



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: Significant improvement**

**Llanfyllin High School
Llanfyllin
Powys
SY22 5BJ**

Date of visit: December 2018

by

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

Outcome of visit

Llanfyllin High School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from any further follow-up activity.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve standards at key stage 4

Many pupils recall prior learning well. The majority make strong progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. However, a minority of pupils do not make enough progress.

Many pupils work well independently and in pairs. Many contribute enthusiastically in class discussion and respond well to their teachers' questions. They discuss their ideas maturely with their peers. A minority of pupils provide well-considered and reasoned answers to questions. However, a few pupils' responses are too brief. In a few lessons, a minority of pupils are too passive or are reluctant to contribute.

Most pupils read aloud with confidence, good expression and intonation. Many use reading strategies effectively to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words or to extract information from a range of sources. Many analyse and infer layers of meaning suitably. Their competence in this skill improves well over time, for example when discussing how Michael Murpurgo makes the reader feel empathy for his hero in *Private Peaceful*. A few explore language confidently and in depth.

Many pupils write at considerable length for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum. This is a notable improvement when compared with the standard of written work at the time of the core inspection. For example in geography, pupils write competently to evaluate the benefits of renewable energy and in technology they write effectively to discuss how disruptive robotics are in modern society. Many pupils structure their writing appropriately and explain their ideas clearly using suitable vocabulary. The writing of a few pupils is very well-crafted and succeeds in capturing the interest of the reader. However, a minority of pupils continue to make frequent technical errors in their writing. The handwriting of a minority of boys in particular is weak.

Many pupils apply their number skills well in a broader range of suitable contexts than at the time of the core inspection, for example in science when calculating density and speed and in geography when interpreting graphs and charts about the National Parks. Many pupils have accurate mental arithmetic skills. They solve equations well and the more able have strong data handling skills.

Bilingual pupils work well in both Welsh and English and they chat naturally to each other in Welsh in class and around the school.

In 2018, performance in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics has improved slightly on the previous year. It is now in line with

modelled outcomes for the first time in the last four years. After improving well in 2017, performance in the capped points score declined slightly in 2018, but remains generally in line with that of similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A*-A has declined year on year since the time of the core inspection and is well below the average for similar schools in 2018.

While performance in the English declined slightly in 2018, it has improved well overall since the time of the core inspection and compares favourably to levels in similar schools. In 2018, performance in mathematics at level 2 is similar to that at the time of the core inspection. It has improved well after a significant decline in 2016.

Although boys' performance was in line with the average for boys in similar schools previously, their performance in 2018 is below or well below the average for boys in similar schools in many indicators. In the majority of indicators, girls have performed better than girls in similar schools in 2018.

Most pupils with special educational needs make sound progress against their targets.

R2. Improve the co-ordination and provision for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened considerably arrangements for the co-ordination of literacy and numeracy provision. Within the school improvement group, co-ordinators have supported middle leaders well to apply the strands of the literacy and numeracy framework appropriately in their schemes of work. They have supported staff effectively to implement a range of useful tasks to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum. Subject staff have received valuable training and support on specific areas such as developing pupils' extended writing, reading strategies and numeracy skills.

Over the last year, the school has focused well on developing appropriate strategies to improve pupils' writing and reading skills. This has resulted in beneficial opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to write at length and to develop their reading appropriately. In addition, pupils use their numeracy skills well in a range of contexts across subjects.

The school identifies pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills appropriately. These pupils benefit from intervention programmes that meet their specific needs and the school monitors these programmes well. In general, these pupils make good progress.

R3. Improve timetabling arrangements to ensure that the quality of learning experiences is consistent for all pupils

Since the core inspection, the school has addressed effectively the concerns regarding timetabling arrangements and the consistency of learning experiences for all pupils.

At key stage 3, there has been a reduction in the number of classes taught by more than one teacher or by a non-specialist. Staff receive appropriate support for teaching outside of their specialism.

At key stage 4, curriculum arrangements for religious education have been strengthened. In addition, shortcomings identified in the core inspection regarding arrangements for the delivery of pupils' optional GCSE courses have been addressed appropriately.

