



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: SI**

**Ysgol-Y-Grango
Vinegar Hill
Rhos
LL14 1EL**

Date of visit: October 2018

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol-Y-Grango 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. Improve standards at key stage 4, particularly those of boys

Since the core inspection, standards at Ysgol Y Grango have improved and outcomes at key stage 4 are now broadly in line with those of similar schools.

In lessons, the majority of pupils make strong progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. Many pupils engage productively in their learning and are able to recall prior learning well.

Most pupils listen attentively and with respect to their teachers and their peers. Many, particularly boys, are eager to contribute to class and group discussions. They express themselves clearly and confidently, making good use of subject specific terminology. A minority explain their ideas maturely and articulately, for example when describing how to simplify surds in mathematics. Many pupils pronounce Welsh and French words and phrases well.

When given the opportunity, many pupils read aloud confidently. Most are confident in scanning a range of texts to locate and extract useful information. Many pupils use clues in text along with their prior knowledge to infer meaning or draw conclusions suitably. A minority are able to explore language highly effectively to uncover and discuss deeper layers of meaning.

Many pupils write well at length in a variety of forms, demonstrating a sound grasp of purpose and audience. A minority write maturely and use a range of techniques successfully for effect, for example to create tension when writing the opening paragraph of a gothic horror story. However, a minority of pupils make frequent basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The majority of pupils demonstrate competent numeracy skills when given worthwhile opportunities across the curriculum. In mathematics, they apply successfully their understanding of the four rules when solving problems in everyday contexts. The majority of pupils analyse data well, for example when comparing statistics such as life expectancy, percentage of pupils who attend secondary schools and GDP per capita for different countries. Many pupils plot graphs accurately and interpret their findings well to draw reasoned conclusions. Many pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately in their information technology lessons.

In general, pupils have a positive attitude towards Welsh language and culture, and many pupils achieve a level 2 qualification in Welsh.

Since the core inspection, pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4 has improved in most indicators, and is now above that of similar schools in a majority.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and the capped points score is higher than at the time of the core inspection and is broadly in line with that of similar schools in both 2017 and 2018. The proportion of pupils that achieve five GCSEs at grades A* to A or equivalent has been below that of similar schools for the last five years.

Since the core inspection, at key stage 4, the performance of boys has improved in most indicators and is now in line with that of boys in similar schools. The performance of girls fell in 2017 in most indicators, and although their performance improved in 2018, it remains below that of girls in similar schools in many indicators. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved and now compares well with that of their counterparts in similar schools.

R2. Improve provision for the development of pupils' skills, in particular numeracy and ICT

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened its provision for developing pupils' skills, and now provides pupils with a wide range of valuable opportunities to develop their numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum.

Skills co-ordinators thoroughly evaluate the impact of provision for skills through analysis of data from a range of tests, and regular meetings with pupils to discuss their work. This information is used well by leaders to identify good practice and areas within provision that require strengthening. Over the last two years, the school has provided staff with beneficial training on classroom strategies to develop pupils' skills. This includes the valuable Friday morning 'Bitesize' session, where the skills co-ordinators share good practice and ideas seen within the school and elsewhere. The school has introduced beneficial arrangements whereby mathematics and English teachers act as literacy and numeracy links to support faculties to develop high quality literacy and numeracy tasks.

Provision for developing pupils' reasoning and problem solving skills within mathematics is now a strength and there are many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, in a few instances, numeracy tasks do not offer a suitable level of challenge for all pupils, or are not closely enough linked to the subject topic being studied.

The school has created an ICT working group with representatives from different faculties. The work of this group is starting to have a suitable impact on provision for developing pupils' skills. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to use ICT for research and to present work. There are a few opportunities for pupils to develop their data and computational thinking skills. However, in general, opportunities for pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum are focused on too narrow a range of purposes.

R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, leaders have focussed successfully on addressing many of the key shortcomings identified in teaching and assessment. Staff have benefitted from a wide range of whole-school and individual training opportunities to help improve their classroom and assessment practice. This includes regular sharing of good practice.

