



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Clydach Primary School
Sybil Street
Clydach
SA6 5EU**

Date of visit: May 2024

by

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

Outcome of visit

Clydach Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, His 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. Establish stable and effective leadership at all levels and improve communication with stakeholders

Leadership at the school is stable and there is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. A new substantive headteacher has taken up his post and has a clear vision for the school, which is communicated to all stakeholders. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. They have a sharp focus on developing the professional culture across the school with a continuous emphasis on improving learning. Senior leaders are developing their leadership roles well and drive the strong progress the school is making in improving provision and pupil outcomes. The work of middle leaders is becoming increasingly effective in supporting whole school improvements. As a result, the staff team works together effectively for a common purpose. Leaders have high expectations for the school's performance and share these with staff, pupils and parents effectively. These high expectations are evident in nearly all classrooms and reflected in the confidence and professional pride staff display.

Leadership across the school is distributed effectively and staff embrace this, for example, with middle leaders leading on developing teachers' approaches to improving feedback to pupils. Teachers now have a greater understanding of their role as leaders of learning in their classes and are proud of the progress their pupils are making. Across the school, the deployment of teaching assistants ensures that they support the learning efficiently. Overall, there is a greater sense of team working at the school, based on mutual respect and trust.

The school's governing body is becoming increasingly effective, with a clear direction and an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors are supportive and work harmoniously with leaders and staff, for example when looking at pupil books to evaluate progress over time. As a result, governors now have a greater understanding of the school and hold the school to account more effectively.

There is frequent and purposeful communication between leaders and stakeholders. Staff are regularly updated about matters of importance and receive beneficial feedback about their impact on pupil progress. There are regular opportunities for staff to share their knowledge and expertise with each other. Leaders and staff frequently update the governing body with the progress the school is making. Parents are regularly updated on events at the school and the progress their children are making, including those with additional learning needs (ALN).

R2. Improve self-evaluation and strategic planning to enable the school to identify and sustain the necessary improvements in teaching and learning

Leaders have a strong focus on monitoring the progress of the school's priorities, its provision and impact on pupils. The gathering of first-hand evidence now extends beyond the leadership team as middle leaders take part in evaluating pupils' work and provide helpful feedback to colleagues. This helps to increase the quality and consistency of feedback to pupils. In addition, staff participate in improvement activities such as looking at pupils' books together, and from this they consider the wider progress of learning across the school and how their teaching contributes to this.

Due to the robustness of the evidence gathered, leaders effectively evaluate the school's strengths, progress and areas for development. Leaders are acutely aware of where the focus for improvement should be, such as in refining approaches to literacy and using the skills they have recently developed as a team to begin to improve the teaching of numeracy.

Leaders are strategic when identifying appropriate professional learning for staff to ensure it is purposeful and impacts positively on the development of the team and on pupil outcomes. Leaders identify how the professionalism of staff has grown and they are empowered by their learning. As a result, staff have the confidence to transfer what they have learned into effective actions, such as the development of the curriculum, and make a beneficial contribution to school improvement.

R3. Improve teaching across the school to ensure that all groups of pupils are challenged well enough and make suitable progress

Overall, there is a consistent approach to planning, which has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. Teachers have high expectations and carefully plan for the progressive development of pupils' skills. A particular strength of the school is the way that teachers work collaboratively to develop pupils' writing skills systematically within a variety of genre and contexts.

Teachers across the school have sound subject knowledge. They plan purposeful and clear learning objectives for tasks and lessons and deliver these at a suitable pace. They explain tasks clearly to pupils and help them understand what to do. As a result, pupils are very clear about the purpose of their learning. Most lessons challenge pupils appropriately, including the more able and those with ALN. Most staff use various questioning techniques effectively to extend pupils' understanding, including reflecting on past learning and experiences. Staff are good language role models and consistently recap key vocabulary to help pupils improve their work.

