



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**

**Llansawel Primary School
Vernon Place
Briton Ferry
Neath
SA11 2JJ**

Date of visit: December 2017

by

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

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Outcome of monitoring

Llansawel Primary school is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in March 2015.

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

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve pupils' standards in literacy, numeracy and Welsh

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Over the past 18 months, pupils in the foundation phase have made strong progress in developing their reading, writing and mental mathematical skills. During the last academic year, progress for pupils in key stage 2 was slower. However, since September 2017, nearly all pupils in key stage 2 have made strong progress.

Most pupils in the foundation phase develop their speaking and listening skills well. For example, younger pupils re-tell the story of The Gingerbread Man through roleplay activities using appropriate story language. Pupils in Year 2 discuss their learning purposefully, providing detailed explanations about life in Roman Britain and comparing food eaten during that time with the food that they eat today. Pupils in key stage 2 build steadily on this good start. They have improved their listening skills and now show a greater willingness to listen to the contributions and opinion of their peers. Many speak clearly and with good expression, for example when explaining how they research information for their topic work using internet search engines and websites.

Pupils in reception make good progress in developing their knowledge of sounds and in building a sight vocabulary. By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils read fluently and with good expression. They use a range of useful strategies to help them to decode unfamiliar words and understand the meaning in a story. For example, they use picture clues and the context of the text, and pupils that are more able make connections to stories that they have read previously. In key stage 2, a majority of pupils read with appropriate fluency and expression. They are beginning to make simple deductions and inferences. More able pupils in upper key stage 2 scan text appropriately to locate information. Many pupils in key stage 2 use a dictionary effectively to locate unfamiliar words and find out what they mean.

Throughout the school, pupils write for an appropriate range of purposes. Many have a sound understanding of the features of different types of writing. Standards of writing by the end of the foundation phase are good and more able pupils write for a wide range of audiences using appropriate language. In key stage 2, standards of writing overall have improved and many pupils write well at length. Across the school, pupils are beginning to make interesting word choices, and this improves the quality of their writing. Nearly all pupils' spelling, handwriting, punctuation and presentation skills have improved since the core inspection. Most pupils are proud of their written work and can see the progress that they have made.

By the end of Year 2, many pupils make good progress in developing their mental and written mathematical skills. Many use a range of strategies effectively to solve problems and calculate answers. They use mathematical vocabulary well in their number work, and understand and use a good range of mathematical symbols including those meaning 'more than' and 'less than'. Progress for pupils in key stage 2 has been slower. However, recent improvements to teaching have resulted in pupils developing more secure number skills. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils have a better understanding of how to multiply and divide and recognise how to work with negative numbers well. Despite these improvements, too many pupils in key stage 2 still have a limited range of strategies to solve problems, and their reasoning skills are weak.

Across the school, nearly all pupils have positive attitudes towards Welsh and, as a result, standards continue to improve. Pupils in the lower foundation phase class use Welsh daily. They sing songs and rhymes to help them establish language patterns, for example about the weather. At the end of the foundation phase, many pupils use a wide range of sentence patterns and vocabulary confidently. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils ask and answer an appropriate range of questions. More able pupils extend their answers using a suitable range of connectives, for example describing the type of house that they live in. Pupils in Year 6 read simple texts well using accurate pronunciation and write for an appropriate range of purposes, for example to describe their friends. Pupils are proud to belong to the Criw Cymraeg, and encourage their peers to speak Welsh regularly. They have developed strategies to encourage other pupils to use Welsh, for example asking questions from the question bag in the playground. This work has helped to raise the profile of Welsh in the school. As a result, pupils use Welsh more often outside of Welsh lessons.

Overall, although pupils in key stage 2 have made strong progress in improving their skills, this is from a low baseline. As a result, a minority of pupils' reading, writing, number and Welsh skills remain below those expected for their age.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that all pupil absences are recorded correctly

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

All teachers have received training on how to mark the register accurately using the agreed symbols for different types of non-attendance. As a result, the school is now using correct codes to record pupil absences. The school does not record any pupils as being educated elsewhere inappropriately. The school's Educational Welfare Officer checks class attendance registers fortnightly to ensure that they are up to date and accurate. She reports her findings regularly to the headteacher and governing body.

Recommendation 3: Develop curriculum planning for key stage 2 that ensures progressive coverage of the range and skills of the National Curriculum and Literacy and Numeracy Framework

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Schemes of work in key stage 2 provide good coverage of the National Curriculum and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. At the beginning of this academic year, staff worked together to develop their planning to reflect the changes to the structure of classes and ensure progression in the development of pupils' skills. Teachers use these plans effectively to deliver interesting lessons that motivate and engage pupils well.

The whole school strategy to teach pupils about the different types of writing is improving pupils' standards. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to write in a wide range of text types, for example poetry, myths, diary entries and nonchronological reports. They teach lessons in sequence and model the different types of writing and the associated vocabulary effectively. As a result, many pupils show a good understanding of the different styles of writing and use these effectively in their written work, both in literacy lessons and across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 3 write interesting letters to apply to become a Roman soldier. Many teachers provide pupils with suitable opportunities to plan, write and then redraft their writing to improve its quality. Teachers' planning now places a greater emphasis on improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and presentation. As a result, pupils' skills in these areas have improved.

Provision for reading is good. Teachers and teaching assistants deliver regular phonics sessions that match well to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils have a better understanding of the sounds that letters make and many use this well when reading unfamiliar words. In addition, daily guided group reading sessions focus appropriately on developing pupils' reading skills, including their understanding of what they read. Support staff make an effective contribution to the provision for reading by delivering intervention programmes for those pupils in need of additional support. As a result of this improved provision, nearly all pupils throughout the school have better attitudes to reading and many pupils' reading skills have improved. However, this work has not had sufficient time to impact fully on the reading skills of older pupils and a minority of pupils in key stage 2 do not read at the level expected for their age.