Nearly all teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and most are good language role models. Most have developed strong working relationships with pupils. They create a purposeful atmosphere, supported by well-established classroom routines. These lessons are well-planned, appropriately challenging and include an engaging variety of activities, which promotes a strong pace of learning. In these lessons, teachers explain ideas clearly and provide relevant opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

In a minority of lessons, teachers provide a high level of challenge. They plan successfully to meet the needs of all pupils and sequence learning activities carefully to build pupils' understanding and their ability to think independently.

A few teachers do not always plan effectively to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils. They do not explain new concepts or demonstrate activities effectively enough, particularly for the lowest ability, or they do not give pupils sufficient time to explore difficult concepts. In a very few lessons, pupils' progress is limited by teachers' low expectations.

In many lessons, teachers monitor pupils' progress closely and provide valuable verbal feedback. They question pupils suitably to check their knowledge and to encourage them to explain their answers clearly. A minority of teachers use questioning skilfully to probe understanding and develop pupils' thinking. A few teachers focus their questions on too few pupils, especially on boys. In many cases, written feedback focuses well on technical accuracy and helps pupils to improve their work effectively.

R4. Improve the effectiveness of leadership and strengthen accountability at all levels

Since the core inspection, the school has successfully restructured leadership roles and responsibilities and strengthened accountability systems. These changes have contributed effectively to improving the capacity and impact of leaders to secure improvements in important aspects of the school's work.

The revised performance management arrangements contribute well to promoting the implementation of specific school priorities. Roles and responsibilities, and line management arrangements are clearly defined. Senior leaders now monitor the performance of middle leaders carefully. These strengthened systems have allowed senior leaders to take appropriately robust action to address areas of underperformance.

Many middle leaders have benefitted from helpful training to strengthen their understanding of their roles and improve their effectiveness. Nearly all middle

leaders play an appropriate role in the quality assurance of their departments. They make good use of the outcomes of these activities, the information from tracking systems, and from senior leaders' lesson observations to monitor performance and make improvements in their areas of responsibility. However, the lack of opportunities for middle leaders to observe lessons limits their capacity to drive improvements in teaching and learning.

The governing body has restructured its committees to focus effectively on key improvement priorities. Governors are now linked beneficially to individual faculty areas and middle and senior leaders present regularly to them. As a result, they have a sound oversight of the school's work. Since the time of the core inspection, they have a significantly improved understanding of their role as critical friends, and now provide a suitable level of challenge, particularly on progress against the recommendations.

R5. Improve the effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning across the school

Core inspection

Since the core inspection, the school's arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning have been strengthened significantly. This has had a positive impact on important areas of the school's work, including pupil outcomes at key stage 4 and the quality of teaching and assessment.

Senior leaders analyse data well and compare performance of specific groups of pupils appropriately against those in similar schools. Most middle leaders review pupil performance data thoroughly and identify key areas for improvement. Senior leaders evaluate the progress that pupils make in lessons well. They identify strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and use this information to plan for improvement effectively. Leaders at all levels monitor pupils' work efficiently to check aspects of provision such as quality of feedback and the provision for the development of pupils' skills. The school plans effectively to improve areas for development identified through their self-evaluation and leaders at all levels monitor progress against improvement plans robustly.

Pupil voice is a strength. The school and faculties gather the views of all pupils comprehensively through various activities such as 'feedback Friday'. This includes canvassing their opinions on teaching and learning. The school gathers the views of parents suitably.

R6. Work with the local authority to eliminate the deficit budget

Since the core inspection, the headteacher, business manager and governing body have managed the budget carefully under increasingly challenging circumstances.

The school works closely with the local authority to ensure that mounting financial pressures do not adversely impact on pupils' experiences and outcomes. It has successfully secured significant extra funding for staff professional development, intervention programmes for literacy and additional resources for faculties. Further

savings have been made through managing staffing levels carefully and renegotiating contracts and leases.

The deficit has increased over the last two years due to unforeseeable increases in costs. A new suitable recovery plan has been agreed with the local authority to eliminate the deficit over the next five years.

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