



Arolygiaeth El 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**

**Llanwern High School  
Hartridge Farm Road  
Newport  
NP18 2YE**

**Date of visit: November 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Llanwern High School 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 significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

In lessons, many pupils make suitable progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. This represents considerable improvement compared to the time of the core inspection. These pupils recall their prior learning well and are able to apply it to new contexts. For example, in science they use their understanding of collision theory and chemical reactions to develop hypotheses and to plan investigations.

Many pupils have sound reading skills and extract relevant information from a variety of texts with confidence. A majority use inference and deduction suitably, such as when considering the character of Curley's wife in 'Of Mice and Men'. In a minority of cases, pupils analyse text well and make perceptive comments.

Many pupils structure their extended writing appropriately. They show a suitable sense of purpose and audience, for example when writing to the local council to express concern about social issues. A few pupils produce thoughtful and sophisticated pieces, such as when evaluating to what extent the police were to blame for the failure to catch Jack the Ripper. A majority of pupils write with appropriate technical accuracy. However, a minority make frequent basic errors in their writing. These pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for proofreading their work before handing it in.

In class discussion and pair or group work, many pupils express their ideas appropriately, using a suitable range of vocabulary. For example, in geography, pupils explain their reasoning for their choice of graph to represent data that they have collected. A minority of pupils, however, have a limited vocabulary, which can restrict their ability to express their views.

The majority of pupils have sound numeracy skills. They use the four operations confidently to carry out calculations and have a firm grasp of percentages and fractions. For example, they work out the cost of ingredients when given a set

discount. The majority construct and interpret a suitable range of graphs in relevant subjects. However, a minority of pupils have weak basic number skills.

In the three years following the core inspection, the school's performance at key stage 4 fluctuated, but in general did not compare well to similar schools. In 2019, performance improved overall and is now above expectations. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2019 is broadly in line with that of the same group of pupils in similar schools. This represents an improvement in outcomes for these pupils compared with the time of the core inspection.

## **R2. Improve behaviour and attendance**

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened suitably its approach to improving behaviour. The 'ready to learn' policy is well understood by staff and pupils, and is consistently applied by most teachers. Leaders use a wide range of information well to monitor pupils' behaviour and address any issues promptly.

There has been a clear improvement in pupils' attitudes to learning since the core inspection, and in particular since the last monitoring visit. Many behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous to teachers and visitors, and show consideration and respect to each other.

Many pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in their lessons. They work with enthusiasm, maintain their concentration well and persist when attempting challenging tasks. These pupils work productively in pairs and groups to support each other's learning, and are eager to participate in class discussion.

The school has suitable strategies in place to promote good attendance. It monitors the attendance of individual and groups of pupils appropriately, and provides beneficial support for those with poor attendance.

Rates of attendance have fluctuated over the last four years. After a substantial decline in 2018, they improved well in 2019, and are now higher than at the time of the core inspection. However, they remain well below expectations. In particular, girls' attendance does not compare well to their counterparts in similar schools. Between 2016 and 2018, persistent absence was well above that in similar schools. However, it reduced in 2019 and is now in line with that in similar schools.

## **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, the school has deployed a suitable range of approaches to improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment. This includes beneficial strategies to share good practice, such as the use of peer observations and a staff

newsletter. In addition, the creation of ‘teacher advocate’ roles provides useful tailored support for individual teachers to improve their classroom practice.

In many lessons, teachers establish good working relationships and well-understood routines that create a positive environment where pupils are ready and able to learn. These teachers think carefully about what pupils will learn, and plan sequences of activities that support and challenge pupils to achieve that learning. In these lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and engaging resources. They monitor pupils’ progress closely, and are swift to address any misconceptions or disengagement. These teachers use questioning suitably to check pupils’ understanding. In a few instances, teachers use their monitoring of pupil progress during the lesson to inform and adapt the next steps in their teaching skilfully. Consequently, the pace of the teaching matches the pace of learning closely, and this helps pupils to make strong progress.

In a minority of instances, teaching is not effective enough. In these lessons, teachers do not engage pupils in their learning successfully. They plan what they wish pupils to do, without thinking carefully enough about what pupils will learn. They do not provide clear enough explanations of concepts or the requirements of tasks. This limits the progress that pupils make.

Many teachers give pupils helpful feedback and provide them with useful opportunities to improve their work in light of their comments. In a minority of instances, pupils make substantial improvements to their work as a result. In a few cases, however, teachers’ comments do not provide pupils with clear enough guidance as to how they can develop their work.

#### **R4. Strengthen provision for more able pupils and for the progressive development of all pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened appropriately its provision for the development of pupils’ skills. It has provided suitable professional learning opportunities for staff to develop this aspect of their teaching. As a result, many teachers provide pupils with a valuable range of activities across the curriculum that enable them to practise and consolidate their literacy skills. In particular, pupils have a beneficial range of opportunities to produce extended writing for a variety of purposes and audiences.

The school has recently taken appropriate steps to refine its approach to developing pupils’ numeracy skills outside of mathematics. This is beginning to provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to develop these skills alongside their subject knowledge and understanding. However, there is still too much variation in the relevance and usefulness of numeracy activities across the curriculum.

Leaders monitor suitably the progress that pupils make in developing their skills. They use this information appropriately to identify and provide helpful interventions for pupils with weaker skills.

The school provides a suitable range of beneficial enrichment activities to support the progress and aspirations of more able pupils. This includes allocated time in Year 7 and Year 8 for them to undertake project-based enquiries that help to develop their independence and the depth of their learning. These strategies have a positive impact on the progress that this group of pupils make.

### **R5. Increase accountability at all levels and strengthen performance management procedures**

Over the last year, the new headteacher has established a clear vision for improvement that is well understood by all staff. This vision has focused clearly and consistently on the development of classroom practice. As a result, leadership has had a positive impact on the effectiveness of teaching and the progress that pupils make.

Leaders at all levels have a sound understanding of their roles, and many now lead their areas of responsibility effectively. The school has refined appropriately the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders. It has strengthened line management arrangements so that lines of accountability are clear and focus well on the quality of teaching and pupil progress and wellbeing. This helps leaders to provide support and challenge to those whom they line manage, and this has had a positive impact on many aspects of the school's work, in particular pupils' attitudes to learning.

The school has strengthened performance management arrangements successfully. Objectives focus clearly on raising standards and improving provision, and link clearly to school and departmental priorities. These arrangements help the school to plan worthwhile and appropriate professional learning opportunities for staff.

The governing body has been strengthened suitably. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide the school with valuable support, and are starting to challenge leaders robustly.

Overall, the school has established a coherent and well-coordinated approach to leadership. This has provided staff with a clear sense of direction, and helped to secure improvement in, for example, the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning.

## **R6. Improve the accuracy of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken suitable steps to strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning. In particular, over the last year it has moved away from an emphasis on compliance with school policies and procedures, and now has a strong focus on evaluating and improving the impact of its provision on pupil progress and wellbeing.

Leaders carry out a suitable range of activities to gather first-hand evidence. This has helped many leaders to develop a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In particular, the school has prioritised activities such as 'book looks' and peer observations, which enable staff both within and across departments to identify specific strengths and areas for development in both standards and provision. The school uses the findings from these activities well to both share good practice and to plan for improvement.

The school makes suitable use of the views of pupils to inform its self-evaluation processes. Its use of parental views, however, is at an early stage of development.

The headteacher has strategic oversight of the school's evaluation and improvement processes. She ensures that these activities focus clearly on teaching, learning and wellbeing and that there are strong links between these processes, professional learning and line management.