Teachers plan their mathematics sessions using information from their assessments of pupils' strengths and areas for development. This approach is helping to improve pupils' mathematical understanding. Leaders and teachers have identified the need to improve pupils' reasoning skills and have adjusted mathematics teaching throughout the school to ensure that there are regular opportunities for pupils to practise these skills. Nearly all teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their mental mathematics skills. However, planning for pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum is less well developed.

Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching so that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate level

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Senior leaders have worked with officers of the local authority to raise standards of teaching to improve outcomes for pupils. Until recently, this work had more impact in the foundation phase than in key stage 2. However, during this academic year, the secondment of a teacher to work with older pupils has had a positive impact on

improving pupils' wellbeing and attitudes to learning. In addition, pupils are more confident to approach tasks and carry out activities independently. As a result, the pace of pupils' learning has increased and they are making faster progress in acquiring skills.

Throughout the school, the overall quality of teaching is now good. Teachers plan learning experiences that engage and motivate pupils well. For example, older pupils in key stage 2 learn about what life was like for working children during Victorian times. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do have improved and they provide activities that match pupils' abilities well. For example, in Year 2, more able pupils measure lengths in centimetres and millimetres when cutting lengths of card to make Christmas cards. In Year 6, more able pupils calculate the area and perimeter of shapes using their multiplication skills and other pupils count the number of squares. As a result, many pupils make good progress in the development of their skills during lessons.

Teaching assistants support pupils well and have provided continuity and consistency in classes where there have been frequent changes of teachers. They work effectively to improve pupils' basic skills. For example, they deliver phonics sessions to groups of pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. This enables pupils to work in small groups on work that matches well to their ability.

Recommendation 5: Develop assessment procedures that include the consistent use of assessment for learning in all classes and effective pupil tracking based on a robust evaluation of pupils' standards

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has a comprehensive system to track pupils' skills development and to record pupils' progress. Nearly all teachers use this information appropriately to inform pupils' next steps in learning. For example, they use tracking data to group pupils for guided reading and spelling sessions. In nearly all classes, teachers use this information suitably to plan lessons. The acting headteacher monitors tracking data carefully to ensure that it reflects accurately the quality of pupils' work in lessons and in their books. Arrangements to ensure the reliability and accuracy of teacher assessments are appropriate. Assessments at key points are an accurate reflection of the achievements of pupils.

Teachers use a wide range of formative assessment strategies effectively to support pupils' learning. For example, they share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons to ensure that they understand what they are going to learn. Nearly all teachers provide pupils with suitable success criteria to judge how well they have completed a task. They give pupils age appropriate oral and written feedback against the agreed learning objectives. This includes what they have done well, alongside clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work further. Older pupils in particular respond well to teachers' written feedback to upskill their writing. Pupils also have regular and beneficial opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers. As a result of these improved procedures, most pupils are now making effective progress.

Recommendation 6: Comply fully with the statutory requirement for the daily act of collective worship

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school now complies with the statutory requirement for the daily act of collective worship.

Recommendation 7: Ensure that all leaders and staff fulfil their roles in relation to strategic aims, plans and responsibilities

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The local authority appointed a new acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher in September 2017. Both of these teachers will remain at the school for this academic year. These arrangements will ensure that the school has stable leadership until it closes in August 2018. The local authority is implementing an effective programme to support the new acting headteacher in her strategic role. The new acting deputy headteacher is also undertaking suitable leadership training. For example, both leaders have attended a useful course on pupil centred self-evaluation. This training has helped them capture evidence of pupil progress more effectively at individual level.

All staff have recently had new job descriptions that clearly outline their roles and responsibilities. The acting headteacher focuses the school's work on addressing key improvement priorities appropriately. She holds all staff to account for the progress of pupils, for example through effective performance management processes for teachers. Other leaders are beginning to take more responsibility for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Across the school, staff now have higher expectations for all aspects of the school's work. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teachers' work well with a strong emphasis on improving outcomes for pupils. This work has led to very good recent improvements in the standard of teaching and learning.

The governing body fulfils its strategic role appropriately. The addition of two challenge advisers from the local authority has strengthened its knowledge and leadership capacity. All governors have specific responsibilities to support the school to achieve its strategic priorities and they make regular visits to evaluate progress. They prepare useful written evaluations of progress against each inspection recommendation. Governors have a realistic understanding of the school's current stage of development. They recognise the progress that it has made, particularly in improving standards of teaching and the pace of learning. However, they also acknowledge that the school still needs to focus strongly on improving pupil outcomes further.

Recommendation 8: Ensure that self-evaluation is based on a broad range of accurate first-hand evidence and that improvement actions have a measurable impact on standards and provision

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school shows an increasing capacity to secure improvements. For example, new approaches to teaching reading and writing skills have had a positive impact on standards for many pupils. Leaders have secured effective provision to ensure that pupils and staff work towards the agreed targets in the post inspection action plans. They adapt improvement plans appropriately as circumstances at the school change.

The acting headteacher leads an appropriate range of monitoring activities. These include regular learning walks, the scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' planning and listening to learners. Following each activity, she provides clear feedback to staff on strengths and areas to improve further. As a result of this work, there have been clear improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' standards. For example, most recently, monitoring activities have led to improvements in guided group reading sessions and the addition of appropriate challenges for pupils in Year 1.

The self-evaluation report is a useful document. The report balances well its attention to data analysis and the evaluation of pupils' skills and progress in lessons over time. Leaders provide effective support for staff and challenge underperformance robustly.

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.