



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 Dyffryn Nantlle
Ffordd Y Brenin
Penygroes
Gwynedd
LL54 6RL**

Date of visit: October 2016

by

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

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The monitoring team

Delyth Lloyd Gray	Reporting Inspector
Gareth Kiff	Team Inspector
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Outcome of visit

Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools that require special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school's performance in nearly all key indicators in key stage 4 has improved. Provisional data for 2016 represents the school's best ever performance in most of these indicators, and shows further progress on the improvements that were seen in 2015.

In the indicator that includes five grade A*-C GCSEs including English or Welsh, and mathematics, data for 2016 shows that the school's performance has increased by nearly ten percentage points since the core inspection. This places the school in the lower half of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, and closer to the modelled outcomes than at the time of the core inspection.

Performance in the core subject indicator and the capped points score has also improved since 2014, but continues to place the school below the family average and in the lower half of similar schools in terms of eligibility for free school meals.

The school's performance in the level 2 threshold has improved by over nine percentage points since 2014. The school's performance in the level 1 threshold has also improved, and places the school in the top quartile of similar schools based on the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals for the second consecutive year.

In the indicator that includes five grade A*-A GCSEs, the school's performance has declined since the core inspection.

Performance in Welsh at level 2 has improved since 2014 and places the school in the top quarter of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals. Although performance in English at level 2 improved in 2015, the school's performance in 2016 has declined and is very similar to the performance at the time of the core inspection. Performance in English places the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools.

In mathematics at level 2, the school's performance has improved by 13 percentage points since the core inspection in 2015. However, this continues to place the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals. Performance in science at level 2 has improved since 2014 and places the school among the top quarter of similar schools.

Since the core inspection, boys' performance has improved in nearly all key indicators in key stage 4. Data for 2016 shows that boys' performance has improved significantly in the indicators that include Welsh or English and mathematics. Girls' performance has also improved in a majority of indicators, including mathematics and science. However, girls' performance has declined in Welsh, English and the capped points score since 2014.

Since 2014, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals has improved in around half of the key indicators in key stage 4. However, these pupils' performance in the level 2 threshold that includes Welsh, English and mathematics has declined.

In nearly all lessons, nearly all pupils are very well-behaved and show strong motivation to learn and work. They respect their teachers, listen carefully and respond positively to tasks. Nearly all pupils work together productively in pairs or in a group. Most pupils recall previous information successfully and apply their knowledge and understanding skilfully when making progress in their learning.

In most lessons, many pupils make valuable progress in thinking skills when responding creatively to tasks and when solving problems. They show maturity when working independently and take responsibility for their own learning. In these lessons, many pupils develop effective reading strategies and show their robust translanguaging skills. A majority of pupils write correctly and at length, and use subject vocabulary correctly and appropriately. Many pupils make sound progress in their Welsh communication skills. However, in general, many pupils lack confidence when speaking in English lessons, and they do not offer extended answers orally.

Many pupils use number strategies effectively in a variety of contexts. A majority show appropriate and skilful calculation skills when using the four number rules independently. However, pupils only apply their information and communication skills appropriately in a few subjects.

In a very few lessons, a minority of pupils do not concentrate sufficiently and do not listen carefully enough. As a result, these pupils do not make the expected progress in line with their age and ability.

Recommendation 2: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the robust focus on improving teaching and assessment across the school has had a positive effect on pupils' standards throughout the school, particularly the progress that many pupils make in lessons.

In a few lessons, teachers plan in great detail and ensure a clear structure and ambitious objectives. In these lessons, there is a series of coherent activities and a lively pace, which ensure progress. In addition, teachers use a wide range of teaching methods, for example probing questions that engage pupils' interest and challenge them to achieve to the best of their ability.

In most lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and are robust language models. In these lessons, teachers have a productive working relationship with their pupils and they control the class effectively. They plan lessons purposefully and carefully in order to ensure that pupils make progress. They offer challenging and interesting tasks that give pupils opportunities to discuss and develop their oracy skills and thinking skills successfully. Teachers in these lessons present and explain information clearly. Many teachers circle the classroom regularly in order to lead pupils and offer appropriate challenge and support.

In a very few lessons, teachers do not plan tasks coherently enough to ensure that their pupils make progress. In these lessons, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking, reading and communication skills.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen and ensure consistency in the provision for literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and for more able and talented pupils

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the provision for skills. In addition, provision for more able and talented pupils has improved.

In literacy in Welsh, the school now has appropriate policies and beneficial arrangements that ensure suitable provision for pupils, for example resources of a high standard to use in weekly morning sessions. The school has provided useful support to departments to devise rich and extended tasks for pupils. As a result, teachers set valuable literacy tasks for pupils in key stage 3.

Procedures to raise standards of English literacy are developing appropriately; for example, pupils improve their standards of language through specific exercises that arise from the 'language rule of the week' scheme. The school tracks pupils' progress in literacy appropriately. However, arrangements for monitoring progress have not led to raising standards of English in key stage 4.

In general, teachers ensure that pupils complete beneficial 'language at work' literacy tasks in their subjects. However, a few teachers do not correct pupils' elementary language errors and spelling errors consistently enough.

