Report following monitoring
Level of follow-up: significant improvement

Ysgol Tudno
Trinity Avenue
Llandudno
Conwy
Conwy
LL30 2SJ

Date of visit: February 2016

by

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

The monitoring team

Dyfrig Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Tony Bate	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Tudno is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 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: Raise standards of reading and writing in Welsh as a first language and as a second language

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school is defined as predominantly an English-medium primary school but with significant use of Welsh. Consequently, since September 2014, the school has not assessed any pupils' Welsh first language skills.

The Welsh language has a high profile throughout the school and all staff promote positive attitudes amongst pupils towards developing their Welsh language skills. Teachers have implemented a comprehensive scheme of work for Welsh second language. It ensures a consistent and well planned approach to raising standards in all classes and ensures continuity and progression from the nursery through to Year 6.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase make very good progress in developing their Welsh literacy skills and respond enthusiastically to activities that introduce and consolidate new words and phrases in Welsh. By the end of Year 2, most pupils write extended sentences through a variety of topics.. Standards in writing of many pupils in Welsh across all areas of learning at the end of the Foundation Phase are very good. Most pupils use their prior knowledge and understanding to read, pronounce and make sense of new words. The standard of reading of most pupils is good.

Many pupils in key stage 2 make rapid progress in their Welsh language reading and writing skills. Most read Welsh books regularly and many understand and respond to texts that include an increasing range of complex words, phrases and short passages. Many pupils write confidently across the curriculum, producing extended pieces of factual information and creative work independently. A minority of pupils are beginning to use a variety of complex phrases and sentence patterns with a high degree of accuracy. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' Welsh second language skills are generally high.

Recommendation 2: Raise standards of written English across the school

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their English literacy skills across the curriculum. This is having a positive impact on pupil outcomes, and standards in English writing at the end of key stage 2 have improved considerably since the core inspection.

The school has implemented a revised curriculum that identifies a wider range of opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills in other subjects and areas of learning. Most pupils develop their writing skills progressively as they move through the school. For example, they develop a good understanding of basic punctuation and spelling and, by the end of the Foundation Phase, many use more complex punctuation, such as speech marks, accurately. They use a suitable range of vocabulary and connectives, and most Year 2 pupils write interesting and creative accounts. Many more able pupils write extended pieces of work confidently across most areas of learning.

Nearly all teachers ensure that frequent opportunities are provided for pupils in key stage 2 to use a variety of genres across the curriculum, particularly in history, geography and science. As a result, most pupils structure their writing effectively and understand how to use different writing styles in their topic work. Many pupils use extended vocabulary and expressions and vary sentences appropriately. Their writing is often interesting, and most pupils respond maturely to different purposes and audiences. For example, they write detailed instructions or reports during investigative activities.

Overall, the quality of provision ensures that pupils' standards of writing across the curriculum is good, and matches the standard of work in pupils' English books well.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that numeracy and ICT skills are developed purposefully in key stage 2

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Teachers have revised their planning for developing pupils' numeracy and information and communication and technology skills (ICT) in key stage 2 effectively.

In planning for numeracy, there is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' knowledge of number facts and on identifying and using number relationships. Pupils' books show a good range of opportunities for them to apply their numeracy skills effectively. The tasks set make frequent links across the curriculum, so that pupils can develop their concepts and skills further by using them to solve problems in relevant contexts. Planning is progressive and pupils have increasingly challenging tasks that match their abilities appropriately.

Planning for developing pupils' ICT skills builds effectively on their experiences from the Foundation Phase. This includes activities for pupils to locate and consider the information they require to support their tasks. There are beneficial opportunities to use an increasing range of ICT tools and resources to find, process and communicate information from a variety of suitable sources. For example, pupils in Year 4 use databases effectively to organise and analyse information on the properties of sportswear. Many pupils develop and communicate their ideas appropriately through ICT with a sense of purpose and audience.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that teaching challenges pupils and develops them to become independent learners

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, staff have been involved in purposeful training and observing good practice that focuses on identifying and meeting the needs of all pupils, especially the more able. As a result, teachers have high expectations of pupils and ensure that learning activities provide good challenge. Their increased awareness of the needs of more able and talented pupils has led to high levels of pupil engagement. The school has purchased appropriate resources for staff to support more able and talented pupils, especially during literacy and numeracy activities.

