

28 February 2020

Dear

**Secondary school monitoring inspections – Freedom of Information request**

Thank you for your email of 4 February 2020, in which you formally request the following:

1. Copies of the Post Inspection Action Plans for all secondary schools that have been placed in any category of Estyn monitoring from 2015 to 2020.
2. Copies of their Follow-up Estyn monitoring reports

When dealing with requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'Act'), Estyn's obligations include:-

1. Confirming or denying whether it holds information of the description specified in the request; and
2. Communicating the information requested to the applicant.

There are a number of exemptions under the Act that impact these obligations. Estyn is required to consider whether an exemption applies in the context of the information being released into the public domain. Not in the context of the information being released to the particular applicant that has requested the information.

If Estyn releases information in response to a Freedom of Information request, this is essentially a decision that the information can be released in response to any similar request from any member of the public.

In response to your request for copies of Post Inspection Action Plans, I can confirm that these are documents forwarded to us by schools in a statutory category and as such belong to the school. These are shared with us in a draft form for comment, feedback and discussion. They are held on a temporary basis by Estyn and then disposed after a period of six months following the publication of the report in which the school is removed from its follow-up category. I am of the opinion that the submitted action plan documents and associated correspondence and reports

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Mae Estyn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Bydd gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn y naill iaith neu'r llall yn cael yr un flaenoriaeth. | Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

relating to post-inspection action plans are exempt from release into the public domain under the following sections of the Act.

- Section 33 – Prejudice to audit functions
- Section 40 (2) – Personal Information

Section 33 applies to any public authority which has functions in relation to a) the audit of the accounts of other public authorities or b) the examination of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which other public authorities use their resources in discharging their functions.

A public authority to which this section applies is exempt of disclosing information if the disclosure of this information would, or would likely to, prejudice the exercise of any of the authority's functions in relation to any matters referred to above.

Estyn, as Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, holds functions in relation to the examination of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which other public authorities, namely schools, use their resources in discharging their functions. Therefore, I consider that releasing the information requested would, or would be likely to, prejudice Estyn's functions in relation to the examination of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which other public authorities use their resources in discharging their functions.

### **Public interest test**

Section 33 is a qualified exemption which requires Estyn to consider whether the public interest in releasing the draft action plans received outweighs the public interest in maintaining the exemption.

I have considered the arguments in favour of releasing those post-inspection action plans that Estyn still retains into the public domain and appreciate the importance of Estyn, as a public authority, being open and transparent. However, I consider that the argument in favour of increasing transparency is reduced given the existing substantial volume of information concerning school inspections that following publication of the monitoring report will be made available to the public, and should be viewable on school websites.

In my view the arguments against releasing the post inspection action plans and maintaining the exemption outweigh the arguments in favour of disclosure.

It is also my view that some of the information held within the above request constitutes personal data and therefore falls to be considered under section 40(2) of the FOIA. The exemption contained in section 40 (2) of the Act applies where the information requested contains the personal data of a third party and disclosure of the information would breach one of the data protection principles contained in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act or would contravene section 10 of the Data Protection Act (where disclosure would be likely to cause damage or distress).

Under section 40(2) of the Act, information which consists of personal data is exempt from release if release of the information, otherwise than under the FOIA, would

contravene any of the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 1998. This exemption is an absolute exemption, which is not subject to the public interest test.

In respect of your second request, regarding the issue of monitoring reports for those schools that have submitted post inspection action plans to Estyn since January 2015, I have concluded that these are not subject to the exemptions as listed above, and are included with this response. Owing to the large number of documents, I am now sending these across a series of emails to the address you have provided.

In those reports dating from 2015 to 2017, these have been redacted slightly to remove the names of inspection team members. This has been carried out in accordance with Section 40(2) FOIA exemption, for the reasons as outlined above.

If you are not satisfied with the decision Estyn has taken regarding your request for information, you are entitled to request that we review the matter. Your request for a review should be addressed to the Feedback and Complaints Manager, and received no later than 20 working days after the date of this communication.

If you are still not satisfied, you also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113  
Email: [enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Gairey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping tail.

**Robert Gairey**  
FOI case officer



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**

**Aberdare Community School  
Ynys Road  
Ynys  
Aberdare  
CF44 7RP**

**Date of visit: September 2019**

**by**

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



## Outcome of visit

Aberdare Community School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around six months' time to monitor progress against the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### R1. Improve attendance and behaviour

Pupils' attendance has been variable over the last two years. Attendance fell sharply in 2018 followed by some improvement in 2019. However, it remains below that at the time of the core inspection and continues to compare unfavourably with that of similar schools. In addition, persistent absence is higher than at the time of the core inspection. Incidents of very poor behaviour have reduced over the same period but the attitudes to learning of many pupils remain a concern.

The school has employed a range of worthwhile strategies to raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance with pupils and parents. These include using social media, assemblies, circle time and first day absence calls. Leaders have also reinvigorated successfully the reward system to maintain pupils' engagement. Close monitoring of attendance in lessons and follow up from staff has led to a significant reduction in internal truancy. The school has recently adopted a range of beneficial systems for collecting useful data on attendance and behaviour. Leaders evaluate this data rigorously and act upon it swiftly. Since January 2019, school data indicates that there have been improvements in attendance patterns for many pupils. However, overall attendance remains below that of similar schools and persistent absenteeism has increased. New strategies are in place to tackle persistent absence, but it is too early to attribute any significant impact to these initiatives.

Following the core inspection, the rate of fixed term exclusions increased sharply. However, since January 2019, the school has strengthened its behaviour policy and practice including a more effective approach to internal inclusion. It has worked appropriately with a range of outside agencies to support vulnerable learners and pupils at risk of disengagement. As a result, over the past two terms, the rate of fixed-term exclusions has decreased considerably.

The school gathers valuable information about incidents of poor behaviour and leaders are beginning to use this data well to identify patterns and possible causes. As a result of changes to procedures and increased staff vigilance, the behaviour of pupils moving between lessons has improved. However, the behaviour of a few pupils on the yard and on the stairs is still too rowdy and of concern to their peers. Furthermore, in a majority of lessons, pupils exhibit immature behaviour and do not focus well enough on their learning. Only a few pupils show enthusiasm for their learning, and a minority do not finish tasks. Overall, behaviour and attitudes to learning are too variable and remain in need of improvement.

## **R2. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

The school has recently introduced a suitable approach to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Many teachers have begun to engage with these strategies but it is too soon to comment on the impact of this approach on the quality of teaching.

The majority of teachers establish suitable working relationships with pupils. A few teachers plan appropriately to take into account pupils' prior learning. In these instances, pupils engage in interesting and varied tasks that help them make progress. For example, in drama pupils respond thoughtfully to the teacher role-playing the actions of a vulnerable character. In a few lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to elicit thoughtful responses. In these lessons, teachers do not accept simple responses but use follow up questions well to probe and challenge pupils' understanding. A very few teachers adapt lessons suitably when required.

Overall, the expectations of the majority of teachers are too low. Their lessons are not sufficiently challenging to secure appropriate progress for all pupils and they do not build on prior learning well enough. In these cases, teachers do not provide pupils with engaging tasks that stretch them. They rely too heavily on simple tasks that keep pupils busy rather than extending their knowledge and skills. The majority of lessons do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to solve problems or develop their knowledge and skills through independent learning. Many teachers do not give enough priority to the development of pupils' skills in lessons. For instance, they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary and extend their verbal skills.

Many teachers do not use questioning well enough to probe or challenge pupils understanding. They do not elicit how well all pupils understand topics or concepts and are too ready to provide praise for simplistic responses to questions.

Generally, feedback does not provide pupils with enough guidance on what they have to do to improve their work. It is often overgenerous and rewards effort but not the quality of the work. In a few instances, teachers provide useful commentary on the quality of pupils' work or helpful verbal feedback in lessons. Overall, feedback does not have enough impact on helping pupils' progress.

### **R3. Improve pupil standards and progress**

Since January 2019, the school has implemented a suitable range of strategies to improve pupils' progress and standards. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes at the end of key stage 4. Since the core inspection, outcomes in key stage 4 have improved in many indicators. In 2018, performance in the majority of indicators compares well with that of similar schools. However, the school's strategies have not had sufficient impact on pupils' progress in lessons.

The majority of pupils recall prior learning suitably and offer brief responses to questions that test their basic understanding. However, many pupils have difficulty applying their prior knowledge to new and challenging contexts. As a result, many pupils do not make strong enough progress in lessons. The majority of pupils listen well to teachers and a few engage beneficially in dialogue about their work.

Many pupils have poorly developed verbal skills and have difficulty when responding at length to questions or when sharing their ideas and opinions. Although a very few pupils use subject vocabulary well in context in many cases their general and subject specific vocabulary is underdeveloped. As a result, they are not able to explain their thinking or develop their understanding well enough. In addition, many pupils do not have sufficiently well-developed independent learning skills.

A minority of pupils read and extract information from short texts suitably. They answer simple questions that relate to these appropriately. A few communicate well in their writing and have a suitable understanding of purpose and audience. However, many pupils' writing is underdeveloped. These pupils often make basic spelling and grammatical errors. In a majority of cases, they rely too heavily on structures provided by teachers. In mathematics lessons, the majority of pupils are able to perform simple calculations. However, in general, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills well enough across the curriculum.

#### **R4. Improve the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since the core inspection, there has been significant turbulence in the senior leadership of the school. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2019 and has offered staff assured leadership. She has improved communication within the school and introduced useful working groups to discuss and share teaching strategies. Staff now feel that senior leaders listen to their views, and their morale has improved significantly.

The new headteacher has expanded her senior leadership team and revised roles and responsibilities appropriately. Senior leaders are starting to work well as a team and are beginning to increase the rigour of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. They have secured improvements in areas that needed urgent improvement such as reducing internal truancy and recorded incidences of poor behaviour.

In general, leaders have a sound understanding of how to use data to inform self-evaluation. There is a suitable calendar of activities to gather first-hand evidence of the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have received appropriate training in order to improve the rigour and usefulness of their lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Very recently, the manner in which these activities are carried out has been refined to focus more closely on standards and the impact of teaching. However, these changes are too recent to have had an impact on the effectiveness of the school's improvement processes. At present, leaders' understanding of pupils' skills and progress in lessons is underdeveloped. Although they have a broad understanding of aspects of teaching that need improvement, they do not link teaching with its impact on standards closely enough. This limits their ability to plan for improvement.

Overall, since the time of the core inspection improvement processes have not been successful enough in securing improvements to the effectiveness of teaching, pupils' skills or pupils' attitudes to learning.



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**

**Abersychan Comprehensive School  
Incline Road  
Abersychan  
Pontypool  
NP4 7DF**

**Date of visit: March 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Abersychan 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 the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards at key stage 4, and for pupils with additional learning needs**

Since the time of the core inspection, the school's performance at key stage 4 improved well in many indicators in 2017.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics and the capped points score indicator is now in line with that of similar schools. In many indicators, pupils make strong progress from previous key stages. Despite these improvements, pupils' performance in a minority of indicators remains below that of pupils in similar schools.

The performance of boys and girls improved in the majority of indicators in 2017 compared with 2016. While girls' performance is above the average for girls in the family in the majority of indicators, that of boys is lower than the average for boys in the family in most indicators. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved well in 2017 in many indicators and is above the average for similar pupils in the family in the majority of indicators. The performance of pupils with additional learning needs improved notably in 2017.

Many pupils read and write in Welsh competently. The most able at key stage 4 converse capably in Welsh with their peers and visitors. A minority of pupils achieve a level 2 qualification in Welsh.

Most pupils show sound recall of prior learning. They work competently independently and with others. They settle quickly to tasks and many show resilience when challenged. Many pupils also apply their knowledge successfully to new situations. In doing so, they develop their subject specific skills well during lessons. However, in a few lessons, a minority of pupils do not engage well enough in their learning and, as a result, do not make enough progress.

In many lessons, nearly all pupils listen well to their teachers. When given the opportunity, a majority of pupils use subject specific vocabulary confidently to explain their ideas and thinking. A few provide well-developed, eloquent responses. However, a minority of pupils' responses to teachers' questions are too brief.

Many pupils use a range of effective strategies to extract information and draw suitable inference from texts. A minority of pupils are able to provide detailed, thoughtful analyses of the materials that they read, for example when reviewing how effectively Martin Luther King persuades his audience to believe in his cause.

Most pupils have well-presented books. The majority write well at length for a suitable range of purposes across the curriculum. They structure their writing appropriately and convey their ideas effectively in their written work. For example, they use complex technical terms adeptly when discussing how intensive farming can affect the water cycle and climate. A few pupils write very confidently at length and vary what they write effectively to interest and engage the reader. The majority of pupils write generally accurately. However, a minority of pupils make frequent technical and grammatical errors. A few of these pupils do not express their ideas clearly in their work, which further impedes its quality.

The majority of pupils have strong number skills and learn and apply new methods successfully. They show sound mathematical reasoning skills and a minority of pupils apply these effectively to real life situations. The majority of pupils draw a range of graphs competently and interpret information contained in them accurately.

In general, pupils do not develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well enough in subjects outside of ICT.

## **R2. Improve attendance and behaviour**

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has put in place rigorous and effective systems to promote, monitor and support good attendance and behaviour.

The school has strengthened considerably the strategic and operational oversight of its work in this area. Pastoral roles have been reviewed suitably, and heads of year now focus well on behaviour, attendance and wellbeing. A new and simplified behaviour management system is used well by nearly all staff. The school uses detailed information on behaviour and attendance to plan suitable interventions to target improvements effectively. It works well in partnership with pupils and parents to address persistent absence and behavioural issues. The school has developed an effective range of strategies to promote and celebrate good behaviour and attendance, for example through a wide range of enjoyable rewards.

Rates of attendance at the school, in particular those of pupils eligible for free school meals, have improved well and compare favourably with those of similar schools. The school is now a calm environment, where most pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful to their peers, teachers and visitors. However, in a few instances, a few pupils are not as well behaved as their peers and disrupt the learning of others.

## **R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and the provision for skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented many useful strategies to improve the quality of teaching, for example the sharing of good practice regularly through teaching forums and staff newsletters.

Nearly all teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and are good language role models, and most forge productive working relationships with pupils. Many teachers plan effectively and set an appropriate level of challenge in their lessons. They use a wide range of approaches to sustain pupils' engagement and interest well. Many teachers have appropriate expectations of pupils in regard to their standard of work and behaviour. The majority of teachers secure strong pace and challenge to the learning in their lessons. Many use pupils' individual education plans appropriately to provide suitable support in lessons. However, a minority do not adapt tasks to meet pupils' needs consistently well.

In a few instances, teaching is energetic, passionate and inspiring. In these lessons, teachers create an extremely positive learning environment and challenge pupils successfully to produce high quality work. However, a few teachers do not plan work that is challenging enough or manage behaviour consistently well in their lessons. As a result, they do not engage all pupils successfully.

Many teachers provide useful verbal feedback to individual pupils and the whole class. The majority explore pupils' understanding well, challenge them through effective questioning, and allow them enough time to respond fully. A few teachers encourage pupils, through clever questioning, to elaborate on their ideas and those of others in order to strengthen the understanding of the whole class well. However, a few teachers do not question effectively to deepen understanding, or focus on too few pupils when seeking responses.

The school has suitable plans in place to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in subjects outside of English and mathematics. Pupils at key stage 3 benefit from valuable skills' lessons. Departments have assumed responsibility for suitable aspects of the literacy and numeracy framework. Co-ordinators provide teachers with valuable support to improve provision for skills, for example to develop methodology in numeracy and approaches to extended writing. How well departments develop pupils' skills is variable. For example, many teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to write at length. However these opportunities do not develop consistently well pupils' ability to write for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum. Provision for the development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

#### **R4. Strengthen the provision for additional learning needs**

Since the core inspection the school has strengthened suitably its provision for additional learning needs. The appointment of a new additional learning needs co-ordinator has ensured that there is a more cohesive and comprehensive approach to planning for and monitoring the progress of pupils with additional learning needs.



For example, staff have received valuable training on how to support pupils of all abilities effectively. The departmental 'additional learning needs champions' play a key role in sharing useful information and good practice within departments. The additional learning needs bulletin provides regular updates about individual pupils and helpful strategies to support their progress. The school has also produced valuable individual education plans for pupils, which include useful targets and teaching strategies. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not adapt work well enough to meet the needs of all pupils.

The additional resource base provides pupils with a safe environment that promotes positive attitudes to learning. Staff in the base provide expert support for pupils with specific learning needs in the resource base and in mainstream lessons. The 'Learning to Live' centre is used well to meet the needs of pupils with identified behavioural issues. This provision is now monitored thoroughly to ensure that nearly all pupils are given appropriate support to help them re-engage with their learning. These approaches have contributed effectively to improved behaviour among pupils at the school.

The school has worked productively with external providers to offer a wide range of appropriate vocational courses to pupils. This extended provision has helped to secure higher attendance rates for learners with additional needs and engage them in their learning.

#### **R5. Improve leadership across the school, and in particular the leadership of wellbeing**

Since the time of the core inspection there have been substantial changes in senior and middle leadership, including to the leadership of wellbeing. The school has refined suitably the roles and responsibilities of leaders so that they are clear and align well to whole-school priorities.

The deputy headteacher, with responsibility for the strategic co-ordination of the full range of wellbeing provision at the school, oversees highly effectively the work of heads of year, the additional learning needs co-ordinator and the attendance and behaviour support teams. This has had a material impact on improving the behaviour and attendance of pupils at the school and the outcomes for pupils with additional learning needs at key stage 4.

Middle leadership at the school has been strengthened well through new appointments and robust processes for holding all middle leaders rigorously to account. There are strong arrangements in place for all heads of department to review examination performance annually with senior leaders and governors. Ongoing assessment information is reviewed monthly with a member of the senior team in charge of raising standards to ensure that leaders maintain their focus on monitoring and improving pupil outcomes consistently throughout the year. Regular line management meetings focus well on the improving the quality of teaching and

learning. Extensive leadership training has strengthened well the ability of many to fulfil their roles effectively. However, there remains variability in the ability of a few middle leaders to improve outcomes in their departments.

The school has strong performance management arrangements and staff's targets align well with whole school priorities. These targets are challenging and are closely monitored throughout the cycle. This has resulted in more rigorous and effective line management arrangements.

The governing body is substantially strengthened. Governors have a clear and thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and provide the school with strong support and rigorous challenge.

### **R6. Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since the core inspection, the school has continued to strengthen arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning. This has had a positive impact on pupil outcomes, attendance and behaviour.

The school has a well-organised calendar of self-evaluation activities. Leaders now accurately identify strengths and areas for development following lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, and this information is used well to provide support and challenge to teachers in order to improve the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes.

Whole school self-evaluation includes detailed analyses of data that identify trends and performance against that of similar schools appropriately. Success criteria include challenging targets for whole-school performance. The school takes account of first hand evidence well, including pupils' views. It is developing its use of the views of parents, staff and governors appropriately. As a result, the report gives an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school's improvement plan links well to self-evaluation findings.

Since the core inspection, the senior leadership team has provided valuable support to middle leaders in order to help them improve their practice in self-evaluation and improvement planning. Senior and middle leaders carry out many quality assurance activities together, and this effectively provides middle leaders with worthwhile opportunities to develop their skills in evaluating performance.

Many middle leaders now use data appropriately to analyse pupils' outcomes. However, a few do not use data accurately to identify all key priorities for improvement. Departmental improvement plans link well to the findings of middle leaders' self-evaluation, and they monitor progress against the plans rigorously. The actions identified in a few of these improvement plans are not always clear enough or the plans do not include sufficiently precise success criteria.

Heads of year evaluate their work suitably, and plan for improvement in aspects such as attendance and behaviour appropriately.

As a consequence of these arrangements, the quality of teaching and learning has improved, pupils' outcomes have improved in many indicators in key stage 4 in 2017, rates of attendance have risen notably and the school is now a calm and pleasant environment.



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: Special Measures**

**Bedwas High School  
Newport Road  
Bedwas  
CF83 8BJ**

**Date of visit: December 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Bedwas high school is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### R1. Improve standards at key stage 4

In 2018, the school's performance compares favourably with that in similar schools in all of the key indicators at key stage 4. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics improved in both 2017 and 2018 and compares well with that in similar schools. Over the last three years, performance in the capped points score has been broadly in line with that of similar schools.

In 2018, there was a slight decline in the proportion of pupils who gained five or more A\*- A grades at GCSE or equivalent. However, despite this decline, the school's performance in this indicator has been above that of similar schools for the last three years.

In 2018, the performance of boys compares favourably with that of boys in similar schools in all of the key indicators. The performance of girls is generally in line with or better than the performance of girls in similar schools.

Since the core inspection, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals has declined in many of the key indicators. In 2018, the performance of these

pupils is better than that of those in similar schools in many key indicators. However, the performance of these pupils in the level 2 threshold, including English and maths is below that of similar schools.

Over the past three years, performance in the sixth form has improved in many of the key indicators and, in 2018, is broadly in line with that of similar schools.

Many pupils make suitable progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. The majority recall prior learning well.

Many pupils respond to questioning appropriately. A few pupils are able to provide extended responses to questions from teachers, for example when considering the beliefs of the Inca people in Peru. A few pupils provide only brief underdeveloped responses and do not communicate ideas in a sufficiently fluent or thoughtful way.

Many pupils produce extended writing that is suitably structured. These pupils convey their ideas well, for example when selecting items to include in a drought survival pack for families in East African refugee camps. However, a minority of pupils make regular basic errors in their spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Most pupils read suitably to extract meaning from a variety of texts. For example, in history, pupils extract key information from a range of evidence regarding the causes of the great depression in 1930s Germany. A minority of pupils use inference suitably to enhance their understanding of texts. For example, pupils accurately interpret the meaning of dialogue in Romeo and Juliet.

Many pupils display sound numeracy skills and apply these well in different contexts. For example, in geography pupils are able to interpret a pie chart appropriately to calculate the proportion of the Earth covered by deserts, forests and mountains.

In lessons and around the school, nearly all pupils are courteous and polite. Most engage appropriately in their learning and work suitably in groups and pairs.

## **R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the last monitoring visit, school leaders have continued to focus suitably on improving the quality of teaching. Staff have benefitted from a wide range of whole-school and individual training opportunities to help improve their classroom practice. This includes useful training on developing teachers' questioning skills and a suitable focus on developing strategies to improve pupils' motivation, engagement and independence. Leaders have identified effective practice and this has been shared in a range of beneficial ways. However, the school has not focused sharply enough on improving the impact of teachers' written feedback on pupils' progress.

Most teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and have strong working relationships with pupils. Many have appropriately high expectations of what pupils

can achieve and provide them with a suitable level of challenge. These teachers plan lessons carefully and include appropriate opportunities for pupils to undertake group or independent work. They use questioning effectively to test knowledge and monitor pupil progress closely. They provide helpful verbal feedback on how pupils can improve their work. Around half of teachers ask probing questions that encourage pupils to extend their thinking.

A few teachers plan lessons that inspire pupils. These teachers use their understanding of pupils' prior learning to extend their understanding and maximise the progress they make. However, a few teachers do not plan lessons carefully enough. They do not ensure that activities are matched closely enough to pupils' ability or build well enough on their prior learning.

A minority of teachers provide pupils with effective written feedback. This shows them clearly how to improve their work. However, in the majority of instances, teachers' do not provide precise enough guidance or they do not ensure that pupils respond appropriately to their comments.

### **R3. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R4. Improve the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and the precision of improvement planning at all levels**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken suitable steps to strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements. This has resulted in a generally appropriate understanding of strengths and areas for improvement and clear improvement planning.

Middle leaders contribute valuably to the whole school self-evaluation process. Many analyse data accurately and identify appropriate improvement priorities. Senior leaders provide useful support and challenge for middle leaders in this aspect of their work. However, the progress of groups of pupils, including pupils entitled to free school meals, those with additional learning needs and more able and talented pupils, is not evaluated thoroughly enough by the school or each department.

Since the core inspection, the school has refined its approach to lesson observation to ensure greater accuracy and reliability. This is beginning to help leaders to focus clearly on the impact of teaching on progress. However, this practice is inconsistent amongst a few middle leaders.

The school has strengthened appropriately its approach to engaging pupils, parents and staff in self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. For example,

pupils have influenced the development of the new behaviour policy and parents have been consulted on how the school can improve communication strategies.

Improvement planning priorities are linked clearly to self-evaluation findings. The school amends its strategies appropriately in light of ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

**R5. Provide robust financial management to eliminate the budget deficit**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.





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: Special measures**

**Bedwas High School  
Newport Road  
Bedwas  
CF83 8BJ  
Date of visit: February 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

The school is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### R1. Improve standards at key stage 4

In 2017, the school's performance compares favourably with that in similar schools in nearly all indicators at key stage 4. Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics improved in 2017 and compares well with that in similar schools. Despite a dip in the capped points score, performance in this indicator also compares well with that in similar schools.

The proportion of pupils who gained five or more A\*-A grades at GCSE or equivalent improved in 2017, and compares well with that in similar schools.

In 2017, the performance of boys compares favourably with that of boys in similar schools in nearly all indicators at key stage 4. The performance of girls is generally in line with or better than the performance of girls in similar schools.

The performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals deteriorated in many indicators in 2017. This does not compare well with the performance of the same group of pupils in similar schools, in mathematics, in particular.

Despite improvements in 2017, the school has not sustained sufficiently strong outcomes at key stage 4 over time.

## **R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Whilst there have been improvements in the quality of teaching and assessment, important areas remain in need of development. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to improve the quality of teaching by, for example, providing valuable opportunities to identify and share good practice. However, the school has not focused sharply enough on improving specific aspects of teaching and assessment such as questioning and the quality of teachers' feedback to pupils, or on supporting weaker teachers and supply teachers.

Most teachers have positive working relationships with pupils and sound subject knowledge. Many prepare helpful resources and provide a variety of appropriate tasks. Many teachers explain clearly and a minority exemplify effectively.

In a very few lessons which are particularly effective, teachers challenge pupils well and employ a variety of interesting tasks which engage pupils successfully. These teachers adapt their strategies skilfully in response to pupils' needs.

A majority of teachers plan lessons well and include sequences of helpful activities which ensure pupil progress and provide appropriate challenge. However, in a minority of lessons the pace of the learning is too slow and teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to learn for themselves. In these lessons, teachers over-direct the learning and their expectations of what pupils should accomplish independently, are too low.

The school's provision to develop the numeracy skills of pupils in lessons is strong but the provision to strengthen their literacy skills remains underdeveloped.

A majority of teachers use questioning suitably to check and secure pupils' understanding and knowledge. However, in general, teacher questioning is not sufficiently probing or challenging and does not enable teachers to monitor pupils' understanding and progress well enough.

In the majority of lessons, teachers provide valuable verbal feedback that enables pupils to understand immediately the strengths and weaknesses in their work. A majority of teachers provide useful written comments on how pupils can improve their work. However, a minority of written comments remain too superficial and do not help pupils to understand how to improve their work well enough.

Pupils' response to teachers' written feedback is underdeveloped. In many cases, pupils respond superficially and teachers do not monitor the quality of these responses well enough.

