

Re-inspection
of
Pencoed Comprehensive
Coychurch Road, Pencoed, Bridgend CF35 5LZ
School number: 674076
Date of monitoring visit: December 2011

Pencoed Comprehensive School was inspected in April and judged as requiring monitoring by Estyn. Estyn undertook a follow-up inspection in December 2011, focussing on the key issues identified in the Section 28 inspection.

Outcome of the re-inspection

Pencoed Comprehensive School has not made enough progress in the key areas for action identified in the Section 28 inspection of the school in April 2010. In addition, performance in the key indicators at key stage 4 is unsatisfactory with no or little improvement over the last four years. As a result, and in accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress twelve months after the publication of this report.

Progress since the last inspection

Introduction

Pupils' performance and attendance has shown little or no improvement since the inspection.

At key stage 3 in 2011, the school was performing below the family average for English, mathematics, science and for the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination). This performance places the school in the lower 50% of schools with similar levels of free school meals for all indicators.

At key stage 4 in 2011, performance in the level 2 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs graded A* to C) including English and mathematics was significantly below the family average and has been so for the last four years. The school has been in the lowest 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals for the last two years and progress from both key stage 2 and key stage 3 has been unsatisfactory. The level 2 threshold and the core subject indicator have similar patterns. Performance in English and mathematics has been well below the family average for the last five years. Performance in English has placed the school in the lowest 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals for the last three years and mathematics performance has been in the lowest 25% of that for similar schools for the last two years.

Attendance has only improved slightly over the last five years and is below expectations. For 2011, it was in lowest 25% of that for schools with similar levels of free school meals, as was the case in three out of the four years before that.

Recommendation 1: Raise pupils' academic standards significantly in science throughout the school and in mathematics in key stage 4, and health and social care in the sixth form.

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Progress has been made in improving standards in science, particularly in key stage 4 and the sixth form. At key stage 4, the percentage of pupils attaining level 2 in science improved significantly in from 62% in 2010 to 78% in 2011 and the school is now the best performing school in science within the family. In 2011, the sixth form pupils achieved in line with the estimates across all the science subjects. The more rigorous process within the department for monitoring pupil performance and accountability is leading to higher standards.

Although performance in mathematics at key stage 4, in 2011, shows a five percentage point increase in level 2 when compared with levels in 2010, the school is still performing well below the family averages. At level 1, the school is performing better than national averages and in line with the family average. The department has introduced strategies for raising standards, but the targets that are set are not challenging enough.

Performance in health and social care in the sixth form has improved, with pupils achieving as expected.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that all members of the SLT:

- **co-ordinate the whole-school initiatives of assessment for learning;**
- **monitor rigorously and consistently the quality of the work of middle managers; and**
- **share best practice to promote outstanding features across the curriculum.**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has introduced a policy for assessment for learning, and departmental improvement plans make appropriate references to assessment and to introducing the requirements for it. The work has not yet had a significant effect on standards.

Each assistant headteacher has line management responsibility for a group of subjects and meets regularly with heads of department to discuss progress, monitor pupils' books and conduct lesson observations. They are now starting to monitor more consistently.

Scheduled meetings of middle managers include, regularly, the sharing of best practice. The school also produces a newsletter that includes examples of best practice across the school. Staff training days have focussed appropriately on the sharing of best practice.

Recommendation 3: Develop the accountability of all post-holders with responsibility in leading teams of staff, consistently monitoring and evaluating practice and planning for improvement.

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has made some progress in developing the accountability of all post-holders responsible for leading teams. Senior leaders and most middle managers now have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities for improving standards and provision at the school.

Senior and middle managers have regular formal meetings and, together, also meet the headteacher and link governor for termly review meetings. As a result of follow-up action from these meetings, improvements have been made, for example in science at key stage 4, and a decrease in pupil behaviour referrals.

Senior leaders and most middle managers have an accurate picture and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The revised processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning are generally effective. However, middle managers meetings do not usually record agreed actions and timescales to review progress in addressing the identified issues.

