



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: Special Measures

**Ysgol Awel y Mynydd
Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
Conwy
LL31 9RZ**

Date of visit: July 2022

by

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

This report is also available in Welsh.

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Awel Y Mynydd 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 special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Establish robust and effective leadership

The headteacher provides robust and energetic leadership, which ensures the support and trust of members of the school community. This includes a supportive deputy headteacher and senior management team, who place an appropriate focus on raising standards. As a team, they have shown resilience in dealing with the significant challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in improving pupils' outcomes.

Leaders have made sensible adaptations to the school's leadership and management structures. The senior management team's responsibilities are defined clearly to have a positive effect on improving provision and raising standards. Leaders now operate more strategically to improve provision, for example in developing challenges in the learning and play areas in classes lower down in the school, which is now a strong feature of the school. The school has continued to work with officers from the regional consortium to develop middle managers' leadership skills and their contribution to the self-evaluation process. As a result, middle leaders contribute effectively to developing the school's priorities for improvement. This includes literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, in addition to a team of teachers who lead on developing information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school. They have a positive effect on the school's work, for example by providing the remainder of the staff with clear guidance on specific areas of the digital competence framework. This leads to developing pupils' skills successfully. Leaders at all levels contribute purposefully to the self-evaluation process and provide their colleagues with useful feedback.

The governors are supportive of the headteacher and staff and contribute enthusiastically to evaluating the school's work by responding to the recommendations from the inspection. They know the school well and a few have resumed their visits to the school, which have been restricted due to COVID-19. For example, one member of the governing body has observed mathematics provision throughout the school to become more familiar with the school's approaches to setting a different level of challenge for pupils. This has strengthened governors' understanding of provision and pupils' standards. The governing body has been strengthened further by adding new members with expertise in areas such as financial management and additional learning needs.

R2. Strengthen self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes

Leaders and staff have continued to work enthusiastically on the post-inspection action plan. They have set useful actions and acted purposefully to address the recommendations. It is a 'live' plan that is given regular attention by the senior management team and teachers and interweaves appropriately with the term's monitoring activities. Leaders provide governors with relevant information about the term's self-evaluation activities and the main findings. They also address staff underperformance suitably, where appropriate.

Teachers and leaders conduct a wide range of self-evaluation activities regularly, which has a positive effect on children's outcomes. With support from the regional consortium, leaders have a sound understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. By scrutinising pupils' work and conducting learning walks, they develop a thorough overview of the current priorities. For example, they identify to what degree learners respond to feedback from teachers. On the whole, book scrutiny reports and records of learning walks provide beneficial comments on the quality of provision and report increasingly on pupils' learning. They set suitable actions for improvement and now identify responsibilities and appropriate review arrangements. As a result, on the whole, monitoring activities have a positive effect on improving provision and pupils' skills.

R3. Establish and make effective use of pupil progress-tracking processes

Leaders have established robust progress-tracking processes that focus accurately on different aspects of pupils' development. Nearly all teachers use these procedures regularly and use assessments appropriately to plan the next steps in learning.

Teachers use an online method appropriately to track pupils' progress with increasing accuracy. They use online personal assessments to identify the next steps in relation to developing pupils' numeracy and literacy skills. Information from assessments is used beneficially to plan appropriate interventions for individual pupils, where necessary. For example, leaders organise literacy and numeracy sessions for pupils who need additional support which, in turn, enables them to develop their skills appropriately. Teachers and assistants work together and communicate with each other regularly to identify pupils' progress and the effect of interventions.

Leaders have developed the useful tracking system to consider the progress made by groups of pupils. This ensures that staff have an increasing awareness of these groups. Teachers' assessments are used suitably to ensure that provision is adapted increasingly to meet pupils' needs. Staff continue to record pupils' wellbeing needs and, as a result, leaders ensure timely access to suitable support.

R4. Ensure that teachers plan purposefully to develop challenging opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the areas of learning

Teachers plan a range of purposeful activities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the school. They link regular extended writing tasks with the class theme and encourage pupils to develop robust writing skills in different contexts. For example,

pupils learn about the features of diaries and then write a diary to describe a person's experience aboard the Titanic. Teachers provide beneficial activities to develop pupils' Welsh language skills with support from the local authority's advisory team. In the strongest examples, particularly in classes lower down the school, activities have a positive effect on pupils' Welsh language skills.

