



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 Dyffryn Ogwen
Coetmor Road
Bethesda
Gwynedd
LL57 3NN**

Date of visit: January 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen 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 that are in need of significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards

In lessons and over time, many pupils make sound progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. They recall previous learning accurately and build beneficially on that knowledge when completing new work.

Overall, many pupils have strong oral communication skills. They listen attentively and respectfully to the teacher and their peers and follow instructions carefully. In a few cases, pupils listen carefully to the responses of individuals or groups and offer mature comments by using subject-specific vocabulary correctly. Many pupils speak confidently and are very willing to contribute orally, and often give extensive answers. They work effectively in discussion groups and share their ideas enthusiastically. More able pupils are natural and fluent speakers who contribute sensibly to discussions by using a wide range of vocabulary in Welsh and English, for example when discussing whether everyone should have the right to protest. A few pupils provide brief, undeveloped answers using fragmented language and limited vocabulary.

Many pupils have sound reading skills. They gather information and locate facts skilfully and come to valid conclusions when reading various texts in both languages. A majority of pupils scan successfully to find the main messages and key information. They read extended pieces closely to identify style and bias. A minority of pupils interpret and come to accurate conclusions about the tone and bias of contrasting texts. For example, they identify observantly how a writer persuades the reader about the advantages of eating meat and being vegetarian.

Many pupils make sound progress in their writing skills. Overall, they write clearly and fluently for a wide range of purposes and audiences in a majority of subjects. A majority of pupils structure their work methodically by using a good variety of sentences and paragraphing appropriately. The written work of a significant few pupils includes consistent basic errors, including slang, language errors and careless spelling.

In Welsh and English lessons, many pupils re-draft their work successfully and independently. They consider the teacher's comments and improve the quality of their work by varying their sentences, adapting adjectives, and adding more sophisticated vocabulary. This is a strong feature. A minority of pupils produce skilful written work by using rich vocabulary, for example when describing Syria before and

after the explosions. More able pupils make sound development in their creative writing skills when creating commendable descriptions of the experiences of Malala and Yusra maturely and sensitively.

In mathematics lessons, many pupils use a wide range of number techniques confidently. They are beginning to apply these skills suitably in relevant subjects across the curriculum. For example, in science lessons, pupils calculate the volume and density of a cuboid successfully. Pupils also reinforce their number skills further in registration sessions in order to strengthen their understanding of important number facts and rules.

Many pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently across a majority of subjects. They make sound progress by using dedicated apps and programs to present their work.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to their work and the school. They work diligently in lessons and persevere in tasks. Many pupils work effectively in pairs and small groups and independently of the teacher. Many pupils are well-behaved and treat their peers and staff with respect. They take pride in their area, their Welshness and their Welsh heritage.

R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, leaders have provided motivational leadership and introduced beneficial strategies to ensure improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment. The school provides useful professional learning opportunities for all staff, which focus on key features of effective teaching. As a result, in many cases, teachers create a learning environment that encourages and challenges pupils to reach their potential.

Many teachers plan their lessons effectively and introduce topics with passion and enthusiasm. They present activities that ignite pupils' interest and challenge them to think further. Many teachers provide pupils with purposeful support while walking around the classroom. They have high expectations and challenge pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. In these lessons, teachers respond effectively to the needs of pupils across the range of ability and prepare purposeful resources to drive learning. In a minority of subjects, worksheets are overused unnecessarily.

Many teachers are robust language models and correct pupils' fragmented language consistently and encourage them to improve the quality of their language. However, in a few cases, there are shortcomings in the teachers' own standards of language and their linguistic expectations are too low.

In a majority of lessons, teachers ask a good variety of questions to check understanding and stimulate thinking, in addition to maintaining a swift and lively pace of learning. However, in other lessons, questions are too superficial and there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to answer at length.

A majority of teachers provide purposeful and comprehensive written feedback on pupils' work, which identifies clearly how they can improve their work. They are given valuable opportunities to respond to the teacher's comments and to think independently before making improvements. In a few cases, teacher feedback is not effective enough as the comments are too brief or too complimentary. In a minority of

subjects, teachers set peer assessment tasks too often and this does not always lead to improvement.