Teachers have worked collaboratively to develop strategies to guide pupils in their learning and understand what they need to do to be successful. These 'steps to success' clearly guide the systematic progression and development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers challenge pupils purposefully through clear guidance on what they 'must', 'should' and 'could' do to improve their work. This is having a positive impact on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the school.

Teachers organise their classrooms well and create effective environments with a positive ethos that encourages independent learning. In the foundation learning, teachers use a range of engaging resources and approaches to develop pupils' interest successfully and challenge their thinking. Both the indoor and outdoor learning environments are thoughtfully designed. These environments allow pupils to develop their independent skills effectively. However, at times, staff over-direct activities for the youngest pupils, which hinders their creativity and imagination.

Teachers successfully challenge and motivate pupils to persevere and succeed in their learning and promote pupils' independent learning well. Staff give focused feedback to pupils to move their learning forward. They monitor their progress in learning and intervene where necessary to guide their next steps, including planning activities for pupils at an appropriate level of challenge for differing needs and ability. The older pupils reflect successfully on their work and the work of others. They have been an integral part of developing the 'effective feedback policy' alongside the staff. As a result, they highlight the strengths in their work and the work of their peers and have purposeful opportunities to improve their work to develop 'resilience and reflection'.

R4. Improve the curriculum and provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills

There is a clear vision for the school's curriculum to be stimulating and address the needs and interests of pupils at the school. The prudent investment in the professional learning for staff to shape the curriculum is impacting positively on the teaching and learning across the school. In their roles as leaders of an area of learning and experience, staff use their learning from working with other schools to work together to develop their ideas. The resulting stronger working relationships between staff is having a clear and positive impact at all levels. Through leaders' encouragement of a culture of self-reflection, staff are more confident to reflect on the curriculum and are empowered to act upon their reflections. For example, staff have modified their initial curriculum plans to ensure that they align more closely with the pupils at the school and their stage of development.

There is a strong awareness of the need to develop pupils' skills in a linear manner. For example, the school has made robust progress in improving the way in which it improves pupils' writing skills through a carefully planned approach that is consistently implemented across the school. As a result of this, pupils develop their skills effectively in their literacy lessons and teachers provide authentic opportunities for them to apply these skills across the curriculum. However, the development of numeracy skills and the opportunities to apply these as effectively across the curriculum is at an earlier stage in its development.

Leaders have made improvements to the school's tracking process to ensure it is suitable for purpose. Tracking is now more purposeful and effective due to its clear focus on the progressive development of skills in literacy and numeracy. Leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss the progress of pupils, and this has evolved to ensure that teachers have greater input. Leaders are currently developing this tracker to focus more closely on aspects of key literacy skills and to begin to progressively track skills in numeracy. Leaders and staff find this a beneficial assessment for learning tool to monitor curriculum coverage and identify any gaps in

learning. In addition, tracking informs the need for interventions to support pupils with ALN.

R5. Ensure that professional learning encourages collaboration across the school and improves teaching and learning

Leaders ensure that staff have access to worthwhile professional learning and they monitor closely the impact this has on school improvement priorities. As a result of carefully planned support, staff across the school are now more confident in their roles and work well together to share expertise and support each other. Nearly all staff are confident when delivering sequences of high-quality lessons that improve pupils' understanding of the different genre and enable them to write with increasing quality. Staff now have the necessary skills to enable them to make further improvements to the curriculum, such as in mathematics, and how these skills should be developed across the curriculum, although this is at an early stage.

In the youngest classes there has been significant progress in the provision for foundation learning. Here, staff have created inviting learning environments and focus on planning for pupils to become more independent when learning. Across the school, a middle leader supports colleagues to develop effective feedback to enhance learning. This work is having a significant impact on pupil progress and enabling them to understand how they can improve their work and become more independent learners.

Nearly all teachers have leadership of an area of learning. Through their collaboration with partner schools, including with local schools, they have the confidence and understanding to construct a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of the pupils of Clydach Primary. Through their honest and professional discussions staff work together to modify the school's curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of their pupils.

© Crown Copyright 2024: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified