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# Report following monitoring
# Level of follow-up:  special measures

## Saltney Ferry C.P. School
## Saltney Ferry Road
## Saltney Ferry
## Chester
## Flintshire
## CH4 0BN

## Date of visit:  July 2015

## by

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

**The monitoring team**

| | |
|---|---|
| Penny Lewis | Reporting Inspector |
| Elizabeth Dackevych | Team Inspector |

| Outcome of monitoring |
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Saltney Ferry County Primary School is judged to have made sufficient 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 removing the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

| Progress since the last inspection |
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### Recommendation 1:  Improve pupils' standards in English and mathematics, particularly at key stage 2

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The standards in English and mathematics at the end of the Foundation Phase and at the end of key stage 2 have improved overall at the expected levels.  However, pupils' attainment in mathematics at the higher level did not improve as expected. The school has analysed the data carefully.  It has put in place further measures, such as introducing more problem-solving activities, to challenge pupils' mathematical thinking more effectively.  Overall, the results of the national testing in literacy and numeracy show a marked improvement from the previous year.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils learn to form their letters correctly and they develop a good range of phonic strategies to enable them to read at an age-appropriate level. They write for a wide range of different purposes.

At key stage 2, many pupils recall previous learning well and are confident to share and discuss their work.  Many pupils are able to use the characteristic features of literary texts in their own writing, and they show an ability to adapt their writing style to suit the audience and purpose.

In mathematics, many pupils identify the appropriate steps and information needed to complete a given task.  More able pupils use correct mathematical language, notation, symbols and conventions to talk about, or to represent, their work to others clearly.

### Recommendation 2:  Improve pupils' communication and social skills to support their learning effectively

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

All staff promote a good range of effective co-operative learning strategies.  They are having a positive effect on pupils' social and communication skills.  These include a lunchtime club where pupils from the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 eat together with staff before taking part in a range of collaborative activities.  During these sessions, teaching assistants reinforce good manners and positive behaviours. Pupils who attend these sessions benefit from the opportunities to talk within a smaller group and they work well with pupils from other classes on a range of engaging tasks.  Many apply their improved social and communication skills successfully to tasks in mainstream lessons.

A visit by older pupils to a residential outdoor centre enabled pupils to develop their social skills further through a wide range of collaborative and interesting activities, which challenged pupils to work together effectively.

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils listen well to each other and take turns when speaking. In lessons, most pupils concentrate well and focus successfully on their learning activities.

Nearly all pupils behave well in and out of the classroom. A clear behaviour management system is in place. Leaders ensure a strong focus on developing and celebrating positive behaviour and there are clear rewards and sanctions, which all staff apply consistently. Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the system and they respond well by demonstrating positive behaviour in lessons and during free time. The number of reported incidents of unacceptable behaviour has fallen and is now very low. Older pupils often support younger pupils well, for example during lunchtimes, when they help them to improve their skills using a range of small games equipment.

Many teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop the skills needed to improve their own learning. All pupils have short-term targets to help them improve their literacy and numeracy work and most pupils have a good recall of these. Most pupils in key stage 2 understand how to use agreed success criteria to help them work more effectively. They are able to assess their own work and the work of others sensibly and they use this information to judge how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This is helping, for example, to make pupils more aware of spelling and punctuation errors in their work and the need to correct these themselves.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that pupils have meaningful opportunities to use their writing, numeracy and ICT skills in all subjects**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has made good progress in planning and embedding a wide range of opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in mixed-skill activities, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Staff provide good opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to use ICT regularly to research topics and to make notes for presentations. For example, pupils use ICT effectively to report on the outcomes of their numeracy work using different writing and numerical formats. In a simulated business activity, pupils solved numerical problems and then wrote a letter to a client using ICT to explain how they had solved the numerical problem posed. In a few cases, more able pupils included a graph to illustrate the outcomes.

In the Foundation Phase, teachers provide pupils with a good range of different ICT applications in lessons to help pupils to improve their co-ordination and handwriting skills. Teachers encourage pupils to show their understanding of symmetry by using an ICT programme to draw a butterfly with a symmetrical pattern on each wing.

In key stage 2, teachers provide pupils with a wide range of activities which require pupils to write in a range of genres across the curriculum.  This includes taking notes, writing reports and instructions, and writing formal and informal letters, as well as creative pieces focused on picture stimuli.  Teachers underpin this work effectively through the inclusion in lessons of good opportunities for pupils to discuss and draft aspects of the work before beginning final copies.

The introduction of the 'Saltney Ferry Times' writing project has provided key stage 2 pupils with good opportunities to make effective use their writing and ICT skills to produce and edit a school newspaper, which pupils have sold to parents and members of the community.  The newspaper is informative and it includes a good range of interesting articles written in different genres about school life and learning supported by illustrations, pictures and graphs.

The school has focused on developing a good range of numerical problem-solving activities across the curriculum.  Teachers encourage pupils in the Foundation Phase to develop their independent thinking skills when looking for patterns in number.  Well thought out and challenging activities for pupils in key stage 2 help to improve their understanding of numerical patterns to solve numerical and verbal reasoning problems.

**Recommendation 4:  Improve the quality and consistency of teaching across the school**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The quality and consistency of teaching across the school have improved significantly.  Senior leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils.  Senior leaders observe classroom teaching regularly.  They provide feedback that focuses firmly on pupil learning.  This has helped teachers to improve their planning and delivery of lessons and, overall, there is greater consistency of approach across the school.

