



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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Sw'n Y Don
Penmaenrhos
Colwyn Bay
LL29 9LL**

Date of visit: November 2018

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Sŵn y Don 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 special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Raise standards in pupils' writing in English lessons and across the curriculum, including their handwriting and the presentation of their written work

The school has embedded useful initiatives to improve pupils' writing skills. Senior leaders monitor pupils' work closely and regularly. This leads to reflective discussions among teaching staff and refinements to their practice that help to improve the quality of pupils' writing over time. Senior leaders audit the teaching of text types to ensure that teachers cover a full range of genres. Teachers have developed planning to ensure the progressive development of pupils' understanding of the features of these genres across year groups and over time. This is having a positive impact on the opportunities that pupils have to write regularly and for different audiences.

In the foundation phase, many pupils' writing is appropriate for their age and ability in English lessons and across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 apply their knowledge of the features of chronological reports to write an imaginative newspaper report based on the story of the 'Three Little Pigs'. Many foundation phase pupils make good progress in improving the quality of their handwriting over time and present their work with care. Their skills in spelling and punctuation are largely at the expected standard.

In key stage 2, the quality of many pupils' handwriting and presentation generally meets expectations for their age and ability. Many pupils have a secure understanding of a wide range of types of writing. For example, pupils in Year 5 write well-ordered instructions on how to fly a plane, using correct sequencing words. Most pupils apply their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum at a similar level as in their English lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils write accurate explanations of how plants reproduce as part of their science work. Many older pupils edit their work appropriately to improve its content. However, by Year 6, a minority of pupils do not use accurate punctuation consistently well. Across the school, many pupils write at appropriate length for their age and ability.

R2. Raise standards in pupils' numeracy skills in mathematics lessons and across the curriculum

Teachers use well-structured long-term planning successfully to support the systematic and progressive development of pupils' learning across all areas of the mathematics curriculum. They implement effective approaches to teaching mathematics to ensure that pupils develop skills suitably as they move through the school. For example, the school has introduced a policy about teaching

mathematical calculations, which has resulted in all staff teaching mathematical concepts consistently. Most teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their numeracy skills across the curriculum. The numeracy co-ordinator scrutinises planning regularly and provides useful feedback for teachers to ensure that planned tasks offer suitable challenge and develop pupils' numeracy skills appropriately.

By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils make good progress in improving their mathematical skills. They use the four rules of number confidently, for example when calculating the amounts of pocket money a child can accumulate in a week. Most pupils improve their numeracy skills well through independent learning activities.

In key stage 2, many pupils develop appropriate skills in their mathematics lessons. For example, pupils in Year 3 use their knowledge of number to measure capacity by reading scales correctly. By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils work at the expected level for their age.

In the foundation phase, many pupils apply their numeracy skills competently in other areas of learning. For example, Year 2 pupils correctly identify quarters, halves and three quarters successfully when colouring in different flags in their topic work. However, there is still some inconsistency in how well pupils apply their numeracy skills in meaningful activities in other subjects in key stage 2.

R3. Raise standards in pupils' ICT and Welsh skills in key stage 2

Leaders and staff have approached the need to improve pupils' Welsh skills enthusiastically. Around the school, staff promote the use of Welsh successfully through bright and inviting Welsh displays in classrooms and in corridors. In addition, they provide pupils with regular opportunities to sing Welsh hymns and songs in assemblies. Throughout key stage 2, a majority of pupils understand and use a range of basic language patterns. When asked, they express simply how they feel and comment on the weather. Most pupils count in Welsh confidently and know limited range of useful words related to topics they have studied. Older pupils read their own work with appropriate understanding and pronunciation but struggle to read unknown texts. For their age and ability, most older pupils still have weak skills in speaking, reading and writing.

