



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 Bro Sannan
Ty Fry Road
Aberbargoed
Bargoed
CF81 9FN**

Date of visit: March 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Bro Sannan 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. Develop a robust leadership structure in order for leaders at all levels to take responsibility for important aspects of the school's life and work

Since the core inspection, the school has worked with the local authority to appoint a permanent executive headteacher and an acting executive deputy headteacher, to lead this school and a neighbouring school. The headteacher shares a clear and purposeful vision with all stakeholders and sets very high expectations for staff, pupils, and governors. He has established a strong leadership structure that has a very positive effect on the school's life and work. Leaders now have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and they lead confidently on different aspects of the school's life and work. They make a valuable contribution to realising the vision and the targets in the post-inspection action plan successfully. As a result, all staff ensure that there is a continuous focus on improving provision and supporting pupils' wellbeing and achievement. This means that the school has made good progress against nearly all of its priorities following the core inspection.

Leaders work successfully with other agencies, including schools, the local authority, and the regional consortium. They have received a range of purposeful training and support to support and check progress against the targets in the post-inspection plan. The headteacher knows the school's needs exceptionally well and understands what external support staff need to realise the priorities. Members of the governing body have worked diligently to support the school's strategic direction and improvements more effectively since the core inspection. Through the Chair's clear and robust leadership, governors are developing a good understanding of the school's performance and its development needs. As a result, they are using their knowledge and understanding more effectively to challenge the school on its performance.

R2. Strengthen self-evaluation processes

The school has strong self-evaluation processes that ensure that nearly all aspects of the school's life and work are given regular attention. These processes include seeking the views of staff, governors, and strategic partners, in addition to pupils and parents. Leaders use findings from first-hand evidence effectively to evaluate standards and provision. As a result, they identify the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and adapt provision where necessary. Leaders have used the targets from the post-inspection action plan successfully to ensure clear improvements, and they have a sound understanding of wider priorities that are in need of attention. They also respond promptly to the findings of staff, parent, and pupil questionnaires to improve provision, for example in tackling pupils' behaviour.

As a result, recent questionnaires and a review of behaviour and wellbeing that was conducted by the local authority, recognise clear improvements in pupils' behaviour following purposeful support from leaders.

Despite the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the school's monitoring arrangements, leaders and governors have succeeded in evaluating provision and standards appropriately. This includes scrutiny of pupils' books, observing teaching, interpreting data, scrutiny of teachers' planning, in addition to talking to pupils about their work. Reports by the headteacher and leaders to the governors are now more evaluative and provide a fair and accurate reflection of the school's life and work. As a result, governors have sound knowledge of strengths and areas for improvement, in addition to progress against priorities in the post-inspection action plan.

R3. Ensure that teachers use a variety of effective learning strategies to meet the needs of all pupils

Since the core inspection, leaders have reorganised the staffing structure successfully to make the best use of teachers' and assistants' expertise. This ensures that leaders match the needs of every class to the staff's particular experience and expertise. These strategic changes have led to positive improvements in the culture among all staff and strengthened provision across the school. They now model and share effective teaching strategies with each other regularly. They have also succeeded in adapting their teaching well during the pandemic and have shared their practice with other schools in the cluster and the regional consortium. This close and continuous co-operation has also ensured consistency in provision across the school, particularly in the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy, and independent learning skills. All staff are now involved in decisions relating to which teaching and learning strategies are most effective across the school. They also take part in meetings to moderate and standardise pupils' literacy and numeracy, which supports their understanding of pupils' standards.

Teachers and learning assistants work together effectively to prepare a range of lessons and purposeful learning experiences for pupils. They plan a series of stimulating activities purposefully, which engage pupils' attention and spark their imagination. This is supported effectively by a range of purposeful teaching strategies. In the best practice, activities excite and enthuse pupils of all abilities and challenge them to perform at their best. Leaders have developed useful planning strategies and organise purposeful training to help staff to deal better with unacceptable behaviour. As a result of successful training and consistent teaching strategies, most pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exceptional, and a majority participate confidently in the classroom by asking and responding to questions.