R4. Improve standards of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a wide range of helpful activities and quality assurance processes to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. This work is beginning to have a beneficial impact on pupils' learning experiences and the progress that they make in lessons.

Most teachers have strong working relationships with pupils. They have established clear classroom routines to secure efficient starts to their lessons. Many teachers plan a wide range of helpful activities and resources linked suitably together to ensure that pupils make sound progress. They explain new concepts well. The majority of teachers give pupils beneficial opportunities to discuss their ideas with their peers and sufficient time to complete tasks independently.

The majority of teachers question pupils appropriately to check their knowledge and understanding. In the few lessons where teaching is particularly strong, teachers have very high expectations and use open questioning skilfully to probe pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking further. These teachers plan tasks effectively to ensure that they build on pupils' learning.

However, in a minority of cases, teachers do not plan their lessons well enough. Shortcomings in these lessons include activities that do not progressively build on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and this limits pupils' learning. In others, teachers do not successfully interest and engage pupils. This is partly because they do not allow pupils sufficient time to explore the work independently, or tasks are repetitive and do not challenge pupils enough. In a few lessons, teaching does not meet the needs of all pupils well enough, in particular the most able.

Many teachers assess pupils' progress effectively in lessons and provide them with helpful verbal feedback. Their written feedback identifies beneficially the strengths and areas for development in pupils' work. The majority of pupils respond appropriately to this feedback. However, the quality of teachers' written comments remains variable. A minority do not explain how to improve clearly enough. This limits pupils' ability to address any shortcomings. A few teachers pay insufficient attention to the technical accuracy of pupils' written work.

R5. Improve the quality and consistency of self-evaluation, improvement planning and monitoring of progress

The quality of whole-school self-evaluation provides the headteacher and leadership team with a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Since the core inspection, improvements in self-evaluation and improvement planning have had a positive impact on standards in lessons and the quality of provision for developing pupils' skills.

The senior leadership team now provide sound support to middle leaders to help them improve their practice in self-evaluation and improvement planning. Senior leaders carry out a majority of quality assurance activities such as lesson observations and learning walks and provide comprehensive feedback to middle leaders. Middle leaders scrutinise pupils' work appropriately according to the school's quality assurance calendar but are not routinely formally involved in observing lessons outside of performance management. Although the quality of these vary, the school has ensured that there is a common understanding of the strengths and areas for development within and across departments.

Overall, departmental self-evaluation is more consistent in quality than at the time of the core inspection and links clearly to whole-school self-evaluation. Most departments analyse outcomes effectively, making suitable comparisons and analysing trends in performance. They use evidence from lesson observations and book scrutiny in their evaluation of pupil progress and provision. This has led to a more accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning within these departments. The role of pastoral leaders in self-evaluation and improvement planning has improved significantly and they use data well to analyse whole year performance and attendance.

Area improvement planning links clearly to issues identified through self-evaluation activities and to whole school priorities. Overall, success criteria are specific and measurable and there are suitable arrangements for monitoring progress.

R6. Increase accountability for leaders at all levels for improving standards and the quality of teaching

Since the core inspection, there have been significant changes in senior leadership. The appointment of a new headteacher in September 2017 and the addition of two assistant headteachers to the senior leadership team has strengthened the school's capacity to make improvements. Roles are clearly defined and communicated, and responsibilities are well balanced. The actions of the senior leadership team are having an impact on improving the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' skills.

Senior leadership meetings focus suitably on action points from previous meetings, as well as on the outcomes of self-evaluation, improvement planning reviews and line management meetings. Lines of accountability are clear and there are regular link meetings with middle leaders that focus well on standards. Senior leaders hold middle leaders to account more robustly than at the time of the core inspection.

The school has strengthened appropriately its performance management arrangements for all staff. However, the objectives do not always include sufficiently measurable targets related to teaching and learning.

The governing body holds senior and middle leaders to account suitably. Governors have strengthened their links to areas of learning and visit the school often to monitor standards and provision appropriately. This has increased beneficially their knowledge of the work of the school.

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