



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**

**Ysgol y Bannau  
Penlan  
Brecon  
Powys  
LD3 9SR**

**Date of visit: July 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol y Bannau 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 the list of schools that are in need of significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Strengthen leadership and ensure that leaders operate strategically**

Following a period of instability in staffing over the last two years, the acting headteacher has established a robust leadership structure in order to address the school's priorities. This has led to creating an ethos of effective co-operation between all of the school's staff, which has a positive effect on pupils' outcomes.

Since the core inspection, members of the senior management team have worked together effectively to respond to the recommendations. Meetings between leaders and staff now focus appropriately on issues relating to provision and pupils' outcomes. This contributes well towards ensuring that staff are more aware of their roles in realising the school's priorities. All members of staff now have a job description that outlines their roles and responsibilities clearly, and suitable performance management processes are in place for the acting headteacher and teachers. This contributes successfully towards identifying teachers' professional learning needs against the school's priorities and their personal development.

The school's leaders work successfully with authority officers and schools across the consortium in order to improve provision and raise standards. A good example of this is the effective co-operation between the acting headteacher and another headteacher to establish robust self-evaluation processes and improve the school's strategic leadership. Members of the senior management team take advantage of beneficial opportunities to improve their leadership skills by taking part in courses and purposeful professional development. This contributes suitably to their understanding of operating more strategically and raising standards. The school's leaders monitor progress against priorities in the post-inspection action plan appropriately, although they do not always measure the effect of this on pupils' outcomes robustly enough.

### **R2. Strengthen self-evaluation processes in order to identify clear priorities for improvement, and monitor them more effectively**

Since the core inspection, the acting headteacher has worked effectively with officers from the local authority, headteachers of other schools, the consortium and governors to take part in a range of beneficial monitoring activities. The school has established a relevant programme to evaluate the school's work, which is based on

scrutinising books, monitoring teachers' plans, observing lessons and sharing good practice in teaching. Teachers are included fully in the process. This has led to creating an ethos of teamwork among staff and ensured transparency within the process.

Recently, leaders have sought the views of parents, governors and pupils through purposeful questionnaires. Members of the school council also scrutinise books with teachers in order to identify what they have enjoyed, in addition to strengths and areas for improvement appropriately. These activities ensure that the views of all stakeholders are considered successfully in evaluating the school's life and work.

Leaders' monitoring reports, which derive from scrutinising books and lesson observations, now focus suitably on appropriate aspects of teaching and learning. Comments at the end of the lesson observation process are beginning to provide teachers with a clear direction on what needs to be improved. Governors also contribute successfully to the process in purposeful monitoring reports. However, the senior management team's monitoring reports are not always incisive or evaluative enough. As a result, they do not have a clear enough overview of strengths and areas for improvement, for example the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

### **R3. Improve processes for assessing and tracking pupils' progress**

Leaders have reviewed the school's assessment policy appropriately and this has ensured that clear procedures are in place. As a result, there is consistency in the way in which teachers provide feedback on pupils' work. Where appropriate, success criteria in lessons focus suitably on developing pupils' specific skills. Overall, pupils are given purposeful opportunities to assess their own work against the success criteria. As a result, many pupils are beginning to identify the steps they need to take in order to succeed in their work.

Overall, teachers' oral and written feedback provides useful comments, which enable pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve. Where feedback is most effective, pupils reflect on teachers' comments and improve their work. This ensures that pupils play an active role in their learning.

The school now has suitable procedures for tracking pupils' progress. Staff use a relevant range of assessments in order to measure pupils' progress, and are beginning to use this information to plan the way forward. It is too early to measure the effect of these new procedures on pupils' outcomes. The school works appropriately with other schools in the cluster in order to moderate pupils' work. As a result, teachers' understanding of the requirements of outcomes and levels is developing well.

### **R4. Raise standards of writing in Welsh**

Since the core inspection, teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of genres. The 'Storm Sgwennu' (Writing Storm) project has engaged pupils' interest in applying their writing skills confidently. By sharing their work with their

parents and publishing the work in the local community newspaper, 'Y Fan a'r Lle', pupils take pride in their success.

By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils write sensibly by following familiar patterns and using simple punctuation. Overall, many pupils spell familiar words correctly. They use adjectives and idioms, and vary their sentences to enrich their work successfully, for example when writing a portrayal of Goldilocks.

In key stage 2, many pupils set out pieces of work correctly and adapt them appropriately for different purposes and audiences. They spell many words correctly and punctuate their work appropriately, by using paragraphs to organise their text. A majority of pupils use their skills successfully to write at length, for example when writing an argument for or against installing wind turbines on the school grounds. However, in a few classes across the school, provision does not always ensure opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills consistently across the curriculum. As a result, the standard of writing does not always reflect the standard that is seen in language books.

### **R5. Improve the quality of teaching to respond fully to pupils' needs**

Teachers have established an effective learning environment in their classes, and they plan interesting experiences that meet many pupils' needs purposefully. There is a constructive working relationship between staff and pupils, which ensures pupils' commitment to learning. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and, on the whole, they present lessons and tasks clearly and effectively. Where appropriate, teachers make clear links with previous learning, which ensures that pupils build well on their skills and understanding. Teachers question purposefully to extend pupils' understanding and, on the whole, ensure that their lessons have a suitable pace. This has a positive effect on pupils' commitment to their work. However, activities do not always respond fully to the needs of more able pupils, as there is a lack of challenge in tasks.

Where teaching is at its best, teachers ensure that pupils investigate for themselves, for example in scientific investigations and activities to solve number problems. However, across the school, activities are too structured at time, and are over-directed by staff. This prevents pupils from developing as creative, independent and confident learners.

On the whole, the principles of the foundation phase have been implemented and rich provision supports learning appropriately. Teachers plan a suitable range of beneficial activities in order for pupils to discover for themselves. However, this has not been developed fully across the phase.

In order to improve the quality of teaching, teachers have benefitted from a range of beneficial experiences by observing good practice in other schools and through purposefully modelling and monitoring sessions. This has raised staff's confidence and has led to improvements in most classes. However, aspects of teaching continue to be an area for development.

## **R6. Strengthen the role of governors to work more strategically and fulfil their statutory duties**

Governors now have specific responsibilities, in addition to a clear link to the recommendations in the post-inspection action plan. As a result, they contribute more effectively to the work of identifying the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Since the core inspection, governors have received relevant training, including on monitoring teaching, learning walks and scrutinising pupils' work. This has strengthened their understanding and ability to evaluate provision knowledgeably and take a more strategic role in developing the school. They now contribute robust comments in a wide range of monitoring reports and identify suitable actions for improvement.

Governors have clear knowledge of the school's priorities. They use the expertise of members of the governing body effectively in order to develop their strategic role in the school's processes. Through relevant training and liaising with governors in other schools, their role as members of the governing body is developing well.

Governors receive purposeful information from the headteacher and the local authority about progress towards the targets in the post-inspection action plan. They now evaluate progress more effectively. As a result, governors' ability to challenge the school and hold it to account is developing well.