R3. Improve provision to develop pupils' skills, particularly in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT)

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a number of new, beneficial strategies to improve its provision to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Through the energetic leadership of middle leaders with responsibility for these skills and successful co-operation with the senior management team, staff have benefitted from valuable training and resources. Many teachers use these materials effectively when planning lessons to support the development of pupils' skills. This has ensured a great deal of good practice across the school.

There are comprehensive opportunities across the subjects for pupils to apply their literacy skills in both languages. Leaders have identified the development of oracy, higher-order reading skills and linguistic accuracy as priorities correctly and have introduced a range of beneficial whole-school strategies. In particular, the robust focus on developing oracy has fostered many eloquent speakers. However, a few teachers do not contribute sufficiently to the efforts to improve pupils' literacy skills.

The school continues to develop and adapt valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in registration sessions and relevant subjects. Leaders use a range of first-hand evidence to identify suitable priorities to develop number skills. There are also purposeful and effective warm-up tasks at the beginning of every mathematics lesson.

The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have created very high quality, attractive websites. These include purposeful resources to support teachers to plan rich tasks in lessons and registration sessions. The numeracy website also includes guidelines for parents to support their children and for pupils to understand, reason and solve a variety of number work. Leaders evaluate and update the content of the websites regularly to ensure that the material is relevant and beneficial for staff and pupils.

There are extensive opportunities for pupils to use and develop their ICT skills across the curriculum. These include beneficial research tasks.

The school has improved its provision to support pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills effectively. Many of these pupils receive valuable and specialist support to accelerate their progress in these basic skills. Leaders evaluate the quality and effect of provision continuously and make suitable changes, where appropriate.

R4. Improve the quality of leadership at all levels

Since the core inspection in September 2019, most leaders have worked together effectively and productively to raise pupils' standards and improve the quality of provision and leadership. They have focused firmly on important shortcomings that were identified in the core inspection and have introduced beneficial structures and processes to address them. Senior leaders have provided beneficial training and valuable professional learning opportunities to help teachers improve their practice and raise their expectations in terms of what pupils can achieve.

Line management arrangements are robust and, in most cases, effective. Staff roles and responsibilities are defined clearly and understandable to all. Meetings have consistent arrangements and common agendas, and focus appropriately on suitable priorities, namely pupils' progress, provision for skills and the quality of teaching.

Most middle leaders identify strengths and areas for improvement within their areas of responsibility appropriately. Across the school, quality assurance processes are robust. The school plans a series of purposeful monitoring activities, such as scrutinising pupils' work and lesson observations. Many leaders make appropriate use of findings from activities to seek pupils' views and make beneficial improvements to provision as a result. There are detailed and effective discussions between middle leaders and senior leaders to set and review targets for individual pupils and ensure that they reach their full potential. Evaluations of lessons and pupils' work give appropriate attention to the quality of teaching and assessment and some elements of standards, such as oracy and writing. Overall, the evaluation of the overall progress made by pupils in their knowledge and skills in lessons and over time is not comprehensive enough.

The school improvement plan and most departmental improvement plans are clear and based on appropriate and important areas for improvement. However, they are based solely on the findings of the core inspection and the shortcomings that were identified. The school has not identified other areas for improvement through its own self-evaluation processes. The governing body is very supportive but its role as a critical friend that challenges the school to improve has not been developed in full.

The headteacher has focused appropriately on supporting the wellbeing of pupils and staff during the challenging period of the pandemic. Most leaders have worked relentlessly to develop a strong sense of team and a joint aspiration to improve important aspects of the school's work. As a result, there are strong improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' standards and skills since the core inspection.

R5. Strengthen performance management processes and ensure a clear system of accountability

Performance management processes and the system of accountability are robust and consistent across the school. The purpose of performance management and its expectations are clear to all staff.

The system of setting staff performance management objectives is clear and coherent and there is a firm focus on the school's main areas for improvement, namely improving pedagogy and raising pupils' standards and skills. Staff and leaders have identified training needs and aligned them appropriately to correspond

to personal objectives. Actions are thorough and include appropriate arrangements for monitoring and reviewing.

Overall, performance management processes have had a positive effect on standards and the quality of provision and leadership. However, senior leaders do not address staff underachievement quickly enough.

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