



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**

**Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Holly Street
Rhydyfelin
Pontypridd
RCT
CF37 5DB**

Date of visit: January 2017

by

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

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The monitoring team

Tony Bate	Reporting Inspector
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Outcome of monitoring

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in June 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 significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve pupils' writing skills in both languages across the school

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils' ability to write extended pieces in Welsh and in English is developing well and in line with their age and ability. Teachers provide interesting stimuli for a range of appropriate and specific tasks that challenge pupils to write independently and effectively in a variety of forms. For example, Year 2 pupils write letters as part of their topic work, and a description of a hedgehog and acrostic poems as part of their Christmas theme. Most pupils write at length, using basic punctuation and spelling most common words correctly.

In key stage 2, many pupils write effectively at length in Welsh and English in a good range of genres. For example, Year 6 pupils write creative stories, diaries, instructions and poetry. All teachers have received suitable training in developing writing across the key stage. As a result, the school has a useful overview of which genres to deliver at different stages and an effective structure to develop all pupils' writing. Across the key stage, most pupils use punctuation consistently well and spelling is generally accurate. More able pupils write at length to a very high standard, using accurate spelling and a wide-ranging vocabulary. In both key stages, many pupils use these skills in writing across other areas of the curriculum well.

End of key stage assessment results in 2016 show a significant improvement in writing in both Welsh and English. However, the provision has not been embedded long enough to show a sustained improvement in standards.

Recommendation 2: Raise standards of Welsh and Welsh as a second language across the school

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Teachers have received appropriate training for the development of Welsh as a first language across the school. They plan work effectively to develop a suitable range of writing genres. Teachers' approach to planning for writing is consistent. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the features of different forms of writing and help them to plan their work carefully. They provide a good variety of extended writing tasks that challenge pupils effectively.

Teachers' marking focuses well on improving pupils' writing skills, including punctuation, spelling and presentation. Nearly all teachers respond purposefully to pupils' work, identifying what they are doing well and how they can improve their work. They encourage pupils to improve their language skills through the use of idioms and interesting vocabulary. Pupils often assess their own and other pupils' work effectively, referring to success criteria that are sometimes set by the pupils themselves. Nearly all teachers give pupils enough time to read and respond to the marking, to which most pupils respond positively and appropriately.

Most pupils' Welsh first language reading, speaking and listening skills are developing appropriately as they progress through the school.

Standards in Welsh second language are improving well. Many pupils in the Foundation Phase display positive attitudes to learning Welsh and make good progress in using and understanding the language. They speak confidently about familiar topics and follow instructions in Welsh accurately. Many pupils follow basic sentence patterns to help them to write their own sentences about familiar topics and themes.

By the end of key stage 2, in the classroom environment, most pupils speak about a good range of familiar topics with accuracy and good pronunciation. They recite and perform poetry at the school and Urdd eisteddfodau, with accuracy and good intonation. Many pupils read appropriately for their age and write to a good standard in an appropriate range of styles and contexts.

Teachers now plan well for the development of Welsh language skills across the school, and this ensures good progression between classes. They ensure that pupils from Welsh-medium classes work with those learning Welsh as a second language to improve their reading and oracy. For example, during some guided reading sessions in key stage 2, one group works with the 'bocs Cymraeg' with the support of fellow pupils from the Welsh-medium classes. Recently, in upper key stage 2, pupils from the Welsh-medium classes regularly lead some of the daily 'helpwr heddiw' sessions in the second language classes. These initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on reading standards and on pupils' confidence to speak Welsh.

Recommendation 3: Improve the achievements of higher ability pupils at the end of both stages

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has an appropriate policy that outlines clearly how the school identifies and meets the needs of more able and talented pupils. Teachers identify pupils who excel in literacy and numeracy effectively and track progress appropriately.

Over the past year, the school has made changes to the way that it manages provision for more able pupils. Teachers have had training to develop particular teaching strategies that help pupils to work at a level appropriate to their ability. For example, all teachers received training on effective questioning and providing challenge for more able pupils.

Nearly all teachers' short term planning now provides a range of activities targeted to specific groups of pupils, including the more able. In addition, most include extension activities to challenge pupils further, for example by providing a complex mathematical challenge, or a stimulating writing task. However, in a few cases, some of these activities do not provide a robust enough challenge for pupils of higher ability.

Pupils of higher ability take part in challenging activities with pupils from other schools in the area. For example, pupils from upper key stage 2 worked with four other primary schools to produce a magazine in Welsh and English as part of a cluster project.

In the end of key stage 2 teacher assessments over the past three years, there is a gradual improvement in the achievement of pupils at the higher-than-expected level in most subjects. However, improvement in the Foundation Phase over the same period remains variable across the areas of learning. Generally, pupils work reflects the end of key stage assessments and, although there are positive improvements in the provision, it is too soon to their full impact on standards.

Recommendation 4: Ensure better consistency in the quality of teaching and assessment across the school

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

School leaders and staff have worked well together to address the inconsistencies in teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching and the level of challenge for most pupils have improved. In most classes, teachers provide a wide range of learning opportunities that ensure that pupils of all abilities make good progress according to their ability. They engage pupils well and have higher expectations. However, in a few instances, teachers do not challenge pupils robustly enough to achieve their best.

Most teachers evaluate their own teaching and identify successes and areas for improvement that inform their future planning appropriately. Most staff use worksheets more sparingly, and this has helped to improve the quality of presentation in pupils' books and developed pupils' ability to work more independently.

There is a consistent approach to marking in nearly all classes and teachers provide useful written feedback for pupils. Pupils receive suitable opportunities to respond to marking in order to adapt, refine or improve their work. There are appropriate opportunities in place for pupils to assess their own learning and the work of others, which is beginning to have a positive impact on standards.

Staff have access to a wide range of data to assess pupils' achievements and progress. There is now a robust whole-school tracking system that supports teachers to set challenging targets for their pupils. They use this information appropriately, for example to prioritise suitable interventions to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

Recommendation 5: Develop the role of governors further in order to challenge the school about its performance

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Governors receive detailed information about the school, including performance data and reports on monitoring activities by staff and local authority officers.

Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance over time, including information that enables them to make comparisons with similar schools. For example, governors recently challenged the school appropriately about the performance of pupils at the higher-than-expected levels in science. As a result, leaders are beginning to implement improvement strategies and have introduced new curriculum material and staff training to address this issue.

The chair of governors knows the school well and supports and challenges the school effectively about its performance. Governors take appropriate advice and support from external sources, such as from a consultant governor of a nearby school and from consortium advisers. The majority of governors now take an active part in self-evaluation activities, such as learning walks, to increase their understanding and evaluation of provision and standards. Governors with responsibility for recommendations in the post-inspection action plan meet with staff regularly to support, monitor and challenge progress against the recommendations appropriately. As a result, governors have a better overview of the school's strengths and areas for development and are beginning to challenge leaders and staff about its progress more effectively. This is beginning to have an impact on improving provision and standards. For example, they are more involved in supporting the senior management team when dealing with underperformance in teaching, which has resulted in improved provision and standards.

Governors are beginning to embed a culture of challenge in their meetings and have recently begun to raise more probing questions about teaching, learning and leadership. However, this is at an early stage of development.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the link between self-evaluation and the school improvement plan

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and, supported by the management team, she has put in place a comprehensive self-evaluation process. It takes good account of first-hand evidence from a range of suitable sources. Based on this evidence, the self-evaluation process identifies relevant priorities for improvement, with a clear focus on improving teaching and raising standards.

The school's current self-evaluation report is an informative and useful working document. The school development plan sets out clear outcomes and priorities and includes a suitable timetable for monitoring and evaluating progress. The senior management team have appropriate monitoring roles in this process and their contribution to the strategic leadership of the school is developing well.

Generally, monitoring reports identify strengths and shortcomings effectively, particularly in teaching. These evaluative reports include worthwhile 'ways forward' to highlight further improvement activities, which are beginning to have a positive impact on classroom practice and on pupil standards and outcomes.

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.