



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: Estyn monitoring**

**Penglais School
Waunfawr
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3AW**

Date of visit: December 2017

by

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

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The monitoring team

Heledd Thomas	Reporting Inspector
Vaughan Williams	Team Inspector
Gari Jones	Team Inspector
Bethan Whittall	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Penglais is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that Ysgol Penglais is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve the achievement of boys and pupils entitled to free school meals

Since the core inspection, performance at key stage 4 has fluctuated in most indicators and improvements have not been sustained. In 2017, outcomes declined overall, are below that at the time of the core inspection in most indicators and do not compare well with similar schools.

Boys' performance at key stage 4 declined in 2017 and remains below that of boys in similar schools in most indicators. In the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics, boys' performance has declined over the last three years and remains below their counterparts in similar schools. Their performance in the capped points score has also declined in two of the last three years.

Since the core inspection, boys' performance in both English and mathematics at key stage 4 continues to be below the average for boys in similar schools. The proportion of boys achieving 5 A* to A grades or equivalent has been below that of boys in similar schools for two of the last three years.

At key stage 3, boys' performance in the core subject indicator has improved since the core inspection. However, it has been below the average for boys in similar schools in two of the last three years.

At key stage 4, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals declined in most key indicators in 2017. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics is well below that of the same group of pupils in similar schools. The proportion of these pupils gaining five grades at A*-A or equivalent, however, is above the average for this group of pupils in similar schools.

Recommendation 2: Improve attendance rates

Overall, attendance has improved since the core inspection and now compares well with similar schools. The increase in the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved markedly since the core inspection. In addition, there has been a suitable reduction in persistent absence.

The school has robust systems to collect and collate data and challenge absenteeism promptly. These procedures are continuing to have a positive impact on rates of attendance.

Recommendation 3: Improve the co-ordination and implementation of the plan to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills to ensure they make suitable progress in all subjects

Since the core inspection, the school has taken a range of suitable actions to improve its provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, action to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills has been too slow.

The literacy coordinator has worked with middle leaders to identify appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. The school has identified the need to improve pupils' oracy and extended writing skills, and has recently introduced beneficial whole-school strategies such as the 'key pieces' success criteria sheets. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the standard of pupils' extended writing. In relevant subjects, there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and consolidate their numeracy skills. The school has recently introduced an effective online resource for improving pupils' fluency in multiplication and division. In general, these strategies are not co-ordinated and applied consistently enough. As a result, they have not had sufficient impact on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The school is starting to make suitable use of data to identify those pupils who require support with their basic literacy skills. This information is used to plan appropriate support programmes. Strategies for supporting pupils with weak numeracy skills, however, are currently underdeveloped.

Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Overall, the school has not made enough progress in improving the quality of teaching and assessment since the time of the core inspection.

In many cases, teachers have secure subject knowledge, are good language models and foster positive working relationships with pupils.

A majority of teachers plan lessons that are effective in developing pupils' subject knowledge and understanding. These teachers use an appropriate range of strategies and resources to engage pupils. They ask suitable questions to monitor pupils' understanding and monitor their progress closely.

In a minority of lessons, teaching is not effective enough. In these lessons, teachers do not plan appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils and they do not use questioning well enough to develop pupils' thinking. They give pupils too much guidance and answer their questions for them instead of encouraging pupils to think for themselves. In these lessons, teachers do not manage or monitor behaviour well enough.

The quality and impact of assessment is variable within and across faculties. The majority of teachers provide pupils with useful feedback which identifies appropriately strengths and areas for improvement in designated tasks. However, in a minority of instances, teachers' guidance is not specific or sharp enough. Many teachers do not ensure that pupils respond to their comments appropriately to make necessary improvements.

The majority of pupils display a positive attitude towards their learning and apply themselves well in lessons. These pupils, when given the opportunity, make valuable contributions to class discussions. However, a minority of pupils provide only brief, underdeveloped verbal responses. In general, a majority of pupils make appropriate use of subject specific terminology and write suitably organised extended pieces in subjects across the curriculum. However, a minority of pupils do not write accurately enough or structure their writing sufficiently well. A majority of pupils have appropriate basic number skills, but the number skills of a minority are underdeveloped.

Recommendation 5: Address the health and safety concerns raised during the inspection

The school has continued to address suitably the health and safety issues identified during the core inspection.

Clearly visible signs direct visitors from all entry points to the reception. The school makes appropriate use of CCTV to monitor the site. This ensures a suitable view of the access doors around the school.

Barriers successfully restrict traffic flow during the day and pupils have a clearly designated footpath to avoid crossing a car park. The school has comprehensive risk assessments in place that are shared with the appropriate staff.

Pupils in the sixth form register electronically so that there is an accurate record of pupils who are on site.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that the senior leaders hold middle leaders to account for raising standards

The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for changing the culture within the school and to improve the effectiveness of leadership all levels. Her vision of a collegiate, supporting environment which focuses on teaching and standards above all else is well understood by all staff. However, leadership has not had sufficient

impact on improving standards since the core inspection.

Leaders use data appropriately to monitor pupil performance. This has helped them to identify suitable targets for improvement, measure progress and sharpen accountability procedures.

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented useful systems and procedures to hold middle leaders to account. However, the impact of these improved systems has been limited. Senior leaders meet with middle leaders on a regular basis and many provide worthwhile support for middle leaders in all aspects of their work. In a few instances, however, senior leaders do not hold middle leaders to account robustly enough. The school conducts useful faculty reviews which concentrate appropriately on teaching and learning. However, a few faculty leaders do not monitor well enough the quality and standards of pupils' work and the impact of teacher feedback.

The school has recently strengthened appropriately its performance management arrangements. This is beginning to be used suitably to challenge and support staff.

Recommendation 7: Improve the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning at all levels

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to evaluate important aspects of its work through gathering first-hand evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Since September 2017, the new headteacher has developed appropriately the use of data by leaders across the school. Although evaluation procedures are generally more rigorous, subsequent planning for improvement has not had enough impact on the standards of pupils' work or the quality of teaching.

The whole-school self-evaluation report is generally accurate and evaluative. It includes an honest appraisal of standards and quality of teaching. The school identifies appropriately many areas for improvement and addresses them suitably in the school improvement plan. Faculty reviews, in many cases, provide a useful evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in subject areas and the school gathers pupils' views systematically. Joint lesson observations and work scrutiny contribute usefully to leaders' understanding of standards and progress. However, leaders at all levels do not focus closely enough on the quality of teaching.

Faculty evaluation reports and improvement plans, on the whole, evaluate performance data appropriately. Overall, self-evaluation reports do not identify specific areas for improvement accurately enough. Most faculty improvement plans align suitably to self-evaluation findings. However, in general, they do not identify actions to secure improvement precisely enough and they do not contain sufficiently specific or measureable success criteria.

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.