The school has effective systems for tracking pupil progress and uses these systems successfully to identify and address underachievement.

#### **R4. Improve the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and the precision of improvement planning at all levels**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to improve self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. This has resulted in improved data analysis and clearer improvement plans. However, important aspects such as the evaluation of teaching and assessment and making use of findings from stakeholder surveys remain in need of improvement.

Middle leaders have benefitted from valuable training on self-evaluation and data analysis in particular. As a result, many now analyse an appropriate range of data, including item level data, well, and identify appropriate strengths and areas for improvement based on this analysis.

Since the core inspection, leaders have worked well with colleagues from other schools to refine their judgements on teaching and assessment. Whilst this has given them a more realistic picture of the quality of these aspects, their evaluations of lessons and pupils' work still do not pay enough attention to the progress pupils make, the standards they achieve or the development of their skills. As a result, leaders' understanding of the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' progress in the widest sense remains limited.

The quality of the school self-evaluation report has improved since the core inspection. It offers a more realistic picture of the school's work and identifies most strengths and areas for development. The school's analysis of data is accurate and offers measured judgements when considering performance in 2017, as well as performance over time. The analysis includes consideration of a suitable range of data, including value-added data. However, in a few areas, the school self-evaluation report does not give due attention to important areas which need addressing, such as behaviour and exclusions, and issues with staff absence. In addition, the progress of pupils entitled to free school meals and those with additional learning needs is not evaluated thoroughly enough by the school or each department.

The school has taken appropriate steps to seek the views of staff, parents and pupils. However, the findings from these activities are not evaluated or communicated well enough, and do not inform the school's action sufficiently.

The link between self-evaluation and improvement planning is now clear. Strategies to support improvements are appropriate and costed, and responsibilities for their implementation allocated appropriately. Most departmental improvement plans are appropriate and have suitable success criteria. However, the school's monitoring of the impact of the whole-school and departmental action plans is not rigorous enough.



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: Special Measures**

**Bedwas High School  
Newport Road  
Bedwas  
CF83 8BJ**

**Date of visit: July 2018**

**by**

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

## **Outcome of visit**

Bedwas High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4**

Standards in lessons and books remain similar to those at the time of the core inspection.

In around half of lessons pupils make suitable progress. They recall prior learning appropriately and apply this to new contexts and problem-solving tasks. For example, in art pupils explore and experiment with different techniques to create imaginative print effects. A minority of pupils use research skills well to deepen their knowledge of particular topics. In history, for instance, they engage in useful independent research to gain an understanding of life during the Renaissance. In a very few instances, pupils make strong progress. They engage purposefully with tasks and demonstrate clear understanding of challenging concepts. For example, in design technology pupils extend their knowledge of environmentally sustainable product designs through collaborative evaluation of actual products. However, a minority of pupils are not successful in building on their knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons and do not make enough progress.

A minority of pupils engage appropriately in discussion work, providing suitably developed contributions. A few pupils provide well-developed and thoughtful responses, for example when discussing their beliefs about creation and a Christian

concern for the environment. However, a minority of pupils do not contribute sufficiently to class discussions and miss opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding through dialogue with their peers and teachers. They do not listen carefully enough to questions and do not fully understand what is being asked of them.

Many pupils are able to retrieve information appropriately from a range of texts. Around half use inference and deduction well when considering literary themes such as Macbeth's loyalty, or developing their understanding of non-literary texts such as articles about Jack the Ripper. However, a minority of pupils do not have a sufficient range of reading skills to support their.

Many pupils write for an appropriate range of purposes and in different formats, including letters, expository pieces, recount writing, factual articles and reports. A few pupils write well independently, showing effective use of vocabulary, structure and control. For example, in English pupils write thoughtful exposition pieces about the impact of footballers as role models. However, around half of pupils have significant weaknesses in their writing. They make frequent basic spelling and grammar errors and do not show sufficient control in their writing, most commonly through the use of subordinate clauses rather than full sentences and comma splicing.

Many pupils complete basic calculations accurately. They apply their numeracy skills appropriately to a range of real life contexts. For instance, they use their numeracy skills well when managing their budget for the Welsh Baccalaureate Enterprise Challenge.

## **R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has maintained its focus on improving teaching and has continued to provide teachers with appropriate professional learning opportunities. It has, for example, focused suitably on developing teachers' use of effective questioning. However, these strategies have not led to sufficient improvements in the quality of teaching.

The school has a comprehensive knowledge of what teachers do. However, other than end of key stage 4 outcomes, which the school supports through extensive intervention work, and national test data, the school does not consider well enough the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and particularly on the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. This makes it very difficult for the school to identify precisely which aspects of teaching are successful and which need to be improved.

In the very few lessons where pupils make good progress, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ask questions that probe pupils' understanding of challenging topics such as creation and plan tasks and resources

that meet the needs and abilities of all pupils well. This encourages a high level of pupil engagement and a brisk pace to learning.

Most teachers have sound subject knowledge and foster positive working relationships with pupils. The majority of lessons are planned appropriately and include relevant activities to support pupils' progress. However, teachers' use of questioning to determine pupils' understanding and to challenge them to develop their verbal responses is too variable.

In a minority of lessons, the level of challenge is not sufficiently high and the pace of learning is not brisk enough. In these lessons, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop independence in their learning. They plan tasks that simply occupy pupils rather than engage, challenge or enthuse them. In these lessons, the support for the development of pupils' skills is often underdeveloped or contrived.

### **R3. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels**

Since the core inspection, the school has refined its leadership structure appropriately. This revision of leadership roles has strengthened leadership and accountability suitably. The extended leadership team now includes associate leaders who have assumed responsibility for important areas of the school's work, in particular teaching and learning, and pupil progress.

The morale of middle leaders has improved since the time of the core inspection. There is now a sense of collegiality amongst them that supports improved line management systems. The school has established a calendar of regular line management meetings that focus suitably on standards, provision and pupil progress. The school has refined suitably the role of pastoral leaders and has appointed progress managers who now track and monitor suitably the progress of pupils in individual year groups. The school is beginning to see the benefits of these changes, for example, the improved outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 4 in 2017.

Performance management objectives link well to school improvement priorities. They focus appropriately on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching.

The school has provided middle leaders with appropriate support to help them develop their effectiveness. However, there is too much variation in how robustly senior leaders hold middle leaders to account. The governing body has appointed link governors for all departments. This is beginning to provide an effective challenge to middle leaders.

### **R4. Improve the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and the precision of improvement planning at all levels**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.



## **R5. Provide robust financial management to eliminate the budget deficit**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to reduce the budget deficit. This includes a robust review of the curriculum and staffing for the forthcoming academic year. Working closely with the local authority, the school has improved arrangements to ensure that the budget is monitored frequently and robustly. Detailed budget reviews, involving governors and the local authority, take place half-termly.

Recently the local authority has approved a one-year extension to the licensed recovery plan. This plan indicates that the school will return to a balanced budget by 2020/21 and is likely to retain a very small surplus.



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Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: Special Measures**

**Bedwas High School  
Newport Road  
Bedwas  
CF83 8BJ**

**Date of visit: March 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Bedwas 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 the list of schools requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### R1. Improve standards at key stage 4

In 2018, the school's performance compares favourably with that in similar schools in all of the key indicators at key stage 4. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics improved in both 2017 and 2018 and compares well with that in similar schools. Over the last three years, performance in the capped points score has been broadly in line with that of similar schools.

While there was a slight decline in the proportion of pupils who gained five or more A\*- A grades at GCSE or equivalent in 2018, the school's performance in this indicator has been above that of similar schools for the last three years.

In 2018, the performance of boys compares favourably with that of boys in similar schools in all of the key indicators. The performance of girls is generally in line with or better than the performance of girls in similar schools.

While, in 2018, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics is below that of similar schools, their performance is better than that of similar schools in many key indicators. This is overall better than at the time of the core inspection.

Over the past three years, performance in the sixth form has improved in many of the key indicators and, in 2018, is broadly in line with that of similar schools.

In lessons, many pupils recall prior learning well. They make suitable progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Many pupils respond to questioning appropriately. A few pupils are able to provide extended responses to questions from teachers, for example when considering the beliefs of the Inca people in Peru. However, a few pupils provide only brief underdeveloped responses and do not communicate ideas in a sufficiently fluent or thoughtful way.

Many pupils produce extended writing that is suitably structured. These pupils convey their ideas well, for example when selecting items to include in a drought survival pack for families in East African refugee camps. However, a minority of pupils make regular basic errors in their spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Most pupils read suitably to extract meaning from a variety of texts. For example, in history, pupils extract key information from a range of evidence regarding the causes of the great depression in 1930s Germany. A minority of pupils show strong ability to infer meaning and examine language to enhance their understanding of texts. For example, they make strong progress in developing their ability to analyse and comment on character, themes, language and structure in English literature.

Many pupils display sound numeracy skills and apply these well in different contexts. For example, in geography pupils are able to interpret a pie chart appropriately to calculate the proportion of the Earth covered by deserts, forests and mountains. They construct suitable graphs, for example in science to plot sulphur dioxide emissions.

In lessons and around the school, nearly all pupils are courteous and polite. Most engage well in their learning. Where teaching is particularly strong, nearly all pupils demonstrate resilience, perseverance and high levels of enthusiasm for learning.

## **R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, school leaders have focussed well on improving the quality of teaching and assessment. Staff benefit from a wide range of whole-school and individual training opportunities to help improve classroom practice. This includes useful guidance on developing teachers' questioning skills and the quality of written feedback. Leaders have identified and placed a suitable focus on sharing effective practice at the school and on developing a culture of collaboration between staff.

Most teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They manage behaviour well and have strong working relationships with pupils. Many have suitably high expectations of pupils' achievement and attitude to work and provide them with an appropriate level of challenge. These teachers plan their lessons carefully and provide clear and relevant aims and objectives for pupils' learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers employ effective questioning techniques to gauge pupils' understanding and further develop their responses.

A few teachers plan and deliver lessons that inspire pupils. For example, in English, teachers focus well on developing pupils' reading skills to analyse the character of Crooks in 'Of Mice and Men' and discuss how his character reflects American society in the 1930s. These teachers use their understanding of pupils' prior learning skilfully to deepen their understanding and maximise their progress. A few teachers, however, do not plan lessons carefully enough. They do not ensure that activities are matched closely to pupils' ability or build well on their prior learning. Consequently, in these lessons, pupils do not engage fully in their learning and do not develop their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. A minority of

subjects, outside of English, provide pupils with beneficial extended writing opportunities for a suitable range of purposes.

Many teachers provide useful verbal feedback in lessons. This enables pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In a few lessons this practice is exceptionally effective in improving the quality of pupils' work. A minority of teachers provide pupils with pertinent written feedback which shows them clearly how to improve their work. However, the majority of teachers do not provide feedback that is sufficiently precise in identifying strengths and how to improve. Too often pupils do not respond appropriately to their comments. In a minority of cases, generic feedback does not address the specific needs of individual pupils well enough. Overall, teachers' written feedback focusses too narrowly on technical accuracy and does not give pupils guidance to develop their skills further.

### **R3. Improve the quality and impact of leadership at all levels**

Since his appointment, the new headteacher has established a clear vision for the school that places high quality teaching and learning at the heart of its work. His vision is well communicated and understood by all. In a short space of time, the headteacher has established a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. He has not shied away from tackling underperformance and removing significant barriers to school improvement. This includes robust plans to address the budget deficit, appropriate restructuring of staffing and leadership at all levels as well as curriculum re-organisation.

The rigour of accountability between the headteacher and the senior team has been increased suitably. Their actions focus well on strategic matters and strike the right balance between addressing inspection recommendations and wider school improvement priorities. Associate leaders have assumed responsibility for important aspects of the school's work, such as teaching and pupils' progress. This has helped build the capacity of the extended senior team and also provides valuable professional development opportunities for those looking to develop as leaders. However, the strategic leadership of wellbeing is underdeveloped.

There are stronger links between the senior team and middle leaders than at the time of the core inspection. The morale of middle leaders has improved there is now a sense of collegiality. Many middle leaders understand their responsibilities for securing strong teaching and learning well and discharge their roles more effectively than at the time of the core inspection. They use data well to address underperformance, monitor provision appropriately, share good practice effectively and manage their teams purposefully. However, in a minority of cases discussions around the outcomes of monitoring activities are not sufficiently robust and do not address areas for development in provision well enough.

The governing body has built its capacity effectively. It is now able to offer better support to the school and to hold it to account rigorously. Governors now have a clear understanding of the school's work. New committees aligned with school development priorities provide robust challenge to senior leaders.

Overall, these changes have contributed effectively to improvements in the quality leadership and improved teaching and outcomes for pupils in key stage 4.

#### **R4. Improve the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and the precision of improvement planning at all levels**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken suitable steps to strengthen arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning. These are beginning to increase the accuracy of information to support self-evaluation. For example, the school has refined its approach to lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work to ensure greater reliability. Through these activities, leaders are beginning to analyse and evaluate accurately the impact of teaching on the progress that pupils make in their learning and skills across the curriculum. As a result, leaders have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are able to plan precisely for improvement.

Many middle leaders contribute well to the whole school self-evaluation process. Senior leaders provide useful support and challenge for middle leaders in this aspect of their work. While many middle leaders evaluate data and provision well to identify appropriate improvement priorities, the contribution of the pastoral team to self-evaluation and improvement planning is underdeveloped. Leaders' evaluation of groups of learners is detailed and now includes appropriately the performance of boys and girls, pupils entitled to free school meals and those with additional learning needs. However, the performance of more able and talented pupils at the school is not evaluated thoroughly enough.

There is a clear link between self-evaluation findings and improvement planning priorities. Improved systems continue to have an impact on further improving the quality of teaching. However, a few plans are not based soundly enough on self-evaluation, for example the literacy action plan focusses too narrowly on technical accuracy and does not focus well enough on the broad range of literacy skills required across the curriculum.

The school has strengthened appropriately its approach to engaging pupils and parents in self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.

Overall, these improved systems have contributed effectively to improvements in important areas of the school's work, including the impact of teaching.

## **R5. Provide robust financial management to eliminate the budget deficit**

The school has made valuable progress in reducing the budget deficit with current projections agreed with Caerphilly County Borough Council. A comprehensive recovery plan has been approved by the local authority.

The headteacher meets regularly and frequently with representatives of the local authority, the consortium, the governing body as well as with the business manager. Close monitoring of every aspect of the school's finances is having a positive effect on reducing the deficit without harming opportunities for pupils. The school has made valuable efficiency savings in day-to-day running costs, such as reducing reprographic costs, reducing the budget for supply teachers and examination fees. Leaders are maximising all avenues to secure additional funding through various grants such as applying for monies for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. The school has also improved how it uses the pupil deprivation grant and the education improvement grant. For example, it provides beneficial numeracy and literacy interventions in Years 7 and 8 for disadvantaged learners. The impact of the initiatives designed to support these pupils and their progress is tracked suitably.

The new headteacher has undertaken a prudent and strategic review of the existing curriculum. Whilst he is beginning to address the impact of staff absence and use of supply teachers on standards, the number of days lost through staff absence has not reduced significantly since the time of the core inspection..

The school is taking suitable steps to ensure that the sixth form is cost effective. It is streamlining provision in partnership with other local schools to make worthwhile savings whilst maintaining appropriate pathways for pupils.



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: special measures**

**Builth Wells High School  
College Road  
Builth Wells  
Powys  
LD2 3BW**

**Date of visit: March 2017**

**by**

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



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## Outcome of monitoring

Builth Wells High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2015.

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

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards at all key stages.**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

In the report shared following the last monitoring visit, we commented fully on pupils' performance based on 2016 data.

In lessons, most pupils have a positive attitude to learning and participate well in class. The majority of pupils apply their knowledge and skills suitably in new contexts and make suitable progress. However, in a minority of lessons pupils do not make enough progress because they are not offered enough challenge.

Most pupils listen well to their teachers and to their peers. A majority of pupils share their ideas and opinions clearly and a few provide thoughtful, extended responses. However, a minority of pupils provide mostly brief, underdeveloped verbal responses to their teachers' questions.

Many pupils can extract information from text accurately and show a good understanding of the text that they read. Many pupils read aloud confidently and clearly. A very few pupils are able to make suitable inferences or deductions.

The majority of pupils produce extended writing that is technically secure for their age and ability. They write well for a range of purposes and audiences and express themselves clearly. However, a minority of pupils do not proof read their work or take

responsibility for improving the content and technical accuracy before presenting it to the teacher. A minority of pupils make basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Many pupils construct simple bar charts accurately and develop their basic data handling and measurement skills suitably. In a few subjects, pupils use these skills to draw suitable graphs and perform basic calculations. However, pupils do not use their numeracy skills in a wide enough range of skills.

**Recommendation 2: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment.**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Most teachers have secure, up-to-date subject knowledge and foster positive working relationships with pupils.

In a few lessons, teachers plan well, set high expectations of their pupils and challenge them to think independently. Teachers provide a range of interesting and stimulating activities which builds on previous knowledge. They use well-targeted resources effectively and probe pupils' understanding before introducing and explaining new concepts and knowledge. Pupils make strong progress in these lessons.

In a majority of lessons teachers plan appropriately. They generally provide suitable activities that engage pupils' interest and consolidate their learning. They question pupils' understanding sufficiently. They provide clear lesson objectives and valuable plenary activities.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan well enough. The activities fail to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and pupils copy too much from the board or worksheets. A minority of teachers use too many closed questions and do not probe and challenge pupils' understanding appropriately. They do not give pupils enough time to construct an appropriate high quality response. Moreover, in these lessons, teaching is not always matched well enough to the needs and abilities of all pupils.

During lessons, many teachers provide valuable verbal feedback to pupils. A majority of teachers provide pupils with worthwhile written guidance on how to improve their work. However, overall, feedback from teachers is not having enough impact on the standards pupils' achieve. A minority of teachers do not provide feedback which challenge pupils well enough and which do not tell pupils what they need to do to improve.

The school gathers and collates information on pupil progress systematically. However, the information from the tracking of pupils' progress is not used well enough to target under performance across the school.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that performance management and line management systems are effective in challenging any underperformance.**

### Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to implement its reviewed procedures for performance management.

The senior leadership team has clearly defined roles and line management responsibilities. Senior leaders work effectively with the heads of department they manage to set objectives for teaching staff that focus on teachers' individual areas for development. These are linked closely to whole-school improvement priorities. The senior leadership team monitors suitably the quality of objectives set and there are appropriate systems to address under-performance. Staff development has been focussed appropriately on the areas the school has identified as most in need of improvement, such as literacy and questioning.

The school has continued to implement performance management procedures for all support staff. However, it is too early to measure the impact of this development.

The school has reviewed line management procedures to include valuable weekly meetings for progress managers. This strengthens the link between whole-school and departmental improvement planning. As a result, teachers and departments have a sharper focus on school priorities, such as improving learners' behaviour and improving attainment at key stage 4 through targeted interventions with specific pupils.

These developments are beginning to have a positive impact on learners' standards and the quality of teaching. However, it is still too early to fully assess their impact on the full range of school improvement priorities, particularly literacy.

### **Recommendation 4: Ensure that self-evaluation and improvement planning have an impact on improving the quality of teaching, assessment and outcomes.**

### Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened its self-evaluation processes to ensure that they draw on an appropriate range of first hand evidence. Senior leaders analyse data well and support middle leaders effectively in developing their understanding and evaluation of performance data. As a result, most departmental self-evaluation reports contain a detailed analysis of pupil outcomes at key stage 3 and key stage 4.

The school has implemented a rigorous cycle of quality assurance procedures to inform its self-evaluation at a whole-school and departmental level. This includes regular lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil voice surveys. However, evaluations from lesson observations and work scrutiny does not identify accurately enough, the standards of pupils' skills, or the impact of teaching and assessment on the progress pupils make.

Most improvement plans at a whole-school and departmental level link well to self-evaluation. Regular meetings between senior and middle leaders help to ensure that

targets in departmental improvement plans are suitably challenging. However, in a few cases, the number of actions contained in these plans means that they do not focus clearly enough on priorities such as developing pupils' literacy skills, or improving the quality of teaching and assessment.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the behaviour of pupils in the classes where their disruption hinders the progress of other pupils.**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection the school has implemented clear and effective strategies to promote positive behaviour. As a result, most pupils are courteous and are increasingly aware of the influence of behaviour on learning.

The school has introduced successful behaviour procedures and monitoring systems which provide a range of useful evidence for leaders to review this progress. High expectations of pupil behaviour are shared by the pupils and teachers. As a result, the engagement and positive attitude of pupils in lessons has improved. Pupils now value the credits they can accumulate for positive behaviour, which links to an appropriate reward system. The electronic system for recording behaviours is applied consistently by most staff and monitored regularly by progress managers at pupil, class and teacher level.

The school has made significant changes to improve communication with parents. This includes providing them with useful electronic access to their child's behaviour record as well as their attendance records.

**Recommendation 6: Ensure that governors use performance data effectively to monitor and challenge underperformance, particularly standards and the quality of teaching.**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection the school has implemented appropriate measures to enable governors to monitor and challenge underperformance.

Following the core inspection the governing body reorganised its committees to enable sharper monitoring of the school's key priorities. Governors now receive detailed information on the performance of pupils at all key stages. Nearly all governors have received useful training to develop their ability to analyse performance data. Curriculum leaders make helpful presentations to the curriculum and standards committee about progress in their areas of responsibility. These presentations focus suitably on the standards pupils achieve and help governors to hold these leaders to account more effectively.

Link governors continue to provide a beneficial level of support and challenge to middle leaders. They are developing their understanding of teaching and learning within their allocated departments and are beginning to use this information appropriately to monitor the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, many governors now have a more accurate understanding of the school's strengths and

areas for development than at the time of the last visit. However, overall, the quality of information governors receive about the quality of teaching and standards pupils achieve during lessons, limits their ability to monitor and challenge underperformance.

**Recommendation 7: Improve the planning for the development of literacy skills across all subjects.**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has refocussed its approach to developing pupils' literacy skills appropriately. Staff have recently carried out useful training on the skills of skimming and scanning and revisited approaches to improving pupils' writing and their use of key subject words in their work. Nearly all staff have recently formulated individual action plans with suitable development priorities for improving provision for literacy in their classrooms. However, the school does not monitor or assess the impact of these strategies on pupils' standards or the quality of teaching. Therefore, the school does not know how consistent and effective the strategies to develop pupils' skills are across different subjects.

A minority of pupils now draft and redraft their work. This is contributing positively to the technical accuracy of their writing. However, only a very few teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop a broad range of reading strategies and provision for higher order reading skills is limited. A minority focus sufficiently on the accurate use of key terms and only a few use questioning effectively to develop pupils' verbal responses. A few subject areas support pupils appropriately to write confidently for a broad range of relevant purposes.

Diagnostic information from the national reading test has been used appropriately to identify target groups for intervention. However, the school is not using this information well enough to inform curricular provision for reading. In addition, the school has not evaluated the impact and suitability of these programmes for pupils with weaker literacy skills.

Overall, the various aspects of the school's work in this area have not been taken forward quickly or effectively enough. Therefore, the school's actions have had limited impact on the quality of provision and standards of pupils' literacy skills, particularly at key stage 3.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Builth Wells High School  
College Road  
Builth Wells  
Powys  
LD2 3BW**

**Date of visit: November 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Builth Wells High School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### Recommendation 1: Raise standards at all key stages

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Provisional data for 2017 indicates that, since the core inspection, performance at key stage 4 has improved in the majority of indicators and particularly so in those that include English and mathematics. The extent of this improvement is greater than the average improvement in similar schools in the majority of the indicators. However, in many indicators, performance does not compare well to that in similar schools. Although outcomes at the end of key stage 4 remain in need of further improvement, many pupils make suitable progress in lessons.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics has improved by nearly 10 percentage points over the last two years. Similarly, the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A has also improved over the last two years. Although performance in the capped points score improved in 2016, it fell in 2017 and is now lower than at the time of the core inspection. In all of these indicators, performance remains below that of similar schools.

At key stage 4, performance in mathematics has improved slightly over the last two years and continues to compare well to that in similar schools. In addition, performance in English has improved by over 11 percentage points since the core inspection, although performance in Welsh has declined.

In 2017, the performance of boys at key stage 4 improved and was better than at the time of the inspection in half of the indicators. For girls, it was the same in only a very few indicators.

All sixth form pupils achieved the level 3 threshold in 2017, as was the case in the previous year. Nevertheless, their performance in all other indicators has fallen, does not compare well with levels in similar schools, and is lower than at the time of the core inspection.

Many pupils make suitable progress in lessons. They develop well their understanding of topics ranging from ballads and narrative openings to the causes of The Wall Street Crash. However, a minority of pupils demonstrate limited recall of recent learning such as the structure of the atom and how this is represented in the periodic table. In a few instances, pupils' progress is hampered by their failure to address missing or incomplete work.

Most pupils listen with attention and respect to their teachers and peers and provide appropriate verbal responses including sharing their ideas and opinions. A majority provide clear and suitably developed responses, including the use of subject specific vocabulary, on topics ranging from the flying styles of different birds to interpretations of poetry and the accurate definitions of mathematical terms and concepts. A few pupils use a much wider and more sophisticated vocabulary. However, a few pupils' verbal responses lack sufficient clarity and precision, such as when trying to describe how to identify the median value.

Many pupils have a suitable range of reading strategies that they use well to support their learning. Most read effectively to locate and extract information about topics including the character of Henry VIII and push and pull factors related to immigration into America. Many pupils use inference and deduction suitably to support their understanding of literary characters such as Macbeth and his relationship with his wife, and Lord Capulet and his ambitions for and changing relationship with his daughter. A majority of pupils in both English and Cymraeg analyse the content of poems suitably. However, a minority of pupils do not extract sufficient detail in their reading. Frequently, they identify key features but miss less evident aspects.

Many produce writing that is technically secure and suitably structured including narrative pieces, discursive essays on Shakespeare and balanced historical analyses such as whether or not Henry VII deserves the title of Welsh hero. A few pupils express efficiently in writing their feelings about pieces of art and a few older pupils write eloquently expressing emotional responses maturely. However, a minority of pupils use clumsy expressions and continue to make too many basic errors in their writing.

A majority of pupils use numeracy appropriately, for example calculating the average number of people executed each day when discussing the cruelty during the reign of Henry VIII. A majority of pupils produce accurate and well-presented graphs such as when plotting the current flowing through different lengths of wire.

Many pupils work well collaboratively undertaking warm-up fitness activities, netball shooting technique practices and discussing the value of openings to narrative writing.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They are punctual to lessons, equipped suitably and settle quickly to their learning.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has implemented a range of useful strategies that has helped to improve the quality of teaching and assessment.

Nearly all teachers have positive working relationships with pupils and many manage their classes well. Many teachers have suitably high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons, for example the correct use of scientific terminology when describing the stages of digestion in science.

Many lessons are well-planned and incorporate a suitable range of learning activities that engage pupils' interests well and support an appropriate pace of learning. These lessons include effective starter activities that help secure continuity in learning, and an appropriate focus on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, in a few lessons, the work does not engage pupils well enough and does not provide a suitable challenge, particularly for more able pupils.