Teachers across the school plan effectively for different ability groups and nearly all provide a good level of challenge for their pupils, whatever their ability.  There is a more consistent emphasis in lessons on encouraging pupils to think and to try to solve problems for themselves before seeking help from adults.  This, in turn, is developing more resilience and perseverance among pupils in pursuit of their learning goals.  The introduction of staged success criteria has improved the level of challenge to pupils, particularly the more able pupils who engage enthusiastically in tasks that are more complex.  Many pupils seek to extend their own learning to match more advanced success criteria.  As a result, nearly all pupils are motivated to learn and most pupils, particularly in key stage 2, talk knowledgably about the learning strategies they apply to attain their targets.

Nearly all teachers provide good verbal feedback to pupils and prompt them to extend their learning further through skilful questioning.

**Recommendation 5:  Improve the use of assessment outcomes to meet pupils' needs appropriately**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The effective use of pupil data-tracking systems is now a securely embedded practice, and the school has recently added literacy and numeracy tracking systems. Staff update pupils' progress on the school's electronic system at regular and agreed points in the school year.  Teachers now use the data as part of the weekly planning process effectively.

The senior leadership team analyse and track pupil performance data routinely. When analysing progress, they also take into account additional data, such as the pupil's eligibility for free school meals and whether the pupil's home language is a language other than English.  The senior leadership team use the outcomes of the analysis to inform discussions with individual teachers and staff as a whole at regular pupil performance meetings.  These processes are helping teachers to provide more timely and well-focused support to pupils, particularly those who are not making the expected progress.

The school has implemented an agreed marking policy.  Teachers mark work regularly and in line with the policy.  Nearly all staff provide pupils with useful comments about what they have done well and the next steps to improve their learning.  However, a few teachers do not always provide written comments to challenge more able pupils to push further the boundaries of their thinking and knowledge.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils are beginning to show a good understanding of how well they complete a piece of work and what they can do to improve.  In key stage 2, pupils use the extended success criteria well to judge their own performance.  Pupils are developing good skills in peer assessment using the success criteria and many provide insightful comments about how their peers can improve their work.

Senior leaders have provided teachers with good opportunities to moderate pupils' end-of-stage work with associate partner schools and consortium schools.  This has improved teachers' understanding of the required levels and staff are beginning to apply the National Curriculum levels more rigorously and appropriately.

**Recommendation 6:  Define clearly the roles and responsibilities for all staff and governors to ensure that the school delivers the school improvement plan effectively**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The acting headteacher was recently appointed to the role of headteacher on a permanent basis.  She has a clear vision for the school's development and provides robust strategic direction to the school.  She has established effective communication links with staff and governors, as well as clear systems, procedures and professional development for all staff to ensure effective teaching.  As a result, staff have a clear focus on pupil attainment and achievement.  Senior leaders and staff work cohesively

as a team.  Teachers and teaching assistants are confident to share their opinions and ideas about how they can improve their work and pupils' outcomes.

The school now has an established senior leadership structure with clear roles and responsibilities.  Regular and informative staff meetings monitor and review school developments closely, and individuals are held appropriately to account.

The chair of governors works very effectively with the headteacher to provide support and challenge and to monitor the developments in the school.  There is a full complement of governors who have a varied range of experience and expertise.  Nearly all governors have received training and they are committed to providing effective challenge as well as support to the school.  Through regular communication with the school and close examination of the data, the governing body now places a strong emphasis on pupil attainment and achievement.

**Recommendation 7:  Implement effective self-evaluation procedures based on first-hand evidence so that leaders have a secure knowledge of the standards in the school and what needs to improve**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

 The school's self-evaluation processes draw on a good range of first-hand evidence.  This includes reviews of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, and the analysis of pupils' progress and attainment.  Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly and they provide helpful feedback to teachers on strengths and areas for development.  The newly-appointed headteacher ensures that all stakeholders contribute effectively to the self-evaluation process.  This is leading to a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Many parents completed a questionnaire on effective communication and parental involvement.  Nearly all parents agreed that the school's communication systems are good or better.  Many parents stated a preference for electronic communication, and as a result the school now uses a specialist school communication application to communicate with parents on a range of issues effectively.  The school holds beneficial parent and child workshops to encourage parents to support their children more effectively at home.

Older key stage 2 pupils recently completed an in-depth questionnaire, which provided a particularly valuable opportunity for them to express their preferences and to take a more active role in their own learning and life in school.

The school self-evaluation report and the school development plan are detailed documents.  The school development plan draws its priorities appropriately from the findings of the self-evaluation report.  The school development plan has clear objectives, success criteria and time-bound specific outcomes.  Senior leaders and governors monitor these outcomes rigorously, which has led to marked improvement in school systems and in pupils' learning and attainment.

**Recommendation 8:  Implement rigorous performance management procedures to ensure appropriate access for staff to professional development opportunities linked to school improvement priorities**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has a suitable policy and procedure for performance management. Senior leaders have clear roles which enable them to monitor and manage teachers and support staff appropriately and regularly.

All staff access comprehensive professional development opportunities.  These focus well on the school's improvement priorities and staff's individual needs.  Good systems are in place to identify the impact of training on the quality of teaching and on the quality of opportunities to improve provision and outcomes for pupils.  For example, pupils' ability to produce interesting pieces of extended writing is improving as a result of a whole-school training programme on effective story writing strategies. Professional development by teachers on self and peer assessment has led to pupils evaluating their work in key stage 2 effectively and this is helping many pupils to improve the quality of their work.

| **Recommendations** |
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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.