



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**

**Coedpenmaen County Primary School  
Coedpenmaen Close  
Pontypridd  
RCT  
CF37 4LE**

**Date of visit: April 2024**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Coedpenmaen County 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 Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels, including that of the governing body**

The headteacher provides effective and determined leadership. Since the time of the core inspection, the school has developed a stable and coherent leadership structure and made significant progress in embedding robust management processes. Staff are now clear about their roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability. In nearly all cases, staff at all levels recognise that they have a role to play in the leadership of the school. They are willing to lead in their areas of responsibility, consider how to make improvements and often take the initiative in seeking support and assistance from others, both internally and externally. Pupil leadership groups now have a clear focus, and impact positively on key areas of the school's work. For example, the work of the Rights Respecting School group has led to pupils having a clearer understanding of their rights as a child and fosters a greater role for pupil voice through the school Senedd.

Leaders have put in place effective processes to support staff to develop and improve their practice, including addressing issues of underperformance where necessary. Altering the staffing structure to release the assistant headteacher from class to focus on supporting staff to develop the effectiveness of teaching has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Her role forms a key part of the school's process for identifying, addressing and monitoring areas for improvement in teaching. For example, when leaders, including governors, looked at pupils' written work, they identified inconsistencies in the written feedback provided by few teachers. The assistant headteacher worked with these teachers to make improvements, resulting in greater consistency and improved clarity for pupils around what they are doing well and how they can improve.

Overall, governors now have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the work of the school and provide sound support and challenge. They have become more visible in the daily life of the school and this has helped to improve their working relationships with staff. Staff are now clear about who the governors are, and the role they play in managing and leading the school. Improved

relationships between governors and staff have allowed them to engage increasingly in the gathering of first-hand evidence about the school's work. In addition, by attending regular post-inspection action plan review meetings, governors have a good understanding of the school's progress towards its improvement priorities. They have benefitted from coaching and modelling from the consortium's Regional Lead for Governance. This has enhanced their skills in questioning and challenging the work of leaders. They now take a greater role in setting the longer-term strategic direction for the school.

## **R2 Develop stronger collaborative working arrangements between staff**

Leaders have worked effectively with the local authority to raise staff morale and support their well-being, which have improved considerably. This has contributed to significantly better staff collaboration and strong progress in improving important areas of the school's work. Staff talk enthusiastically about these developments and the role they have played in delivering these.

There is now a culture of learning in the school with a strong willingness among staff to share their practice and learn from others within the school and from other organisations. For example, staff work together closely to develop effective termly curriculum plans and take part in projects with other schools. Increasingly, staff ask leaders for opportunities to share their learning with other colleagues and time is dedicated to this.

Most staff reflect openly about the effectiveness of their practice. They seek guidance from others where they need it and offer to share their skills where they have particular strengths. For example, teachers have shared their expertise in coding, music and the teaching of French. In addition, teachers have asked colleagues to model lessons, engaged in team teaching to help improve their skills and shared educational research. Overall, the wide-ranging opportunities leaders have provided for staff to collaborate have contributed strongly to improvements in pupils' learning and staff's own sense of belonging.

## **R3 Improve self-evaluation and improvement processes**

Leaders have developed a useful monitoring, evaluation and review cycle that involves members of staff, governors, parents and pupils. This is embedded and links closely to the school's post-inspection action planning and its arrangements for staff professional development review. Self-evaluation processes are robust and support leaders and staff to bring about improvements effectively. Where leaders identify shortcomings in important aspects of the school's work, such as teaching, they take appropriate, supportive and timely action.

The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's progress since the core inspection. Leaders identify correctly aspects of the school's work that are now

strengths, for example its curriculum provision, as well as the areas that require ongoing improvement, such as the development of pupils' numeracy skills.

Evaluation activities focus well on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. Leaders analyse pupil progress information and gather a wide range of first-hand evidence that includes, observing teaching, reviewing teachers' planning, looking at pupils' work and talking to them about their learning. Leaders have improved communication with parents, seeking their views through questionnaires and the parent council. These activities help to ensure parents make a strong contribution to the school's development. Increasingly, staff engage in monitoring and review activities linked with their areas of responsibility. Over time, they have developed their confidence and evaluative skills, with many no longer requiring the support previously provided by curriculum leads from the regional consortium.

Following review activities, leaders identify clearly the strengths and areas for development in well-focused summary reports. These reports are discussed in depth in staff meetings and include precise targets for improvement with suitable actions and helpful criteria to measure progress. Leaders' subsequent commentary on progress is mostly evaluative and identifies further next steps, where needed. Rigorous professional discussion at a whole-school level about the school's evaluations has become a consistent feature of its improvement work.

There is now a culture of trust and respect between leaders and staff. Through ongoing professional dialogue and collaboration, leaders guide improvement by providing bespoke professional learning activities that support individuals to improve their practice. With coaching from leaders and support from their peers, staff reflect on their teaching with an increasingly accurate view of their own successes and areas for further improvement. They are proactive in sourcing, for instance, training opportunities or reading materials to help them with their next steps. Staff taking responsibility for their own professional growth represents a significant milestone in the school's improvement journey.

Governors' contribution to whole-school self-evaluation and improvement has improved notably. They now take an active role in gathering first-hand evidence of teaching and learning by visiting classes, reviewing pupils' work with teachers and leaders, attending curriculum planning meetings with staff, and scrutinising self-evaluation documents. This has helped them to gain secure knowledge of the progress the school is making and where further improvement is still required.

#### **R4 Ensure that teachers match teaching and learning opportunities closely to pupils' needs**

Leaders have successfully addressed important areas for development in teaching across the school. The headteacher has prioritised professional learning for individuals and teams, and set high expectations for pupils' learning. Teachers plan

and deliver engaging learning experiences for all pupils that support most to make strong progress. While the quality of teaching shows notable improvement, and overall, is now much more consistent across the school, leaders recognise the need to ensure this improvement is sustained in all classes.

Teachers and support staff use a variety of successful approaches to ensure that lessons are structured carefully and have a clear focus for learning. Most of the time, teachers provide appropriate challenge that meets pupils' needs and supports a brisk pace to learning. Staff use questioning effectively to develop pupils' thoughts and ideas, and give them purposeful opportunities to collaborate on tasks. Consequently, nearly all pupils are keen to learn, are engaged and sustain interest in their work.

Staff have good working relationships with pupils. They know pupils well and ensure that learning opportunities enable pupils to make progress. For example, practitioners in the foundation learning classes have explored together why young children often repeat an activity over and over again, and how this supports their development. As a result, staff in these classes now use their observations of pupils to carefully inform their planning to take account of pupils' developing strengths, needs and interests. Teachers in older classes focus well on developing pupils' understanding of what they are learning and why. They use success criteria with pupils consistently so that pupils understand how to be successful in their work. Pupils are beginning to monitor their own progress and evaluate the learning of their peers. This is having a beneficial impact on the development of pupils' literacy skills, in particular.

Through regular meetings with leaders to talk about pupils' progress, staff reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching and act promptly to provide additional support for individuals or groups, as appropriate. There is a well-considered whole-school approach to providing verbal and written feedback to pupils. This helps to address pupils' misconceptions promptly and supports them successfully to make improvements to their work. Staff apply these approaches consistently and pupils understand them well.

## **R5 Ensure that the school is prepared for the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales**

Leaders have worked well with stakeholders to develop a vision for the school and its curriculum. This acts as an important touchstone for staff when planning learning experiences for pupils. With helpful support from the regional consortium, the deputy headteacher has ensured that there is a consistent approach to curriculum design across the school. The school's curriculum is progressive, cohesive and addresses all aspects of the Curriculum for Wales. Leaders have developed useful infographics that exemplify the structure and key principles of the curriculum. This supports teachers well in understanding how to translate their planning into practice.

There is a useful set of expected requirements to support teachers' planning. This helps teachers to ensure that they provide quality learning experiences and equity for all pupils. Teachers who have lead responsibilities for each area of learning and experience review curriculum planning regularly, and where necessary, make amendments to better meet pupils' needs. Staff incorporate pupils' ideas into the planning of topics, providing pupils with ownership and fostering their motivation. Leaders follow a robust quality assurance process to ensure that planned learning experiences are purposeful, relevant and meet the needs of pupils and national requirements.

Teachers plan stimulating topics, based around enquiry questions, that culminate in 'fantastic finishes', which pupils share with their parents. This provides pupils with a strong purpose for their learning. A strength of the school's provision is the planning of authentic, real-life learning experiences that draw successfully on the local context of the school, its community, Wales and the wider world. For example, older pupils learn about the forthcoming National Eisteddfod to be held in Pontypridd. They consider the perceptions and opinions of different people, including small business owners in the community. This leads them to generate ideas about how they can support the promotion of the Welsh language and culture within the local area. Consequently, these authentic experiences contribute strongly to pupils' attitudes to learning. Nearly all pupils engage in their learning well, focus for sustained periods of time, work at a good pace and successfully complete their tasks in lessons.

The school now has a systematic approach to developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and digital skills in their work across the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to consolidate and apply their literacy and digital skills are integrated well across the areas of learning and experience. A significant reduction in the number of worksheets pupils complete has enabled them to develop their extended writing, and recording skills, well. Provision for numeracy is at an earlier stage of development.

**R6 Ensure that the organisation of the classing structure of the school meets the needs of all pupils and enables pupils to access the learning experiences that are required for their age and ability**

Leaders have worked effectively with local authority officers to improve facilities at the school to better meet pupils' needs. These improvements include building work to increase the number of classrooms available for younger pupils and appropriate access to outdoor learning for Year 2 pupils in a mixed Years 2 and 3 class.

There has been notable financial investment to improve the indoor and outdoor environment to support the development of learning experiences for all pupils, including helpful suggestions for resources from the parent council. The parent teacher association (PTA) has been proactive in raising funds to support this, enabling staff to enhance nursery pupils' experiences with a wide range of authentic resources that support play-based learning. The PTA-funded provision of a sports

pitch has also made a valuable contribution to the development of older pupils' physical skills and well-being.

Leaders have prioritised the professional learning of staff to support their ability to provide learning experiences for pupils that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff have engaged well with these opportunities. Practitioners in the foundation learning classes have benefited considerably from visiting other schools and non-maintained settings to observe practice in making effective use of physical spaces for younger pupils. This has developed their confidence to provide well-organised and inviting areas of provision that support pupils to thrive.

Leaders have allocated time for support staff to access the Welsh Government's suite of online learning modules. This, along with other support including that from the regional consortium, has had a strong impact on improving their understanding of child development and the features of high-quality provision for younger pupils. There is now consistency in staff's planning of effective learning opportunities to ensure all pupils in foundation learning classes explore their own interests, make choices, and practise their skills independently, indoors and outside.

Across the school, class sizes and pupil-staff ratios are appropriate and leaders monitor pupil admission numbers closely.