



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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Treffynnon
Penymaes Road
Holywell
Flintshire
CH8 7EN**

Date of visit: November 2019

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Treffynnon is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

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

R1 Improve standards at key stage 4

The standard of work that pupils produce in lessons has improved substantially since the core inspection. The improvements noted in recent monitoring visits have been sustained and developed. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and the majority make strong progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Performance of pupils at the end of key stage 4 has improved since the core inspection although, in general, progress is slightly below that expected.

In many lessons, pupils are developing and improving their oracy skills to be able to provide technical, detailed and correct answers. For example, in food technology lessons, pupils explain and evaluate the advantages of protein and carbohydrates on their health confidently. Many listen carefully to their teachers and their peers and support each other's learning well in group and pair activities. However, a minority of pupils lack the confidence to contribute in class discussions.

When reading, many pupils are developing their ability suitably to infer meaning, draw conclusions from text and use evidence well to support their ideas, for example in history, when considering the impact of poverty during the Tudor times.

Many pupils write suitably, for example to explain, describe or persuade. When doing so, they are clear about the purpose of their writing. They structure their writing appropriately and are developing their ability to use language effectively to vary their expression to suit the audience and purpose. However, a minority of pupils make regular basic errors in their writing.

Many pupils have a sound grasp of basic number work, decimals, fractions and percentages. Many pupils are able to construct and plot graphs accurately. They use numeracy skills appropriately to solve everyday problems, for example when calculating simple and compound interest on loans and savings.

R2 Improve levels of attendance

The school uses a wide range of appropriate strategies to address poor attendance. These include early responses to pupils' absence and contact with parents through telephone calls and home visits. In addition, staff work with a wide range of external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families to help improve their attendance. These initiatives have had a positive impact on the attendance, although attendance rates remain lower than in other similar schools.

Pastoral staff analyse attendance data suitably to identify any patterns of poor attendance and meet regularly to share information on pupils whose attendance is causing concern. As a result, they know these pupils well and the issues that contribute to their poor attendance. In addition, an attendance panel meets on a fortnightly basis to identify and support students with significantly poor attendance and those at risk of disengagement. The school provides an appropriate alternative curriculum, which has helped to ensure that a few key stage 4 pupils remain engaged in education.

There are appropriate systems in place to reward good attendance, that have been developed through consultation with pupils. The school works closely with parents to raise their awareness of the importance of good attendance for their children.

R3 Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions

The school has taken suitable steps to address poor behaviour and engagement in lessons. There is now an appropriate range of support and alternative curriculum arrangements for pupils who do not engage purposefully in their learning. The school has also established clearer expectations regarding acceptable conduct in lessons and around school than at the time of the core inspection. As a result, behaviour in general has been good and fixed term exclusions are lower than at the time of the core inspection. In addition, the quality of teaching and learning experiences provided by the school has had a positive impact on behaviour.

R4 Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, leaders have strengthened successfully its approach to improve the quality of teaching and assessment across the school. Senior leaders have provided staff with a range of useful opportunities to share good practice and organised beneficial whole-school and individual training and support. As a result of these initiatives, the quality of teaching and assessment has improved significantly since the time of the core inspection.

In most instances, teachers develop strong working relationships with their classes and establish classroom routines that support learning well. Many teachers are enthusiastic for their subjects. They plan lessons effectively and provide a range of engaging and purposeful activities that build well on pupils' previous learning and knowledge. They work well with teaching assistants to provide valuable support to pupils' learning. However, a minority of teachers do not develop pupils' independent learning skills well enough.

Many teachers use questioning effectively. They give pupils time to think and share their ideas and opinions clearly through a 'professional voice'. This helps pupils to provide clear, correct and detailed responses. Many teachers provide suitable levels of challenge and in these lessons, pupils make strong progress.

In most lessons, teachers provide pupils with useful verbal feedback in a timely and supportive manner. Key assessment tasks are used valuably to provide a clear focus when assessing what matters. Most teachers use 'action' feedback comments to identify specific areas for improvement well.

Many teachers have clear expectations regarding how pupils should respond to feedback. These teachers ensure that pupils engage well with follow-up tasks to develop specific aspects of their work. In many cases, pupils amend and improve their work in response to guidance beneficially.

R5 Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate action to improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels. During this time, there have been substantial changes in leadership, and the school has used this opportunity to reorganise and refine suitably roles and responsibilities. The headteacher and two deputy head teachers work well together as a team and share the same vision and values. Together, they set high expectations for all staff and pupils. They communicate these effectively to staff, pupils and parents. As a result of their decisive leadership, there have been significant improvements to the quality of teaching and to the standard of pupils' work. The senior leadership team has succeeded in improving staff morale and has developed a culture of openness and trust amongst staff and leaders. They have improved communication across the school and the consistency of all leaders in implementing key school policies and procedures. Through the work of the 'School Development Team', consisting of senior and middle leaders, the school has developed a beneficial, collegiate approach to improving the quality of teaching across all faculties.

Middle leaders have a clear understanding of their role in raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. They take a leading role in sharing good practice both within and across subject areas. They are taking a more forensic approach to analysing the effectiveness of teaching in their subject areas. This has resulted in positive attitudes to learning, and improved levels of participation and behaviour by most pupils.

There have been significant changes to the governance of the school. An interim executive board (IEB) has replaced the governing body. However, the shadow governing body works closely with the IEB to ensure a smooth transition in spring 2020 when the IEB comes to an end. The IEB meets monthly to monitor the school's work closely. In doing so, it provides the school with suitable challenge and valuable support. For example, middle leaders now give regular presentations to the IEB on specific aspects of their work. As a result, members of the board have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. Governors are well-informed, support the school well and hold senior and middle leaders to account appropriately. They have a clear understanding of the school's issues have challenged underperformance robustly.

The school has effective arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness of its work and to plan for improvements. It has established a clear and well-understood programme of activities to gather and evaluate first-hand evidence on the standard of pupils' work and the effectiveness of teaching. As a result, leaders have a sound understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. They use this information appropriately to plan for improvements.

The school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the role of pupil voice in their self-evaluation processes. Leaders are beginning to use this evidence suitably to adapt their provision in light of pupil feedback. However, the contribution of parents and the wider community to school planning and decision making is underdeveloped.

R6 Resolve the budget deficit effectively

The school has a licenced deficit agreement with the local authority and a detailed financial recovery plan. The local authority monitors the school's expenditure monthly. The governors, headteacher and business manager monitor the school's budget and expenditure appropriately to ensure that they adhere to the deficit agreement. For example, any changes to staffing have to be agreed in advance with the local authority. The school has worked closely with the local authority to reduce costs where appropriate, including reviewing staffing structures and responsibilities and taking a more rigorous approach to managing sickness absences. As a result, staff absences have reduced significantly.

In order to reduce operating costs, the school continues to undertake an appropriate range of efficiency measures, including the sharing of site management and support staff costs with the adjoining primary school. As a result, the school was able to reduce substantially the licenced deficit for the 2018-2019 financial year. However, the school is unable to return an in-year balanced budget and is not predicted to do so in the near future.

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