Overall, staff feedback on pupils' work is effective. Pupils understand what they are doing well and many are able to explain clearly what they need to do to improve. Teachers and assistants use questions appropriately to find out what pupils understand. In the best practice, staff use questioning techniques skilfully to encourage pupils to think deeply about their answers, co-operate with others and broaden their understanding.

R4. Improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills

Since the inspection, the school has appointed leaders to lead on literacy and numeracy, which has ensured good progress in pupils' skills.

The senior leader with responsibility for literacy has led staff very effectively on monitoring standards and provision. This has ensured that good practice that was already in place continues, and that aspects that were in need of development are given due attention. The school has introduced a Welsh oracy scheme that has been adapted to meet pupils' specific needs. The scheme provides a structured and developmental language programme that is based on language patterns and common vocabulary. In the best practice, teachers combine the programme with their literacy sessions to ensure beneficial opportunities to reinforce learning. Better consistency in provision is beginning to have a positive effect on standards of oracy, with pupils from the earliest year groups to the top of the school speaking maturely.

In the foundation phase, staff have placed a strong emphasis on reading development by planning fun learning experiences for pupils. There is now a strong emphasis in these classes on developing pupils' early reading skills and nurturing an interest in books and stories. In key stage 2, they have introduced a 'reading carousel' arrangement for pupils to receive beneficial opportunities to read for different purposes and various audiences. Leaders' monitoring records and pupils' achievement show the early success of this arrangement. Staff who are most confident in teaching reading support others often, by sharing best practice and offering advice and support.

Following recent training, staff have adapted ideas and resources to improve pupils' writing skills. Staff meet regularly to scrutinise their work, share good practice, and learn from each other. The management team observes lessons to support teachers, in addition to modelling good practice for them. Many teachers plan a series of lessons and learning experiences skilfully and build on pupils' understanding of the qualities and characteristics of different types of writing effectively. As a result, many pupils in these classes are beginning to write a wide range of work to a high standard, for example a monologue telling the story of the Aberfan disaster from the perspective of the school's iconic clock.

The senior leader with responsibility for numeracy has ensured that beneficial plans are now in place to support pupils' skills. Staff have taken part in a good range of purposeful training and support on how to teach and deliver concepts of numeracy and mental arithmetic in the classroom. As a result, most teachers deliver useful short sessions daily to develop pupils' basic numeracy skills. In the foundation phase, teachers and assistants plan a range of fun, hands-on learning experiences, for example by counting the number of dinosaurs that appear virtually on the school grounds through an app on their tablet computer. In key stage 2, teachers are beginning to plan an appropriate range of beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in other areas of learning. However, these practices are not fully embedded in all classes. In the best practice, pupils use their skills very well to solve problems and to support their learning in real-life contexts, for example by following a journey on a map using coordinates in the four quadrants.

R5. Improve pupils' independent learning skills

The difficult period over the last two years as a result of the pandemic has had a detrimental effect on developing pupils' independent learning skills. Long periods of home-schooling and periods of staff and pupil absences have hindered the staff's efforts to embed this work successfully across the school. However, since the core inspection, the standard of teachers' planning has improved and activities are now tailored suitably to a wide range of abilities. Teaching assistants work effectively both inside and outside the classrooms to support pupils who are in need of support and motivate them to undertake tasks successfully, without overdirecting them towards the correct solution.

In the foundation phase, staff provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their learning more independently. They are given beneficial opportunities to choose and engage in a suitable range of learning experiences to support their skills. By key stage 2, teachers set clear expectations for pupils to nurture their independent skills. There is a clear expectation that pupils think deeply, ask a friend, or use resources within the classroom before approaching the teacher for support. Overall, staff create stimulating environments within the classroom, which supports pupils to find information to solve challenges.

Nearly all pupils have targets that help them to complete their writing and numeracy tasks without the need for support from an adult. In the best examples, targets are personal to the individual and are measurable in order to promote pupils' independent skills.

Teachers seek pupils' ideas effectively at the beginning of each theme. In the foundation phase, they are beginning to use the pupil voice to plan learning experiences and challenges. By key stage 2, they provide increasingly valuable opportunities for pupils to have input into what they learn, which stimulates their interest and encourages them to apply themselves to their learning.

© Crown Copyright 2022: 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