Since the core inspection, the school has proceeded to improve provision for numeracy appropriately. This includes introducing a suitable numeracy policy and a useful number booklet for teachers in order to ensure consistency in learning methods for elements of numeracy. The co-ordinator works positively with relevant departments to evaluate and refine their number tasks, and the number of departments that deliver appropriate number activities has increased. Beneficial weekly activities are arranged for pupils in key stage 3, such as 'Tackling Number' (Tacllo Rhif). The school analyses the results of number tests carefully. However, leaders do not make detailed enough use of evidence of pupils' performance in lessons and external tests to plan effectively for the most able pupils.

Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the core inspection. Teachers in an increasing number of subjects set suitable and interesting tasks that have been levelled appropriately. Following a recent audit to discover the staff's development needs in this area, the school has provided appropriate training for a few teachers. However, there is no coherent plan in place to expand teachers' skills further.

The school has made appropriate progress in the provision for more able and talented (MAT) pupils since the core inspection. Many teachers now have a culture of challenging MAT pupils, and there are careful arrangements to monitor these pupils' performance. MAT pupils are given valuable and regular opportunities to voice their opinion on the quality of learning and teaching with teachers.

Managers place robust expectations on departments to ensure challenging experiences and tasks for pupils. However, there is not enough consistency in the provision for more able pupils across the whole range of subjects. Despite progress in the provision for more able and talented pupils, this has not had enough of an effect on standards in key stage 4.

Recommendation 4: Develop the role of leaders at all levels so that they undertake their strategic responsibilities fully

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The governing body has appointed a new headteacher since the core inspection. The headteacher has a clear and ambitious strategic direction, and she shares this unambiguously with all of her staff. With robust support from the senior leadership team, the headteacher sets a strong focus on raising standards, improving the quality of teaching and assessment, and strengthening leadership.

Nearly all middle leaders are fully committed to the headteacher's vision. Leaders understand their roles and responsibilities in full, and there is a high level of accountability attached to these responsibilities. The school has provided useful training for middle leaders on analysing and evaluating standards in their departments. As a result, most of the departmental self-evaluation reports are detailed, and are honest and accurate evaluations of standards and the quality of teaching and leadership. Whole-school priorities have been incorporated appropriately in departmental improvement plans, along with areas for improvement that derive directly from the departmental evaluations.

The school operates a robust system of conducting and recording management meetings at all levels. This has led to clear and beneficial communication between the senior leadership team and middle leaders. Link managers monitor the work of middle leaders carefully.

The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's standards of achievement. The school has established a quality monitoring sub-committee to monitor progress against the recommendations from the core inspection. The committee conducts regular meetings in order to monitor and challenge the school's performance. These arrangements have succeeded in raising standards in many indicators, and have improved the quality of provision and leadership since the core inspection.

As a result of a consistent focus on improving the quality and consistency of leadership, the school has succeeded in making improvements in many important indicators in key stage 4.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen the continuous professional development programme for staff and ensure that there is more focus on improving learning and teaching and the quality of leadership

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, the school has given priority to raising standards of learning and teaching appropriately by producing a comprehensive and purposeful programme of training by internal and external providers; for example, a series of beneficial training sessions were given on the features of good teaching, such as effective questioning and developing reading strategies.

The school has delivered valuable guidance on important issues, such as scrutinising pupils' work and forming a judgement on standards and the quality of teaching when observing lessons. Leaders have conducted beneficial cross-school activities, such as a 'book scrutiny fair' in order to share good practice. The ability of leaders at every level to evaluate performance data and the standard of pupils' work in books and lessons has now been strengthened significantly.

Senior leaders have provided intensive support to departments and individual staff that need to improve, and this has had a positive effect on teaching and learning in most cases. There is now an orderly staff performance management cycle in place. The school deals with the very few cases of underperformance by staff robustly and appropriately.

The school has provided appropriate training on strategies to raise the level of challenge for pupils in lessons. Recently, as a result of consultation with pupils, a few departments have created a series of valuable extended tasks for more able pupils. It is too early to measure the effect of these on pupils' standards.

As a result of appropriate and beneficial training for staff, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of learning, teaching and leadership throughout the school since the core inspection.

Recommendation 6: Improve pupils' and parents' contribution to decisions at the school

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a number of successful procedures that have ensured a significant increase in the contribution of pupils and their parents to the school's work.

The school council's status has been raised since the core inspection, and there is now a regular routine to their meetings. The school council makes an appropriate contribution to the school's self-evaluation arrangements. The council conducts

mature discussions on important issues, such as the quality of teaching and learning, and schemes to promote reading. It has also contributed valuable comments on the new reward system.

The school's links with its parents have improved significantly. The school provides an interesting and beneficial termly newsletter for parents. The school communicates effectively with parents through the website and shares important information, for example the school's performance data. There are useful parents' evenings on specific educational issues, for example parents' contribution to supporting their children's work. The school conducts a valuable forum for parents in order to discuss important issues.

Since the core inspection, the school has made appropriate use of questionnaires on the views of parents and pupils to plan for improvement. Many departments seek pupils' views on specific elements of their lessons, and make sensible changes as a result of these.

Recommendations

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