



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**

**Ysgol Gynradd Brynsiencyn
Brynsiencyn
Llanfairpwll
LL61 6HZ**

Date of visit: January 2020

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Brynsiencyn 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 school that are in need of significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Strengthen leaders' strategic role, including ensuring that the governing body operates more effectively in setting a direction and challenging the school's performance

Since the core inspection, an experienced headteacher from a nearby school was in charge of the school two days a week until the end of the Spring Term 2019. They worked diligently with governors to set a clear strategic direction for the school, and with officers from the local authority, to improve provision and raise standards. They established effective procedures in order to guide improvements in all aspects of school life. These procedures are having a positive effect on pupils' standards. As a result, members of the governing body and nearly all staff are aware of their roles, and operate successfully in guiding the school to improve continuously. Following the appointment of a permanent headteacher at the beginning of the summer term 2019, the school's leadership situation has become stable and the headteacher has continued successfully with the procedures that were established previously.

With support from the regional consortium, leaders implemented an effective improvement plan in order to meet the recommendations' requirements. These procedures are having a positive effect on pupils' standards, provision and important elements of leadership. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators are now gaining confidence in leading improvements within their areas of responsibility. An example of this is the way in which shortcomings in provision to develop pupils' skills are continuing to improve. Leaders are now less reliant on external support and are becoming confident in evaluating standards and provision independently. They analyse the outcomes of national tests and lead on improvements beyond their own classes successfully.

Following purposeful training, the governing body has developed to operate more effectively. Sub-committees meet regularly and a majority of governors visit the school either to observe lessons or to scrutinise pupils' work books. These governors have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. They provide feedback following visits in order to contribute towards setting a strategic direction for the school. As a result of the headteacher's purposeful support, this feedback is much more evaluative and identifies the next steps effectively. For example, feedback on scrutiny of books holds the school to account successfully in terms of the need to improve written feedback in theme work and mathematics, or in terms of challenging underperformance. However, a minority of governors' ability to undertake an active role in guiding the school has not been developed robustly enough.

R2. Improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum and their presentation of work

Since the core inspection, staff have received training from the regional consortium in order to support them in planning to develop pupils' skills effectively. Leaders and staff have worked together successfully in order to scrutinise practices that have a positive effect on pupils' confidence and progress in their skills. They have also visited nearby schools in the area and further afield to observe good practice. Staff are now much more confident in planning lessons and creating activities to develop pupils' numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum in rich contexts.

In the foundation phase, many pupils apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills successfully by undertaking rich challenges both inside and outside the classroom. For example, they research the lives of different insects that they have observed in the bug hotel. Then, they estimate the length of different insects before measuring them and comparing the answers with their original estimate. They are also given valuable opportunities to write detailed factual pieces, for example about the lifecycle of a butterfly.

Many key stage 2 pupils research and read an appropriate range of books. They use this information to write effectively in an interest range of contexts, for example when creating a successful portrayal of Alun Wyn Jones. They show a good awareness of audience by creating dialogue between characters during the great strike at Penrhyn quarry. However, a lack of language accuracy among a minority of key stage 2 pupils in Welsh hinders their expression at times. Most pupils' numeracy skills are developing soundly. They are able to apply their skills successfully, for example when comparing how far the rugby teams from different countries had travelled to attend the Rugby World Cup in Japan. Many pupils in key stage 2 apply their ICT skills successfully. An example of this includes creating graphs to show information about the pulse before and after taking part in physical exercise, comparing their heart rates with those of their friends and coming to sensible conclusions.

A whole-school structure has now been adopted for handwriting, and this is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' presentation across the school. As a result, a majority of pupils show respect and pride in their work, and their presentation is neat and shows improvement over time.

R3. Improve pupils' skills in making decisions and taking responsibility for their own learning in order to develop as independent learners

Staff have visited schools that demonstrate good practice in terms of creating independent learners in mixed-age classes. As a result, all members of staff understand how learners' independence can be developed and the advantages of providing every possible opportunity to give the child a strong voice. The effect of these activities can be seen clearly in the classrooms, in schemes of work, in the choices for learners in both classes and in the school council's activities. A specific example of developing learners' independence is the ability of many pupils across the foundation phase to fetch and return purposeful items from outside the classroom. They also develop as independent learners by choosing their challenges wisely. This is built upon further in key stage 2, as pupils behave maturely when

selecting or changing challenges to enable them to achieve highly. However, a minority of pupils at the top of the school continue to be too restricted to writing scaffolds to be completely independent learners.

Staff have reorganised the foundation phase class in order to create purposeful areas to encourage independence and nurture learners' responsibility by returning materials to the correct boxes. The teacher has promoted independence and responsibility further by creating a number of jobs within the class under the umbrella of 'Helper of the Day'. By doing so, pupils lead a plenary session at the beginning of the day, ensure that the library and coat area are tidy, and distribute letters at the end of the day. One very obvious change in the foundation phase is the way in which pupils take responsibility for their own learning when working independently on an adventure task. Activities in the adventure tasks are introduced by the teacher at the beginning of the week, and QR codes are used purposefully to enable pupils to work independently to gather evidence without input from an adult for the rest of the week.

