



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

**Report of visit
Level of follow-up: significant improvement**

**Cymer Afan Primary School
Margam Street
Cymmer
Port Talbot
SA13 3EE**

Date of visit: March 2014

by

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

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The monitoring team

Anthony Bate	Reporting Inspector
Mike Maguire	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring visit

Cymer Afan primary school is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2011.

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: Raise standards in reading, writing, numeracy and ICT across the school

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Standards of reading and writing have significantly improved across the school. The school's assessment of pupil reading ability shows that the majority of pupils have improved their reading over the last academic year.

Many Foundation Phase pupils read accurately and fluently, with good expression and understanding. Most pupils use phonic strategies well to help them attempt unfamiliar words. Many pupils in key stage 2 read with confidence and fluency, and name authors they enjoy. A minority of pupils use higher order reading skills such as skimming and scanning text effectively.

In their written work, many Foundation Phase pupils compose appropriate sentences to describe events, experiences and to communicate meaning effectively. More able pupils use interesting and appropriate vocabulary in their writing.

Pupils' writing in key stage 2 builds appropriately on the skills learnt in the Foundation Phase. At the end of key stage 2, many pupils write at length and for different audiences and purposes. Most pupils use the full range of punctuation effectively to guide the reader in complex sentences, for example commas, bullet points and speech marks. Presentation has significantly improved, with most pupils showing pride in their work. However, a few pupils across the school have difficulty spelling a range of common words correctly.

Pupils use their numeracy and information and communication technology skills well throughout the curriculum.

Foundation Phase data for 2013 shows that pupil performance was in the lower 50% in language, literacy and communication skills in English, and in the higher 50% in mathematical development, when compared to similar schools based on free school meals. Performance was in the top 25% compared to similar schools for pupils achieving the higher outcome (outcome 6) in these learning areas.

As in 2012, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level at the end of key stage 2 in 2013 placed the school in the bottom 50% of similar schools in English and mathematics. These results are slightly higher than the average compared with the

family of schools. However, no pupils achieved the higher level 5 in any aspect of literacy in 2013 and only a few pupils achieved this in mathematics.

Recommendation 2: Continue to develop assessment procedures so that information is used fully to raise standards and ensure that pupils are more involved in assessing their work

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Assessment procedures have a positive impact on standards in the classroom. Teachers identify effectively which skills to assess and carefully consider individual pupil progress from previous learning. They use a good range of assessment data to identify pupils who need extra support.

Teachers tailor lessons and activities appropriately to provide challenge to pupils of different abilities. For example, the use of suitable intervention strategies to raise standards, including guided reading which is beginning to improve boys reading, and guided talk sessions used to improve pupils oracy skills.

Assessment moderation procedures at the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 are robust. All staff are fully involved in the process and assure that assessments are accurate and consistent across the school.

Teachers set appropriate literacy and numeracy targets for pupils. Most pupils understand their targets and what they must do to improve their work.

A good range of assessment for learning strategies are successfully implemented across the school. Specific success criteria enable pupils to engage in their learning activities and assess their own performance. There are consistent and planned opportunities that encourage pupils to assess their own progress and that of their peers. Pupils use ICT very effectively to support their learning and improve their performance, especially for example, in physical education lessons.

Teachers mark pupils' work on a regular basis and provide them with appropriate written and oral feedback. As a result, most pupils know what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve.

Recommendation 3: Improve provision for the development of skills to ensure progression and continuity across the curriculum

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school makes good use of a topic-based scheme to support and develop pupils' skills across the curriculum. The choice of topics successfully engages pupils, particularly boys, in their learning. In addition, there has been a significant reduction in the use of worksheets. As a result, pupils are developing their writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils have produced a range of stimulating work in history as a result of a study about the Swansea Blitz during World War 2.

Teachers set clear learning objectives in lessons and provide activities that meet the needs of pupils with different abilities well. In lessons, there is good challenge for the more able through appropriate grouping of pupils and a careful choice of relevant and often exciting activities that motivate and maintain their interest. For example, more able pupils in Year 3 use tablet computers to research and produce a comprehensive fact file about the local football stadium. Also, more able writers throughout the school have had opportunities to work with professional authors and, as a result, produced their own imaginative stories. Specialist teaching by secondary school staff also challenges pupils of all abilities, for example in art and physical education, to improve outcomes.

Teachers monitor pupils' skill development well through lesson observations, scrutiny of work and the careful assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. They use this information appropriately to identify strengths and to set targets in the school improvement plan.

Recommendation 4: Develop a robust system for monitoring all aspects of school provision and ensure that self-evaluation is systematic, rigorous and focuses strongly on pupil outcomes

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

There is now a robust system in place to enable the school to monitor effectively its strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is now a regular part of school life and all staff and stakeholders are involved in the process.

The school collects a good range of information in order to inform self-evaluation. This includes the views of pupils, parents and governors, regular scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom observations. Teachers use specific criteria to help them scrutinise pupils' work consistently across the school. The involvement of upper junior teachers in the scrutiny and moderation of pupils' work across the federation of schools is helping them identify strengths and areas for development more accurately.

Pupils' performance data is analysed well and used to set appropriate targets for improvement.

The information collected by the school is used effectively to produce monitoring reports. The most recent report is detailed and evaluative and identifies areas for school improvement. The school improvement plan appropriately outlines the impact that school improvement strategies should have on pupil outcomes. In addition, specific success criteria established for each priority area enable the school to evaluate its progress. Adapted versions of the plan for staff, parents and pupils ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the priorities and involved in the school improvement process.

The school now needs to maintain the current programme of self-evaluation activities in order to accurately identify priorities for school improvement.

Recommendation 5: Further develop the role of the governing body and other stakeholders in self-evaluation and school improvement

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

A new governing body was established in September 2013 that represents the federated schools of the Upper Afan Valley.

Governors are now involved in many important aspects of school life including the school's self-evaluation processes. Through learning walks and the scrutiny of pupils' work in Cymer Afan Primary, and across the federation of schools, governors are able to make appropriate judgements about what is working well and what needs to be further developed.

Governors have received relevant training in several areas, including the performance of pupils and how this compares with that of pupils in other similar schools. Other training for governors has concentrated on how schools assess pupil progress and how governors can act as critical friends to the school. These training activities have improved governors' knowledge and have given them the confidence to challenge the school appropriately.

Governors are provided with detailed headteacher's reports, the school's self-evaluation report and the school improvement plan. They consider and discuss all of these and now regularly question, challenge and hold the school to account over pupils' performance, attendance levels and the progress the school is making in addressing the inspection recommendations.

The federation of schools has recently established a system of link governors in order to involve them fully in monitoring standards and provision for areas of the curriculum. This is still in the early stages of development and needs more time to be fully embedded.

The school is successfully developing the role of other stakeholders in self-evaluation and school improvement. The views of pupils and parents contribute to the school's targets for improvement.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work towards meeting the inspection recommendations that have not yet been fully addressed.