Many teachers use effective questioning to probe pupils' understanding. A very few make extensive and skilful use of developmental questions to encourage pupils to analyse and expand upon their explanations.

In most lessons, teachers provide helpful verbal feedback to pupils. In the majority of instances, teachers' written feedback to pupils on subject-specific and literacy aspects of their work is particularly useful. In these instances, effective use is made of followup questions to help pupils improve their work. Many pupils respond appropriately, for example by redrafting to improve sections of their work. However, in a minority of cases written feedback to pupils is too superficial and does not provide them with clear enough guidance on how to improve their work.

The school tracks and monitors pupils' progress well. This enables middle leaders to identify pupils who are underperforming and implement a range of suitable support strategies.

### **Recommendation 3: Ensure that performance management and line management systems are effective in challenging any underperformance**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a robust and supportive performance management system. This is used effectively to address areas of underperformance in order to improve standards and the quality of teaching.

Senior leaders and governors work well together to provide appropriate challenge and support to staff, including when underperformance is identified. This is contributing to improvements in the quality of teaching.

Line management arrangements have been revised appropriately and there is balanced allocation of responsibilities which reflect school improvement priorities well. This has helped to establish a strong, whole school focus on improving pupil outcomes, enhancing the quality of teaching and improving pupils' literacy skills.

The headteacher and her senior leadership team work together well to drive forward a range of effective improvement strategies. The quality and consistency of middle leadership have been improved through beneficial internal and external support programmes.

All leaders and staff have specific performance targets against each of the school's three key priorities. Progress in achieving their objectives is reviewed suitably.

Revised performance management and line management systems have contributed to improved pupil wellbeing and are beginning to impact positively on standards.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that self-evaluation and improvement planning have an impact on improving the quality of teaching, assessment and outcomes**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented effective arrangements to strengthen the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning. These processes are contributing well to improvements in the quality of teaching and assessment and, in particular, to cultivating pupils' literacy skills.

There is a systematic and rigorous cycle of quality assurance activities that provides relevant information about many areas of the school's work. These activities include a regular programme of lesson observations and scrutiny of work that focus appropriately on pupils' skills and progress. The school also carries out helpful surveys of the views of pupils, parents and teachers.

The self-evaluation report is a comprehensive, well-structured and data-rich analysis of outcomes and the effectiveness of provision across the school. It provides a robust and generally accurate evaluation of these aspects. Senior leaders support middle leaders well to produce helpful departmental reviews that include detailed analyses of pupil outcomes. As a result, leaders at all levels have a secure understanding of particular strengths as well as key areas for improvement.

The school improvement plan sets out clear, high-level priorities and includes suitable initiatives that focus directly on raising standards, developing pupils' skills and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Departmental plans contain a suitable range of actions that address these priorities well. Performance targets are suitably challenging and take appropriate account of previous outcomes, pupils' progress and performance in similar schools.

There are useful arrangements to monitor the implementation of key improvement initiatives. However, these evaluations do not always measure the impact of specific actions sharply enough.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the behaviour of pupils in the classes where their disruption hinders the progress of other pupils**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection the school has implemented a positive behaviour policy that outlines clearly the roles and responsibilities of pupils, parents, staff and governors. Arrangements to support this policy include the introduction of an electronic system for recording pupil behaviour. This is used effectively to recognise good behaviour and identify any instances of poor behaviour. These approaches are contributing to nearly all pupils behaving well in lessons and around the school. Most are courteous and respectful to adults and to their peers.

Progress managers undertake useful learning walks to monitor pupils' behaviour. This helps to ensure consistency in application of the schools' behaviour policy. In addition, staff receive beneficial training in behaviour management, for example in using restorative approaches. Most teachers deal well with the few incidents of poor behaviour.

The school has improved well its communication with parents. This includes providing parents with their child's behaviour record as well as their records on attendance and progress.

The school has recently employed a behaviour support officer and established a nurture room to support pupils at risk of underachieving. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these initiatives.

**Recommendation 6: Ensure that governors use performance data effectively to monitor and challenge underperformance, particularly standards and the quality of teaching**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, senior leaders have improved the range, quality and clarity of information, including performance data, which governors receive. This helps governors to monitor and challenge school performance suitably. There is a strong relationship between senior leaders and the governing body based on this open and transparent sharing of information.

Governors receive regular detailed reports which identify trends in pupil performance, including appropriate benchmark analyses. They also receive a useful report on the standard of teaching. This helps governors in understanding clearly the specific challenges the school faces in improving the quality of teaching and in raising standards.

Governors are supported well to improve their use of key performance data, for example through their attendance at senior leadership and curriculum progress managers' meetings. Their involvement in the work scrutiny process has also helped strengthen governors' understanding of this aspect of the school's work and their ability to hold staff to account.

**Recommendation 7: Improve the planning for the development of literacy skills across all subjects**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a suitable range of strategies to support the development of pupils' literacy skills. Many pupils now produce writing that is technically secure and use a suitable range of reading strategies to support their learning. However, it is too soon to identify the full impact of these strategies.

The school has made effective use of the national reading tests to identify pupils' weaknesses in reading and provide all pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 with a reading target. These targets are known and understood by pupils and by staff in key subject areas who provide useful support and monitor progress appropriately.

Revised lesson observation and work scrutiny records now focus well upon the development of pupils' skills. The school makes suitable use of these records to monitor pupil progress and evaluate the learning opportunities provided. As a result, the school has now identified common aspects of reading and writing that need to be improved. Learning opportunities to address these skills across the curriculum have been reviewed and improved accordingly.

The school is aware that simply providing opportunities for pupils to use their skills will not in itself lead to rapid enough improvement. As a result, the literacy co-ordinator and the consortium staff have provided useful training for teachers to help them support pupils effectively.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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**

**Cantonian High School  
Fairwater Road  
Fairwater  
Cardiff  
CF5 3JR**

**Date of visit: June 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Cantonian High School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in February 2015.

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, particularly in English and mathematics, and improve pupils' numeracy skills**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, at key stage 4, performance has improved in many indicators. In the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, performance has improved by nearly 15 percentage points over the last two years and has been above modelled outcomes throughout this period. Performance in the capped points score has been above modelled outcomes for the last four years. In 2016, in many indicators, pupils make strong progress from previous key stages.

Performance in English improved in 2016 after a slight decline in 2015 and is now better than at the time of the core inspection. Since the core inspection, performance in mathematics has improved by more than 12 percentage points. In both subjects, 2016 performance compares well to that of similar schools.

At key stage 3, performance in the core subject indicator has improved since the core inspection.

At key stage 4, in 2016, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in all indicators. Their performance in English and the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics is now above the national average for this group of pupils, although it is slightly below in mathematics.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to their learning, maintain concentration well and make sound progress in their lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other, and support each other's learning effectively in pair or group work. However, a very few pupils do not listen well enough or maintain their focus throughout their lessons.

The majority of pupils write with suitable technical accuracy and structure their work appropriately. A minority write fluently at length for a suitable range of purposes, deploying varied and engaging language. However, a minority of pupils make frequent errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. These pupils do not structure extended pieces of writing sufficiently well or demonstrate a secure enough grasp of purpose or audience.

Many pupils use an appropriate range of strategies to locate relevant information from a variety of sources. They use inference and deduction well to interpret texts

and successfully analyse the techniques used by writers. However, a minority of pupils are not secure enough in their understanding of how to use inference to interpret texts.

In many cases, pupils make clear and articulate contributions to discussion activities and demonstrate a sound understanding of subject terminology. A few provide thoughtful and well-developed responses. However, a minority of pupils make only brief verbal contributions to discussion work.

Many pupils have sound number skills. They use these skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when calculating measurements in design technology. However, a minority of pupils lack confidence in performing mental calculations and are not sufficiently accurate when constructing graphs. Many pupils demonstrate well-developed information and communication technology skills, for example when using spreadsheets to calculate profit margins.

### **Recommendation 2: Reduce fixed-term exclusions**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a wide range of strategies to improve behaviour. These strategies have had a significant impact on pupils' engagement with their learning and have been successful in reducing the level of fixed-term exclusions.

The school has implemented a clear framework of rewards and sanctions to promote positive behaviour. Staff have been provided with valuable training to help them develop positive relationships with pupils. This has been successful in ensuring that nearly all staff follow the school's behaviour policy consistently and that pupils and staff have a secure, shared understanding of the school's expectations regarding behaviour.

The school monitors pupils' behaviour closely and provides effective interventions for the most vulnerable pupils. It works well with external agencies to provide targeted support for these pupils.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching across the school**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has focused appropriately on improving the quality of teaching. It has used a wide range of strategies to ensure that good practice is shared and that senior and middle leaders maintain a consistent focus on developing effective teaching. This has had a positive impact on many aspects of teaching, such as lesson planning and the monitoring of pupil progress.

In many cases, teaching is effective in promoting good progress in pupils' knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, teachers plan a variety of challenging activities and use carefully-prepared resources that engage pupils successfully. They set clear learning objectives and provide pupils with valuable verbal feedback about their progress. These teachers provide clear explanations and use questioning appropriately to monitor pupils' understanding.

In a minority of lessons, however, teachers do not plan effectively enough to secure strong progress in pupils' learning. Either the pace of learning is too slow, or insufficient time is provided for pupils to consolidate their learning. In these lessons, teachers do not use questioning effectively enough to probe and develop pupils' understanding.

In the majority of instances, teachers' written feedback pays appropriate attention to the technical accuracy of pupils' work. Teachers provide pupils with clear advice about how to improve their work, and ensure that they make suitable improvements. However, in a minority of cases, teachers do not give pupils sufficiently clear guidance about how to make improvements.

**Recommendation 4: Comply fully with the statutory duty to review all statements of special educational needs at least annually**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school now complies fully with its statutory duty to review all statements of special educational needs at least annually.

Since the core inspection, the school has reviewed thoroughly its provision for pupils with additional learning needs and has undertaken a wide range of strategies to strengthen this aspect of its work. Individual education plans and pastoral support plans are planned carefully to meet pupils' needs and are used well by staff to support their teaching. Valuable partnerships with parents and external agencies are used effectively to support pupils.

The school monitors the progress of pupils with additional learning needs closely, and plans effective interventions to support their progress. This has had a significant impact on these pupils' outcomes.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen leadership arrangements to ensure greater accountability and improve the management of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has been effective in strengthening leadership arrangements. This has had a positive impact on many aspects of the school's work, including improving pupil outcomes at key stage 4.

Senior leaders hold middle leaders to account fully through robust line management arrangements. Regular meetings focus clearly on pupil progress and the quality of teaching. Leaders follow up rigorously on action points arising from these meetings. Performance management targets link closely to whole-school improvement priorities. However, in a few instances, these targets are not sufficiently precise or measurable.

The school's self-evaluation report draws upon a wide range of first-hand evidence and provides a suitably evaluative appraisal of the school's performance.

Departmental reviews are used well to identify areas for development and plan beneficial training. In many instances, lesson observations focus well on pupil standards and progress. However, a few lesson observations, and book scrutiny processes in general, do not focus consistently enough on the development of pupils' skills.

The school's improvement plan links well with self-evaluation findings. Progress against identified priorities is monitored rigorously by senior leaders and the governing body. Middle leaders use analysis of data well to identify appropriate areas for development. Departmental improvement plans link well with the findings of self-evaluation and most contain suitable success criteria and monitoring activities. However, in a very few instances, targets for improvement in these plans are not sufficiently precise.

Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and provide robust challenge to leaders at all levels. Their work has made an important contribution to improving outcomes and addressing financial challenges.

### **Recommendation 6: Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented an effective range of measures to reduce its budget deficit. It has carried out a robust review of non-essential costs to secure valuable savings. The headteacher and the local authority work together very closely to ensure that expenditure is used judiciously to support school improvement priorities whilst remaining within agreed spending limits.

The governing body scrutinises financial planning rigorously and supports the headteacher well in managing the budget. This has helped the school to reduce its in-year budget deficit for three consecutive years. The school has been successful in meeting the local authority targets for repayment ahead of schedule.

The school has been highly successful in attracting significantly increased numbers of pupils to Year 7, and this has had a positive impact on the school's financial position. However, the overall deficit remains significant.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen  
Heol yr Ysgol  
Tondu  
CF32 9EL**

**Date of visit: December 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2015.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs)

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards, particularly in key stage 4 and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

No judgement applied

In 2016, at key stage 4, performance improved in all indicators. Performance in both the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and the capped points score is now above modelled outcomes.

At key stage 4, in 2016, performance in many indicators places the school in the upper half of similar schools based on free-school-meal eligibility. Performance in the level 2 threshold increased by over thirty-four percentage points and places the school in the top quarter of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 grades at A\* or A increased slightly in 2016, but remains below the average for similar schools.

At key stage 3, performance in the core subject indicator improved in 2016. In Year 13, performance improved in many indicators in 2016 and is generally in line with averages for similar schools.

In 2016, the performance of girls in all key stage 4 indicators improved and is above the average for girls in similar schools. Boys' performance also improved in many

indicators. However, their performance remains below the average for boys in similar schools in the majority of indicators.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in all key stage 4 indicators in 2016. Their performance is now above the national average for this group of pupils in all indicators. At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving the core subject indicator increased slightly and is in line with the national average for these pupils.

In around half of lessons, most pupils make sound progress. They engage well in their learning, maintain concentration successfully and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. These pupils work effectively in pair or group activities. They recall their prior learning well, but only a few are able to apply this learning successfully to new contexts. A majority of pupils do not demonstrate sufficient independence and resilience in their learning and rely too heavily on their teachers. A few pupils behave immaturely and struggle to maintain concentration.

In the majority of cases, pupils' writing is technically accurate and appropriate for purpose and audience. A few more able pupils produce fluent and well-structured extended writing. However, a minority of pupils do not organise their writing well enough and are not successful in selecting appropriate vocabulary for their purpose or audience. These pupils do not take enough responsibility for improving the quality or technical accuracy of their writing. Consequently they continue to make basic errors.

Many pupils are able to select information successfully to answer basic questions. A majority have a suitable understanding of effective reading strategies and are able to make appropriate inferences and deductions from a range of sources. However, a minority of pupils do not read questions or instructions carefully enough.

A minority of pupils contribute appropriately to oral activities. A few, when encouraged by their teachers, provide well-developed and articulate verbal responses. However, the majority of pupils are content to remain passive in discussion work. In a few cases, pupils lack the confidence and vocabulary to express their ideas clearly.

The majority of pupils, when given the opportunity, use their numeracy skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when converting binary and hexadecimal numbers in ICT. However, a minority of pupils have weak numeracy skills. These pupils struggle to complete basic mental calculations and are not able to select appropriate methods to solve problems.

## **Recommendation 2: Ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

No judgement applied

The school has made appropriate modifications to the curriculum so that it meets the needs of many learners. Pupils in Year 8 and Year 9 are now able to study subjects in suitable breadth and depth.



The 'Challenge Curriculum' in Year 7 has generally been well planned and implemented and is being evaluated carefully by the school. This new curriculum has had a positive impact on pupil engagement in Year 7. However, it is too early to evaluate its impact on pupils' progress and skills development. Furthermore, it does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in Welsh or modern foreign languages. However, the school is taking suitable steps to review these elements of the Year 7 curriculum.

The restructuring of the school day and improved timetabling arrangements have had a positive impact on pupil engagement. The school has strengthened suitably provision for Welsh at key stage 4. However, plans to develop pupils' understanding of Welsh culture across the curriculum are at an early stage of development. The school is continuing to work appropriately with partner primary schools to develop successful curriculum continuity from key stage 2 to key stage 3.

The school has made suitable progress in implementing the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. It has taken appropriate steps to strengthen leadership of this area. A few subject areas play an effective role in improving pupils' extended writing skills. However, many subjects' contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills remains underdeveloped.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has undertaken a generally appropriate range of actions to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. However, these strategies have not had a sufficient impact on the standards achieved by pupils. Furthermore, the school does not plan well enough to support the induction of newly-qualified teachers.

The majority of teachers have established strong working relationships and well-understood routines with their pupils. They prepare carefully resources that engage pupils well. In around half of lessons, teachers are successful in helping most pupils to make sound progress. These teachers plan a variety of activities that are closely matched to pupils' ability. In these lessons, clear learning objectives and carefully-structured activities that build well on prior learning promote strong pace and progress in learning. These teachers monitor pupil progress closely, which enables them to address effectively any misconceptions.

In a minority of lessons, teachers plan demanding activities that promote strong progress. These teachers use effective questioning techniques to develop pupils' understanding well. In a few instances, teachers are successful in challenging pupils to think independently and develop resilience in their learning.

In around half of lessons, however, teaching is not effective enough. In these lessons, teachers' expectations are too low and activities are not well-matched to pupils' ability. In these lessons, teachers' questioning does not probe or develop pupils' understanding well enough and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to

develop independence or resilience.

In a minority of lessons, teaching has significant shortcomings. In these lessons, teachers do not prepare resources that are sufficiently engaging and they are not effective in involving pupils in class discussion. Teachers' explanations are not sufficiently clear and they do not monitor pupils' progress well enough.

In many instances, teachers' written feedback pays appropriate attention to the written accuracy of pupils' work. The majority of teachers provide pupils with useful advice on how to improve their work, and a minority ensure that pupils make appropriate improvements to their work in light of this feedback. However, in a minority of cases, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficiently clear guidance on how to develop their work.

The school tracks the progress of key stage 4 pupils closely. This enables leaders to plan effective interventions to address underperformance. Systems to monitor the progress of key stage 3 pupils are at an early stage of development.

**Recommendation 4: Strengthen arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils and meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship**

No judgement applied

The school has refined suitably its arrangements to support pupils' wellbeing. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these improvements on pupil outcomes.

The school has strengthened appropriately its procedures for dealing with bullying, and this has had a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. Pastoral leaders monitor behaviour and attendance closely, and the school takes appropriate steps to support pupils with poor attendance or challenging behaviour, for example through provision in the Phoenix Centre. As a result, the school has been successful in reducing levels of fixed term exclusions. However, in a minority of instances, the school's behaviour policy is not followed consistently by staff.

The school has developed appropriately its provision for personal and social education. It provides appropriate guidance for pupils choosing their options at key stage 4 and key stage 5. The school continues to ensure that requirements regarding a daily act of collective worship are met, and most pupils engage positively in 'Thought for the Week' activities.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability in all areas of the school's work**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented suitable strategies to strengthen leadership. This has contributed well to improved pupil outcomes at key stage 4. However, many of these strategies are at an early stage of development

and have not had sufficient sustained impact on pupil standards or the quality of teaching.

Appropriate job descriptions are now in place for most teachers and leaders. Strengthened line management arrangements ensure that many staff are held to account appropriately. However, there is still too much variation in the effectiveness of middle leadership. In a very few instances, middle leaders' roles are not defined clearly enough and senior leaders do not monitor sufficiently their effectiveness.

The school provides suitable training for most senior and middle leaders. Performance management arrangements are appropriately focused on pupil standards and improving the quality of teaching. However, professional development activities are not linked closely enough with performance management objectives.

Governors provide appropriate challenge to senior and middle leaders. They play a suitable role in monitoring the school's progress.

### **Recommendation 6: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

No judgement applied

The school has continued to develop appropriately its processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning. This has had a positive impact, for example on pupil outcomes at key stage 4. However, overall, these strategies have had insufficient impact on pupil standards,

Senior leaders monitor suitably the quality and accuracy of departmental self-evaluations. This, along with appropriate training for middle leaders, is beginning to secure improved consistency in departmental self-evaluation and improvement planning. However, the majority of middle leaders' evaluations are insufficiently rigorous. As a result, they do not identify precise enough targets for improvement.

Scrutiny of pupils' work generally focuses appropriately on pupil progress and identifies suitable areas for improvement. Lesson observations are beginning to focus more closely on the impact of teaching on the standards achieved by pupils. However, in a minority of cases, leaders do not evaluate sufficiently the impact of teaching and assessment practices on pupil progress.

The school has taken suitable account of pupil feedback, including their views on the effectiveness of teaching. However, processes to evaluate the views of parents remain underdeveloped.

Governors are developing suitably their role in self-evaluation and improvement planning.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen  
Heol yr Ysgol  
Tondu  
Bridgend  
CF32 9EL**

**Date of visit: July 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2015.

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

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan. Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards, particularly in key stage 4 and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

No judgement applied

In a minority of lessons, many pupils make sound progress. They demonstrate secure recall of previous learning and clear understanding of new learning such as controversial issues related to stem cell research and the use of pathetic fallacy in literature. In these lessons, many pupils demonstrate an interest in their learning and take a pride in their work. However, in a majority of lessons, pupils do not make enough progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. In these lessons, a majority of pupils often prefer to remain passive in their learning and are not challenged by teachers to participate more fully.

Many pupils listen to the teacher with attention and respect. However, only a few provide well-developed verbal responses. Often, this is because the expectations and opportunities for them to do so are limited.

A majority of pupils use basic inference suitably, for example, in their consideration of still images. However, only a few use such higher order skills well to enhance their understanding of themes and characters, such as Shylock, in literary texts. Other than basic information retrieval strategies, many pupils have limited reading skills which impacts negatively upon the progress they make.

Many pupils have a secure understanding of the purpose of their writing in different subjects but are less confident in their sense of audience. As a consequence, they make incorrect language choices and their writing lacks the correct tone. A few more able pupils produce writing that is well-structured and technically sound.

However, many pupils have weak writing skills. Only a minority of pupils take enough responsibility for improving the content and technical accuracy of their work. In addition, very few respond suitably to the guidance offered to them by teachers. Consequently, basic errors persist and much of their writing lacks sufficient structure and control.

In a few lessons, pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately in subjects other than mathematics. This includes basic measurement and data handling, and the construction of simple bar charts and graphs. However, many pupils have difficulty with calculation, fractions and numerical problem solving. Overall, the numeracy skills of most pupils remain underdeveloped.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection the school has made suitable revisions to the curriculum in Year 8 and Year 9, and in key stage 4 particularly for September 2016. This will allow pupils to study subjects in suitable breadth and depth. The school has also developed a theme based curriculum for Year 7, but it is unclear how this will impact on pupils' ability to progress suitably in different subjects such as French.

The school has recently developed a useful transition strategy for pupils moving from key stage 2 to key stage 3. This is intended to provide better continuity in pupils' learning in core subjects, and in Welsh,

Pupils who have weak literacy skills are supported suitably through appropriate intervention programmes. However, implementation of the national literacy and numeracy framework remains far too slow. This is due to limited strategic planning and ineffective coordination. The school has only very recently started to develop suitable provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The school has increased the curriculum time for Welsh to a sufficient level. However, opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh language skills outside of Welsh lessons, and to develop their understanding of Welsh culture, remain underdeveloped.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment**

No judgement applied

In the minority of lessons, teachers plan effectively so that activities are matched well to meet the needs of all pupils. They use strong subject knowledge to provide clear explanations and to target successfully pupils' misconceptions. Teachers' questioning probes pupils' understanding well and challenges them suitably to develop their thinking skills and verbal responses. This secures pupil engagement,

supports an appropriate pace to learning and helps pupils to make solid progress.

In a majority of lessons, pupils do not make enough progress. These lessons frequently expose weaknesses in teachers' planning particularly when activities lack appropriate challenge. Too often, teachers do not use questioning well enough to determine pupils' understanding or to encourage them to develop their verbal skills. Frequently, teachers do not involve a wide enough range of pupils in class discussions. This contributes to a lack of pupil engagement and impedes their progress and learning.

The school's teaching and learning group has identified and shared with staff aspects of teaching that support effective learning. However, this has not had enough impact on improving classroom practice. Training to address many of the key shortcomings in teaching identified during the core inspection has yet to be delivered.

Since the core inspection leaders have refreshed and improved their approach to assessment across the school. As a result, teachers now have a clearer understanding of the requirements for assessment, general feedback and marking within their subject. However, to date, the impact of the school's new approach to assessment has not brought about improvements in the overall quality of pupils' work.

Leaders have refined and extended the school's tracking system to include all year groups. This is beginning to provide leaders with a better picture of pupils' attainment and progress across the school. However, it is too early to judge how well information from the tracking system will be used to improve outcomes for pupils.

**Recommendation 4: Strengthen arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils and meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship**

No judgement applied

The school's revised pastoral structure, personal and social education provision and increased extra-curricular activities help to raise pupils' awareness of health and wellbeing. However, the school has not evaluated the impact of this.

The school has recently developed a suitable anti-bullying strategy and introduced a range of procedures to deal with bullying and poor behaviour. The school's system now records different types of bullying and analyses them by gender and age. However, it is too soon to judge how this will be used to reduce bullying and improve behaviour.

Since January 2016 the school has used the Phoenix Centre effectively to support pupils with additional learning needs and also to address instances of poor behaviour. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced considerably. However, the rate of fixed-term exclusions remains higher than local and national averages.



The school has taken appropriate actions to ensure that it meets statutory requirements for the daily act of worship.

The school has improved the support to help pupils make informed career choices. This includes an online careers advice and guidance booklet and a series of careers appointments. The school contacts parents and provides them with appropriate information before and after pupils' appointments. The assistant head for curriculum provides additional information and guidance in tutorials and assemblies.

Since the inspection, the school has ensured that individual education plan targets are precise and specific. However, staff awareness and use of these targets remains at a very early stage.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability in all areas of the school's work**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has made steady progress in improving the effectiveness of leadership across the school. The new senior leadership structure, in addition to new job descriptions, have provided leaders with a greater clarity about their roles. As a result, senior and middle leaders are increasingly held to account for their leadership responsibilities.

Team and line management meetings are becoming a more established part of the school's work. These meetings now focus more effectively on key priorities in the school, such as improving the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, the school's performance management arrangements are better aligned to the school's priorities including pupil outcomes. However, all these processes are still relatively new and have not had time to impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school.

The school has suitable plans in place to train senior and middle leaders further in their roles. However, plans to develop a number of middle leaders as emerging senior leaders are too ambitious at this stage of the school's development.

The school's governing body has been strengthened with the recent appointment of several new governors and the formation of a standards committee. As a result, governors are starting to challenge senior leaders more effectively.

**Recommendation 6: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a useful range of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes, which is understood clearly by nearly all staff. However, at the time of this visit, the annual cycle, including the evaluation of standards and subsequent improvement planning, had not finished. Consequently, it

is too soon for these processes to have had any impact on important areas of the schools work.

The school has started to use external subject reviews and has introduced a clear programme of lesson observations and work scrutiny. These provide useful information on provision, including compliance with school policies, but take very little account of the impact of teaching and marking upon pupils' progress and the quality of their learning. As a result, it is difficult for the school to make secure judgements on the standards pupils achieve in lessons, particularly in the development of their skills, and to identify precisely enough the most important areas for improvement.

Departmental self-evaluations of provision and leadership are honest and mostly accurate documents. Senior leaders quality assure these reports and challenge middle leaders suitably on overly positive evaluations. However, overall, the evaluations of the quality of teaching lack detail and do not consider well enough the impact of that teaching on pupils' progress, particularly the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

The school has extended usefully its consideration of pupil voice through the school and college councils, subject reviews and questionnaires. However, systems to seek the views of parents remain underdeveloped.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen  
Heol yr Ysgol  
Tondu  
CF32 9EL**

**Date of visit: June 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards, particularly in key stage 4 and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, performance at key stage 4 has improved in all indicators. Performance in both the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and the capped points score, is now above modelled outcomes.