Recommendation 4: Ensure rigorous and interdependent systems of evaluating and planning with a clear focus on raising standards of teaching and learning.

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school's self-evaluation processes are understood by many staff and there is a developing culture of self-evaluation and improvement planning. The restructured line-management responsibilities, the introduction of a revised review framework and relevant supporting documentation contribute well to this improvement.

The school has introduced an effective tracking system to monitor pupil progress and many middle managers understand the performance of their subject areas well. Targeted groups and individuals are identified and intervention strategies have been implemented to address under-achievement.

However, the use of performance data by senior leaders and middle managers varies too much. The school does not use data well enough to target and support specific groups of pupils such as the more able and talented, pupils with special educational needs and those entitled to free school meals. Consequently, these pupils are continuing not achieving as well as they should. A minority of departments do not use data to compare their own department with those of other schools, or with other departments within the school.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that the school's assessment procedures are consistent and are used rigorously and accurately across the school to raise standards. Develop the school's targeting system to ensure that targets are realistic and challenging.

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The assessment system has been further refined and developed to improve consistency. Every department now arranges standardised assessments every half term. Pupil performance in these assessments is collated to show whether each pupil is progressing as expected. The information is readily available to all staff and provides a good overview of pupils' progress.

Overall, targets for individual pupils are now more realistic and challenging. However, pupils with additional learning needs are not set challenging enough targets. Termly reports to parents provide suitable information on their child's progress towards these targets in every subject.

There has been slow progress in addressing inconsistencies within departments in the quality of marking. Although senior leaders scrutinise pupils' books, they do not do enough to address the identified shortcomings. As a result, inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' written comments remain.

Recommendation 6: Increase significantly the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by addressing the inconsistencies, particularly in terms of challenge, pace and pupils' behaviour.

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Useful initiatives have been introduced to improve teaching, including providing guidance on the characteristics of a good or better lesson and what to look for when observing a lesson. Every teacher has been observed on three occasions over a year using a standardised observation form.

Good practice has been shared through a newsletter and during meetings, and individual teachers have visited other schools to observe good practice.

While these initiatives have been useful, they have had a limited impact on increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. Completed lesson observation forms have too many inconsistencies between the written text and the overall evaluation, and guidance on how teaching and learning can be improved. The quality assurance of the process of observing lessons is largely underdeveloped.

Recommendation 7: Enhance the capacity of the governing body to act as a critical friend of the school by improving its monitoring procedures and holding managers to account more effectively.

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The capacity of the governing body to act as a critical friend has been significantly improved.

A group of governors meets every term to scrutinise strategic plans and processes, and works closely with senior leaders to support the development of self-evaluation and improvement.

Governors are also involved more directly with departments and have developed a higher profile around the school. For example, as part of their newly developed departmental link role, governors attend feedback sessions following departmental reviews. Additionally, governors visit departments and record the outcomes of these visits.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise pupils' academic standards significantly in science throughout the school and in mathematics in key stage 4 and health and social care in the sixth form*;
- ensure that all members of the SLT*;
 - co-ordinate the whole-school initiatives of assessment for learning;
 - monitor rigorously and consistently the quality of the work of middle managers; and
 - share best practice to promote outstanding features across the curriculum;

- develop the accountability of all post-holders with responsibility in leading teams of staff, consistently monitoring and evaluating practice and planning for improvement*;
- ensure rigorous and interdependent systems of evaluating and planning with a clear focus on raising standards of teaching and learning*;
- ensure that the school's assessment procedures are consistent and are used rigorously and accurately across the school to raise standards. Develop the school's targeting system to ensure that targets are realistic and challenging*;
- increase significantly the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by addressing the inconsistencies, particularly in terms of challenge, pace and pupils' behaviour*;
- raise standards in English at key stage 4; and
- improve attendance rates.

*Recommendations included in the S28 inspection April 2010