

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Significant improvement

Ysgol Dolafon

**Dol-y-Coed Road
Llanwrtyd Wells
Powys
LD5 4RA**

Date of visit: March 2026

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Dolafon 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 significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Strengthen leadership at all levels to use self-evaluation processes effectively to recognise and realise the school's priorities for improvement

Since his appointment, the acting headteacher has worked effectively to strengthen strategic leadership across the school. Leaders have ensured that all staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which they undertake diligently. Staff now contribute purposefully to the schools' self-evaluation activities and, as a result, are developing a clearer understanding of the strengths and priorities for improvement.

Leaders have implemented a purposeful culture of professional learning. All staff have valuable opportunities to attend training and visit local schools to observe good practice. As a result, professional learning is starting to have a positive impact on classroom practice. For example, teachers now provide increased opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills progressively.

With support from the local authority, the acting headteacher has introduced robust self-evaluation processes. Regular learning walks, work scrutiny and discussions with pupils enable leaders to identify key strengths in teaching and learning, as well as areas for improvement more accurately. For example, they recognise the need to embed current feedback strategies to improve the consistency and impact on pupils' progress.

The governing body plays an active role in the school's improvement journey. Link governors meet with leaders regularly to discuss the progress the school is making in specific areas of its work. Governors visit the school to conduct monitoring activities which supports them to develop a deeper understanding of the standards of teaching and rates of pupils' progress across the school. This enables them to provide appropriate challenge and support to leaders.

R2. Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent, and that staff make purposeful use of assessment information to plan provision to challenge and support pupils' progress

Overall, there are clear signs of improvement in the quality of teaching across the school. Staff foster positive and supportive working relationships with pupils, which contribute to a purposeful learning environment. In most cases, teaching engages pupils positively and supports many to make at least appropriate progress in their learning.

Through constructive collaboration with the local authority, leaders have strengthened staff's understanding of expectations for pupils' skills progression. This has led to clearer, shared expectations for teaching and learning. Increasingly, staff are applying these expectations more consistently when planning learning activities to ensure that they build suitably on pupils' prior knowledge.

Leaders provide valuable opportunities for staff to collaborate and reflect on teaching practice and its impact on pupils' learning. For example, regular sharing of pupils' work during professional dialogue amongst staff supports them to reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Staff engage positively in targeted professional learning and benefit from effective support from the school improvement advisor, alongside worthwhile opportunities to observe effective practice in other schools. This is beginning to strengthen the quality of professional dialogue between leaders, staff and governors, particularly in relation to evaluating teaching and learning across the school.

Where teaching is most effective, staff provide clear objectives consistently to enable many pupils to understand what they need to do to be successful in specific tasks. They deliver well-paced lessons with purposeful learning activities that meet the needs of many pupils appropriately, leading to good levels of engagement and suitable progress. Staff are beginning to use questioning more effectively to probe and extend pupils' thinking, encouraging them to explain their ideas in greater depth. Increasingly, staff use a suitable range of strategies to assess pupils' understanding and support their progress. They are becoming more skilled in matching the level of challenge to pupils' needs and at providing timely feedback that moves learning forward.

Staff have reduced their reliance on overly structured worksheets. Pupils are beginning to develop greater independence in organising and presenting their work. A range of approaches are used purposefully to promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem, including celebrating achievements through useful 'Wal Balchder' displays.

Leaders and staff have made beneficial improvements to the learning environment, particularly for younger pupils. These pupils now benefit from more focused opportunities to practise and apply their skills through purposeful play, both indoors and outdoors.

However, leaders recognise that there remains scope to develop the use of the extensive outdoor environment further to support pupils' development.

Leaders and staff have developed an appropriate and improving understanding of pupils' progress. During termly pupil progress meetings, staff draw appropriately on their professional knowledge and relevant assessment information to identify pupils' strengths and areas for development. They are beginning to use this information effectively to inform planning for individuals and groups. This process is supporting leaders to track the progress of specific groups more systematically and to respond more promptly to their needs.

R3. Provide an engaging and purposeful curriculum that develops pupils' independence, mathematical and literacy skills progressively over time

Since the core inspection, leaders and staff have strengthened the quality of teaching and learning by planning and delivering more engaging learning experiences. Staff are developing a sound understanding of progression and are embedding this in purposeful and authentic learning experiences across the school. Staff now provide a curriculum that is starting to support suitable progression in the development of pupils' skills from the Reception class to Year 6.

Staff provide increasingly purposeful opportunities for pupils to make choices and take greater responsibility for their learning, fostering curiosity, enthusiasm and independence. Many pupils contribute their ideas with growing confidence, for example through interesting 'Dolafon Detective' hook activities, where they influence the direction of thematic work beneficially.

Leaders and staff ensure that the curriculum takes appropriate account of the school's local context. They are beginning to plan a suitable range of engaging and immersive experiences, including visitors and visits within and beyond the local area, which support pupils to deepen their understanding appropriately. Provision to develop pupils' awareness of Welsh heritage and history is developing suitably. For example, older pupils undertake purposeful research into government decision-making, such as the Mynydd Epynt eviction. and its impact on communities.

More recently, leaders and staff have strengthened their focus on improving pupils' reading skills. They analyse an appropriate range of evidence to track progress, leading to the implementation of targeted interventions that are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' engagement and progress. Many younger pupils read with increasing fluency and expression. Older pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to reading and discuss their preferences confidently. Increasingly, pupils across the school apply their reading skills effectively across areas of learning, for example when researching information or using skimming and scanning techniques purposefully.

The school's focus on improving pupils' writing is beginning to result in gradual improvements in the quality and consistency of their work. Staff have developed a clearer understanding of how to support the progressive development of writing skills and generally plan effectively to build on prior learning. By Year 2, most pupils write sentences with generally accurate spelling and appropriate letter formation. As they move through the school, many pupils apply their knowledge of the features of different types of writing appropriately. For example, older pupils produce detailed balanced arguments on issues such as fuel consumption and environmental concerns. Overall, many pupils' handwriting is improving, and they are beginning to take greater pride in the presentation of their work.

In mathematics, leaders and staff have introduced a coherent whole-school approach to developing pupils' skills progressively. This is beginning to improve rates of progress and pupils' skills. Staff make effective use of practical and visual resources to support understanding and develop mental calculation skills. Younger pupils explore concepts through play and secure early number and measure skills suitably. As pupils progress, many apply their skills appropriately across areas of learning, strengthening their reasoning in meaningful contexts. For example, older pupils use online resources confidently to compare prices and identify best value when planning events such as the Easter 'Eggstraveganza', supporting their understanding of profit and loss purposefully.

R4. Ensure consistency in the quality and use of pupil feedback to support and provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to respond and improve their work

Leaders have provided beneficial professional learning for staff to improve assessment processes. Following a consultation with pupils and consideration of relevant research, staff have updated the assessment, marking and feedback policy and introduced a marking code that is now being used consistently across the school. This is beginning to guide staff to provide timely and purposeful feedback that supports pupils' learning more effectively.

Across the school, pupils are increasingly able to explain how personalised feedback and targets support them to improve their work. Older pupils confidently explain how the 'Reflect, Connect and Progress' sessions provide valuable opportunities to look back on their work, discuss it and make improvements. Through their self-evaluation processes, leaders have identified the need to build on this early success to ensure that practice is consistently effective across the school.

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