At key stage 4, in 2016, performance in many indicators places the school in the upper half of similar schools. Performance in the level 2 threshold increased by over 34 percentage points and places the school in the top 25% of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving five A\*/A grades increased slightly in 2016, but remains below the average for similar schools. Value added information for 2016 shows that pupils' progress from key stage 2 is above predicted outcomes in all key indicators.

At key stage 3, performance in the core subject indicator has improved by nearly six percentage points since the core inspection.

In 2016, the performance of girls in all key stage 4 indicators improved and is above the average for girls in similar schools. Boys' performance also improved in many indicators. However, their performance remains below the average for boys in similar schools in the majority of indicators.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in all key stage 4 indicators in 2016 and is now above the national average for this group of pupils. At key stage 3, the performance of this group of pupils also improved slightly and is now in line with the national average for these pupils.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning and maintain their focus and concentration very well. They listen attentively and with interest to teachers' explanations and the views of their peers. Many pupils apply their knowledge and skills suitably in new contexts and engage constructively in learning activities.

The majority of pupils participate enthusiastically in class or small group discussions. These pupils share their ideas and opinions clearly and provide thoughtful, extended responses. They use subject terminology correctly and confidently. However, a minority of pupils offer only brief and underdeveloped responses.

Many pupils read effectively to retrieve information from a range of texts. They use this information well to support their learning, for example when considering the significance of Owain Glyndwr in the history of Wales. The majority make appropriate inferences and deductions to evaluate sources and reach thoughtful conclusions.

The majority of pupils produce extended writing that is technically secure. They write well for a range of purposes and audiences and express their views clearly. The majority of pupils improve the quality of their work successfully in response to teachers' feedback. However, a minority of pupils make too many errors with spelling, punctuation and grammar. A few pupils have weak presentational and handwriting skills.

Many pupils have sound number skills. They measure and draw graphs correctly, and handle and interpret data effectively, for example when conducting experiments to record the speed of sound. Many pupils apply their numeracy skills well to solve real life problems, for example when using geographical bearings and measuring distance.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has made helpful improvements to the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners.

The revised curriculum at key stage 3 and beneficial links with partner primary schools ensure that pupils are able to study subjects in suitable depth and to develop their skills appropriately. The 'Challenge Curriculum' in Year 7 has been planned carefully and implemented effectively. The robust monitoring arrangements ensure that this innovative provision is evaluated every half term and refinements made where relevant. Although this curriculum currently limits continuity in the development of pupils' Welsh and modern foreign language skills, it has been planned carefully to address these concerns for 2017-2018.

Since the core inspection, at key stage 4, the school has made suitable arrangements to ensure that Year 11 pupils have continuity in their learning experiences. Current Year 10 pupils follow an appropriate curriculum structure than at the time of the core inspection. Provision for mathematics, English, science and Welsh language has been increased. The school ensures appropriate curricular provision for delivering the Welsh Baccalaureate effectively in key stage 4 and in the sixth form. Opportunities for pupils to experience the Welsh dimension have improved suitably over the past two years.

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented the literacy and numeracy framework purposefully and effectively. Valuable strategies such as 'think on, write on' ensure that beneficial extended writing tasks are implemented across all curricular areas. These activities provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to improve a wide range of literacy and thinking skills.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a range of useful initiatives that are helping to improve key aspects of teaching and assessment. The school has developed useful initiatives for sharing best practice in teaching and assessment.

A notable feature of most lessons is the respectful and productive working relationships between teachers and pupils. In many lessons, teachers communicate enthusiasm for their subject and create a supportive learning environment. In a few instances, teachers' probing questions encouraged pupils particularly well to think carefully and to extend their verbal responses.

In many lessons, learning activities are planned well and include a range of suitably challenging tasks and stimulating resources that engage pupils successfully. In many cases, teachers prepare interesting starter activities that set an appropriate context for the lesson and provide useful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy or numeracy skills. However, a few numeracy activities have limited value in a few subjects.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, teachers do not use questioning well enough to challenge pupils. In these lessons, pupils' learning does not proceed at a suitable pace. In a few instances, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.

In many lessons, teachers provide supportive verbal feedback to pupils that helps them to gain a more secure understanding of specific aspects of their work. In their written feedback, many teachers provide pupils with helpful advice to improve their subject-specific and literacy skills. In the majority of cases, pupils refine their work well in response to these comments.

The school tracks the progress of pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4 particularly effectively. Leaders use this information well to identify those pupils who are not performing in line with their abilities and to plan suitable interventions.

### **Recommendation 4: Strengthen arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils and meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection the school has implemented a wide range of effective strategies to strengthen arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils.

In most lessons, and around the school, pupils behave well. The school has developed strong processes to promote good behaviour and it provides beneficial support to pupils to help them manage their behaviour where this is required.

Strategies to prevent bullying are robust and include a particular emphasis on antibullying education. The school's five annual 'wellbeing days' focus on a wide range of relevant issues that promote pupils' personal development successfully.

The school has reduced exclusion rates significantly since the core inspection. Pupils' attendance is monitored closely and has a suitable range of early interventions to help pupils with poor attendance to improve. For example, the 'Phoenix Centre' provides valuable personalised support for pupils to overcome physical and emotional barriers to learning.

The school has developed a wide range of worthwhile opportunities that are highly effective in promoting pupils' social and cultural development. These include academic and cultural enrichment opportunities, as well as numerous sporting activities. The school provides pupils with valuable advice and experiences to help them make informed choices about their future careers and learning opportunities.

The school monitors the progress of pupils with additional learning needs carefully. Teachers know the particular needs of these pupils in their classes well and procedures to evaluate the progress of pupils on intervention programmes are robust.

The school complies with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability in all areas of the school's work**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has made worthwhile progress in improving the effectiveness of leadership at all levels. This has contributed well to enhancing the quality of provision and to raising standards.

The executive headteacher provides astute and effective, strategic leadership. He gives firm direction and promotes high expectations for all aspects of the school's work. The roles and responsibilities of staff are set out clearly in well-defined job descriptions. These help ensure appropriate levels of accountability. The responsibilities of the extended leadership team are well-balanced and relate appropriately to key priorities. The addition of the associate assistant headteachers to the leadership team is contributing well to the effectiveness of this group.

Together with the senior leadership team, the executive headteacher has ensured effective lines of communication and established a successful collaborative culture and commitment to addressing the school's priorities. As a result, the school is developing a strong capacity for self-improvement.

Senior leaders provide effective support and challenge to middle leaders, for example through fortnightly line-management meetings. These meetings focus appropriately on pupils' progress as well as the quality of teaching and learning.



Together with the rigorous quality assurance arrangements, this approach is helping to develop greater consistency and effectiveness in the work of middle leaders. Many middle leaders undertake their responsibilities well. Although a few middle-leaders do not monitor the work of their teams rigorously enough, senior leaders have implemented appropriate actions to improve the effectiveness of these staff.

There are suitable performance management arrangements that help identify relevant professional development priorities. Personal objectives relate directly to the school's priorities, in particular to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Nearly all targets are clear, challenging and measurable. However, the school has not introduced appropriate performance management procedures for non-teaching staff.

The governing body has been reorganised and now operates effectively as a 'critical friend'.

### **Recommendation 6: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented robust procedures to evaluate and improve the quality of its work. These have contributed successfully to improvements in pupil outcomes, the quality of teaching, and arrangements to support the wellbeing of pupils.

The school has developed a well-planned cycle of quality assurance activities that includes lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, and regular feedback from pupils and parents. These activities focus suitably on pupils' progress and the impact of teaching on learning. They provide leaders with a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate all aspects of the school's work. The school makes effective use of a comprehensive range of data to inform its evaluation of pupil performance. As a result, most leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Middle leaders are supported well to improve the consistency and rigour of their quality assurance and self-evaluation. However, in a few cases, middle leaders' self-evaluation reports are not sufficiently evaluative.

Whole-school and departmental improvement plans identify clear and relevant initiatives that take suitable account of national priorities. A broad range of detailed complementary action plans specify purposeful strategies to strengthen key areas of the school's work. These plans include challenging targets, clear timescales and measurable success criteria.

The governing body contributes effectively to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Governors know the school well and have a secure understanding of the progress the school has made and the challenges it faces.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen  
Heol yr Ysgol  
Tondu  
CF32 9EL**

**Date of visit: March 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Coleg Cymunedol y Dderwen is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2015. As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs)

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### Recommendation 1: Raise standards, particularly in key stage 4 and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

In 2016, at key stage 4, performance improved in all indicators. Performance in both the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and the capped points score is now above modelled outcomes.

At key stage 4, in 2016, performance in many indicators places the school in the upper half of similar schools based on free-school-meal eligibility. Performance in the level 2 threshold increased by over thirty-four percentage points and places the school in the top quarter of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving five A\*/A grades increased slightly in 2016, but remains below the average for similar schools. Value added information for 2016 shows that pupils' progress from key stage 2 is above predicted outcomes in all key indicators.

At key stage 3, performance in the core subject indicator improved in 2016. In Year 13, performance improved in many indicators in 2016 and is generally in line with averages for similar schools.

In 2016, the performance of girls in all key stage 4 indicators improved and is above the average for girls in similar schools. Boys' performance also improved in many indicators. However, their performance remains below the average for boys in

similar schools in the majority of indicators.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in all key stage 4 indicators in 2016. Their performance is now above the national average for this group of pupils in all indicators. At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving the core subject indicator increased slightly and is in line with the national average for these pupils.

In the majority of lessons, most pupils maintain their interest and participate enthusiastically in learning activities. The majority of pupils recall earlier learning well and make secure progress in developing their knowledge and understanding, and acquiring new skills.

Many pupils listen attentively and with interest to teachers' explanations and the views of their peers. The majority make clear and thoughtful contributions to class or group discussions although only a minority respond confidently to teachers' questions. A few pupils provide well-developed and reasoned responses and express their ideas and opinions articulately. A minority of pupils offer only brief and underdeveloped responses.

Many pupils read effectively to retrieve information from a range of texts and sources and use this information well to support their learning. The majority make appropriate inferences and deductions to evaluate sources and reach conclusions, for example to describe a particular literary character or the atmosphere in a specific setting.

In the majority of cases, pupils present their work neatly. They produce technically accurate written accounts and write appropriately for a range of purposes and audiences. A few more able pupils produce well-structured extended accounts. They support their ideas and opinions with a broad range of evidence and use this to reach thoughtful and balanced judgements about specific issues or events. A few pupils refine their work effectively in response to teachers' comments or the suggestions of other pupils. A minority of pupils make frequent technical errors in their written work and do not make enough effort to improve the quality of their work or the accuracy of their spelling and grammar.

The majority of pupils apply their mathematical skills well in a range of contexts, for example when producing bar charts or graphs in science and geography or as part of a project such as planning a holiday abroad.

In a few lessons, many pupils use information and communications technology appropriately to research information or to word process their written accounts.

## **Recommendation 2: Ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's curriculum and timetabling arrangements have been modified suitably to meet pupils' needs. However, it is too early to see the impact of these

developments on outcomes at key stage 4.

The Year 7 'Challenge Curriculum' is contributing well to supporting pupils' engagement and enjoyment in their learning. It provides a secure framework to promote the development of pupils' skills. Although this curriculum currently limits continuity in the development of pupils' Welsh and modern foreign language skills, it has been refined appropriately to address these concerns for 2017-2018.

The revised curriculum at key stage 3 ensures pupils are able to study subjects in suitable depth and to develop the skills pupils require to commence GCSE courses in key stage 4. In particular, additional time has been allocated to the core subjects in both Years 8 and 9 and to help improve standards in religious education and Welsh.

At key stage 4, the school is in a transition period in terms of its curriculum provision. It has made suitable arrangements to ensure Year 11 pupils have continuity in their learning experiences. Current Year 10 pupils follow a more appropriate curriculum structure than at the time of the core inspection. Provision for mathematics, English, science and Welsh language has been increased.

The school is giving a higher profile to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. In particular, specific extended writing projects pupils undertake are beginning to provide valuable opportunities for them to improve these skills. However, only a few subject areas play an effective role in improving pupils' extended writing skills.

Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the Welsh dimension across the curriculum are limited.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has implemented a range of useful initiatives that are helping to improve specific aspects of teaching and assessment. However, these approaches have not had sufficient impact on pupils' skills and their progress in a minority of lessons.

In most lessons, teachers establish positive working relationships with pupils and set clear learning objectives. In many cases, teachers prepare interesting starter activities that engage pupils, set an appropriate context for the lesson and often provide useful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy or numeracy skills. In these lessons, there is a strong emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary and helping them to use language effectively.

In many lessons, teachers use a range of helpful resources, provide clear explanations and use questioning appropriately to consolidate earlier learning. This helps pupils to acquire a secure understanding of the topics and aspects covered. In a few instances, teachers' probing questions support pupils effectively to think carefully and to extend their verbal responses.

In the majority of lessons, learning activities are well planned and include a range of suitably challenging tasks. In a minority of lessons, teachers provide valuable opportunities for a few pupils to read their work aloud or explain their ideas to the class. This helps to reinforce key principles and contributes well to raising the self-esteem and self-confidence of these pupils.

In a minority of lessons, teaching has shortcomings. These lessons do not proceed at a suitable pace, the level of challenge is inappropriate and teaching does not engage all pupils effectively. In particular, pupils do not have enough opportunities to discuss their ideas with other pupils.

In many lessons, teachers provide supportive verbal feedback to pupils that helps them to gain a more secure understanding of specific aspects of their work. In their marking, the majority of teachers provide pupils with helpful advice to improve their subject-specific and literacy skills. In a few cases, pupils refine their work well in response to these comments. However, at present there is not enough emphasis on ensuring all pupils make the necessary improvements to their work. There is also too much inconsistency in the extent to which teachers make sure pupils improve the accuracy of their spelling and grammar.

The school tracks the progress of pupils at key stage 4 particularly effectively. Leaders use this information well to identify those pupils who are not performing in line with their abilities and to plan suitable interventions. Arrangements to monitor the progress of pupils in key stage 3 are systematic and developing well.

**Recommendation 4: Strengthen arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils and meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has implemented a broad range of effective strategies that are contributing well to promoting pupils' health and wellbeing.

In most lessons and around the school, pupils behave well. The school has reduced significantly the rates of both internal and fixed-term exclusions. Fixed-term exclusion rates are now low and well below those for the same period last year. The school maintains a consistent approach to tackling poor behaviour. It has robust systems for addressing bullying that include a strong emphasis on anti-bullying education.

The school's five annual 'wellbeing days' provide pupils with a wide range of valuable experiences that support their personal development well. The 'Phoenix Centre' provides beneficial personalised wellbeing support to help learners overcome physical and emotional barriers to learning. The school is developing a culture where high levels of attendance are celebrated. This, together with close monitoring and early intervention to reduce absenteeism, has helped improve levels of attendance.

Staff provide a wide range of valuable extra-curricular activities for pupils. These include academic and cultural enrichment opportunities as well as numerous sporting



activities. The school's careers guidance arrangements provide key stage 4 pupils with valuable advice and experiences to help them make informed choices about their future careers and learning opportunities.

The school complies with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability in all areas of the school's work**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

At the time of the core inspection, the overall quality of leadership was weak. Senior leaders failed to provide clear direction or ensure suitable systems of accountability and staff morale was low. There are now high expectations, effective lines of communication and a strong collaborative culture. As a result, performance at key stage 4 has improved significantly from a low base and now compares well with similar schools.

The executive headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction to all areas of the school's work. The senior leadership team has been restructured successfully to ensure responsibilities are well-defined and balanced appropriately. The addition of the associate assistant headteachers to the leadership team is contributing well to the effectiveness of this group.

Revised line-management arrangements ensure middle leaders are held to account robustly. Meetings between senior and middle leaders focus closely on pupils' progress. The standards' review meetings, which are attended by the chair of governors, are challenging and hold middle leaders to account effectively for the performance of their faculties. Many middle leaders undertake their responsibilities well. However, a very few middle leaders do not hold members of their teams to account rigorously enough for certain aspects of their work.

Performance management arrangements are appropriate and are helping to identify relevant professional development priorities. Agreed objectives focus primarily on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Nearly all targets are clear, challenging and measurable. However, similar arrangements have not been extended to include non-teaching staff. There are suitable arrangements to monitor and support the professional development of newly qualified teachers.

The governing body has been reorganised and now operates effectively as 'critical friend'.

**Recommendation 6: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has continued to increase the effectiveness of its self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements. These approaches have strengthened the quality and consistency of self-evaluation reports and contributed to improved pupil outcomes at key stage 4. However, overall, these strategies have not had enough impact on the quality of learning and teaching.

The majority of departmental self-evaluation reports now provide a secure foundation for improvement planning. The majority of middle leaders have identified clear improvement objectives for their areas.

Arrangements for the scrutiny of pupils' work are systematic and robust. Outcomes of this process are used well to strengthen the quality of feedback to pupils and to help improve the standards they achieve. The impact of revised arrangements for lesson observations is beginning to be reflected in improved teaching and learning in the majority of lessons.

The school takes suitable account of pupils' opinions, including their views on the effectiveness of teaching. However, the school has not developed a systematic approach to consulting parents about the school's work.

The school improvement plan identifies clear and relevant initiatives that take appropriate account of national priorities. Complementary targeted action plans specify purposeful strategies to strengthen key areas of the school's work. These include improving the quality of teaching and promoting the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The governing body is contributing more effectively to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements, for example through the work of the standards committee and the chair of governors' involvement in work scrutiny reviews.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: Estyn monitoring**

**Cwmbran High School  
Ty Gwyn Way  
Fairwater  
Cwmbran  
NP44 4YZ**

**Date of visit: June 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Cwmbran High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2015.

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 that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will visit the school in approximately 3 months to evaluate the quality of the plan. Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 - 18 months' time to monitor progress against the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Improve the standard of pupils' skills, particularly their writing, and numeracy**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

A majority of pupils read with suitable understanding and are able to extract basic information from both literary and non-literary texts. A few pupils use inference and deduction well, for example to enhance their understanding of important historical events such as Pearl Harbour and the civil rights movement in America. However, around half of pupils do not have a sufficient range of reading strategies and this prevents them from making the progress they otherwise might.

Around half of pupils produce writing that is mostly technically secure, although a similar proportion continue to make frequent errors in basic spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, their writing lacks control and this prevents them from expressing themselves clearly.

Most pupils do not develop their numeracy skills well enough in subjects other than mathematics. Although many pupils produce a range of basic bar and line graphs, a majority do so untidily and inaccurately.

The shortcomings in pupils' skills are reflected in the school's poor performance in key performance indicators in 2016. At key stage 3 and key stage 4, it is weaker or much weaker than that in similar schools in all indicators. In addition, most pupils made significantly less progress than expected from previous key stages.

At key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics is significantly below modelled outcomes. This, and performance in English, are particularly weak.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, and in the capped points score, does not compare favourably with that in similar schools. Performance in the level 2 threshold is well below modelled outcomes. The proportion of pupils who achieve five GCSE passes at grades A\* or A is below the average in similar schools.

At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils who achieve the core subject indicator is well below modelled outcomes. In all indicators, performance does not compare favourably with that in similar schools.

At key stage 3, the performance of boys is weaker than that of boys in similar schools in many indicators. The performance of girls and of pupils eligible for free school meals is weaker in every indicator than that of their counterparts in similar schools. At key stage 4, the performance of boys and of girls is below that of boys and girls in similar schools in many indicators, and mostly well below in indicators that include English and mathematics. This is also the case for those pupils eligible for free school meals.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the behaviour and disrespectful attitudes of a few pupils in a minority of lessons**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a range of suitable strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes. However, this work has not had sufficient impact on improving pupil behaviour.

The school has introduced a stepped behaviour policy, which is understood clearly by most pupils. This has helped to reduce fixed term exclusions, although they remain high. The school's monitoring data suggests that the new approach is impacting positively upon poor and disrespectful behaviour. This includes reducing the number of 'call outs' for senior leaders to intervene in incidents of unacceptable behaviour by a half since the time of the core inspection. However, the number of 'call outs' is still high.

The school now collects and analyses relevant data on behaviour every two weeks. This is used appropriately to recognise patterns in pupil behaviour, to address inconsistencies in teachers' behaviour management and to identify any pupils who need additional support.

Since the core inspection the school has also implemented a suitable range of interventions to support those pupils with challenging behaviour. This includes helpful individualised support and modifications to the curriculum that has improved pupil access and engagement.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that the literacy and numeracy framework is implemented fully**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has become more aware of the need to improve provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, progress towards full implementation of the literacy and numeracy framework has been far too slow. Current provision is underdeveloped and it is not coordinated well enough.

In a minority of lessons, pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to develop their skills. However, the school does not quality assure provision effectively or monitor its impact on the standard of pupils' skills across the curriculum. Lesson observations in particular, but also work scrutiny, do not focus well enough on pupils' skills' development or the proportion of pupils who demonstrate the respective skills. The school's marking policy is not specific enough or applied consistently. As a consequence, most teachers' written feedback is not improving the technical accuracy or the quality of pupils' writing.

The school's support for the development of pupils' verbal and reading skills in different subjects is particularly underdeveloped.

**Recommendation 4: Address the shortcomings in teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress in all lessons**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a range of suitable strategies to improve the quality of teaching. However, this has not had enough impact on improving pupils' learning and the standards they achieve, particularly at key stage 4.

The school has undertaken a systematic programme of lesson observations. Many of these observations have been carried out together with heads of department, an external adviser and a link school to try and ensure accuracy and consistency in the evaluations.

The records of lesson observations offer useful summaries of individual teachers' strengths and areas for development. The school's analysis of these records suggest there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the core inspection. However, in most cases, the observations do not focus accurately enough upon the impact of the teaching, in particular upon the progress pupils make, and how well they use and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, it is very difficult for the school to identify precisely the aspects of teaching that are most in need of improvement.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the consistency in the work of middle managers, particularly in planning for improvement**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has increased support to improve the work of middle leaders. This has resulted in greater consistency in their approach to improvement planning, but has not had a positive enough impact on the standards pupils achieve.

Management meetings now have common agendas which include an increased focus on pupil outcomes. Senior leaders hold middle leaders securely to account through line management meetings, regular work scrutiny and lesson observations. These processes guide middle leaders well to take a consistent approach to their work. However, they do not focus well enough upon strategies that will provide lasting, rather than temporary, improvements in teaching and learning.

Middle leaders have benefited from valuable professional development opportunities to develop their leadership skills. These included useful guidance to develop their understanding of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. As a result, they have improved their understanding of whole school issues and are becoming more confident in carrying out their leadership responsibilities.

Self-evaluation reports and improvement plans now all conform to the same format, and middle leaders generally follow the guidance for completion of these documents. However, their self-evaluation reports do not draw well enough on first hand evidence to identify precisely the strengths and areas for development. Furthermore, departmental self-evaluation reports are too descriptive, and concentrate too heavily on processes. As a result, improvement plans do not prioritise specifically enough the most important areas for development.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.





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: Special Measures**

**Cwmbran High School  
Ty Gwyn Way  
Fairwater  
Cwmbran  
NP44 4YZ**

**Date of visit: June 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Cwmbran High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve the standard of pupils' skills, particularly their writing, and numeracy**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during the visit.

### **R2. Improve the behaviour and disrespectful attitudes of a few pupils in a minority of lessons**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during the visit.

### **R3. Ensure that the literacy and numeracy framework is implemented fully**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has worked hard to emphasise to both staff and pupils the importance of the development of literacy and numeracy skills across

the curriculum. It has introduced a wide range of strategies to strengthen this aspect of its work. However, these strategies have only had a variable impact on the standard of pupils' skills.

Leaders at all levels have a clear focus on literacy and numeracy development in their self-evaluation work, such as learning walks, book scrutiny and the gathering of feedback from pupils and staff. However, when carrying out these activities, leaders are too often focused on compliance with school policies rather than the impact that strategies are having on pupils' skills. This makes it difficult for them to identify specific areas for development or plan for improvement precisely enough.

During this academic year, based on their self-evaluation findings, the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have refined their approach to supporting departments. They have worked helpfully with individual subject leaders to develop resources and activities that enable pupils to practise and consolidate their skills. This is starting to have a positive impact on how well subjects outside of English and mathematics develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The school has had a strong focus on literacy and numeracy development in its professional learning activities this year. This has helped to support the development of effective practice in a few subject areas. However, there is too much variation in how successfully teachers develop pupils' skills alongside their subject knowledge and understanding. Too many literacy or numeracy-focused activities are contrived and do not contribute to pupil progress well enough. Furthermore, some of the school's skills-related strategies have a negative impact on the pace of learning in lessons.

#### **R4. Address the shortcomings in teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress in all lessons**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during the visit.

#### **R5. Improve the consistency in the work of middle managers, particularly in planning for improvement**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has provided middle leaders with a range of generally appropriate support and training. This has included suitable opportunities to share good practice and to work with other schools. These activities are beginning to have a positive impact on the effectiveness of leadership.

Pastoral leaders, heads of department and skills co-ordinators undertake a wide range of self-evaluation activities such as learning walks, book scrutinies and gathering the views of pupils. This has helped a majority of middle leaders to

develop a sound understanding of the main strengths and areas for improvement in their area of responsibility. A few middle leaders have a clear and precise understanding of the specific aspects of their provision which require improvement, and have been successful in raising the standard of pupils' work. Overall, however, there remains too much variation in how effectively middle leaders carry out their role.

The senior leadership team has provided broadly appropriate support for middle leaders. They have challenged underperformance appropriately. Senior leaders have introduced a range of new strategies and approaches to support the work of leaders at all levels. However, the impact of these strategies has been limited by the fact that too many have been introduced within a short space of time and that their effectiveness is not evaluated carefully enough. In particular, leaders focus too much on compliance with school policies rather than the impact on pupils' standards, skills and attitudes to learning.

The roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team are not sufficiently well balanced. This hampers their ability to support and challenge middle leaders. Overall, leaders at all levels have not had sufficient impact on pupil outcomes or the effectiveness of teaching.



Arolygiaeth El Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: Special Measures**

**Cwmbran High School  
Ty Gwyn Way  
Fairwater  
Cwmbran  
NP44 4YZ**

**Date of visit: November 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Cwmbran High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **R1. Improve the standard of pupils' skills, particularly their writing, and numeracy**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve the behaviour and disrespectful attitudes of a few pupils in a minority of lessons**

The school has taken suitable steps to improve the behaviour and attitudes of pupils. As a result, many pupils behave well in classes and around the school.

Many pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning, sustain concentration well and persist when given challenging tasks. These pupils demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the quality of their work. However, a few pupils are too passive during lessons and do not listen attentively. This limits the progress that they make.

Recently, the school has adapted its behaviour policy following consultation with pupils and staff. The revised policy includes clearly defined sanctions and rewards and sensible expectations for the behaviour of pupils. This policy is understood well by pupils and staff.

