



*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: Estyn monitoring**

**Sychdyn C.P. School  
Vownog Road  
Sychdyn  
Mold  
Flintshire  
CH7 6ED**

**Date of visit: January 2014**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Sarah Morgan	Reporting Inspector
Rebecca Lawton	Team Inspector
Julie Hughes	Local authority representative

## **Outcome of monitoring visit**

Sychdyn Primary School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2012.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 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 inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Improve the quality of pupils' writing**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has introduced a systematic approach to teaching literacy, using structured schemes of work and planning to ensure continuity and progression, particularly in key stage 2. The re-organisation of teaching time and teachers at key stage 2 ensures that all pupils have focused literacy lessons every day and this has led to an improvement in pupil progress.

Key stage 2 teachers carry out daily guided reading sessions with groups of pupils of similar ability. Teachers focus closely on identifying and developing pupils' understanding of writing techniques, as well as improving punctuation and spelling and developing a wide vocabulary. These pupils use what they have learned in these sessions effectively in their own writing. All write across a wide range of genres, including stories, poetry and factual writing.

Teachers' marking is thorough and gives pupils clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. As a result, most pupils draft, edit and re-draft their work skilfully. Many produce writing of a high quality, using description and dialogue creatively to enhance the quality of their work. Spelling and punctuation are generally good and most write neatly, especially when they re-draft and produce work for wall displays or presentation books.

In the Foundation Phase, staff use an appropriate range of approaches to teaching writing in formal situations and introduce pupils to a variety of suitable genres. Class display books contain plenty of good examples of class and group collaborative writing across areas of learning. However, Year 2 pupils do not make enough progress in writing independently and at length.

**Recommendation 2: Raise standards in numeracy and information and communication technology and ensure that pupils use these skills across the curriculum**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school's initial focus on raising standards in mathematics, through focused teaching and raised expectations, has ensured that most pupils now have better numeracy skills. This means that they can approach problem-solving and investigative activities in mathematics and in other areas of the curriculum more confidently. In most classes, children now apply their numeracy skills well and at an appropriate level.

The school has reviewed its topic planning to ensure that pupils have plenty of good opportunities to practise and consolidate their numeracy skills in purposeful contexts across the curriculum. Leaders and teachers have mapped this planning carefully against the requirements of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework to ensure that pupils build on their numeracy skills from year to year. Pupils' books and a portfolio of work show that they often apply their numeracy skills well in other subject areas. However, pupils would benefit from developing opportunities to use their skills, knowledge and understanding in a wider range of contexts, particularly in the Foundation Phase.

Standards of information and communication technology (ICT) in pupils' books and portfolios are now generally good, particularly in key stage 2. Most pupils develop a wide range of skills progressively as they move through the school. Improved access to ICT equipment, better internet access and the reviewed curriculum provide pupils with regular and suitable opportunities to practise their ICT skills in a wide range of contexts.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that teaching and assessment across the school is of a high quality and challenges all pupils to achieve well**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The headteacher has identified accurately the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and assessment and has provided teachers with good opportunities to undertake appropriate training in priority areas. Since September 2013, the school has introduced a new approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy in key stage 2 and has made changes to class organisation. These strategies, along with the headteacher's commitment to teaching a key stage 2 class every morning, have begun to secure improvements in the quality of teaching and assessment. Evidence in pupils' books and observations during the monitoring visit confirm that standards in literacy and numeracy in these classes are rising.

The quality of teaching and assessment in the Foundation Phase has not improved at the same pace. There remains too much inconsistency in teachers' approach to the ethos and principles of the Foundation Phase. Leaders do not always ensure that temporary teachers understand what the school expects of them. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and activities do not always

provide pupils with enough challenge. As a result, the learning experiences offered to pupils are not always stimulating enough and the quality and quantity of work produced by pupils in the Foundation Phase varies too much. Teachers base their assessments of pupils' achievement on too narrow a range of independent work.

Leaders carry out a range of suitable monitoring activities to evaluate the quality of teaching and they take appropriate account of local authority evaluations. These activities include some lesson observations and book scrutiny. However, senior leaders do not have sufficient leadership time to carry out planned monitoring activities regularly and rigorously enough, particularly in the Foundation Phase. Written and verbal feedback to teachers is too descriptive and does not identify targets for improvement for individual teachers clearly enough. As a result, teachers do not know what they need to do to improve, and leaders do not have the information they need to track improvements in teaching and assessment.

**Recommendation 4: Develop provision in the Foundation Phase so that it meets the needs and interests of all pupils and encourages independent learning**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Local authority support and in-school training has helped teachers and support staff to organise classrooms more appropriately to encourage independent learning. All classes now have areas of continuous provision that pupils can access when given opportunities during the school day.

Teachers now deploy support staff more effectively and ensure that they make the most of everyone's skills and talents to enhance learning for pupils. Teaching assistants are involved fully in planning and take responsibility for specific areas in the classroom each week. This means that they are better placed to assess the progress of individuals in each area and activity and respond more appropriately to their needs.

Despite these improvements in planning and organisation, senior leaders have not monitored classes and pupils' work regularly and rigorously enough to ensure that the planned curriculum is carried out successfully at all times. Too much variability in the quality of teaching has resulted in inconsistencies in the quantity and quality of work that pupils do. Year 2 pupils say that the activities they do are often not challenging enough. This means that pupil progress varies too much across and between year groups.

**Recommendation 5: Comply with the statutory requirements for Collective Worship**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has revised its timetable for collective worship. There is appropriate provision for all pupils to take part in some form of collective worship each day, in line with statutory requirements. However, leaders now need to monitor this provision to ensure that staff in both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 follow the timetable.

**Recommendation 6: Address the health and safety issues identified during the inspection**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has partly addressed the health and safety issues raised in the inspection report. However, during the monitoring visit, the team identified further health and safety issues and reported them to the headteacher and governing body.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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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.