



**Report following monitoring
Level of follow-up: significant improvement**

**Thornwell Primary School
Thornwell Road
Bulwark
Chepstow
Monmouthshire
NP16 5NT**

Date of visit: January 2015

by

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

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The monitoring team

Andrew Thorne	Reporting Inspector
Michelle Gosney	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring visit

Thornwell Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2013.

As a result, Her 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

Recommendation 1: Improve standards of writing across the curriculum, especially for more able pupils

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the standards of writing across the curriculum have improved substantially. Nearly all pupils' writing skills are appropriate to their age and ability. By the end of the Foundation Phase, nearly all pupils can write well independently in a variety of genres. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils write well for a good range of purposes in English lessons and across the curriculum. More able have a wide vocabulary, which they use effectively. They produce extended pieces of written work with accurate spelling and punctuation in a variety of subject areas. Nearly all pupils' writing in subjects across the curriculum reflects the standard of their work in English and writing books.

In the Foundation Phase, performance at the higher-than-expected outcome (outcome 6) in literacy places the school in the top 25% when compared with similar schools. At key stage 2, there is a trend of continuous improvement in English at the expected level 4. For 2014, results place the school in the top 25% when compared with similar schools. At the higher-than-expected level (level 5), results place the school in the higher 50%.

Recommendation 2: Improve pupils' presentation and handwriting

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has a clear handwriting policy that all teachers follow well. This policy sets high expectations for the standards of pupils' handwriting and provides staff and pupils with clear guidance on the formation of letters and letter joins. All pupils undertake regular handwriting sessions and most are aware that the quality of their presentation and handwriting is important in all their work. The school teaches pupils to write in a cursive style. As a result, most pupils form letters well by the end of Foundation Phase. Many pupils in key stage 2 write in a clear, joined cursive style. A few pupils do not use write using the school's cursive style consistently.

The school has clear expectations of how pupils present their work. Nearly all pupils follow these guidelines well and take pride in the presentation of their books. As a result, the presentation of most pupils' work is of a good standard.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that planning develops pupils' skills progressively, especially in literacy and numeracy, as they move through the school

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The quality of planning for the development of pupils' skills varies across the school.

In the Foundation Phase, long term planning identifies good opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and builds on pupils' prior learning successfully. This ensures that teachers develop pupils' skills systematically and progressively. In key stage 2, teachers are still in the process of building literacy and numeracy skills into their long term planning. As a result, they do not yet have complete plans to ensure that they will teach all of these skills by the end of the academic year. Leaders do not have long term planning to identify systematic opportunities to develop pupils' thinking, information and communication technology (ICT) and Welsh communication skills as they progress through the school.

At both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, teachers' medium and short term planning provides a suitable range of opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. These are appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils. The school is continuing to work towards addressing the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks.

Recommendation 4: Improve the consistency and accuracy of teachers' marking and assessments

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

There is a high level of consistency in the quality of marking throughout the school. Nearly all marking informs pupils of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Many of these comments take the form of thoughtful questions that extend pupils' understanding. Most pupils respond appropriately to the questions asked. Nearly all teachers encourage pupils to assess their own work and the work of others regularly. As a result, most pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their learning.

The school's processes for monitoring pupils' progress have improved since the inspection. Across the school, teachers assess pupils' work regularly and record achievement in an electronic tracking system. Leaders monitor the accuracy of these assessments closely through activities such as regular book scrutiny to ensure that pupils' work matches the teacher-assessed outcomes. Staff have termly meetings to standardise and moderate pupils' work. The school has useful portfolios of standardised levelled work in writing, numeracy, Welsh and science. These support teachers with the accuracy of their assessments competently. In a very few cases, the work in pupils' books does not support the teacher assessed level at the end of the key stage.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that the governing body holds the school to account more rigorously

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Governors have suitable links with the school's subject co-ordinators and undertake appropriate visits to the school that help them monitor progress against improvement priorities. The governing body has a worthwhile range of sub-committees to help it to monitor the work of the school. Committees, such as the finance committee, provide the governing body with clear written reports of their actions. As a result, the whole governing body is beginning to develop a more meaningful understanding of all aspects of school governance. However, committees that focus on school improvement, such as the curriculum committee, have yet to meet.

Governors have taken responsibility for the oversight of their annual report to parents appropriately. However, they are still to provide parents with a report for the last academic year.

The introduction of a self-evaluation day in the summer term provides governors with a valuable opportunity to learn more about the work of the school and to contribute to the school's self-evaluation process. Although governors had insufficient input into the post inspection action plan, this day gives them an opportunity to monitor the school's progress against its improvement goals.

Using the knowledge gained from visits to the school and detailed reports from the school's challenge adviser and the acting headteacher, the governing body is beginning to challenge school leaders about the standards achieved by pupils competently. However, this role is at an early stage of development.

Recommendation 6: Develop clear self-evaluation procedures to monitor and evaluate pupil performance more accurately and effectively

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Senior leaders have established an effective timetable for monitoring pupil performance. It sets out the self-evaluation activities and the staff responsible for each action clearly. As a result, monitoring takes place in a timely manner.

The self-evaluation procedures now ensure that school leaders have a worthwhile range of first hand evidence of pupil performance. This includes a good range of evidence from such sources as pupils' books, an analysis of national test data and observations of pupils' learning in lessons. These activities are beginning to lead to improvements in classroom practice. However, the school has yet to complete a whole year cycle of monitoring and evaluation activities and it is too early to assess their full impact on pupil outcomes.

The school has suitable systems for monitoring the progress of all pupils. These include an electronic tracking system and a spreadsheet of annual pupil performance. These allow leaders to evaluate the progress that pupils make as they move through the school and identify those who may need support efficiently. The monitoring and evaluation of progress made by pupils participating in intervention

programmes is worthwhile and shows that most pupils make good progress following this support.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.