Pastoral leaders analyse behaviour data regularly in order to put appropriate rewards and sanctions in place. This includes the use of a graduated response that is proportionate to the degree of poor behaviour. The school provides beneficial support for those pupils whose behaviour causes concern, including communicating effectively with their parents. This has helped to reduce disruption and conflict in lessons. However, teachers' application of the behaviour policy remains inconsistent and too many teachers tolerate low-level disruption. As a result, in a minority of lessons a few pupils misbehave and disrupt their own learning and that of others.

The school gives suitable prominence to rewarding good behaviour, for example through end of term visits to an ice skating rink and safari parks. In addition, the school provides parents with up-to-date information about their child's behaviour and attitude through use of an online app

### **R3. Ensure that the literacy and numeracy framework is implemented fully**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

#### **R4. Address the shortcomings in teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress in all lessons**

The school has strengthened the leadership of teaching appropriately through the recent appointment of an assistant headteacher. It has introduced 'teacher trails' where nearly all staff engage in opportunities to observe their peers briefly. This is beginning to create a more open culture of evaluating and improving teaching. This is supporting the school suitably to identify and share good practice. The recent review of the quality of teaching and learning across the school is helping senior leaders to develop an improved understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching. Leaders are beginning to use this information appropriately to plan tailored professional learning to support the identified priorities. However, it is too early to measure the impact of this work.

In a few effective lessons, teachers plan well, take into account pupils' prior learning and provide useful models of high quality work. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and skills. These teachers have high expectations of pupils of all abilities. In addition, they monitor pupil progress sensitively and provide useful advice for improvement. In these lessons, pupils engage enthusiastically and make rapid progress.

Many teachers make effective use of the 'ready to learn' strategy to engage most pupils at the outset of lessons. However, in the majority of instances, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Their lessons are not sufficiently challenging to secure appropriate progress for all pupils or to sustain pupil engagement. In addition, they do not build on pupils' prior learning or plan activities to develop pupils' independent learning skills well enough. In these lessons, teachers give pupils too much structure and over-direct their work. They do not explain concepts or introduce activities clearly enough. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress and a few become disengaged and disrupt their own learning and that of others.

The majority of teachers use questioning suitably to check pupils' knowledge. However, they do not use questioning well enough to probe or deepen pupils' understanding and develop their skills.

#### **R5. Improve the consistency in the work of middle managers, particularly in planning for improvement**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.





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**

**Cwmbran High School  
Ty Gwyn Way  
Fairwater  
Cwmbran  
NP44 4YZ**

**Date of visit: October 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Cwmbran High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around six months' time to monitor progress against the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve the standard of pupils' skills, particularly their writing, and numeracy**

Nearly all key stage 3 pupils engage well in useful dedicated daily reading time. Many read with suitable understanding and extract basic information from both literary and non-literary texts. Most pupils are aware of strategies such as skimming and scanning to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their reading with purpose. However, only around half of pupils use these skills independently when presented with reading tasks.

A few more able pupils write well, with an extensive and varied vocabulary, and use complex sentence structures to very good effect when required. Around half of pupils produce writing that is mostly technically secure, although a similar proportion continue to make frequent errors in basic spelling, punctuation and grammar. These errors detract from the quality of their writing, their presentation is poor and expression confused.

Many pupils apply their numeracy skills suitably through subjects other than mathematics. However, a minority of pupils make basic errors. For example, they fail to give units of measurement or scale when producing basic bar charts, line graphs and scale diagrams.

Whilst the standards of pupils' skills in key stage 3 are beginning to improve, there has been little impact in outcomes at key stage 4. Provisional data for 2018 suggests that performance overall has fallen since 2016, and is lower in 2018 than 2017 in all indicators.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics was below similar schools in 2017 and provisional data for 2018 suggests it remains below in

2018. The proportion of pupils who achieve five GCSE passes at grades A\* or A was below the average in similar schools in 2017 and declined further in 2018. The performance of boys and girls respectively, and that of pupils eligible for free school meals remains below that of their counterparts in similar schools.

## **R2. Improve the behaviour and disrespectful attitudes of a few pupils in a minority of lessons**

The school's stepped behaviour policy is understood clearly by most pupils. This behaviour policy and approach is impacting positively upon reducing incidents of poor and disrespectful behaviour. The number of fixed term exclusions and 'call outs' for senior leaders to intervene in incidents of unacceptable behaviour has continued to reduce.

The school continues to collect and analyse data on pupil behaviour. This is used appropriately to recognise patterns in pupil behaviour and is helping leaders to challenge staff to be consistent in their application of the policy. However, a minority of teachers remain inconsistent in the way they apply the policy and there is too much variability in the way instances of poor behaviour or negative attitudes to learning are dealt with. As a result, in a minority of classes, a few pupils do not engage, remain passive and make little progress in learning.

## **R3. Ensure that the literacy and numeracy framework is implemented fully**

Since the previous visit, the school has appointed a senior leader to drive developments in literacy and numeracy and suitably experienced staff to the roles of literacy and numeracy coordinators.

Leaders have implemented a range of useful approaches to promote literacy and numeracy skills across the school. These include an accelerated reading scheme, 'Tearing into reading' days, skills opportunities identified in lesson plans and schemes of work, planned embedded numeracy opportunities, a literacy marking scheme and coordinated extended writing tasks. These approaches are starting to have an impact on standards in key stage 3. However, there has been limited impact on key stage 4 outcomes.

The school has appropriate processes to monitor the implementation of these literacy and numeracy initiatives. Leaders at all levels carry out learning walks, departmental reviews, book scrutiny and pupil voice activities. These activities have led to consistent application of policies. For example, nearly all teachers provide opportunities to develop writing. However, these activities are not sufficiently focussed on the standards of literacy and numeracy that learners achieve.

Nearly all teachers use the literacy marking scheme when marking pupils' work, and make generally effective use of comments and additional tasks to focus pupils on areas they need to improve. Many pupils respond to these additional tasks and make corrections and minor improvements to their work.

#### **R4. Address the shortcomings in teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress in all lessons**

Since the last visit, the school has continued to implement a range of appropriate strategies to improve the quality of teaching. However, this has not had enough impact on improving pupils' progress and the standards they achieve, particularly at key stage 4.

The school carries out a suitable range of activities to evaluate teaching and assessment. These activities have helped the school to identify and support teachers who are underperforming. However, in most cases, evaluation and scrutiny do not focus well enough upon standards of skills and progress in learning. As a result, across the curriculum, many pupils continue to produce work below the level of which they are capable.

In a few lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They plan a range of tasks that provide a high level of challenge and support a brisk pace to learning. In these lessons, teaching focuses well on developing literacy, numeracy and social skills as well as subject content and knowledge. This helps pupils to make good progress.

In around half of lessons, teachers develop subject knowledge and literacy or numeracy skills in their lessons appropriately. They plan a range of interesting activities that present a suitable level of challenge.

In a minority of lessons, however, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. They do not plan activities that challenge pupils sufficiently and accept work of a poor standard. As a result, pupils do not sustain their interest and make insufficient effort to produce careful work. In these lessons, pupils do not make enough progress.

In a very few lessons, teachers do not engage pupils' interest or challenge them to remain on task. In these lessons, teachers do not encourage positive attitudes to learning and pupils make very little progress.

Since the previous visit, the school has focused attention on improving assessment. There is a consistent approach to providing feedback and setting tasks that will help pupils to improve their work. Many pupils respond well to these additional tasks and as a result do improve their work. However, a minority of pupils do not respond to comments to correct or complete their work. This limits their progress.

#### **R5. Improve the consistency in the work of middle managers, particularly in planning for improvement**

The school has continued to support middle leaders appropriately to develop their understanding of self-evaluation and improvement planning. Middle leaders have benefited from valuable professional development opportunities to develop their

leadership skills. As a result, they have improved their understanding of key issues and a majority are becoming more confident in carrying out their leadership responsibilities. However, this work has not had a positive enough impact on the standards pupils achieve.

Management meetings are now more structured with a clear focus on key aspects such as pupil behaviour and outcomes. Senior leaders have strengthened the accountability of middle leaders through line management meetings, regular work scrutiny and lesson observations. These procedures are helping middle leaders to adopt a more consistent approach to their work. However, the quality of leadership across the school remains too variable. For example, leaders do not make the link between teaching and its impact on standards well enough.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning draw on suitable first hand evidence. However, the lack of sufficient focus on the standards and quality of pupils' work means that areas for development are often understated and actions for improvement are not identified precisely.



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: Special Measures  
Denbigh High School  
Ruthin Road  
Denbigh  
LL16 3EX**

**Date of visit: February 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

### **SM remain**

Denbigh High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards at keys stage 4, in particular for girls**

In books and lessons, the majority of pupils recall prior learning suitably and acquire new knowledge and skills appropriately. A minority of pupils demonstrate secure prior learning and are able to apply this effectively to new situations. However, a minority of pupils make insufficient progress overall.

Since the time of the last monitoring visit, attitudes to learning have improved suitably, for example many pupils listen well to their teachers and work satisfactorily on the tasks set. When asked to do so, a minority of pupils express their ideas clearly and demonstrate good language skills. However, a minority of pupils' responses remain brief and underdeveloped. A few are unwilling to participate or contribute meaningfully in lessons.

Most pupils are able to extract familiar ideas from the texts that they read. The majority draw basic inferences suitably. Many higher ability pupils are able to analyse

text competently. However, a minority of pupils do not draw conclusions from reading precisely enough.

Many pupils express their ideas clearly in their writing. Generally they write suitably in a range of forms. They structure their ideas appropriately and use subject specific terminology accurately in their work. The extended writing of many more able pupils is well-crafted, showing a secure ability to adapt messages confidently for purpose and audience, for example when writing to appreciate the music of the film Jurassic Park. However, overall there are too few meaningful opportunities across the curriculum for pupils across the ability range to write for a wide enough range of purposes. This affects their ability to write confidently in different situations. A minority of pupils struggle to express their ideas clearly in their writing, make incorrect language choices and continue to make frequent technical errors. Too few pupils take pride in the presentation of their work.

Around half of pupils have secure number skills and a minority can apply these skills effectively to problem-solving scenarios. The majority have an appropriate understanding of measures. They are able to choose the most appropriate type of graph to demonstrate their findings and come to sensible conclusions when analysing the information presented in them.

Nearly all pupils carry out undemanding tasks using information communication technology (ICT) suitably, for example to create book covers, spreadsheets and to carry out research. However, overall, pupils do not develop their use of ICT well across the curriculum.

Over the last three years, the majority of pupils gain a level 2 qualification in Welsh.

In 2018, performance at key stage 4 is lower than at the time of the core inspection in all indicators. Overall, this performance is well below that in similar schools in most indicators.

Girls' performance in 2018 is better than at the time of the core inspection in a few indicators and is above girls in similar schools in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and in English. However, in 2018 their performance is lower than at the time of the core inspection and below that of similar pupils in the majority of indicators. The performance of boys has declined notably since the time of the core inspection and in 2018 they perform less well than boys in similar schools in all indicators.

In the sixth form, the proportion of pupils achieving 3 A\*-C grades at A level and performance in the level 3 threshold has remained in line with that of similar schools over the last three years. While performance in the average wider points score improved after the core inspection, it has been consistently below that of similar schools in the last 3 years.



## **R2. Improve behaviour and attendance**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and the provision for skills**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has maintained a suitable focus on improving the quality of teaching, assessment and provision for skills. It has provided staff with an appropriate programme of professional learning activities. This includes training on challenging pupils suitably in lessons, effective questioning and developing pupils' literacy skills. Teachers now have regular opportunities to carry out peer observations and share good practice valuably in a variety of ways. However, many of these initiatives are recent and therefore it is too soon to judge their impact.

Many teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and have positive working relationships with pupils. They have developed useful routines to ensure that pupils settle quickly and are ready to learn at the start of the lesson. This includes the use of appropriate starters to activate pupils' prior learning. They monitor progress closely and provide appropriate support for pupils where needed. The majority of teachers provide pupils with suitably planned and resourced lessons that engage pupils appropriately in their learning. In about half of lessons, teachers ensure that there is an appropriate level of challenge and that the pace of teaching closely matches the pace of learning.

Around half of teachers do not plan lessons carefully enough. They do not ensure that activities are matched closely enough to pupils' ability or build progressively on pupils' knowledge. This leads to a slow pace of learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers' explanations do not focus sufficiently on the most important information to support further learning and this affects pupils' engagement. They do not ensure that there is an appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning. A few teachers do not manage pupil behaviour well enough.

While teachers' questioning skills are developing suitably, the effectiveness of their questioning remains too variable. Only a few teachers ask probing questions to secure pupils' understanding and to develop their thinking skills effectively. As a result, the development of pupils' reasoning skills is limited in many cases.

Many teachers provide helpful advice to pupils on how to improve their work. In the best examples, feedback is constructive, targets relate closely to the task set and require a specific and valuable action by the pupil. However, how effectively teachers set success criteria is inconsistent across subjects. In addition, teachers'

targets and pupils' responses vary too much across the school. In a minority of books targets for pupils to improve are too generic. A minority of pupils do not respond well enough to teacher comments. Their responses are either too superficial or they do not respond at all.

The school provides pupils with appropriate opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. There has been a suitable focus on improving the provision for the development of oracy, higher order reading skills and extended writing. However, how well these approaches are being delivered, both within and between departments and their impact on pupils' standards is too variable.

In mathematics lessons, there are suitable opportunities for pupils to solve problems set in everyday contexts. In a few relevant subjects across the curriculum, there is an appropriate range of worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills. However, in a minority of instances, numeracy tasks do not offer a suitable level of challenge for all pupils.

Pupils are provided with useful opportunities to use their basic research, presentation and communication ICT skills, although arrangements to develop pupils' higher-order ICT skills across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

The school makes effective use of baseline skills data to identify pupils who need support with basic literacy and numeracy skills. These pupils are provided with helpful intervention programmes.

#### **R4. Strengthen leadership across the school, with a particular focus on the systems and arrangements to support pupil wellbeing.**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.



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**

**Denbigh High School  
Ruthin Road  
Denbigh  
LL16 3EX**

**Date of visit: June 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Denbigh High school is judged to have made insufficient 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 increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. 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 following receipt of the action plan, to ensure that it is suitable and likely to bring about the required improvements. Inspectors will visit the school again, in a further four to six months' time, to monitor progress in addressing a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards at keys stage 4, in particular for girls**

In 2017, performance at key stage 4 fell and was lower than at the time of the core inspection in most indicators. The performance of girls was lower in the majority. Since the inspection, pupils have made less progress than expected in nearly all indicators and significantly less in many. Their performance does not compare well to that of pupils in similar schools.

The school has started to introduce a suitable range of strategies to improve the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. However, these are mostly recent introductions and have not led to the improvements necessary in pupil outcomes.

In lessons, around half of the pupils complete enough work and develop their knowledge and skills appropriately. A minority demonstrate secure recall of previous learning and use it in new situations such as explaining how contour lines can be used to determine why the site for the settlement of Denbigh was chosen.

Around half of pupils do not listen with sufficient attention or respect. As a result, they miss important information and instructions. A minority of pupils provide brief underdeveloped verbal responses, although these are frequently simple guesses to the teacher's questions. A few pupils provide suitably developed verbal responses on topics such as the conditions necessary for early settlement. A very few, more able pupils demonstrate a developing sense of how to use rhetoric following thoughtful analyses of speeches by Martin Luther King and Barack Obama.

The majority of pupils can skim or scan suitably, finding information on topics including the eruption of Mount St Helens, the lives of Josiah Wedgwood and Richard Arkwright and the importance of performing arts in the curriculum. A minority use inference and deduction suitably when reading non-literary texts on topics such as mountaineering and social networking sites and to enhance their understanding of travel writing, such as Bryson's view of Llandudno. In addition, pupils use these skills to consider mood in literary texts such as 'Heroes' and culpability in 'An Inspector Calls'. However, a minority of pupils do not have an appropriate range of reading strategies to support their learning, which contributes to them making less progress than expected.

Around half of pupils write suitably in a range of genres including blogs, film reviews, formal letters and descriptive accounts. While a majority understand the purpose of their writing, many lack a clear sense of audience. As a consequence, they make incorrect language choices and their writing lacks the correct tone. Close to half of pupils do not produce writing that is technically secure and structured suitably. They continue to make basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, including confusing tense, using subordinate clauses rather than full sentences, and comma-splicing.

The majority of pupils have a suitable grasp of basic number skills, including the four rules and calculations with percentages. For example, in food technology, Year 8 pupils calculate successfully the cost of ingredients when preparing a gateau. In addition, the majority use data accurately, for example in geography to produce graphs to illustrate the link between infant mortality and prosperity in different countries. A few, more able pupils interpret graphs and charts well to draw thoughtful conclusions about the data. However, in general, pupils have difficulty in applying mathematical concepts to solve everyday problems. This is most often due to a lack of deep understanding of concepts.

The performance of boys in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics fell sharply in 2017. That of girls also fell and both are lower than in similar schools.

Overall, performance in this indicator is considerably lower than expected. In the capped points score, girls did slightly better than in 2016. However, performance overall in this indicator is lower than at the time of the inspection, remains below expectations and does not compare well with that in similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A improved in 2017.

At the time of the core inspection, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals was better than that of the same group of pupils in similar schools in the majority of indicators. However, in 2017 it fell sharply and was lower than in similar schools in most indicators and well below in many.

## **R2. Improve behaviour and attendance**

The school has recently reviewed and revised approaches to improving pupil attendance and behaviour. However, the response to this recommendation has been very slow, particularly in the year following the inspection, and has had little impact overall on either attendance or behaviour.

In 2016-2017, attendance improved but remained well below expectations and continued to compare poorly with that in similar schools as it has in each of the previous three years. The recent appointment of an attendance officer has contributed to improved attendance over the past four months. However, unverified data indicates that attendance for 2017-2018 has fallen sharply and is much lower than at the time of the inspection.

The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved very slightly in 2016-2017, although it remained well below that of the same group of pupils in similar schools and in schools nationally. The unverified figure for 2017-2018 suggests a significant decline in the attendance of this group of pupils to a point much lower than at the time of the inspection. In 2017, the overall level of persistent absence fell, particularly that of girls, despite a slight increase in that of boys.

Since the inspection, the school's pastoral structure has reverted to a year group system with the intention of providing greater consistency in supporting pupils' academic progress and wellbeing. Following consultation with staff and pupils, a revised behaviour policy was introduced in early 2018 and very recently an internal exclusion room has been introduced. Staff have recently received appropriate professional learning opportunities to promote good behaviour and respect. However, teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently and the exclusion room has had no obvious impact as the number of recorded behavioural incidents and the rate of fixed term exclusions remain high.

In close to half of lessons, inappropriate behaviour or poor attitudes to learning including a lack of resilience, limited concentration and an over-reliance upon the teacher, allied to shortcomings in teaching, limit pupils' progress.

### **R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and the provision for skills**

The school has started to introduce a suitable range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching. This includes a focus on improving teachers' questioning and behaviour management skills and the sharing of effective practice. However, these are mostly recent introductions and have not had sufficient impact on the quality and consistency of teaching.

In many lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and the majority foster positive working relationships with pupils. They monitor pupil progress closely and offer valuable verbal feedback that helps pupils to progress in their learning.

Around half of lessons are planned suitably. In these lessons, teachers provide interesting activities and helpful resources that develop pupils' subject knowledge and skills effectively. They use questioning techniques that probe and develop pupils' understanding appropriately.

In around half of lessons, teaching is not effective enough. In these lessons, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not plan activities that engage or challenge pupils of all abilities well enough. This contributes to a slow pace of learning and pupil disengagement. Frequently, these teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to think deeply or develop their independent learning skills. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not manage pupil behaviour well enough.

The school has recently made improvements to its provision for skills. This includes departments taking the lead on respective skills and, very recently, nominated individuals quality assuring the opportunities they provide. The school provides pupils with a suitable range of opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills. However, in a minority of lessons, opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills are restricted by the overuse of worksheets. In addition, teachers' feedback to pupils on the quality and accuracy of their writing is particularly underdeveloped. Although there are regular opportunities for pupils to use their information retrieval skills, there are insufficient opportunities across the curriculum for them to develop higher order reading skills.

The school provides pupils with an appropriate range of worthwhile opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in relevant subjects. However, the provision for the development of their numerical reasoning and problem solving skills, both within mathematics and across the curriculum, is underdeveloped.

The school uses data from a range of baseline tests to track suitably the progress that individual pupils make in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. It uses this information well to identify pupils with weaker skills and provide them with suitable support.

Plans to develop pupils' information and communication technology skills across the curriculum are at an early stage of development.

Provision for Welsh enables pupils to make sound progress, with the majority gaining a level 2 qualification.

#### **R4. Strengthen leadership across the school, with a particular focus on the systems and arrangements to support pupil wellbeing**

Since the core inspection in November 2016, initiatives to address weaknesses in the quality of leadership have not been implemented quickly or robustly enough. Following the core inspection, senior leaders did not show sufficient urgency in addressing important areas for improvement. As a result, leadership across the school has had little impact on improving outcomes, provision and the support for pupils' wellbeing. The current senior leadership team does not have the capacity to secure the improvements required.

The school has recently started to address weaknesses in key areas of leadership. This includes the appointment of a new headteacher and, very recently, two associate assistant headteachers. These changes are helping to distribute leadership responsibilities more appropriately. The headteacher is beginning to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of their work. Meetings at all levels now focus primarily on standards and pupils' progress. Despite these recent changes, progress in strengthening key areas of the school's work, such as pupils' behaviour and attendance and the quality of teaching, has been too slow. While the school has an appropriate anti-bullying policy and clear procedures for promoting good behaviour and respect, these are not applied rigorously enough.

Senior leaders have not challenged and supported middle leaders well enough to help them carry out their roles effectively. This has contributed to a minority of middle leaders not providing effective leadership to their areas of responsibility.

There have been recent changes to the governing body, which now provides a suitably robust level of challenge and support to the school. The school currently runs a large deficit budget and is holding discussions with the local authority to approve a licensed deficit recovery plan.



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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: Special Measures**

**Denbigh High School  
Ruthin Road  
Denbigh  
LL16 3EX**

**Date of visit: December 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Denbigh High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards at keys stage 4, in particular for girls**

Around half of pupils make sound progress in their learning. They recall prior learning suitably and apply this competently in familiar contexts to improve their understanding and skills. However, a minority of pupils do not recall prior learning well enough and do not make enough progress over time

Most pupils behave well in lessons and the majority display positive attitudes to learning. However, a minority are too passive in lessons, lack concentration and are easily distracted. As a result, they do not complete enough work during lessons and do not make enough progress.

Most pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and each other. The majority pay suitable attention to the contributions of others and a few listen actively and pose

insightful questions about what they are learning. However, a minority of pupils do not listen well enough to teachers' explanations or instructions.

When given the opportunity, a minority of pupils develop their thinking skills well and are able to explain their views effectively, for example when discussing the causes and impact of knife crime in England and Wales. Many pupils offer brief verbal responses to teachers' questions. When given the opportunity, the majority of pupils engage actively in discussions with each other about their work. A few speak confidently and use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and opinions. However, a minority have difficulty articulating their thoughts or expressing their views clearly. In most cases, this is because teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas or extend their responses.

Many pupils locate and extract key information from texts efficiently. The majority can deduce basic meaning from a suitable range of texts. For example, in biology lessons, pupils locate and use key information from a report about a problematic drug trial.

Since the last monitoring visit, the majority of pupils have improved the quality of their writing suitably and take more pride in the presentation of their work. They use paragraphs appropriately, punctuate accurately and use subject specific vocabulary competently. A majority of pupils have a suitable understanding of audience, purpose and tone when writing. However, many make frequent errors in their spelling and a minority have difficulty even when spelling basic everyday words.

The majority of pupils use the four rules of number suitably to perform basic calculations. When given the opportunity, these pupils apply their number skills appropriately to work out simple percentages and convert fractions. Many have a suitable understanding of measure and use this to calculate the area of shapes accurately. However, the majority of pupils have difficulty applying their mathematical knowledge to solve problems in challenging contexts. In addition, they do not transfer these skills to other subjects across the curriculum well enough. A minority of pupils make errors when plotting and labelling graphs and a few have difficulty with basic multiplication.

Performance at key stage 4 has been weak since the core inspection, and has shown little improvement. In 2019, outcomes for pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, remain well below expectations. The performance of girls has been variable and in 2019 is well below that of girls in similar schools.

Leaders evaluate suitably standards based on performance data. However, their evaluation of outcomes does not focus well enough on the school's performance when compared to expectations relative to similar schools. In addition, leaders do not draw well enough on a suitable range of first hand evidence to evaluate the standard of pupils' work in lessons and books.

## **R2. Improve behaviour and attendance**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

## **R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and the provision for skills**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has focused suitably on strengthening the quality of teaching by developing a whole-school approach to teaching, 'The Denbigh High School Way'. Leaders have recently introduced a cycle of lesson observations to begin to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. However, these observations focus too heavily on compliance with school policies rather than the quality and impact of provision. This is limiting the school's ability to identify strengths and areas for improvement in teaching.

Most teachers develop purposeful working relationships with pupils, creating a positive learning environment. These teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning suitably to confirm pupils' understanding. Around half plan lessons suitably, use interesting resources and provide clear explanations and instructions. They monitor progress closely during lessons and provide swift verbal feedback.

Around half of teachers do not ensure that activities are well matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able. In these lessons, teachers do not respond effectively to address off-task conversations or the passive approach to learning of a minority of pupils. As a result, not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Around half of teachers do not have high enough aspirations for the standards that pupils can achieve and a minority intervene too quickly when pupils find tasks difficult, preventing them from developing as resilient and independent learners. Many teachers do not use questioning well enough to probe and extend understanding.

Many subject areas are beginning to make suitable use of assessment feedback to support pupils' learning. Many teachers identify and correct pupils' spelling errors appropriately, although pupils do not take enough responsibility for correcting their own work. A majority of teachers provide suitable written feedback that tells pupils how to improve their work. Overall, teachers do not ensure pupils respond effectively to feedback and the quality and impact of written feedback is too variable.

The school has adopted a suitable focus on improving the provision for developing pupils' oracy skills across the curriculum, for example by increasing the use of class discussions in lessons. This is beginning to improve the verbal skills of a minority of pupils. The school has recently introduced small group sessions to support the reading and numeracy of those pupils with weaker skills. In key stage 3, pupils are beginning to engage positively with an online literacy package to improve their reading and writing skills. This provision ensures pupils receive support and challenge which meet their specific individual needs. However, it is too early to

measure the impact of this work on improving pupils' skills. Overall, the provision to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum remains underdeveloped.

**R4. Strengthen leadership across the school, with a particular focus on the systems and arrangements to support pupil wellbeing**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit



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: Special Measures**

**Denbigh High School  
Ruthin Road  
Denbigh  
LL16 3EX**

**Date of visit: July 2019**

**by**

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

**Outcome of visit**

Denbigh High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may not be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.



## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **R1. Raise standards at keys stage 4, in particular for girls**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve behaviour and attendance**

Since the appointment of the attendance officer in January 2018, the school has strengthened arrangements for monitoring pupil absence and introduced a range of beneficial approaches to improve pupils' attendance. These include regular reviews of the effectiveness of interventions and a purposeful whole-school approach to raising pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance. In addition, the school has built useful partnerships with parents and outside agencies.

