Blenheim Road Community Primary School was inspected in January 2009 and judged as requiring significant improvement. As part of the Welsh Assembly Government’s requirements for schools requiring significant improvement, Estyn undertook a follow-up inspection in March 2010 focusing on the key issues identified in the section 28 inspection.

Outcome of the re-inspection

Blenheim Road Community Primary School is judged to have made good progress in relation to the recommendations for improvement identified in the Section 28 inspection in January 2009. As a result of this progress 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

The school has made progress in:

R1 raising standards in subjects and areas of learning where shortcomings are identified;

Standards in English and mathematics have improved in most classes and are now good. Levels of progress and achievement in science, Welsh as a second language and the foundation subjects have good features that outweigh shortcomings.

In English, the majority of pupils communicate effectively and confidently in a range of situations. Standards of writing have improved and are generally good in relation to pupils’ starting points on entry to the school. By the end of key stage two, many pupils write appropriately across a wide range of genres.

In mathematics, especially number, standards are good with no important shortcomings in most classes. Most pupils use relevant mathematical terms
accurately and understand a good range of mathematical concepts which are appropriate to their age and ability.

Standards in science have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Most pupils use scientific terms accurately in their descriptions and accounts. They understand how the practical applications of science, like the use of electricity in their homes, affect their lives.

The standard of Welsh as a second language has improved throughout the school. Most children understand and respond well to the instructions used in class. They use a few simple sentence patterns correctly to ask and answer questions and express personal information, both orally and in writing.

However, in a few classes, standards in mathematics and English are below average in relation to pupils’ age and ability. In both key stages, many pupils have a limited understanding of scientific investigation and enquiry. Most pupils are not yet able to apply their Welsh language skills effectively outside lessons.

R2 improving achievement in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology and competence in bilingual skills;

Literacy

Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils’ literacy skills. Most pupils speak with confidence and many pupils’ basic reading and writing skills are now well established. The higher order reading and writing skills of many pupils are underdeveloped and only around half of pupils listen attentively.

Numeracy

Numeracy skills across the curriculum have good features that outweigh shortcomings. A minority of pupils use numeracy well in the foundation subjects.

ICT

Nearly all pupils’ ICT skills have improved in most year groups. Most pupils confidently find, develop, create and present information and ideas using a range of software.

Bilingualism

The use of incidental Welsh has improved and many pupils now use Welsh to communicate in class and around the school at a very basic level.
R3  improving progress for pupils of all abilities, placing emphasis on more-able pupils and developing fully all pupils’ skills of independent learning

In most classes, pupils’ progress and achievements are good, taking into account their starting points on entry to the school. However, more-able pupils do not achieve highly enough.

When pupils are given a good range of opportunities to work independently, many respond positively and work well on their own and in small groups. However, this practice is inconsistent between classes and most pupils are not independent learners.

R4  improving lesson planning and management and ensuring the effective use of assessments to improve learning and provide appropriate challenge in lessons.

The school has made good progress in improving lesson planning and assessment.

Planning is consistent across all classes and provides a range of activities at different levels for pupils. However, teachers do not provide enough challenge to pupils and activities are not always well-matched to their needs and abilities. This often results in low-level disruption which hampers the progress of the lesson and hinders learning for other pupils.

Assessment has good features that outweigh shortcomings. Standardisation (levelling) and moderation of pupils’ work has improved and has contributed positively to teachers’ understanding of pupils’ levels of attainment. However, marking and feedback to pupils is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to improve their own work.

R5  improving the rigour of strategic management, the quality of self-evaluation, the effectiveness of planning for improvement and ensuring the efficient use of resources to provide value for money.

Strategic management is good. The management structure in the school is clear and all staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.

There are now effective self-evaluation processes in place. These processes help senior leaders to know their school well and to plan effectively for future improvement. All staff feel that their input is valued.

The use of resources is good. Effective use of staffing has improved pupils’ standards.

R6  ensure statutory requirements are met for class sizes, collective worship, workforce remodelling and publication of the school’s disability equality scheme.

The school now meets statutory requirements for all of the issues identified in the last inspection report.
Class sizes in the Foundation Phase adhere to Welsh Assembly Government recommendations. All pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship. Teachers receive the recommended time to undertake planning, preparation and assessment. The details of the school’s disability equality scheme are made known to parents in the school prospectus.

**Recommendations**

In order to improve on this progress, the school should:

R1: raise standards in science and foundation subjects;

R2: further improve standards in Welsh second language and bilingualism;

R3: continue to improve pupils’ key and wider skills, especially the skills of listening, numeracy and independent learning;

R4: address the lack of consistency in teaching and assessment to ensure sufficient challenge for all pupils; and

R5: address the safeguarding concerns discussed with the headteacher, governing body representative and local authority link adviser during the inspection.

The local authority should formally review the school’s progress against the above recommendations in 12 months time.