By the end of key stage 2, many pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) word-processing packages suitably to create stories and recounts. They import images from the internet to include in their work, for example when creating welcome posters in Welsh. Many pupils have a basic understanding of how to use spreadsheets to record information, but they cannot use more advanced features, such as formulae to manipulate data. In addition, most pupils do not understand how to use databases well enough. Many pupils use programs confidently to make informative presentations, for example on crime and punishment. Nearly all pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

R4. Improve planning for the opportunities for pupils to apply their skills at an appropriate level across the curriculum

Teachers have changed their topics to better enable them to teach literacy and numeracy skills through cross-curricular themes. They have mapped out the writing genres they plan to teach in each year group during literacy lessons and across subject areas. As a result, teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in a wide range of different curriculum areas. For example, in Year 2, pupils write a letter to an alien inviting it to a party and in Year 6, pupils plan and record a science experiment clearly and logically. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to write at length during literacy lessons and in cross-curricular activities. Across the school, there are worthwhile activities to enable pupils to use their oracy and reading skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 and 5 listen to each other well when working together on an experiment to find out if the amount of ice cubes affect the temperature of a liquid. Pupils in the foundation phase read information from different sources effectively to help them complete written tasks.

Many teachers plan suitable activities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in different contexts. They ensure that they teach a skill in a mathematics lesson before they provide opportunities for pupils to use those skills in different curriculum areas. For example, once they have a secure understanding of different types of average, older pupils in key stage 2 choose the correct one these to discover if larger animals have longer life spans. However, there is still inconsistency in the quality of opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to use their skills in meaningful activities.

Teachers plan to teach Welsh language patterns and introduce vocabulary incrementally so that pupils make progress in learning Welsh as they move through the school. To support this, staff organise interesting daily language sessions where pupils play games to consolidate their learning. As a result, pupils hear the Welsh language around the school frequently and are improving their confidence in using known language patterns. However, it is still too early for these plans to ensure that pupils reach the expected standards by the end of key stage 2.

The school has recently introduced a comprehensive framework for the provision of ICT skills throughout the school. This framework provides clear guidance for teachers to develop pupils' skills progressively as they move through the school. However, teachers do not yet implement the complete scheme. As a result, they do not currently teach the full range of ICT skills, for example the use of databases.

R5. Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that staff challenge pupils appropriately

All teachers work collaboratively and reflect collectively on how to improve the quality of their professional practice to raise standards of teaching. Across the school, they ensure that pupils understand the purpose of each lesson and what they need to do to be successful. Many pupils respond well to this direction and think carefully about what they do well and what they can improve in their learning. In most classes, teachers encourage pupils to evaluate the success of their learning. For example, at

the end of a lesson, pupils decide whether to place their finished work in a green, red or yellow tray to reflect how well they have completed an activity.

In all classes, teachers encourage pupils to choose success criteria that will help them to make good progress in their learning. Pupils decide from a set of statements what they 'must, should or could' achieve by the end of their activity. This approach is becoming expected practice and most pupils think carefully about the level that they can achieve and choose wisely.

The school has worked well with a range of partners to provide a stimulating outdoor learning environment for pupils in the foundation phase. This provides teachers with the opportunity to develop a range of pupils' skills through practical outdoor activities and to challenge them at a suitable level. For example, Year 1 pupils enjoy looking for and naming hidden shapes in the outdoors and reception pupils practice forming letters in different materials. Teachers provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop their independent learning skills through different 'challenges'. For example, Year 2 pupils research information on the astronaut Tim Peake and choose how to present their findings.

R6. Improve processes to assess and track pupils' progress, including arrangements to help pupils know how to improve their work

Leaders have introduced a whole-school approach to providing feedback to pupils on the quality of their work. Teachers apply this policy consistently in all classes. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the procedure and give it due attention when assessing their own work.

Nearly all teachers provide pupils with clear learning objectives in lessons and ensure that all groups of pupils know what they need to do to succeed. They provide pupils with useful oral and written feedback about what they have done well and how they can improve their work further. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving pupils' standards. However, a minority of teachers do not write their comments simply enough. This means that pupils do not understand what they need to do to improve. In addition, a few teachers do not always check that pupils have responded appropriately to the feedback provided.