Overall, internal school data suggests that these strategies have led to notable improvements in pupils' attendance, in particular the attendance of boys and pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Levels of attendance for these groups now compare favourably with the levels of attendance at the time of the core inspection. However, in 2019, the rate of attendance of girls is still lower than at the time of the core inspection.

Since the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher, the school has introduced a new behaviour policy, which is having a beneficial effect on behaviour in lessons and around the school. The expectations of this policy have been communicated clearly to both staff and pupils, and are understood well by all parties. However, a very few pupils continue to disrupt lessons. A few teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently and supply teachers are not supported well enough to manage pupil behaviour. The rate of fixed term exclusions has decreased to a level that is lower than at the time of the core inspection but remains too high.

Many pupils involve themselves successfully in their learning. However, a minority are passive and do not engage well in learning activities. Often this is because the level of challenge provided by their teachers is either too high or too low.

### **R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and the provision for skills**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R4. Strengthen leadership across the school, with a particular focus on the systems and arrangements to support pupil wellbeing**

Since 2018, there have been notable changes in senior leadership. The appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher together with the creation of an

extended senior leadership team has strengthened the school's capacity to make improvements. The actions of the new senior leadership team are beginning to have a positive impact on improving pupil behaviour and attendance in particular. However, these changes have not led to sufficient improvements in other important areas of the school's work, such as improving the quality of teaching and assessment.

Although roles and responsibilities are now understood well, there continue to be a few areas of overlap within the senior leadership team, for example regarding the responsibility for improving pupil behaviour. Lines of accountability between senior and middle leaders are clear and there are regular link meetings that focus appropriately on standards and behaviour. Middle leaders now have a suitable understanding of how to manage their departments. However, in general, senior leaders do not support middle leaders well enough to carry out their roles. They do not hold them to account consistently or rigorously enough, particularly for the quality of teaching and assessment. This does not help these middle leaders to hold their own departments to account well enough for these aspects. In addition, the management of progress leaders is not sufficiently strategic. For example, best use is not always made of leaders' time, which restricts their capacity to carry out their role effectively.

The senior team has a strong focus on developing a culture where all staff reflect honestly on their areas of responsibility. Leaders at all levels are now involved in a suitable range of self-evaluation and improvement activities and are beginning to develop an understanding of the main strengths and areas for improvement in their areas of responsibility. However, leaders at all levels do not draw effectively enough on the full range of data and first hand evidence when self-evaluating their work to plan for improvement. In quality assurance, leaders do not evaluate the impact of provision on standards well enough. Consequently, they do not identify strengths and areas for improvement precisely, particularly with regards to the quality of teaching. This hinders their ability to plan for whole-school and individual training needs accurately. Departmental improvement planning follows the school's priorities too closely and does not always focus closely enough on departmental priorities.

The school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen performance management arrangements for all teaching staff. However, in many instances, performance management targets are not sufficiently robust.

The school continues to run a large deficit budget. The recovery plan for this deficit is in the process of being finalised. The governing body, through its effective chair of governors, holds senior and core subject leaders to account robustly.



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: special measures**

**Eastern High School  
Quarry Hill  
Newport Road  
Rumney  
Cardiff  
CF3 3XG**

**Date of visit: July 2017**

**by**

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

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## **Outcome of monitoring**

Eastern High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure that all pupils are safe in school**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school has attended appropriately to the safeguarding issues raised by the team during the previous monitoring visit and continues to maintain the strong progress noted in the last report.

### **Recommendation 2: Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation.

We commented on pupils' performance based on 2016 data in the report following the monitoring visit in September 2016. These comments remain unchanged.

The standard of work that the majority of pupils produce in lessons has improved considerably since the last monitoring visit. In particular, pupils' presentation and organisation of their work is notably better overall than in previous visits.

The majority of pupils contribute enthusiastically to class discussions. A few pupils make thoughtful verbal contributions, although in many cases, pupils' limited

vocabulary restricts the effectiveness of their participation in these activities. A minority of pupils do not listen well enough to teachers' explanations and instructions. As a result, much of their work is incomplete or poorly presented.

The majority of pupils write with suitable technical accuracy and structure their written work appropriately. A very few pupils write at length fluently, using sophisticated vocabulary and a range of techniques that are well matched to purpose and audience. However, a minority of pupils make frequent basic errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. They produce written work that is too brief and does not express their ideas well enough.

Many pupils use a suitable range of reading strategies, and are able to select relevant information from a variety of texts. The majority of pupils have suitable number skills. When given the opportunity, they use these skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when constructing graphs to record experimental data in science.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school has developed a number of valuable approaches to improving pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning. These are having a beneficial effect on the wellbeing of pupils, and are helping to create a positive ethos in the school.

The school's 'Culture for learning' policy is well understood by most staff and pupils. There are clear systems and processes for behaviour management that are applied consistently by most staff. In addition, approaches to improving teaching have enabled teachers to increase their range of strategies to engage pupils in their learning. This has helped to foster strong working relationships between staff and pupils. As a result of these improvements, most pupils now behave appropriately around school and in lessons, and a majority focus well on their work in class.

In lessons, the majority of pupils work with motivation and interest. They recall prior learning well and maintain their concentration appropriately. They contribute productively to pair and group work. However, a minority of pupils lack independence in their learning, and remain too passive in lessons.

There has been a significant reduction in fixed-term exclusions. Leaders monitor and evaluate their approaches to improving pupils' behaviour carefully. They are beginning to draw on pupils' views effectively to develop this work.

Most pupils arrive punctually to lessons. Strategies to improve pupils' attendance are having a positive impact, and the school's data indicates that pupils' attendance continues to improve well.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment across the school**

### Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the previous monitoring visit, the school has introduced a range of strategies that has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and assessment. Senior leaders have been successful in engaging nearly all staff in an ongoing programme of lesson observation and one-to-one coaching. This programme has been valuable in identifying areas for improvement at a whole-school and individual level and has had a clear impact on the quality of teaching.

Many teachers have developed strong working relationships with their classes, which has had a positive impact on pupils' engagement with their learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers plan activities that are well-matched to pupils' ability, set clear learning objectives and prepare resources that engage pupils successfully. These teachers use questioning appropriately to involve the majority of pupils in discussion activities, to monitor pupils' progress closely and to manage behaviour well when necessary. In a few instances, teachers use skilful questioning to explore and develop pupils' understanding.

In a minority of lessons, however, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not plan work that is sufficiently demanding, or challenge the limited engagement and poor work of a minority of pupils strongly enough. These teachers are not successful in ensuring pupils are actively involved in their learning, especially in class discussion. In a few instances, teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour effectively.

Since the previous monitoring visit, the school has deployed a range of suitable strategies to improve the effectiveness of teachers' written feedback. In many cases, teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, and ensure that pupils make valuable improvements in light of this feedback. In a minority of instances, teachers do not provide pupils with clear enough guidance on the best ways to make progress.

### **Recommendation 5: Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school has undertaken valuable work to strengthen leadership and to develop self-evaluation and planning for improvement. This has had a notable impact on the ethos of the school and on the quality of teaching. However, the quality of middle leadership remains too variable and there has not been sufficient improvement in important areas such as pupils' skills or in outcomes at key stage 4.

Senior leaders have taken well-considered strategic actions to improve key aspects of the school's work. The use of coaching to develop teachers' practice, and actions to improve pupils' reading skills and attitudes to learning are beginning to have a positive impact.

Arrangements to hold leaders at all levels to account more securely are helping to drive improvement, in particular in developing pupils' wellbeing. Line management

meetings have a clear focus on pupils' progress and this is enabling middle leaders to plan and deliver suitable interventions.

Whole-school self-evaluation processes are now more robust. On the whole, the school's self-evaluation report is evaluative and provides a fair appraisal of the school's progress. The school's improvement plan generally identifies clear priorities, actions and intended outcomes.

Middle leaders now use data more frequently to track the progress of individual pupils. This has helped departments to identify those pupils who are in need of support. Departmental self-evaluation reviews now include a suitable account of performance data. However, heads of department do not analyse the evidence from work scrutiny and teaching well enough to identify specific areas for improvement in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject. This means that it is difficult for middle leaders to plan for improvement precisely enough.

Senior leaders provide valuable support to develop the leadership skills of middle leaders. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the effectiveness of middle leaders.

Governors continue to support the school well to make progress.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.





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: special measures**

**Eastern High School  
Quarry Hill  
Newport Road  
Rumney  
Cardiff  
CF3 3XG**

**Date of visit: November 2017**

**by**

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

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## **Outcome of monitoring**

Eastern High School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure that all pupils are safe in school**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has undertaken successfully a number of actions to make sure that pupils are safe in school.

Leaders have established a team within the school that focuses specifically on coordinating support for pupils' welfare and wellbeing. They have developed effective systems to support pupils with poor attendance and behavioural, emotional and social issues. This includes appropriate staff training and a process for them to refer pupils giving cause for concern. The school has set up a beneficial range of partnerships with external agencies to provide additional support for pupils facing the most challenging issues. The work of the team is also having a positive impact on pupils' attendance and attitudes to school.

The school has addressed all of the health and safety concerns identified at the time of the core inspection. Senior leaders ensure that staff understand and use revised policies and procedures consistently throughout the school. The school has strengthened well its policies and procedures for child protection appropriately. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school's anti-bullying policy takes appropriate account of pupils' views. This defines clearly what bullying is, how it can be prevented and how it will be addressed. In addition, the school has introduced valuable strategies that help pupils to resolve conflicts effectively. These approaches enable pupils to develop their social skills and have contributed well to the development of a positive school ethos.

### **Recommendation 2: Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

At key stage 4, there has been an overall trend of improvement in performance since the core inspection. Provisional data indicates that, in many indicators, this improvement has continued in 2017.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics increased by 15 percentage points in 2016. Provisional data indicates that performance in this

indicator has continued to improve in 2017 and that it now compares favourably with that in other similar schools. Performance in the capped points score has shown slight improvement since the core inspection, and also compares well with similar schools.

In 2016, performance in mathematics improved significantly. Provisional data indicates that it has declined slightly in 2017 but it still compares favourably with performance in similar schools. This data also indicates that performance in English has improved considerably, and performance in this indicator now compares very well with similar schools.

At key stage 4, provisional data for 2017 indicates that the performance of girls has, overall improved considerably since the core inspection. Boys' performance has also improved in the majority of indicators over this period. The performance of both boys and girls remains below that of boys and girls in similar schools. However, the gap between the performance of both groups and that of pupils in similar schools has narrowed substantially since the time of the core inspection. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved significantly since the core inspection in many key stage 4 indicators.

Overall, the quality of pupils' work is now significantly better than at the time of the core inspection. A majority of pupils demonstrate appropriate levels of resilience and independence in their learning and maintain their concentration well in lessons. These pupils make effective use of the recently-introduced 'prep' time to revise and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. A few pupils demonstrate well-developed problem-solving skills, for example, when they investigate the properties of right-angled triangles in mathematics. However, a minority of pupils remain too passive in their lessons. A few pupils do not listen well enough to their teachers or their peers, and a very few demonstrate immature behaviour which limits their progress and disrupts the learning of others.

Most pupils present and organise their work well. Many write with suitable technical accuracy and structure their extended writing effectively. They demonstrate a secure grasp of purpose and audience when writing in a variety of styles, for example when they produce well-balanced arguments regarding the importance of reading, or how far the lives of black Americans improved in the 1920s. A few pupils write fluently at length, using sophisticated vocabulary and a range of techniques to enhance the quality of their writing. However, a few pupils make frequent basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar and do not structure their extended writing well enough.

Many pupils have sound reading skills. They are able to select relevant information from a range of sources and have effective reading strategies to interpret unfamiliar words. A few pupils demonstrate well-developed higher-order reading skills. For example, in history, they analyse a wide range of written sources so that they can summarise and categorise thoughtfully the causes of Hitler's rise to power.

The majority of pupils participate appropriately in discussion work, and are able to express their thinking with suitable clarity. A few pupils make highly articulate and thoughtful contributions to class discussion. However, a minority of pupils are either reluctant to contribute to class discussion or are not able to express their ideas

coherently enough.

The majority of pupils have satisfactory number skills. When given the opportunity, they apply these skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when they calculate electricity bills in science.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection the school has established a coherent and systematic approach to improving pupils' wellbeing. This has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning.

Pupils' punctuality has improved significantly since the core inspection. Most pupils arrive for lessons promptly and ready to learn. The school has strengthened substantially its approaches to promoting good attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved considerably.

The 'Culture for Learning' policy is understood well by most staff and pupils. There are clear procedures for behaviour management that are applied consistently by most staff. These strategies have had a positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils, and are helping to establish a positive learning ethos across the school.

Since the core inspection the school has placed a strong focus on improving teaching and learning. Leaders have supported teachers particularly well to increase the range of strategies to engage pupils in their learning. This has helped to develop beneficial working relationships between staff and pupils that foster learning and pupil progress.

In lessons, the majority of pupils work with enthusiasm and interest. They contribute productively to pair and group work, and are keen to make good progress.

Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour carefully to identify those pupils in need of support. There are effective systems to help pupils to develop their social skills. As a result of the range of well-coordinated approaches, most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and there has been a considerable reduction in fixed-term exclusions.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment across the school**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, there has been a notable improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment. This has had a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve and their attitudes to learning. Senior leaders have developed a successful programme of professional learning to improve teaching at a whole-school and an individual level. In addition, middle leaders and staff have benefited from

opportunities to share effective practice in teaching and learning. These strategies have made a valuable contribution to establishing useful classroom routines and raising expectations amongst staff and pupils.

Many teachers have developed strong working relationships with their classes, which has had a positive impact on pupils' engagement with their learning. A few highly effective teachers use deft questioning techniques, and demanding and innovative activities to challenge pupils' thinking, develop their problem-solving skills and deepen their understanding. In a few cases, however, teachers do not plan activities that are matched closely enough to the needs of all pupils, or that develop progressively their skills, knowledge and understanding.

In many lessons, teachers plan carefully-sequenced activities that are matched well to pupils' ability, and use a variety of resources that engage and challenge pupils successfully. In these lessons, teachers use questioning appropriately to engage the majority of pupils in discussion activities and to monitor pupils' progress.

Since the core inspection, the school has improved markedly the effectiveness of teachers' feedback to pupils. In many cases, teachers give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work, and ensure that pupils make valuable improvements to extend their skills and understanding. In a minority of instances, however, teachers do not ensure that pupils respond to teachers' comments well enough.

### **Recommendation 5: Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has undertaken valuable work to strengthen leadership and to develop self-evaluation and planning for improvement. This has had a substantial impact on improving the quality of teaching, and on pupils' standards of reading and writing. These actions, together with approaches to improve pupils' wellbeing, have had a notably positive effect on the culture and ethos of the school.

Senior leaders have taken well-considered and timely strategic actions to improve key aspects of the school's work. The use of coaching to develop teachers' individual practice is a particularly strong aspect of the school's improvement journey, and has had a marked impact on the quality of teaching.

Processes to hold leaders at all levels to account more securely are helping to drive improvement. The school has recently refined its line management arrangements so that senior leaders use their expertise to challenge and support middle leaders more effectively. This has introduced greater consistency in accountability arrangements, and means that middle leaders have a sound understanding of important areas of their work such as assessment and the effective use of data.

Line management meetings have a clear focus on pupils' progress and on evidence-based accountability. This is enabling middle leaders to improve the work in their areas of responsibility. Performance management arrangements are suitably robust,

and improvement targets for teachers identify useful areas for improvement.

Senior leaders tackle underperformance robustly. They offer well-structured support for teachers in need of improvement. In addition, they provide valuable support to develop the leadership skills of middle leaders. This has had a positive impact on the effectiveness of middle leadership.

Whole-school self-evaluation processes are now robust. The school's self-evaluation report is evaluative and provides an honest appraisal of the school's progress. The school's improvement plan generally identifies clear priorities, actions and intended outcomes.

Middle leaders now use data appropriately to track the progress of individual pupils. This has helped departments to identify those pupils who are in need of support. Departmental self-evaluation reviews now include a suitable account of performance data. However, heads of department do not analyse the evidence from work scrutiny and teaching consistently well enough to identify specific areas for improvement in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in their respective subjects. This means that in a few instances it is difficult for them to plan for improvement precisely enough.

Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance. They provide effective scrutiny of all aspects of the school's work, and continue to support the school well to make progress.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Eastern High School  
Quarry Hill  
Newport Road  
Rumney  
Cardiff  
CF3 3XG**

**Date of visit: September 2016**

**by**

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



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## Outcome of monitoring

Eastern High is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

### **Maintaining the level of follow-up activity (for all special measures and significant improvement visits where the provider will remain in the category)**

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan. Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Ensure that all pupils are safe in school**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has continued to implement helpful strategies and policies to tackle bullying and to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Most pupils say that they feel safe and that they value the restorative approaches recently introduced by the school.

Leaders have established a team within the school that focuses specifically on coordinating support for pupils' welfare and wellbeing. They are developing effective systems to support pupils with poor attendance and behavioural, emotional and social issues. This includes a programme of staff training and a process for staff to refer pupils giving cause for concern. The school has set up a beneficial range of partnerships with external agencies to provide additional support for pupils facing the most challenging issues. The work of the team is also having a positive impact on attendance and pupils' attitudes to school.

Health and safety issues identified at the time of the core inspection have been addressed suitably.

## **Recommendation 2: Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in December 2014, the school's progress in many key indicators has fluctuated. In 2015, pupil outcomes were the lowest in Wales in all performance indicators at key stage 4, and in the core subject indicator and English at key stage 3. At both key stages, performance in all indicators placed the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals.

In 2016, unverified data for key stage 4 suggests an improvement from this very low base in the majority of these key indicators. Performance improved in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, in the core subject indicator, in mathematics at level 2 and in the level 1 threshold. However, performance in the level 2 threshold and in science at level 2 has continued to fall. Performance in English remains broadly similar to that in 2015.

At key stage 3 performance in English has improved significantly since 2015. Performance in the core subject indicator and in science has improved. However, performance in mathematics remains the same as in 2015.

In the majority of lessons observed during this visit, many pupils make satisfactory progress. They are attentive and focus appropriately on their work. However, only a few pupils can recall previous learning effectively or demonstrate a secure understanding of subject knowledge. Many pupils lack the confidence to contribute to discussion and provide short, underdeveloped verbal responses to teachers' questions.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to implement suitable training for staff to support the development of pupils' reading skills. It has mapped the literacy framework across the curriculum for writing and oracy, and has implemented systems to track and monitor pupils' progress against this. However, it remains too early to evaluate the impact of this work on standards. The school has made no progress towards implementing the numeracy element of the LNF in lessons. Opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in meaningful contexts remain limited.

Overall, the standards of pupils' skills and the areas of concern identified in the last monitoring visit have not changed.

## **Recommendation 3: Improve pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school continues to implement valuable strategies to improve pupils' behaviour. As a result of consistent classroom routines and expectations of behaviour, there is now an orderly and calm learning environment in many lessons. In these lessons, most pupils behave well. However, in a few lessons a very few pupils continue to disrupt the learning of others. A few teachers remain inconsistent in their implementation of the school's behaviour policy and do not address poor behaviour

effectively.

The behaviour of pupils around the school has improved since the time of the core inspection. Many pupils behave sensibly in corridors and are courteous and welcoming to visitors.

The use of the internal exclusion room continues to have a positive impact on reducing the levels of fixed-term exclusions.

Attendance in 2015 -16 rose by 2.8 percentage points compared to 2014 -2015. However, it remains below modelled outcomes and in the bottom 25% of similar schools based on eligibility for free schools meals. In 2015-2016, the rate of persistent absence fell by 12 percentage points compared to 2014-2015 but remains considerably higher than the average in similar schools.

Many pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. However, a few arrive late for lessons and a few are still arriving on site when the first lesson is already underway. The poor punctuality of these pupils disrupts their learning and that of others.

In the majority of lessons, many pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They focus well on tasks set, cooperate with their teachers and are supportive of each other. A few pupils do not engage in learning and lack confidence in their own abilities. In a few lessons where pupils demonstrate poor attitudes to learning, this is frequently due to ineffective teaching and classroom management.

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment across the school**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Many teachers establish a positive classroom ethos, set suitable learning objectives and manage pupils' behaviour effectively. A majority of teachers provide clear explanations, and plan useful, logically sequenced activities to support pupils in achieving these. Most of these teachers check pupils' understanding appropriately at different points throughout the lesson.

A useful staff training programme focusses on important aspects of teaching and assessment practices. The process of lesson observations and learning walks is starting to pay greater attention to pupils' engagement in lessons. However, senior leaders do not focus well enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' standards. This limits their ability to identify areas for improvement. Moreover, it is too soon to judge the impact of recent training on the reliability of teacher assessments.

A minority of teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils. In these lessons, planning is weak, activities are not well matched to pupils' abilities, and teachers do not develop pupils' skills adequately. Too often, activities lack challenge and the pace of learning is too slow. Many teachers' questioning does not develop and extend pupils' knowledge or their verbal responses sufficiently. This contributes to the modest progress that pupils make in these lessons. A very few teachers differentiate well enough. In a few lessons, teachers do not manage the behaviour or support pupils effectively and this disrupts their learning.

Around half of teachers provide pupils with useful written feedback to help them improve their work. However, only a few pupils respond appropriately to this guidance. A majority of teachers do not identify consistently weaknesses in pupils' writing, or provide them with sufficient opportunities to draft and redraft their written work. As a result, the quality of pupils' writing does not improve.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Senior leaders continue to work together well to improve the school. There is a clear strategy for improvement based on the needs of pupils, and this provides a sound platform from which to strengthen the work of the school. This is beginning to have a positive impact on important areas of the school's work such as pupils' wellbeing and the quality of teaching.

Generally, senior leaders have a good understanding of the areas of strength and weakness in the school. However, the whole school self-evaluation report is too focussed on evaluating review processes. It does not make clear judgements about the quality of leadership and provision, or about any impact on the standards pupils' achieve. Furthermore, the school improvement plan does not identify the school's priorities for development sufficiently clearly or how leaders will evaluate progress against these precisely enough.

The school is working suitably to strengthen the leadership skills of middle leaders. It has invested in training for heads of department to develop their ability to analyse and use performance data more effectively. These middle leaders are developing their awareness of the progress that pupils should make, and of the strategies required to enable pupils to meet the demands of examinations. However, departmental self-evaluations do not analyse evidence of standards and provision well enough. This means that progress has been too slow in these areas. The quality of middle leadership remains too variable.

Senior leaders have improved plans for performance management so that they align more suitably to the school's areas for improvement. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

The governing body has a strong understanding of the work of the school. It continues to provide an effective level of support and challenge for all areas of the school's work.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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**

**King Henry VIII Comprehensive School  
Old Hereford Road  
Abergavenny  
Monmouthshire  
NP7 6EP**

**Date of visit: June 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

King Henry VIII School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

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 at key stage 3 and key stage 4

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

In 2015, following the core inspection, pupils' performance improved in most key indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4. Over a three year period, the extent of the improvement at key stage 4 is considerably greater than the average improvement in the family of schools, and in schools nationally, in every key performance indicator.

In 2015, at key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics improved slightly after the significant improvement achieved in 2014. This performance continues to place the school in the lower 50% of similar schools but is above modelled outcomes for the second year running. In 2015, performance in the level 2 threshold, in the capped points score and in science all improved but continues to place the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools. Performance in the level 1 threshold and in the core subject indicator improved very slightly in 2015. This continues to place the school in the lower half of similar schools for the former but drops the school into the bottom 25% of similar schools for the latter. Performance in mathematics improved substantially in 2015 and places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. Although performance in English dipped slightly, it continues to place the school in the upper 50% of similar schools.

At key stage 3, in 2015, performance improved in all key indicators and now compares favourably with that in similar schools. Performance in the core subject indicator and in mathematics places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. However, performance in science places the school in the upper 50% and in English in the top 25% of similar schools.

In 2015, at key stage 4, the performance of girls improved in all indicators apart from a very slight dip in English. The performance of boys also improved in many indicators but not in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics or in English.

In 2015, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in many key stage 4 indicators. This was significantly so in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, in the level 2 threshold, in mathematics and in science. The performance of this group of pupils remains lower than the average performance of the same group in similar schools in the majority of indicators. However, relative performance is higher in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics and in mathematics, and equal in English. At key stage 3, in 2015, the performance of



this group of pupils improved in the core subject indicator and in English. In both indicators, this performance is higher than the average performance of the same group in similar schools. In mathematics and science, performance changed little and remains above the average performance of the same group in similar schools in science, but below in mathematics.

In a majority of lessons, pupils make sound progress. Most pupils behave well and many display positive attitudes to learning. They are engaged and enthusiastic, working well independently and with others.

Many pupils have good listening skills, speak confidently and read with secure understanding. A minority of pupils use inference and deduction well to enhance their understanding of a range of texts. A few synthesise information effectively from different sources, particularly in humanities based subjects. Many pupils write well for a suitable range of purposes and a minority produce well-crafted and engaging work. However, a minority do not develop their writing well enough and a few continue to make basic, common errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Many pupils make appropriate use of a suitable range of number skills, including mental and written calculation, in subjects other than mathematics. More able pupils complete more sophisticated calculations including those based on chemical equations. A majority of pupils interpret data accurately from charts and graphs on a range of topics such as the comparative insulation properties of different materials.

## **Recommendation 2: Develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has improved opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This is having a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve.

The strategic appointment of literacy and numeracy champions has increased the school's capacity to develop provision and to monitor pupils' progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, systematic reviews also inform planning for further developments and well-targeted initiatives such as the whole-school approach to extended writing.

Schemes of work across the curriculum now cover all strands of the literacy and numeracy framework appropriately. This has helped to guide teachers well in supporting the progressive development of pupils' skills. This has led to improvements in numeracy. For example, many pupils now have greater confidence, in using an appropriate range of data handling skills and in using inference to improve their understanding of different texts. However, a few pupils, especially boys, do not write with sufficient accuracy.

The school has extended the range and improved the effectiveness of its support for pupils with weaker skills. The work of learning coaches has been particularly helpful in improving the outcomes these pupils achieve.

**Recommendation 3: Strengthen leadership, particularly middle leadership, to provide more rigour and challenge to secure sustained improvements in pupils' standards**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has made strong progress in developing its line management systems. Leaders at all levels are now challenged and held to account with greater rigour.

The school has implemented a comprehensive range of strategies to support the development of leaders. This includes targeted coaching and mentoring for individual leaders, and planned involvement in the school's professional learning communities. These strategies have been effective in ensuring much greater consistency in the work of senior and middle leaders. Governors have received useful training that has helped them to be more effectively involved in school self-evaluation and to challenge the school about its performance more rigorously.

Frequent line management meetings now focus suitably on improving pupils' performance and strengthening their learning. Minutes of these meetings include clear and useful action points to be addressed before the next meeting.

