers to improve in the areas identified by the school. Forms to evaluate lessons or marking have improved and are helpful. These forms emphasise the implementation of teaching strategies and marking policy but have less emphasis on pupils' progress and, as a result, teachers are not always given thorough feedback on the impact of their teaching.

Recommendation 2: Improve the performance of more able pupils

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Standards at key stage 4 for more able pupils have improved in the core subjects, although the degree of improvement and current performance across all subject areas is too variable. Within the core subjects in 2014, around one in four pupils achieved A* or A grades in English compared to around one in seven pupils in mathematics and one in nine in science. In many other subjects in 2014, at least one in five pupils achieved A* or A in GCSE or equivalent.

Standards at key stage 3 for more able pupils, reflected in the proportion achieving Level 6 or above, have improved in English and science but declined in mathematics.

The school has taken suitable action to improve outcomes for more able pupils. In the draft of the school's latest performance report for parents and the wider public, the school has for the first time published the percentage of pupils that achieve A* or A grades at GCSE or equivalent in key stage 4. The school has taken good account of the views of more able pupils in planning for improvement. Teachers are provided with helpful information about more able pupils and many are using this information well in their planning.

More able pupils receive specific mentoring in addition to the school's usual mentoring provision. Feedback from pupils shows that they value the support and challenge they receive through mentoring. As part of its whole-school tracking system, the school monitors closely the progress of more able pupils against their targets during both key stages and provides timely support to those pupils who are performing below their target.

The quality of evaluation of more able pupils' performance within subject areas is too variable. The most effective subject leaders carry out a detailed analysis of the performance of more able pupils in key stage 4, discuss the reasons for lower-than-expected performance with subject teachers and develop appropriate improvement plans.

Recommendation 3: Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Since the core inspection, the school has provided worthwhile training to support teachers to develop appropriate opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy in their subject areas. The literacy and numeracy coordinators provide useful classroom resources, helpful support with lesson planning and regular opportunities to share good practice.

Many teachers provide pupils with valuable opportunities to develop reading skills and support pupils with basic number skills and how to use a range of charts and graphs accurately to represent and analyse data. The results of national literacy and numeracy tests are tracked, analysed and shared effectively with staff, who use this information well to inform planning and to monitor the success of in-class approaches.

Many teachers provide appropriate opportunities to develop the skills of extended writing and set specific targets for literacy when marking. As a result, many pupils use punctuation and paragraphs well in their writing and they have an increasingly secure grasp of context, purpose and structure. However, a minority of pupils do not spell technical words with the same competence.

The school offers a range of valuable intervention programmes for pupils who have weaker literacy and numeracy skills. However, the exit criteria for these interventions do not take enough account of the pupils' starting point and this limits how well the school evaluates the success of the interventions.

The school has not made sufficient progress in implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. The identification of opportunities to deliver literacy and numeracy skills in lessons and schemes of work is not precise enough in many cases to support teachers effectively in delivering these skills within their subject. Leaders do not have enough oversight of the provision for skills to be able to understand whole school development needs, nor are they fully able to ensure that skills are delivered progressively across the curriculum. Current monitoring procedures focus on evidence of the literacy and numeracy provision rather than on the quality and impact of this provision. The school's lesson planning guidance does not focus enough on progress in pupils' skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen tracking arrangements and make better use of information to identify and monitor individuals and groups that require further support

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Since the core inspection, the school has improved its tracking system. All pupils are set appropriate individual targets and their progress is tracked rigorously. These targets are based on a range of suitable information including pupils' previous performance and the teacher's knowledge of them. Planned interventions to help pupils meet their targets are structured and individualised for each pupil. Year progress managers ensure that these interventions are appropriate, although interventions for individual pupils are not always recorded well enough which makes it difficult to evaluate their impact. The percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics improved significantly in 2014, placing the school in the second quarter compared to similar schools, whereas the school was in the bottom quarter for this indicator in 2013.

Teachers are provided with a very useful range of contextual information about all the pupils in their class groupings. Most teachers use this information well in order to organise groups of pupils to suit different learning activities.

All pupils have a teacher mentor who meets regularly with them to discuss their work and how it can be improved. A useful system of peer mentoring has also been introduced. Peer mentors and teacher mentors are appreciated by pupils who recognise the helpful role they play in helping them to focus on their targets and talk through any issues that affect their progress in school.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen safeguarding arrangements

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has reviewed its safeguarding arrangements and strengthened them successfully. The school had made good use of an external safeguarding review that was carried out as part of a local authority-commissioned review of all its schools. The assistant headteacher responsible for pupils' wellbeing provides strong leadership for the school's safeguarding arrangements.

The school maintains appropriate and up-to-date records for every member of staff. All staff, including non-teaching staff, have received basic safeguarding training at Tier 1. Several key members of staff have received additional training at Tier 2, and the school's designated child protection officer is trained at Tier 3. All staff are clear about the school's arrangements and the school uses random spot checks to ensure that staff awareness remains high. All staff identity badges display key safeguarding information on their reverse side.

The school site is more secure. This includes a new reception area and the reception staff are rigorous in checking the identity of visitors and ensuring that they are advised of the relevant procedures for safeguarding children. Information leaflets for visitors and parents clearly set out the school's safeguarding arrangements. Prominent displays and signage in the school reinforce these arrangements.

Several governors are trained in safe recruitment and at least one of these governors participates in every interview process.