Pupils carry out self-assessment of their work at a simple level. This is beginning to help them to understand what they need to do to improve. Older pupils in particular use self-assessment beneficially to redraft their written work. Most pupils are aware of their individual targets and know what they need to achieve them.

The school has introduced a useful electronic system to track pupils' progress. Teachers use this system to record pupils' assessments in literacy and numeracy. They use the information successfully to help plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Staff work with schools within their cluster to standardise and moderate pupils' work. These meetings have a positive impact on teachers' ability to make secure judgements about the standard of pupils' work, particularly at the end of the foundation phase and key stage 2.

R7. Improve leadership to strengthen the focus on standards at all levels

The acting headteacher has developed a strong vision for school improvement based on teamwork, high expectations and raising standards. All staff share this clear focus on ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils. Leaders challenge any underperformance robustly.

Senior leaders have introduced many new systems and processes to address school improvement priorities successfully. They work well with all staff to implement these, monitor their effectiveness and make refinements. As a result, the school has made significant progress in addressing all inspection recommendations. Governors and the acting headteacher have created a staffing structure that ensures all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the running of the school and as part of the school improvement process. This ensures a fair distribution of workload and duties among staff.

Regular staff meetings and meetings of the senior leadership team focus appropriately on the school's improvement activities. They provide beneficial opportunities for staff to reflect on the success of new initiatives and to suggest further improvements. Senior leaders have established suitable performance management procedures for teachers and support staff that relate well to the school's priorities for improvement and their individual needs. These generally contain objectives that are specific and measurable and support the effective review of staff performance.

Working in partnership with the regional consortium, senior leaders plan useful professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff that address the aims of the post inspection action plan and the school's overall improvement priorities well. For example, whole school training has resulted in improvements to the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils about how they can improve their work. In addition, three senior and middle leaders have recently attended leadership courses. This has improved their individual confidence and skills as leaders and has strengthened the overall leadership of the school.

Governors support the school well and are beginning to ask leaders challenging questions. They are developing a more secure understanding of standards at the school through their regular scrutiny of pupils' work. They appreciate the need to stabilise senior leadership at the school and have started the process to appoint a permanent headteacher.

R8. Introduce a range of effective self-evaluation activities

The acting headteacher has introduced a wide range of monitoring activities, such as lesson observations, learning walks and the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. In addition, leaders analyse pupil performance data thoroughly to assist them in improving pupils' outcomes. Through these activities, leaders highlight accurately strengths and areas that they still need to improve. For example, through the monitoring of pupils' books and planning, leaders recognised that there was still some inconsistency in the opportunities that pupils have to apply their numeracy skills in meaningful contexts. The numeracy leader is working with staff to improve this aspect of the school's work.

The acting headteacher has worked successfully with many teachers to develop their skills in judging the school's strengths and areas for improvement. For example, she modelled good practice in the scrutiny of pupils' work. As a result, other teachers now play a more effective role in making accurate judgements about the standards achieved by pupils.

Leaders have started to engage more regularly with parents, for example through regular coffee mornings and inviting parents to have lunch in school. They have also very recently re-established the school council to listen to the views of pupils. The council has started to suggest ways to improve the experience for pupils at playtimes. However, overall leaders do not use the views of parents and pupils well enough to help inform school self-evaluation.

R9. Track the effectiveness of the expenditure of specific grant funding to support vulnerable pupils

Leaders now track the effectiveness of expenditure against the agreed actions in their grant funding plans. They have created a detailed map that outlines the provision that individual pupils at the school receive, alongside the results of their national tests and ongoing teacher assessments. Teachers use this information well to track the progress of all pupils eligible for free school meals. During regular pupil progress meetings, class teachers meet with the assessment coordinator to discuss the progress that each pupil is making. If the progress or wellbeing of a child is causing any concern, they make appropriate changes to their support. As a result, the school has a secure understanding of the impact that the pupil development grant is having on improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of all vulnerable pupils.

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