Senior and middle leaders now use data more robustly to evaluate pupils' performance, to agree challenging targets and to identify areas for improvement. Senior leaders challenge and support middle leaders appropriately to improve the quality of provision and the standards achieved by pupils. Most middle leaders fulfil their roles well.

The improvements in the quality of leadership and management have contributed to suitable progress in most performance indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4, and in improving provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

**Recommendation 4: Strengthen the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has made strong progress in improving the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning at both school and departmental level. These strengthened processes have supported improvements in pupil progress in most key indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4, and in provision and leadership.

The whole-school self-evaluation report contains a comprehensive evaluation of performance data and identifies accurately areas for further development. Leaders gather relevant evidence from a wide range of sources. This includes the regular and systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and assessment through focused book scrutiny and lesson observations.

There is a clear link between the school's self-evaluation report and improvement plan. The plan includes relevant priorities that have suitably ambitious and measurable targets. It outlines appropriate timescales against which to evaluate progress, along with details of who is responsible and the resources required to support the priorities.

Departmental self-evaluation processes mirror effectively those at whole school level. In addition to routine monitoring activities, the recently introduced peer reviews have supported the development of middle leaders well. Most departments identify suitable actions to bring about necessary improvement. Senior leaders challenge and support middle leaders successfully to improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

### **Recommendation 5: Improve attendance**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

In 2015, following the core inspection, the rate of attendance improved slightly but remained below modelled outcomes for the third consecutive year. However, the clear focus the school has placed on improving pupils' attendance is beginning to have a positive impact. Unverified data for the current academic year suggests a strong improvement in attendance of 1.4 percentage points and a fall of over three percentage points in persistent absence from last academic year.

The school has introduced useful attendance protocols that are understood clearly by most pupils and applied consistently by staff. The attendance of all pupils, including groups of pupils, is monitored closely. All pupils receive monthly attendance reports. High attendance is encouraged and rewarded with poor attendance challenged and supported suitably. This is increasing all pupils' understanding of the importance of regular attendance. For example, unverified attendance figures for pupils eligible for free school meals suggests an improvement of over one percentage point from last academic year.

The school's range of successful strategies to improve pupils' attendance includes working closely with partner primary schools to establish common attendance protocols and going out into the community to meet parents and encourage their support.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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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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: November 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Llanfyllin High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in February 2016.

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

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12-18 months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### Recommendation 1: Improve standards at key stage 4

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4 has improved slightly overall, but continues to be below that of similar schools in many indicators.

In many lessons, pupils recall prior learning well and make suitable progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. The majority of pupils, when given the opportunity, make valuable contributions to class discussions, for example when discussing with enthusiasm about the differences between facts and opinions of the people's view about the reign of William the Conqueror.

Many pupils demonstrate sound reading skills. They extract relevant information from text effectively and are able to analyse content and style successfully, for example when evaluating the effectiveness of various styles used by the authors in both 'Tomorrow' from Macbeth and the poem 'Ci Gwyn'.

The majority of pupils produce suitably-structured writing for an appropriate range of purposes and audiences. More able pupils produce well-structured and reasoned analyses, especially when comparing and contrasting poems. However, a minority of pupils produce written responses that lack detailed explanation and they make regular spelling and punctuation errors. A few present their work poorly.

Many pupils have sound numeracy skills. In a few subjects other than mathematics, pupils use these skills to perform basic calculations and draw suitable graphs, for example to describe the transportation of rocks in science and to show how many holidays were taken by UK residents in geography.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics declined in 2016. Provisional data indicates that it improved in 2017. However, it remains below modelled outcomes. Performance in the capped points score has

improved steadily since the core inspection, and now compares well to similar schools.

Performance in English has improved since the core inspection and now compares well with similar schools. However, performance in mathematics has declined since the core inspection and does not compare favourably with similar schools.

At key stage 4, girls' performance in many key indicators is below that of girls in similar schools. In contrast, boys' performance is generally in line with that of boys in similar schools.

The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A has declined since the core inspection and is below the average for similar schools.

**Recommendation 2: Improve the co-ordination and provision for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened suitably arrangements for the co-ordination of literacy and numeracy provision. Co-ordinators have developed a range of useful tasks to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum. These co-ordinators have provided staff with valuable training and support on specific areas such as developing pupils' extended writing and reading strategies.

The school has developed suitable plans to help subject areas provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills. Extended registration periods are used appropriately to enhance the skills provision. Over the last year, the school has focused suitably on developing appropriate strategies to improve pupils' writing and reading skills. This has resulted in more opportunities for pupils to write at length and to develop their reading appropriately. However, a minority of teachers still do not plan enough suitable opportunities for pupils to develop these skills. As a result, this has not had enough impact on the standards of pupils' work.

Pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills benefit from intervention programmes that meet their specific needs. The school monitors these programmes well and these pupils, in general, make good progress.

**Recommendation 3: Improve timetabling arrangements to ensure that the quality of learning experiences is consistent for all pupils**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has addressed suitably 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. Appropriate support is provided for staff

teaching outside of their specialism.

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

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve standards of teaching and assessment**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a range of activities designed to improve the quality of teaching and assessment.

Most teachers are effective language models and have up-to-date subject knowledge. In the majority of lessons, teachers plan effectively and provide a variety of engaging resources. These teachers' foster positive working relationships with pupils. In these lessons, teachers give individual pupils helpful verbal feedback. They question pupils effectively to monitor pupils' understanding and progress.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to contribute to discussion activities or to develop independence in their learning. In addition, the pace of these lessons is too slow and a few pupils' lose interest in their work as a result. In these lessons, pupils do not benefit from sufficient opportunities to learn independently. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress in their skills and subject knowledge.

Many teachers provide pupils with useful and meaningful feedback that identifies the strengths in their work and offers clear guidance on how pupils can make improvements. Many teachers encourage pupils to follow up on this feedback and improve specific aspects of their work.

#### **Recommendation 5: Improve the quality and consistency of self-evaluation, improvement planning and monitoring of progress**

No judgement applied

The newly appointed headteacher and leadership team have completed a useful whole-school self-evaluation, which shows a sound understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development. Overall, improvements in self-evaluation and improvement planning have not had sufficient impact on the standards achieved by pupils or the quality of teaching.

Since the core inspection, the senior leadership team has provided appropriate support to middle leaders to help them improve their practice in self-evaluation and improvement planning. Senior and middle leaders carry out a majority of quality assurance activities together. This ensures there is a common understanding of the strengths and areas for development within departments. The outcomes of these activities are shared with all staff and appropriate actions put in place to respond to any issues identified.

Department self-evaluation reports link clearly to the whole school self-evaluation report. However, there is still too much variation in the quality of these reports. In the best examples, departments analyse outcomes effectively, making suitable comparisons and analysing trends in performance. A few departments are beginning to include evidence from lesson observations and book scrutiny in their evaluation of provision. This has led to a more accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning within these departments. However, many of these reports are inconsistent in their quality. The role of pastoral leaders in self-evaluation and improvement planning remains underdeveloped.

Departmental improvement plans address appropriately issues identified through self-evaluation activities. However, these plans are not linked to whole school priorities with sufficient clarity. The majority of plans do not contain specific enough or measurable success criteria.

**Recommendation 6: Increase accountability for leaders at all levels for improving standards and the quality of teaching**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, there have been significant changes in senior leadership. The appointment of a permanent headteacher in September 2017 and the addition of two additional associate members to the senior leadership team has strengthened appropriately the schools' capacity to make improvements. Roles are clearly defined and communicated and responsibilities are well balanced. Despite strengthening procedures for holding leaders to account, the current leadership team has not had enough impact on standards or the quality of teaching since the time of the core inspection.

Senior leadership meetings focus suitably on action points from previous meetings, self-evaluation outcomes, improvement planning reviews and line management meetings. Lines of accountability are clear with regular link meetings with middle leaders that focus appropriately on standards and the quality of teaching. Through these meetings, senior leaders hold middle leaders to account more consistently than at the time of the inspection.

The school has reviewed appropriately its performance management arrangements for all staff at the beginning of a new cycle. The objectives are consistent and link suitably to the schools priorities of raising standards and improving quality of teaching.

The governing body holds senior and middle leaders to account suitably. Link governors for areas of learning visit the school often to support and challenge leaders regarding standards and quality of teaching.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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**

**Llanwern High School  
Hartridge Farm Road  
Newport  
NP18 2YE**

**Date of visit: June 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Llanwern High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around six months' time to monitor progress against the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a suitable range of strategies to improve the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. These strategies are starting to have a positive impact on a few aspects of pupil outcomes, for example the attainment of more able pupils. However, overall these strategies have not had a sufficiently consistent impact on pupil outcomes.

In lessons, the majority of pupils make suitable progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. They show suitable recall of prior learning, and a minority apply their learning appropriately to new contexts, for example when investigating the properties of parallel lines. However, a minority do not engage well enough in their learning and make limited progress.

The school has been successful in improving pupils' confidence in undertaking extended writing tasks. A majority structure their writing suitably, for example when describing the various factors that affected the lives of women and Jews in Nazi Germany. They show an appropriate grasp of purpose and audience when writing in a variety of formats. A few pupils produce thoughtful and carefully structured pieces, such as when they examine the effect of evil and suffering on religious belief. The writing of the majority of pupils is technically sound. However, a minority make frequent basic errors in their writing and produce responses that are simplistic and underdeveloped.

Many pupils have sound basic reading skills. They read aloud with suitable fluency and identify broadly appropriate selections of text to answer questions or identify key messages. They use inference and deduction suitably to interpret texts. A few analyse written material thoughtfully, for example when they examine the reliability of sources about the Jack the Ripper murders. A minority of pupils, however, do not



have sufficiently well-developed reading strategies. They lack confidence in interpreting texts or dealing with unfamiliar words and do not identify the most important words and phrases in texts precisely enough.

The majority of pupils participate appropriately in class discussion. A few provide articulate and well-developed responses, such as when discussing the variables that affect the time it takes a car to travel down a ramp. However, a minority lack confidence or are reluctant to participate in discussion activities. They struggle to articulate their ideas and do not have a sufficiently secure grasp of subject terminology. A few pupils have a limited vocabulary which restricts their ability to grasp new concepts or to express their ideas clearly.

Many pupils have appropriate basic number skills. When given the opportunity, the majority use these skills suitably across the curriculum, for example when investigating how the length of a piece of magnesium affects the temperature rise of a solution. However, a minority of pupils lack confidence in using their number skills to solve real-life problems.

Many pupils pronounce words in Welsh with appropriate accuracy and are able to speak in basic sentences. However, overall, pupils' ability to write in Welsh is underdeveloped. As was the case at the time of the core inspection, a minority achieve a level 2 qualification in Welsh.

Since the core inspection, at key stage 4, performance has improved in the majority of indicators. However, overall, performance in 2017 does not compare well to that of similar schools. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics declined substantially in 2017 and is now well below expectations. In the capped points score, performance is very similar to that at the time of the core inspection and is in line with expectations. The proportion of pupils achieving five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A improved in 2017.

At key stage 4, boys' performance improved in the majority of indicators in 2017. However, the performance of both girls and pupils eligible for free school meals declined in the majority of indicators. Overall the performance of all three groups of pupils continues to compare poorly to their counterparts in similar schools.

## **R2. Improve behaviour and attendance**

Since the core inspection, the school has had an appropriate focus on improving pupils' behaviour. It has recently developed a 'ready to learn' policy that sets out clearly the school's expectations and provides staff and pupils with suitable guidance regarding rewards and sanctions. This is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons and around school. However, the policy is not applied consistently or effectively enough by a minority of staff. The number of fixed-term exclusions remains high.

The majority of pupils have a positive attitude and engage well in their lessons. A minority demonstrate enthusiasm for learning and show suitable levels of independence and resilience. However, a minority of pupils do not engage fully in class activities. They lack independence and resilience in their learning and are over-reliant on their teachers. They do not maintain their concentration or listen well enough, and pay insufficient attention to the presentation and organisation of their work. The behaviour of a few pupils disrupts their own learning and that of others.

Recently, the acting headteacher has strengthened arrangements for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance and has refined appropriately leadership roles regarding this aspect of the school's work. However, these strategies have not had sufficient impact on improving pupils' attendance, and this continues to have a negative effect on pupil progress and outcomes.

Overall rates of attendance increased in 2017, but they remain well below expectations and continue to compare poorly to similar schools. Boys' attendance is now in line with that of boys in similar schools. However, the attendance rates of both girls and pupils eligible for free school meals are well below the average for these groups of pupils in similar schools. Persistent absence has decreased since the core inspection, but remains higher than in similar schools.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced suitable strategies to improve the quality of teaching. This includes appropriate whole-staff training and opportunities to share good practice. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on a few aspects of the school's provision, such as the level of challenge for more able pupils and how effectively teachers manage pupils' behaviour and develop their confidence in writing at length. However, overall, these strategies have not had sufficient impact on pupil outcomes or the independence and resilience that they demonstrate in their learning.

In the majority of cases, teachers have suitable expectations of what pupils can achieve. They plan appropriately challenging and engaging tasks that enable pupils to build successfully on their prior learning. In these lessons, teachers develop strong working relationships and establish clear routines that help pupils to develop their confidence and independence in learning. They monitor pupils' progress carefully and address misconceptions appropriately. In a few instances, teachers use effective questioning techniques to probe pupils' understanding and build their confidence in further developing their verbal responses.

In the majority of cases, however, teachers do not use questioning effectively enough to probe and develop pupils' understanding. In a minority of instances, teachers' expectations remain too low. In these lessons, activities are not sufficiently engaging or challenging and teachers do not plan well enough for the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. They do not provide explanations

that make clear enough to pupils what is expected of them. In addition, they do not monitor pupils' progress carefully enough or manage their behaviour effectively.

The school has refined appropriately its approach to assessment and written feedback, and this is starting to have a positive impact on pupil progress. Many teachers provide pupils with written feedback that gives them suitable guidance as to how they can improve their work. A few teachers ensure that pupils make valuable improvements in light of their advice. Overall, however, teachers' feedback does not have a consistent enough impact on the standards that pupils achieve.

#### **R4. Strengthen provision for more able pupils and for the progressive development of all pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented suitable strategies for the development of pupils' literacy skills. Staff have received appropriate training on, for example, improving pupils' technical accuracy, extended writing and verbal responses. In addition, pupils have useful opportunities to practise their skills during tutor periods. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on the technical accuracy and structure of pupils' written work. However, approaches to the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills in lessons across the curriculum remain inconsistent.

The school identifies appropriately those pupils with weak literacy skills and plans suitable interventions to support their development. Leaders monitor these interventions, as well as classroom approaches to skills development, through lesson observations, learning walks and book scrutiny. However, they do not evaluate the impact of these strategies on pupils' progress rigorously enough.

Provision to develop pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum, including interventions for those with the weakest skills, remains limited.

The school has established beneficial partnerships to improve the range of enrichment activities available to more able pupils. It has introduced suitable strategies to help teachers provide appropriate challenge and support for these pupils in lessons. For example, staff have received beneficial training on questioning techniques to extend pupils' understanding. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the standards achieved by more able pupils. However, these strategies are not used consistently or effectively enough across the curriculum.

#### **R5. Increase accountability at all levels and strengthen performance management procedures**

Over the last two terms, the acting headteacher has taken swift and decisive action to strengthen leadership and increase levels of accountability. He has refined leadership roles and responsibilities suitably and challenged underperformance where necessary. These changes have contributed well to developing the school's

capacity to bring about improvement. Overall, however, leadership has not had sufficient impact on standards or provision since the core inspection.

Line management arrangements are now clear, well understood and focus appropriately on the school's strategic priorities. Meetings have a suitable focus on raising standards and generate action points that are generally followed up appropriately. Leaders have been provided with helpful training and support to improve their effectiveness in their roles. Senior leaders and a minority of middle leaders now understand clearly their role in holding their teams to account for performance in their area of responsibility. However, across the school, there is still too much variation in how effectively middle leaders fulfil their roles.

Performance management arrangements have generally been strengthened appropriately. Staff have been given appropriate guidance on setting suitable objectives and success criteria. However, overall, there remains too much variation in how robustly leaders carry out their performance management responsibilities.

The governing body continues to support the school's progress well and challenge leaders suitably.

#### **R6. Improve the accuracy of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened appropriately arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning. This has improved the level of consistency with which these arrangements are carried out. However, these improvements have not had sufficient impact on important aspects of the school's work, including key stage 4 outcomes and pupil attendance.

Over the last two terms, the acting headteacher has been effective in ensuring that the senior team have developed a consistent and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Senior leaders have provided middle leaders with useful support to develop this aspect of their work. This has had a positive impact on how well a minority of middle leaders identify development priorities and plan for improvement. However, overall, there remains too much variation in how effectively middle leaders use self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. In particular, when evaluating teaching, they do not focus closely enough on the impact that it has on pupils' progress. As a result, their view of teaching is often overgenerous and this makes it difficult for them to identify specific areas for improvement.



Arolygiaeth El 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**

**Llanwern High School  
Hartridge Farm Road  
Newport  
NP18 2YE**

**Date of visit: May 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Llanwern High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around six months' time to monitor progress against the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has applied various relevant strategies to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. However, these strategies have not led to sufficient or sustained improvements in pupil outcomes.

In lessons, the majority of pupils demonstrate suitable recall of previous learning, such as the manipulation of quadratic equations, and make appropriate progress when, for example, identifying the reasons for Henry VIII's break from Rome. However, a minority of pupils do not engage well enough in their learning and make limited progress.

A majority of pupils have suitable listening skills though a minority do not listen to the teacher with sufficient attention or respect. As a result, they miss important information that may help them learn and improve their performance in imminent public examinations. A minority of pupils contribute appropriately to class discussions and a very few make interesting comments including on imagery and authorial intent in literary texts such as 'Of Mice and Men'. However, a majority of pupils lack confidence or do not make sufficient effort to involve themselves in class or small group discussions. They make few or no contributions so miss opportunities to consolidate or extend their knowledge and understanding, or to develop their verbal skills.

A majority of pupils read suitably to extract information and a similar proportion use basic inference and deduction to improve their understanding of literary and non-literary texts. A few pupils do this particularly well, for example when discussing Shakespeare's presentation of the relationship between Shylock and Antonio, and when considering the poetry of Maya Angelou and Gillian Clarke. In addition, a few pupils evaluate thoughtfully historical sources on events such as the Sharpeville Massacre. However, a minority of pupils do not use a sufficient range of reading strategies to support their learning in different subjects, well enough.

Around half of pupils produce writing including considerations of the effects of Nazi rule on different groups, that is technically secure and structured suitably. However, a minority continue to make too many basic errors and do not take sufficient responsibility for proof-reading their work before they hand it to the teacher. Most pupils write in a suitable range of formats such as reports on the accessibility of the school, diaries, and leaflets on autism. Around half understand well the purpose of their writing but only a minority demonstrate a clear sense of audience. A few pupils produce thoughtful and mostly well-constructed writing, when, for example, explaining how religious believers respond to the existence of evil, and why William the Conqueror was victorious in 1066.

The majority of pupils have sound basic number skills. When given the opportunity, they use these skills appropriately across the curriculum. For example, they plot and interpret suitably a scatter graph to investigate the correlation between spending and the number of visitors to a national park.

In 2017, following the core inspection, performance at key stage 4 improved in half of the indicators. However, it fell significantly in the others, particularly those including English and mathematics, and did not compare well with that in similar schools in any. Although there was an improvement in the majority of indicators in 2018, performance remained lower than at the time of the core inspection in many of them and pupils continued to make less progress than expected from previous key stages. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, improved well but remained slightly below expectation, though in the capped points score it dipped sharply and was much lower than expected. Performance in both of these indicators was substantially lower than at the time of the core inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A also fell in 2018 and did not compare well with that in similar schools.

In 2018, the performance of boys and that of girls improved in the majority of indicators. However, both performed lower than their counterparts in similar schools. Boys did so in many indicators and girls in all. The performance of boys and of girls also remained lower than at the time of the core inspection in many indicators. In 2018, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals fell and was lower than

at the time of the inspection in nearly all indicators. It was also lower than that of the same group of pupils in similar schools in all indicators.

## **R2. Improve behaviour and attendance**

The school continues to refine its approaches to improving pupil behaviour. It has established a beneficial range of internal provision to support vulnerable or disruptive pupils that provides a valuable alternative to exclusion from school. The 'reset room', internal exclusion room and Hwb Centre provide suitable opportunities for pupils to engage with teaching and support that meets their emotional and learning needs. However, daily behaviour referrals and rates of fixed term exclusions remain high.

Many pupils behave well in class and a majority of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Although a majority of pupils sustain concentration throughout lessons, a minority display a lack of resilience. These pupils do not engage fully in class activities, they lack independence in their learning and are over-reliant on their teachers. A minority of pupils' books contain work that is poorly presented or incomplete.

The school has strengthened arrangements for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance. The tracking system enables pastoral leaders to monitor suitably individual trends and intervene within appropriate timescales. However, attendance rates continue to be well below that of similar schools. This has had a negative impact on the performance and progress of groups of learners. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is particularly weak. Persistent absence remains high.

## **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, the school has deployed a suitable range of strategies to improve teaching and assessment. This has included professional learning opportunities at individual and whole-school level as well as useful opportunities for staff to share good practice. These strategies are starting to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching. However, there remains too much variation in how successfully teachers develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Overall, progress in improving the effectiveness of teaching since the core inspection has been too slow.

In the majority of cases, teachers plan carefully sequences of challenging activities that build well on pupils' prior learning. They use engaging resources that stimulate pupils' interest successfully. In these lessons, teachers establish strong working relationships and well-understood classroom routines and, where necessary, manage pupils' behaviour effectively. They use questioning appropriately to explore pupils' understanding and develop their verbal skills. In a few instances, demanding



activities and a variety of carefully planned approaches enable teachers to secure strong progress for their pupils.

In a minority of instances, however, teaching is not effective enough. In these lessons, teachers do not plan carefully enough to match activities to pupils' ability. This often results in pupils undertaking repetitive tasks that are insufficiently demanding and which do not support their progress or the development of their independence sufficiently. In these lessons, teachers do not use questioning well enough to challenge and develop pupils' thinking. They do not provide them with sufficiently relevant and challenging opportunities to practise and consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills.

The majority of teachers provide pupils with helpful verbal and written feedback. They set pupils valuable activities to extend their understanding, and in a minority of cases this helps pupils to make substantial improvements to their work. However, there remains too much variation in how effectively assessment is used to support pupils' progress. In a minority of cases, teachers do not give pupils clear enough guidance as to how they might improve their work.

#### **R4. Strengthen provision for more able pupils and for the progressive development of all pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has continued to implement suitable strategies to support the development of pupils' literacy skills, and more recently, their numeracy skills. These include professional learning opportunities for staff on particular aspects of pupils' language development, both verbal and written. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' written work but not so obviously upon the quality of their verbal responses. Overall, approaches to support the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills, including teachers' marking for literacy, remain too inconsistent, while opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics, are underdeveloped.

The school identifies appropriately those pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills and provides helpful opportunities to support their development. While the school monitors provision and skills through lesson observations, learning walks and book scrutiny, these quality assurance procedures do not evaluate closely enough the impact of these strategies on pupils' progress and skills development. As a result, it is very difficult for the school to identify precisely the strategies that work well and those that do not.

The school has continued to provide suitable enrichment activities to challenge and engage more able pupils. These include 'The Brilliant Club', the debating club and seminar type sessions delivered by PhD students. Although staff have received relevant training on questioning styles designed to extend the understanding of all

pupils', there is limited evidence of these strategies being used consistently or effectively enough across the curriculum.

#### **R5. Increase accountability at all levels and strengthen performance management procedures**

The school has experienced significant change, in particular three different headteachers, since the core inspection. Recent appointments have strengthened the senior team appropriately and helped leaders to communicate the school's strategic vision with suitable clarity.

Line management arrangements have been strengthened and focus appropriately on raising standards. Key action points identified through meetings are generally followed up consistently. As a result, the majority of senior and middle leaders carry out successfully their roles in supporting school improvement. However, there is too much variability in the quality and impact of leadership.

The school has strengthened performance management arrangements and staff targets now align suitably with whole school priorities. This means that staff can now be held to account for their roles, and the school is able to plan professional learning opportunities more effectively.

Overall, leaders have not secured sufficient or sustained improvements in important areas, such as attendance, the quality of teaching and the attitudes to learning of a minority of pupils.

The governing body continues to support the school's progress well and challenge leaders suitably.

#### **R6. Improve the accuracy of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken a range of suitable actions to strengthen arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning. In particular, since last September, it has refined systems and processes in order to make them consistent and coherent. This is starting to have a positive impact on how well the school plans for and secures improvements. However, overall, this aspect of the school's work has not had sufficient impact on important areas such as key stage 4 outcomes, pupil attendance and the effectiveness of teaching.

The majority of senior leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. In general, they use first-hand evidence appropriately to identify improvement priorities. In particular, since the last monitoring visit, the school has refined its approach to evaluating teaching. This enables senior leaders to set teachers valuable targets for improving their practice, and this is having a positive impact on the majority of teaching. In addition, the school has strengthened

appropriately its arrangements for gathering and acting on pupil feedback. There remains too much inconsistency, in how well leaders use the scrutiny of pupils' work to identify areas for development. In particular, they focus too often on compliance with school policies rather than pupils' standards and progress.

Middle leaders have received suitable support to develop their self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. In the majority of cases, they use first-hand evidence appropriately to identify improvement priorities and make suitable amendments to their provision. However, there is still too much variation in how effectively they undertake this aspect of their role. In particular, they do not focus consistently closely enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and skills development. This leads them to have an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility, and hinders their ability to plan for improvement precisely enough.



Arolygiaeth El 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**

**Llanwern High School  
Hartridge Farm Road  
Newport  
NP18 2YE**

**Date of visit: November 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Llanwern 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 the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

In lessons, many pupils make suitable progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. This represents considerable improvement compared to the time of the core inspection. These pupils recall their prior learning well and are able to apply it to new contexts. For example, in science they use their understanding of collision theory and chemical reactions to develop hypotheses and to plan investigations.

Many pupils have sound reading skills and extract relevant information from a variety of texts with confidence. A majority use inference and deduction suitably, such as when considering the character of Curley's wife in 'Of Mice and Men'. In a minority of cases, pupils analyse text well and make perceptive comments.

Many pupils structure their extended writing appropriately. They show a suitable sense of purpose and audience, for example when writing to the local council to express concern about social issues. A few pupils produce thoughtful and sophisticated pieces, such as when evaluating to what extent the police were to blame for the failure to catch Jack the Ripper. A majority of pupils write with appropriate technical accuracy. However, a minority make frequent basic errors in their writing. These pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for proofreading their work before handing it in.

In class discussion and pair or group work, many pupils express their ideas appropriately, using a suitable range of vocabulary. For example, in geography, pupils explain their reasoning for their choice of graph to represent data that they have collected. A minority of pupils, however, have a limited vocabulary, which can restrict their ability to express their views.

The majority of pupils have sound numeracy skills. They use the four operations confidently to carry out calculations and have a firm grasp of percentages and fractions. For example, they work out the cost of ingredients when given a set

discount. The majority construct and interpret a suitable range of graphs in relevant subjects. However, a minority of pupils have weak basic number skills.