Teachers provide well-organised and stimulating experiences that engage pupils' interests effectively, and promote independent learning. Many pupils in the Foundation Phase make informed choices during tasks and work well independently and with others. In key stage 2, many pupils develop as confident and independent learners and show perseverance in their work. Many older pupils work for extended periods of time, engage regularly in decision-making and take responsibility for their own learning so that they apply their key skills effectively.

The school makes effective use of creative arts projects with Welsh artists and musicians, such as creating and exhibiting sculptures of themselves. Such activities challenge nearly all pupils and develop sound independent thinking. Ysgol Tudno is a Primary Lead Creative School and is involved in several projects with partner primary schools. These initiatives provide valuable opportunities for pupils to participate in problem solving activities by using creative mediums, such as art and music, in cross curricular activities.

Teachers use assessment for learning strategies effectively in most classes, and this promotes independent learning well. Most pupils understand and respond to the marking scheme effectively. This enables them to evaluate their work and set their own targets for improvement. Throughout the school, classroom displays encourage pupils to think about their learning and challenge them to reflect on how they can improve their work.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that assessment procedures are sound in key stage 2

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has recently introduced an electronic system to record and track pupils' progress. Teachers use the system effectively to identify groups of pupils who need additional support. They are beginning to use the system purposefully to plan learning activities that match the needs of individual pupils. Teachers take part in a suitable range of moderation and standardisation activities to produce useful pupil assessment profiles. These activities confirm the accuracy of their judgements of pupil standards.

Senior leaders and governors are beginning to use assessment data effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress made by pupils. They do this through regular meetings to identify any pupils who are not on track to reach their targets. Senior leaders use analysis of the outcomes of national reading and numeracy tests effectively to inform self-evaluation and plan for improvement.

Teachers mark pupils' work purposefully and regularly. Nearly all teachers' written comments relate well to the learning objectives for specific tasks. These comments focus appropriately on what pupils have done successfully and suggest appropriate areas for them to improve. Most teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to improve their work in response to feedback. However, in a few instances, comments do not always provide sufficient detail on what pupils need to do to improve their work.

All teachers use assessment for learning strategies effectively in lessons. Nearly all pupils have individual targets and most discuss these and show how they achieved them. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils create their own success criteria in groups and as individuals. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what they have to do to achieve well in tasks and evaluate their own progress accurately.

Recommendation 6: Develop the senior management team's strategic role by focusing on establishing robust arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Members of the senior management team have clear and well-defined roles and responsibilities. They receive valuable professional development to improve their effectiveness, for example to ensure a better understanding of performance data. Many of the senior management team have received specific training in order to develop their leadership skills further. For example, the deputy headteacher and numeracy co-ordinator have attended senior and middle leadership training courses organised by the regional consortium. As a result, assessment and tracking procedures have improved and the specific module on classroom observations has contributed to a more robust monitoring process for evaluating teaching and learning.

The strategic role of the senior management team is now well developed. They meet regularly and discuss relevant issues about provision and standards. Each member of the senior management team leads a small subject team, which includes teachers, support staff and a governor. These teams focus well on improving provision, such as when developing coherent curriculum schemes of work and evaluating their impact on standards. Senior leaders conduct timely book scrutiny and lesson observations and use these to consider carefully the quality of the provision and its effect on standards. They enable the whole school team to focus purposefully on implementing improvement priorities, such as the core inspection recommendations.

Recommendation 7: Strengthen the role of governors in the self-evaluation and planning for improvement process and challenge the school about its performance

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Governors have a robust understanding of their role and receive beneficial training. They are increasingly aware of the performance of the school in key areas, such as attendance and end of key stage pupil outcomes. They are more confident in asking challenging questions in governor meetings and seek additional, relevant evidence to make strategic decisions, for example when appointing staff, or providing further provision to improve specific areas such as numeracy or ICT.

The governors now play a clear role in the school's self-evaluation process. Visits from the majority of governors, to monitor lessons and to scrutinise pupils' work, strengthen their understanding of the quality of the provision and standards. In conjunction with the senior management team, they use the information gathered from their visits effectively, including performance data and other evidence collected in the self-evaluation process. They identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement and present these clearly in a comprehensive self-evaluation report.

In general, governors use self-evaluation evidence appropriately to challenge the school to improve in key areas, such as raising standards in Welsh second language and numeracy. They set appropriate improvement actions, which are generally realistic and focus appropriately on improving standards. However, leaders do not monitor progress well enough at appropriate milestones. As a result, they do not always adjust actions and priorities to address any shortfalls in progress against the identified success criteria.

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.