Staff now ensure that the pupil's voice has an effect on planning by seeking pupils' input at the beginning of new themes and recording what they already know and what they would like to learn. Staff are beginning to become flexible enough to adapt planning as pupils' ideas and relevant events arise. Pupils are given an opportunity to organise a celebration or a creative activity as the highlight of each theme. A particular example of this was the '1918 Tea Party', with food and entertainment from the period to bring the theme 'A Oes Heddwch?' (Is There Peace?) to a close. Pupils are also given opportunities to identify where they can develop their literacy, numeracy or digital skills.

Pupils are given more opportunities to have an influence on school life by shouldering responsibilities on the school council. They develop their role successfully by organising fundraising activities, improving the school environment and planning a safe haven. In the haven, pupils who are worried about something are able to think in a comfortable and safe space. They also develop their ability to act more strategically by setting a wellbeing priority for the school in relation to improving playtimes.

R4. Ensure that planning and teaching provide suitable and challenging targets that respond to the needs of all pupils

Since the core inspection, staff, with support from the consortium, have created an overview of stimulating themes to be delivered over a four-year period. They ensure a balance of subjects and areas within the themes over time, which mean that opportunities to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are clear.

Teachers use comprehensive and purposeful plans to prepare exciting and challenging lessons and activities for the range of ages in both classes. Teachers plan learning experiences that are tailored effectively for the different range of abilities in the class. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to evaluate their progress, and to make mature decisions about which activity is most suitable for them. They are also encouraged to attend support groups if they feel that this will help them to understand their work better.

Assistants work effectively with pupils with additional needs in order to support and motivate them to undertake their tasks successfully, both inside and outside the classroom. Staff question pupils effectively and encourage them to think and discuss with partners regularly in order to challenge all pupils to think. Staff organise educational visits to support learning and motivate all pupils to apply themselves further to the themes by raising their awareness of local and national history. Examples of this are the trips to Yr Ysgwrn, Llynonn Mill, Celtic burial chambers and Oriel Ynys Môn, among others.

R5. Ensure that pupils have a better understanding of what they need to do in order to improve

The school has adopted an agreed assessment policy, which includes responding to pupils' work and reporting to parents. Staff have also received training on assessment for learning in the classroom. Through these steps, pupils have a better understanding of how to improve their work. For example, many pupils at the top of key stage 2 use success criteria maturely in order to correct and develop their written work.

Teachers share the lesson aim clearly with pupils. They set purposeful challenges for the full range of abilities and ages within the classes, and refer to them appropriately during lessons. Most pupils select the appropriate level of challenge during their lessons. Key stage 2 pupils select a specific challenge and respond maturely when they feel that they have made the incorrect choice, and that they need more or less of a challenge for a particular activity. This is a very positive feature and shows a very close and constructive relationship between staff and pupils. Many pupils show a good level of resilience to persevere with their tasks, and an awareness of their own needs.

Pupils are given regular opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers, and many speak sensibly and maturely about the quality of their work. They identify strengths and shortcomings in their work confidently. They listen to each other well and adapt what they will do following feedback from others. For example, in the foundation phase, pupils use an app to show their performance to the remainder of the class, and then respond to their comments. In key stage 2, most pupils use success criteria in order to decide how successfully they have completed their work and consider the next steps for improvement. Pupils are becoming more familiar with producing targets for themselves, by selecting suitable and relevant targets.

Many pupils use feedback effectively to improve the standard of their work. For example, in the foundation phase, they respond effectively to feedback by adding a capital letter or punctuating correctly. In key stage 2, they re-draft their extended written work successfully and give detailed attention to the teacher's feedback.

R6. Ensure more effective use of the outdoor area in the foundation phase

The teacher and support staff in the foundation phase work diligently to establish a daily routine and plan valuable experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

The teacher plans purposefully to develop pupils' skills in the extensive area that is part of the school's grounds. As a result, this area is a natural part of provision. Staff provide a range of focus tasks, challenges and enrichment activities. These develop a variety of pupils' skills across the areas skilfully. The level of challenge of tasks in the outdoor areas corresponds well to the level of challenge of other tasks within the classroom. A particular example of this is a group of pupils searching for verbs that were hidden in the outdoor area near the classroom, in order to use them to create sentences in relation to the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. The outdoor sheds are used effectively in order to promote pupils' independence by fetching equipment and putting it away independently and methodically.

The school has transformed the area immediately outside the classroom highly purposefully. This area is now attractive, stimulating and is developing to become a natural extension of the classroom as a space for pupils to practise a range of skills. For example, pupils have built a bug hotel, and flowers and herbs have been planted in order to promote pupils' curiosity, knowledge and understanding of nature.

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