Recommendation 6: Improve the quality and use made of individual education plans across the curriculum

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Since the inspection, the school has improved the quality of individual education plans. The plans identify suitable targets, strategies to be employed to meet those targets, persons responsible and relevant success criteria. Performance against these targets is recorded well. The school reviews these plans twice a year and revises targets as necessary. Pupils and parents are now appropriately involved in the development and review of plans.

The information from individual education plans informs 'lesson boards' that are generally used well by teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that pupils are supported effectively in their learning. However, a few teachers still do not regularly use the individual education plans or lesson boards well enough to plan learning activities that meet pupils' needs.

Recommendation 7: Review the roles and responsibilities of middle and senior leaders

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Since the core inspection, the school has increased the capacity of the senior leadership team by adding three assistant headteachers and the school bursar. They work effectively alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher, both of whom are now permanent in their positions. All the members of the senior leadership team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which link well to improving teaching and learning. The increased capacity of the senior leadership team has resulted in the headteacher and deputy headteacher being able to manage their time more effectively and prioritise activities appropriately.

The school's revised management structure sets out clear lines of responsibility. Senior and middle leaders have a good understanding of their own roles and responsibilities and of their accountability in relation to each aspect of their work. Line managers have regular timetabled meetings with the staff they manage. The common agenda for these meetings is created by the leadership team and is based on whole school priorities, together with progress against agreed targets from the previous meeting. For these meetings, a common template is used to record action points, staff responsibilities and deadlines. New targets are then set and discussed in the next challenge and support line management meetings. This has developed into an effective means of holding staff to account for the completion of agreed actions.

Line managers implement a range of suitable strategies to challenge the staff that they manage. Performance management procedures are carried out appropriately. Pupils have target levels or grades for each subject, and all teachers' record assessments each half-term, enabling leaders to track pupils' progress towards their targets and identify underperformers. Line managers challenge middle leaders

vigilantly about the progress made by individual pupils during the year.

Increased levels of challenge and accountability since the core inspection have started to have an impact on the quality of teaching and middle leadership in the school. This is reflected in the improvement in standards in many key indicators in key stage 3 and key stage 4 in 2014, including the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics in particular.

Although there is good progress in many areas, senior leaders have not overseen well enough the school's work to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Recommendation 8: Develop the role of leaders so that they are fully accountable for their areas of responsibility

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The headteacher has a clear vision and a strong commitment to raising standards. He inspires colleagues to share his high expectations for pupils and has ensured that the whole school is fully committed to improvement. In this focus on improvement the senior leadership team supports him very well. All the senior leaders understand their collective responsibility to improve standards.

The school has developed further its strategies to increase accountability for improving standards and quality. There are robust, high-quality systems to enable senior leaders to monitor departments, and to help middle managers lead their areas effectively. Senior leaders ensure that all staff have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and that they carry them out effectively. Senior leaders challenge departments where standards are causing concern.

Regular meetings between middle and senior leaders are supported by well-defined procedures. Agendas for these meetings, and for department meetings, are structured to ensure that important issues are addressed, lines of accountability are clear, and appropriate actions are taken within specified timescales. As a result, there is increasing consistency across the whole school in the way that managers and staff focus on agreed areas for improvement. Most middle leaders and teachers have responded well to the challenge of improving pupils' outcomes.

Governors have a very good understanding of the school's performance and how it compares with that of other schools. They look closely at targets and results, and have begun to ask challenging questions about departments that are under-achieving. Link governors are associated successfully with all departments in order to monitor their progress. The governing body has set up a challenge and support committee together with an improvement board in order to hold staff to account. Staff present on their areas of responsibility to governors and explain what impact they have had on pupil outcomes.

The improved approach to leadership and governance within the school has empowered staff at all levels to take full responsibility for their own areas. There is a strong desire throughout the school to raise standards for all pupils. This is reflected

in the recent improvements in standards and the quality of teaching across the school.

Recommendation 9: Improve the rigour and use of self-evaluation activities to inform improvement planning

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Leaders have developed a healthy culture of self-evaluation within the school, supported by a stronger governing body.

The school has an honest and accurate view of its current performance. The school's targets for improvement, particularly in relation to performance in the main indicators at key stage 4, are appropriately challenging. The school openly publishes a wide range of performance data for parents and the wider public.

There are clear links between the school's overall self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, departmental plans and subject reviews.

The format of the school's progress reports against the recommendations from the core inspection is helpful, although the school has not always evaluated the impact of its actions successfully.

The school has worked well with external organisations to improve its capacity to make accurate judgements about standards and the quality of teaching when observing lessons or scrutinising pupils' work. The school's views on standards and the quality of teaching match closely to the team's findings during this visit. However, there is still a lack of focus on the development of pupils' skills in these quality assurance activities.

The use of data by subject leaders has improved following training for middle leaders and clear guidance from senior leaders about what they expect. The governing body has established a 'challenge and support' sub-committee. This committee meets monthly and provides a robust challenge to senior and middle leaders about performance in their areas of responsibility. However, inconsistencies remain in the quality of evaluation by a few subject leaders.

The school has successfully addressed shortcomings in improvement plans, which now have a helpful common format. Actions are generally clear although success criteria are not always refined enough in order to understand what impact is expected. Plans now consistently include the implications for resources and for staff professional development.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work towards meeting the inspection recommendations that have not yet been fully addressed.