Teachers plan mathematics lessons that build on previous learning soundly. Their planning identifies relevant opportunities for pupils to transfer these skills to other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils practise and apply their numeracy skills independently by measuring and recording the temperature of different areas of the school. In very few classes, opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in other areas are limited. Teachers plan lessons that provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to choose the level of challenge associated with completing a task. They plan beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop and apply an increasing range of digital skills. For example, pupils use spreadsheets effectively by inputting data on their favourite activities following a visit to the RSPB reserve and present the data in a variety of charts. Teachers respond to pupils' work across the school with increasing consistency and the feedback they are given enables them to build on their skills and improve their work. On the whole, the progress that is made lower down the school to provide challenging opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills has been very strong.

R5. Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills

Throughout the school, pupils develop their literacy skills effectively during language lessons. For example, lower down the school, they write about familiar characters with an increasing level of accuracy by following a specific scheme. Many pupils are beginning to apply their writing skills appropriately by working independently in the enhanced provision. For example, they write facts about famous people and Conwy castle. Most of the school's older pupils write interesting pieces in a variety of genres and recall their recent learning to support them. For example, they discuss the features of a pamphlet then create a pamphlet to attract tourists to visit north Wales. Many pupils develop confidence by responding to questions about themselves with increasing accuracy, using familiar sentence patterns in Welsh. However, pupils' Welsh speaking skills in the school's higher years have not been developed consistently enough.

On the whole, throughout the school, pupils make good progress in mathematics lessons. As a result, they apply their numeracy skills with increasing confidence when working in other areas of learning. For example, in classes lower down the school, pupils cut out shapes and measure them correctly to the nearest half centimetre. In the school's upper years, they present information about the populations of the towns and villages in which the pupils in the class live in tables and graphs.

Many pupils use their ICT skills successfully to present information, for example by creating slides about different habitats or by using green screen technology to tell Welsh stories. They develop data-handling skills effectively by creating simple tables and graphs lower down the school and by using formulae with increasing confidence at the top of the school. Many create their own websites to show what they have learned recently and insert appropriate pictures.

R6. Ensure that pupils contribute effectively to their own learning and to making wider decisions about the school's work

On the whole, pupils play a more active part in their own learning and are becoming more independent learners. There are now useful opportunities for pupils to contribute ideas to the term's themes. Lower down the school, parents and carers are given beneficial opportunities to share their children's interests with the school and suggest ideas for the term's work. Older pupils provide suitable ideas about what they would like to learn within the term's theme through class discussions, for example by choosing to research the world's oceans.

Lower down the school, pupils take ownership of their learning by researching independently. For example, during their 'Big Question' periods, pupils conduct interesting investigations to see whether the tallest child is the fastest. They apply their skills successfully by undertaking purposeful challenges with an appropriate level of challenge independently. The ability of these youngest pupils to work independently is now a strong feature of the school's work. In the school's upper years, pupils are given suitable opportunities to choose to research areas of personal interest and choose how to present their work during the 'awr athrylith' ('genius hour') period. By doing so, they are given more opportunities to work independently, for example by researching to discover the size of the Titanic before creating a model of it. Pupils discuss their work with their peers sensibly within 'parau parablau' ('talking partners') and give each other constructive feedback. In many classes, pupils contribute ideas on how to succeed in their work and select the level of challenge that is most relevant to them. These opportunities are now increasingly consistent across the school.

The school has active pupil voice groups, such as the school council. These groups now have an increasing influence on the work and strategic direction of the school. For example, members evaluate to what extent their peers succeed in developing independent skills by using the 'genius hour', by considering feedback from questionnaires and providing targets to improve provision for staff and governors. Members of the eco council pick litter on the school grounds and members of the Criw Cymraeg have organised a 'Silent Disco' to raise money while promoting Welsh music. The 'Dewiniaid Digidol' ('Digital Wizards') support the ICT co-ordinators to promote specific aspects of the digital framework in all classes.

R7. Comply with Welsh Government guidelines when planning the expenditure of specific grants

The school's finance administrator and business manager support leaders to ensure that the funding allocation is used purposefully and in line with specific grant guidelines. Leaders plan the use of grant expenditure sensibly. For example, they have ensured that the expenditure plan for the Pupil Development Grant and the Accelerated Learning Programme identifies the provision that is needed to raise pupils' outcomes. Where appropriate, they ensure that this expenditure is also linked to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan and monitor the effect of expenditure regularly. Financial matters are discussed in detail by the governors' finance sub-panel, which reports back to the full body. With the support of the local authority and the regional consortium, they check that the core funding and specific grants are spent appropriately.

The school evaluates the effect of the use of grants on improving pupils' standards and wellbeing accurately. For example, leaders use the information they have about groups of pupils to organise specific support for them. They have developed suitable tracking procedures for individuals and groups of pupils to monitor progress and use this information to allocate appropriate provision for vulnerable pupils and to inform planning. They use all of this information suitably to evaluate the use of grants to identify the effectiveness of the activities planned for pupils.

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