



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**

**Dewstow Primary School
Green Lane
Caldicot
Newport
Monmouthshire
NP26 4HD**

Date of visit: January 2015

by

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

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The monitoring team

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| Jane McCarthy | Reporting Inspector |
| Kevin Davies | Team Inspector |

Outcome of monitoring visit

Dewstow Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2013.

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 end of Foundation Phase outcomes

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has set challenging targets for the end of the current academic year for all pupils for both the expected and higher-than-expected levels. Senior leaders have implemented a rigorous tracking system and this shows that nearly all pupils are on track to attain the targets set. Work in pupils' books matches well with the outcomes awarded at the end of last term, indicating that teacher assessment is accurate. More able pupils apply their numeracy skills well, for example when doubling and halving numbers and measuring in centimetres. Pupils working at the expected level for their age read well with good expression, for example changing their voices appropriately when reading a question. They show a good understanding of what they are reading and can say what they think will happen next in a story. They apply phonic skills well when reading unfamiliar words.

The percentage of pupils attaining the expected outcomes at the end of the Foundation Phase improved for all areas of learning in 2014. The percentage of pupils attaining the Foundation Phase indicator improved from 54% in 2013 to 67% in 2014. However, performance in all areas of learning at outcome 5 in 2014 still places the school in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools. At the higher-than-expected outcome 6, performance has improved in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. Although performance in numeracy at outcome 6 still places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools, performance in literacy and personal and social development now places it in the higher 50%.

Recommendation 2: Raise standards of pupils' writing skills

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Nearly all pupils' writing skills are developing well. Most pupils have a positive attitude towards writing and are motivated to write by the good opportunities that teachers provide. There is clear evidence in pupils' books that standards of writing have improved during the last two terms.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils write in an appropriate range of styles and apply these well in their topic work. For example, they write wanted posters for pirates, using a good variety of descriptive vocabulary, and explanation texts about snails, using appropriate text features, such as sub-headings and diagrams. More able pupils use alliteration effectively when writing poems and

include a good range of punctuation well to structure their writing, including speech marks, in their stories. Pupils working at the expected level for their age use full stops appropriately and nearly all can spell simple high frequency words accurately. Pupils of all abilities are beginning to apply their phonic knowledge well when writing words they do not know how to spell correctly.

Many pupils in lower key stage 2 write appropriately in a suitable variety of text types. They understand the writing process well and are developing a good knowledge of the features of different types of writing. In upper key stage 2, many pupils plan their writing well and edit their work to improve it. More able pupils write at length. They understand how to use punctuation for effect when writing. For example, they use exclamation marks and capitalisation of words for emphasis. However, their choice of vocabulary is sometimes unimaginative. As a result of improvements in the teaching of writing, nearly all pupils apply their writing skills well across the curriculum, for example writing persuasively about renewable energy.

However, throughout the school, the presentation of the work of many pupils remains untidy and too few develop a joined, fluent handwriting style. Not enough pupils in key stage 2 spell familiar words accurately and a minority make errors with basic writing skills, for example using capital letters to start words within a sentence.

Recommendation 3: Raise standards of Welsh as a second language

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Most pupils throughout the school display positive attitudes to learning Welsh and make good progress in their use and understanding of the language. In the Foundation Phase, many pupils ask and answer simple questions about familiar topics well, for example when talking about the weather. More able pupils read familiar books well, using appropriate pronunciation. They show a good understanding of the text and explain the story correctly using their own words. By the end of the Foundation phase, many pupils write short sentences using familiar words and sentence patterns appropriately.

In key stage 2, many pupils develop their vocabulary well and use familiar sentence patterns appropriately to respond to questions about themselves and their hobbies. Many use a good range of describing words to extend their sentences. More able pupils read with fluency and understanding from familiar books. Many pupils write in a limited range of styles and contexts with support. However, most pupils' ability to write independently is underdeveloped.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that the development of skills is planned systematically across the curriculum

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has developed a comprehensive overview of the skills that pupils need to develop across the curriculum as they move through the school.

Teachers have used a range of published resources to plan opportunities for pupils to acquire and consolidate skills in all subjects and areas of learning. Literacy and numeracy leaders have audited the school's topic cycle to ensure that it takes full account of the objectives from the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework. Teachers plan and identify opportunities for pupils to apply their skills through interesting themes that motivate and engage nearly all learners. In the Foundation Phase, teachers have identified the skills pupils use when carrying out activities through continuous and enhanced provision.

Recommendation 5: Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The headteacher has restructured the school's teaching staff to ensure that there are effective senior leaders in each phase. These leaders are good role models in demonstrating high expectations of all pupils. For example, the Foundation Phase leader has modelled lessons effectively for colleagues to share her expertise in teaching mathematics and help them to understand new strategies. As a result, all teachers have a better understanding of what pupils can achieve. Nearly all differentiate work well to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for all learners.

Teachers use the open-plan environment successfully to enable pupils to work independently, in groups and as whole classes. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively in this environment to cater for the differing needs of pupils. For example, they use small teaching areas well to teach phonics to different ability groups. Teachers are flexible in their approach to grouping pupils and this allows pupils from different year groups to work together at an appropriate level. This helps to ensure that teachers meet the needs of nearly all pupils.

Senior leaders have an effective system in place for monitoring the performance of teachers. They use this process well to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

All staff are committed to school improvement and to obtaining the best possible outcomes for their pupils.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the role of the staff and governing body in the self-evaluation process

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's processes for identifying its strengths and areas for development have improved since the core inspection.

School staff are fully involved in the self-evaluation process through an annual cycle of monitoring activities. Leaders and teachers are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to these activities. They use a good range of first hand evidence, including lesson observation, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of data to help them know what they do well and what they need to improve. School leaders have considered the views of all stakeholders, including parents and pupils, to

support the self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation report is evaluative and draws on this first hand evidence.

Members of the governing body have received training to help them improve their understanding of their strategic role. Most governors now visit school more regularly and take part in a wider range of activities. This has helped them to gain a better awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, this work is at an early stage of development and governors do not yet contribute fully to the school's self-evaluation processes.

Recommendation 7: Use the outcomes of the self-evaluation process to inform the priorities for improvement.

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The outcomes of the self-evaluation process identify areas for improvement well. The school's improvement plans clearly outline the steps required to address the areas for development. Priorities for improvement focus on areas that will have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. During the past year, school leaders have focused well on the implementation of the post inspection action plan. As a result of this appropriate focus, the cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning is not yet embedded fully in the work of the school.

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| Recommendations |
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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.