In the three years following the core inspection, the school's performance at key stage 4 fluctuated, but in general did not compare well to similar schools. In 2019, performance improved overall and is now above expectations. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in 2019 is broadly in line with that of the same group of pupils in similar schools. This represents an improvement in outcomes for these pupils compared with the time of the core inspection.

## **R2. Improve behaviour and attendance**

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened suitably its approach to improving behaviour. The 'ready to learn' policy is well understood by staff and pupils, and is consistently applied by most teachers. Leaders use a wide range of information well to monitor pupils' behaviour and address any issues promptly.

There has been a clear improvement in pupils' attitudes to learning since the core inspection, and in particular since the last monitoring visit. Many behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous to teachers and visitors, and show consideration and respect to each other.

Many pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in their lessons. They work with enthusiasm, maintain their concentration well and persist when attempting challenging tasks. These pupils work productively in pairs and groups to support each other's learning, and are eager to participate in class discussion.

The school has suitable strategies in place to promote good attendance. It monitors the attendance of individual and groups of pupils appropriately, and provides beneficial support for those with poor attendance.

Rates of attendance have fluctuated over the last four years. After a substantial decline in 2018, they improved well in 2019, and are now higher than at the time of the core inspection. However, they remain well below expectations. In particular, girls' attendance does not compare well to their counterparts in similar schools. Between 2016 and 2018, persistent absence was well above that in similar schools. However, it reduced in 2019 and is now in line with that in similar schools.

## **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, the school has deployed a suitable range of approaches to improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment. This includes beneficial strategies to share good practice, such as the use of peer observations and a staff

newsletter. In addition, the creation of ‘teacher advocate’ roles provides useful tailored support for individual teachers to improve their classroom practice.

In many lessons, teachers establish good working relationships and well-understood routines that create a positive environment where pupils are ready and able to learn. These teachers think carefully about what pupils will learn, and plan sequences of activities that support and challenge pupils to achieve that learning. In these lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and engaging resources. They monitor pupils’ progress closely, and are swift to address any misconceptions or disengagement. These teachers use questioning suitably to check pupils’ understanding. In a few instances, teachers use their monitoring of pupil progress during the lesson to inform and adapt the next steps in their teaching skilfully. Consequently, the pace of the teaching matches the pace of learning closely, and this helps pupils to make strong progress.

In a minority of instances, teaching is not effective enough. In these lessons, teachers do not engage pupils in their learning successfully. They plan what they wish pupils to do, without thinking carefully enough about what pupils will learn. They do not provide clear enough explanations of concepts or the requirements of tasks. This limits the progress that pupils make.

Many teachers give pupils helpful feedback and provide them with useful opportunities to improve their work in light of their comments. In a minority of instances, pupils make substantial improvements to their work as a result. In a few cases, however, teachers’ comments do not provide pupils with clear enough guidance as to how they can develop their work.

#### **R4. Strengthen provision for more able pupils and for the progressive development of all pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened appropriately its provision for the development of pupils’ skills. It has provided suitable professional learning opportunities for staff to develop this aspect of their teaching. As a result, many teachers provide pupils with a valuable range of activities across the curriculum that enable them to practise and consolidate their literacy skills. In particular, pupils have a beneficial range of opportunities to produce extended writing for a variety of purposes and audiences.

The school has recently taken appropriate steps to refine its approach to developing pupils’ numeracy skills outside of mathematics. This is beginning to provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to develop these skills alongside their subject knowledge and understanding. However, there is still too much variation in the relevance and usefulness of numeracy activities across the curriculum.

Leaders monitor suitably the progress that pupils make in developing their skills. They use this information appropriately to identify and provide helpful interventions for pupils with weaker skills.

The school provides a suitable range of beneficial enrichment activities to support the progress and aspirations of more able pupils. This includes allocated time in Year 7 and Year 8 for them to undertake project-based enquiries that help to develop their independence and the depth of their learning. These strategies have a positive impact on the progress that this group of pupils make.

### **R5. Increase accountability at all levels and strengthen performance management procedures**

Over the last year, the new headteacher has established a clear vision for improvement that is well understood by all staff. This vision has focused clearly and consistently on the development of classroom practice. As a result, leadership has had a positive impact on the effectiveness of teaching and the progress that pupils make.

Leaders at all levels have a sound understanding of their roles, and many now lead their areas of responsibility effectively. The school has refined appropriately the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders. It has strengthened line management arrangements so that lines of accountability are clear and focus well on the quality of teaching and pupil progress and wellbeing. This helps leaders to provide support and challenge to those whom they line manage, and this has had a positive impact on many aspects of the school's work, in particular pupils' attitudes to learning.

The school has strengthened performance management arrangements successfully. Objectives focus clearly on raising standards and improving provision, and link clearly to school and departmental priorities. These arrangements help the school to plan worthwhile and appropriate professional learning opportunities for staff.

The governing body has been strengthened suitably. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They provide the school with valuable support, and are starting to challenge leaders robustly.

Overall, the school has established a coherent and well-coordinated approach to leadership. This has provided staff with a clear sense of direction, and helped to secure improvement in, for example, the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning.



## **R6. Improve the accuracy of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken suitable steps to strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning. In particular, over the last year it has moved away from an emphasis on compliance with school policies and procedures, and now has a strong focus on evaluating and improving the impact of its provision on pupil progress and wellbeing.

Leaders carry out a suitable range of activities to gather first-hand evidence. This has helped many leaders to develop a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In particular, the school has prioritised activities such as 'book looks' and peer observations, which enable staff both within and across departments to identify specific strengths and areas for development in both standards and provision. The school uses the findings from these activities well to both share good practice and to plan for improvement.

The school makes suitable use of the views of pupils to inform its self-evaluation processes. Its use of parental views, however, is at an early stage of development.

The headteacher has strategic oversight of the school's evaluation and improvement processes. She ensures that these activities focus clearly on teaching, learning and wellbeing and that there are strong links between these processes, professional learning and line management.



Arolygiaeth El 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**

**Milford Haven School  
Steynton Road  
Milford Haven  
Pembrokeshire  
SA73 1AE**

**Date of visit: September 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Milford Haven School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around six months' time to monitor progress against the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards at key stage 4 and improve the progress made by all pupils in lessons, in particular their development of literacy and numeracy skills**

The majority of pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of subject content and skills. They display suitable recall of prior learning and apply their knowledge appropriately to new contexts.

In lessons, the majority of pupils listen attentively to their teachers and peers. A few communicate confidently and articulate their ideas well. For example, pupils provide thoughtful, well considered answers when asked to identify a range of musical elements as represented by a series of images. The majority of pupils, are reluctant to express themselves verbally in lessons. They are often passive and lack the confidence to respond to teachers' questioning.

The majority of pupils have sound basic reading skills. They locate and summarise information successfully. For example, in geography, pupils consider a range of the human and physical features of Wales and use this information well to consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in Wales. However, the majority of pupils do not make enough progress in developing their higher-order reading skills and do not analyse texts in sufficient depth and detail.

The technical accuracy of the majority of pupils' writing is sound. They structure their writing appropriately and show a secure sense of purpose and audience. However, a minority produce only brief and underdeveloped responses. These pupils make frequent errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The majority of pupils make sound progress in developing their basic number skills and, when given the opportunity, apply these skills suitably in relevant subjects across the curriculum. A minority of pupils do not have a secure knowledge and understanding of fundamental mathematical concepts.

In 2018, the school's performance in most key performance indicators at key stage 4 declined and did not compare well with similar schools. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals was below that of their counterparts in similar schools.

## **R2. Improve pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a range of appropriate strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. This has helped to establish a common understanding amongst pupils, parents and staff of the importance of good behaviour and attendance.

The recently strengthened behaviour policy is applied consistently by many staff and is beginning to have a positive impact on improving behaviour in lessons. Many pupils behave well in class and a majority demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Although a majority of pupils sustain concentration throughout lessons, a minority display a lack of resilience and do not engage fully in class activities. A few pupils continue to misbehave in lessons and disrupt the learning of others. The poor punctuality of a few pupils has a negative impact on their learning and the learning of others.

Pupils who experience specific barriers to learning and/or poor attendance are supported suitably by a range of strategies and interventions. Provision at the 'Hafan', 'Bay' and 'Harbour' rooms helps pupils to learn in a nurturing and caring environment. This recently established resource supports the emotional, behavioural and learning needs of these pupils well.

Over the last two years, the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions has decreased but the number of incidents remains high.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching**

Since the core inspection, senior leaders have introduced a suitable range of strategies that are beginning to have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. They have provided relevant professional learning opportunities for all staff aimed at establishing a shared understanding of the key features of effective teaching. However, these strategies have not focused consistently well enough on evaluating the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and are a good language model for pupils. Many develop constructive working relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well where necessary.

In around half of lessons, teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. In a minority of cases, teachers have high expectations of their pupils, but the majority do not challenge pupils sufficiently. These teachers provide tasks which are not demanding enough. This inhibits pupil progress and the pace of learning in these lessons is too slow. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' achievement and their attitudes to learning.

A minority of teachers use effective questioning techniques to probe pupils' understanding. The majority, however, often elicit only short, factual answers and do not encourage pupils to develop their verbal responses in depth well enough.

The majority of teachers provide pupils with suitable feedback that shows them how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Overall, teachers' feedback does not focus well enough on helping pupils to develop their literacy skills.

### **R4. Strengthen the planning for the development of pupils' skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened suitably its approach to the improvement of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Many subject leaders have identified appropriate opportunities for skills development in their schemes of learning. In addition, school improvement groups have assumed responsibility for developing and sharing suitable resources and teaching approaches within their subject departments. However, the impact of teaching on the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum remains too variable.

Leaders use an appropriate range of first hand evidence to identify relevant priorities for the development of skills. They have provided staff with suitable training and resources, and organised valuable opportunities throughout the year for teachers to share ideas for the teaching of skills. However, only a minority of teachers use these

teaching strategies effectively in their lessons to support the development of pupils' skills. In addition, teachers' feedback does not focus consistently well enough on helping pupils to develop their skills.

Overall, planning to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills lacks clarity and does not focus well enough on the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum. Leaders do not focus sharply enough on the impact of its provision on pupil progress.

The school has enhanced suitably its provision to support pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills. These pupils receive valuable and specialist support to accelerate their progress in their basic skills. Many make sound progress in their literacy and numeracy skills and as a result gain confidence and become more positive in their attitudes to learning.

The school has taken many positive steps to enrich the provision to develop pupils' Welsh language skills and appreciation of Welsh heritage and culture. These include a popular annual Eisteddfod, Bush Craft activities organised by the Urdd, and a specific focus to learn about local history in schemes of learning. However, this has had limited impact on the use of Welsh by pupils outside Welsh lessons.

#### **R5. Improve the quality and impact of leadership, particularly through the strengthening of arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since her appointment in April 2018, the headteacher has implemented a range of suitable strategies that are helping to improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership. She has set out high expectations for all areas of the school's work and has been successful in communicating this ambition clearly to parents and other stakeholders. However, while strategies are contributing well to improvements in pupils' behaviour, they have not had sufficient impact on the quality of teaching and learning and on the standards pupils achieve.

The headteacher has undertaken a comprehensive and strategic restructure of leadership across the school. Senior leaders' responsibilities now focus directly on the school's improvement priorities. This is helping to strengthen leadership capacity and to give clarity and direction to leaders' work.

There is a clear line-management structure that is helping to hold staff appropriately to account for the quality of their work. Line management meetings follow a common agreed agenda, focusing directly on pupils' progress and the implementation of the school's improvement priorities. These meetings provide a useful means for senior leaders to reinforce expectations and to provide support and challenge where relevant. Despite this, the impact of middle leaders on pupil progress and the effectiveness of teaching remains inconsistent.

The headteacher has strengthened the school's approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning. Leaders gather first-hand evidence through a suitable range of evaluative activities. This helps them to identify broadly relevant areas for improvement. However, when evaluating teaching, leaders do not focus sharply enough on its impact on pupils' progress and skills. As a result, they are often too generous in their evaluation of teaching. This makes it difficult for them to identify specific improvement priorities and monitor their progress towards them.

## **R6. Address the deficit budget**

The school has taken appropriate action to address the deficit budget. Following agreement with the local authority for a licensed deficit to cover a three-year period from 2017 to 2020, the school produced a three-year medium-term financial recovery plan to return the school to a balanced budget in 2020.

The school has worked closely with the local authority and other partners to attract additional funding to support specific initiatives and to achieve necessary efficiencies. In particular, the school was successful in its grant application to fund the alternative curriculum provision.

The most recent updated financial accounts project a small budget surplus at the end of the current financial year.



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: Special Measures**

**Newport High School  
Bettws Lane  
Newport  
NP20 7YB**

**Date of visit: January 2019**

**by**

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



## Outcome of visit

Newport high school is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4 and in the sixth form**

In lessons, many pupils make suitable progress and show a sound recall of prior learning. A minority of pupils make strong progress and demonstrate a suitable understanding of what they have to do to continue to improve.

Many pupils listen attentively and respond to questions appropriately. They use subject specific vocabulary well to convey their understanding of topics and to express their viewpoints clearly. For example, pupils discuss the disadvantages of eating unhealthy food. A few pupils are reluctant to contribute to discussions. They lack confidence or are not sufficiently motivated to contribute.

When reading, many pupils extract facts from a range of texts well. For example, in art, pupils use information on Manga cartoons to find the answers to questions about the history of this genre. The majority of pupils summarise information suitably, drawing out the key points from texts accurately. A minority of pupils analyse appropriately how writers use language to create meaning. For example, pupils analyse successfully the poem 'Zero Hour' and explain the ways in which the poet

uses language to personify inanimate objects. A few more able pupils use inference suitably to help them understand themes, settings and characters in texts. However, a minority of pupils do not have secure enough reading skills to infer and deduce meaning effectively.

The written work of many pupils is well organised and clearly presented. They use subject specific language accurately to explain their ideas. The majority of pupils write suitably for a range of purposes. For example, in information technology, pupils compare the uses, advantages and disadvantages of social networking. A few pupils produce extended writing that presents an argument well. In doing so, they use a wide range of vocabulary skilfully. A minority of pupils make basic errors and do not take enough responsibility for improving the quality of their writing.

Many pupils apply their basic number skills across the curriculum well. They demonstrate an appropriate understanding of mathematical concepts such as multiplication and division and how they can use these in different contexts. A minority of pupils solve simple problems appropriately using a combination of deduction and numerical calculations. When given more challenging tasks, a few pupils tackle these with confidence and independence.

In information technology, most pupils use relevant software appropriately, for example to present information and interrogate databases. In a few subjects across the curriculum pupils use design software programmes suitably.

Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning. When teaching encourages them to, pupils show genuine curiosity when engaging in new experiences and are keen to develop their understanding of new concepts. For example, in humanities pupils engage enthusiastically with the challenge of locating local towns on an ordnance survey map and discover how the map represents their local area. However, across the school a few pupils do not engage well in their learning and a very few do not show respect for their teachers and peers.

In 2018, the school's performance in many of the key indicators at key stage 4 is above the performance of similar schools. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics has improved and is now above that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 grades A\*/A at GCSE or equivalent also improved in 2018 and is above that in similar schools.

In 2018, the performance of boys compares favourably with that of boys in similar schools in most of the key indicators at key stage 4. The performance of girls is better than the performance of girls in similar schools in half of these indicators. In 2018, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals improved and is better than that of their counterparts in similar schools in many of the key indicators at key stage 4.

Over the past three years, performance in the sixth form has improved and, in 2018, is better than that in similar schools in many key indicators. However, the proportion of pupils achieving 3 grades A\*/A at A level or equivalent is below that in similar schools.

## **R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R3. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R4. Strengthen the co-ordination of provision for pupils with additional learning needs**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R5. Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since the core inspection, the school has worked appropriately to strengthen its accountability systems and improve leadership at all levels. Overall, these changes have contributed well to improvements in many indicators in key stage 4 and the sixth form.

The school has refined suitably the responsibilities of senior leaders and school governors. These now align closely with the school's development priorities. Governors and senior leaders review the school's progress against priorities for improvement rigorously. At all meetings, they evaluate actions appropriately and identify suitable further actions. As a result, leaders have a sound understanding of the school's progress and governors are able to challenge senior leaders effectively.

Senior and middle leaders have completed valuable training which has improved their ability to fulfil their roles. They interpret performance data well and use this information to drive improvements in their areas. In addition, the school has strengthened appropriately its assessment practices. This helps leaders identify pupils' underperformance accurately and address this quickly.

The school has strengthened suitably its systems for evaluating its work and planning for improvement. Whole-school 'learner experience reviews' draw appropriately on a wide range of first-hand evidence to identify relevant areas for development.

Middle leaders use the findings from data analysis suitably. In a few cases, they identify accurately strengths and priorities for development and the precise actions needed to address shortcomings. Middle leaders' effectiveness in identifying and prioritising areas for development in provision is too variable, however. They do not evaluate the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' progress in acquiring knowledge, understanding and skills precisely enough. The link between the outcomes of self-evaluation, improvement priorities and actions designed to address these are not sufficiently clear.

Most performance management targets are suitably challenging and measurable. In general, objectives consider well both school and national priorities, as well as professional development needs.



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: Special Measures**

**Newport High School  
Bettws Lane  
Newport  
NP20 7YB**

**Date of visit: June 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Newport High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4 and in the sixth form**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

The school has introduced a programme of professional learning intended to address shortcomings in teaching. This includes opportunities to share good practice while a coaching and mentoring programme is designed to provide appropriate additional support. However, the school's systems to evaluate teaching and learning do not focus well enough on the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make and on the development of their skills. As a consequence, the school is unable to identify precisely enough the aspects of teaching most in need of improvement and leaders' view of teaching is overgenerous. The quality of teaching remains too variable and many of the shortcomings identified during previous visits remain.

Pupils make most progress in the lessons where teachers have suitably high expectations and plan a range of engaging and well-organised activities that

challenge pupils appropriately. In these lessons, the pace of learning is matched effectively to pupils' needs, and teachers foster purposeful working relationships with pupils. In a few lessons, teachers' questioning probes and challenges pupils' thinking and understanding effectively. In these instances, this has a direct and positive impact on the quality of pupils' work. In a few lessons, teachers plan pair and group activities well to enable pupils to share and explore ideas effectively with their peers.

Where teaching is weaker, classroom routines are not fully established. Too often tasks keep pupils occupied but do not progress their thinking, subject or cross-curricular skills well enough. This is because, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Pupils who require additional support are not always given sufficient support to allow them to make suitable progress, and in a few lessons pupils make insufficient progress because of teachers' weak behaviour management.

In many lessons, teachers provide pupils with helpful verbal feedback on the quality of their work. Many teachers provide pupils with useful written feedback on general areas for improvement. However, too often feedback is not sufficiently precise or does not explain how to improve well enough. As a result, its impact is limited and only a few pupils respond suitably to improve their work.

### **R3. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

Since the core inspection, the school has established a clear strategic overview for the development of pupils' skills. The skills steering group provides the school with useful strategic direction while working parties give staff helpful guidance on the implementation and monitoring of skills across the school. Roles and responsibilities are understood clearly. However, quality assurance activities concentrate too much on the inclusion of activities intended to develop pupils' skills rather than on their quality, appropriateness and impact across the curriculum. Overall, planning for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum remains underdeveloped.

The school has provided teachers with helpful materials and resources such as toolkits and "teach bites" to support them in developing pupils' skills. However, a few teachers do not use these materials effectively enough and their expectations of what pupils can do are too variable, for example in the quality of graphs produced by pupils across subjects. In addition, not all of the materials used to develop pupils' numeracy skills at key stage 3 are suitable for all abilities and are therefore limited in their scope and effectiveness.

The school has sound arrangements to support continuity in teaching and learning in the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as they move from primary school to Newport High School.

Vulnerable pupils follow bespoke programmes. Departments are currently reviewing their schemes of learning in order to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners including those who are more able and those who have SEN. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this review and there remains too much variation in how well teachers meet the needs of all learners in lessons.

Pupils in year 9 are able to choose from an appropriate range of key stage 4 subject options. However, the school's arrangements for staffing and delivery of cross-curricular programmes in humanities and in health and wellbeing in key stage 3 are too variable in quality and this has a negative impact on the quality of learning experiences for pupils.

**R4. Strengthen the co-ordination of provision for pupils with additional learning needs**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

**R5. Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

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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: Special measures**

**Newport High School  
Bettws Lane  
Newport  
NP20 7YB**

**Date of visit: September 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Newport High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4 and in the sixth form**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R3. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

Since the core inspection, the school has established useful working parties for literacy, numeracy and digital competence and a steering group oversees their work suitably. Roles and responsibilities are well understood and this is helping to improve the coordination and planning for the development of pupils' skills. Working

party members have assumed responsibility for developing and sharing resources and teaching approaches within their subject departments. Subject leaders have mapped framework skills across many schemes of learning appropriately.

Using a range of first hand evidence, coordinators have begun to identify relevant priorities for the development of skills. They have provided staff with suitable training and resources, and have organised opportunities throughout the year to present and share ideas for the teaching of skills. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of these new arrangements and initiatives on the progressive development of pupils' skills.

Overall, planning to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills lacks sufficient clarity and does not focus well enough on the progressive development of pupils' skills across the curriculum. Quality assurance activities do not focus sharply enough on the quality of provision or its impact, particularly in cross-curricular contexts. This hinders how effectively leaders can identify training needs and areas for development. As a result, the effect of teaching on the development of pupils' skills outside of English, mathematics and ICT is too variable.

In Year 7, pupils now receive dedicated lessons in English and schemes of learning for English have been revised appropriately. Leaders have strengthened arrangements for curricular transition, for example by delivering bridging units for English. The school has also revised its approach to cross-curricular learning in humanities in Year 7. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this and other curricular initiatives on the development of pupils' skills.

All departments have reviewed examination performance at GCSE to identify skills which pupils need to develop progressively from an early stage. For example, this has had a positive impact on pupils' resilience when writing at length, particularly at key stage 4 in English. However, this approach occasionally focusses too much on outcomes at key stage 4 and is not yet having enough impact across the full age range. The school's provision for ensuring that pupils develop their numeracy skills across an appropriate range of subjects is at a very early stage of development.

#### **R4. Strengthen the co-ordination of provision for pupils with additional learning needs**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to improve the coordination of provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). In particular, this has had a beneficial impact on the provision in the Progress Centre and in community-based learning settings.

The school has established a systematic approach to the completion of statutory annual reviews of pupils' progress. The school involves pupils, parents and other agencies valuably in this process. Individual development plans identify useful

strategies to help teachers support pupils with ALN. However, too many teachers, in particular those who teach ALN pupils in mainstream classes, do not make effective enough use of these plans to plan lessons that meet the needs of these pupils.

Pupils who attend the Progress Centre and community-based learning settings have access to a suitable curriculum which helps them re-engage with mainstream provision. This provision includes GCSE English and mathematics lessons delivered by subject specialist teachers, and personalised level 2 vocational qualifications.

The additional learning needs coordinator contributes usefully to transition arrangements with cluster primary schools. Statutory review meetings for Year 6 pupils inform the school well about pupil need before they enter the school. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these arrangements on Year 7 pupils' progress and wellbeing.

The school has improved the quality assurance arrangements for community-based and partnership provision for pupils with ALN. The coordinator undertakes regular monitoring visits to off-site provision and is held to account appropriately for the quality of these strategies in fortnightly line management meetings.

Actions taken since the core inspection have raised the profile of additional learning needs across the school suitably. However, leaders have not evaluated sufficiently the impact of these strategies on the progress and wellbeing of pupils with ALN across the school.

#### **R5. Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.



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: Special Measures**

**Newport High School  
Bettws Lane  
Newport  
NP20 7YB**

**Date of visit: September 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Newport High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

<b>Progress since the last inspection</b>
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**R1. Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4 and in the sixth form**

Inspectors did not evaluate the recommendation during this visit

**R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Inspectors did not evaluate the recommendation during this visit

**R3. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

Inspectors did not evaluate the recommendation during this visit

**R4. Strengthen the co-ordination of provision for pupils with additional learning needs**

Since the core inspection, the school has developed a broad range of strategies intended to strengthen the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). However, these strategies have not had sufficient impact on improving the quality of that provision.

In around half of lessons observed during this monitoring visit, teachers were not fully aware of who the SEN pupils were in their class. In many lessons, there is insufficient challenge or support for the full range of pupils. The school has provided training for all staff to improve their understanding of the Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for pupils. It has also improved the guidance for staff on how to support the needs of individual pupils. However, the quality of that guidance is not always sufficiently precise enough to help them meet effectively the specific needs of SEN pupils. Pupil targets in IDPs are too vague and the school does not monitor the progress of SEN pupils well enough.

Discrete classes support pupils with the highest need appropriately. The school has a wide range of appropriate strategies to support the transition of SEN pupils from primary school to secondary school. Since September 2019, the off-site provision for those at risk of underachievement has been relocated on-site to challenge pupils and monitor progress more robustly. However, it is too early to judge the impact of more recent changes.

## **R5. Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since the core inspection, there has been significant disruption to the headship arrangements at the school that remain unresolved. Currently, there is a short-term arrangement for two acting headteachers to support the school until January 2020. They work together effectively to provide stability to the school during a period of significant change. Senior leaders continue to work diligently on addressing shortcomings identified during the core inspection. However, leadership has not had sufficient impact on the quality of provision or standards since the core inspection.

The school has made significant changes to the key stage 3 curriculum since the time of the last monitoring visit to help teachers to plan securely for pupils' progress. Leadership systems, including those of the governing body, have been refined to help leaders recognise the links between recommendations and how they impact on each other, and therefore work together coherently on the school's priorities. Line management arrangements have also recently been restructured so that heads of core departments are now line managed by the same senior leader. Joint meetings with their line manager provide helpful opportunities for identifying and addressing underperformance at key stage 4. Changes to pastoral leadership have been made to improve the monitoring of pupils' wellbeing and its impact on their progress. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these changes and pastoral leadership has not been consistently effective in supporting academic performance, particularly in 2019.

Leaders have taken appropriate steps to review and refine improvement processes. However, many of the areas for development identified during previous monitoring visits remain. The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in identifying and prioritising areas for development remains too variable. Too often the school's evaluations of standards, teaching and assessment are insufficiently robust. Many of the changes to systems are very recent or have not been implemented fully, therefore it is too soon to evaluate their impact.





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: Special Measures**

**Newtown High School  
Dolfor Road  
Newtown  
Powys  
SY16 1JE**

**Date of visit: December 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Newtown High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve performance at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and mathematics**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve attendance and reduce fixed term exclusions**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R3. Improve provision for developing pupils' numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum**

The school is beginning to provide worthwhile co-ordinated opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in relevant contexts across the curriculum. Teachers have received useful guidance to support pupils to tackle specific numeracy tasks, for example in setting out appropriate approaches and processes to follow.

In subjects such as science, geography and design technology, numeracy tasks are used meaningfully to support pupils' learning. For example, Year 9 pupils analyse the intensity on the Richter scale of earthquakes in Japan to consider the impact on the local community. In history, pupils produce charts to compare and consider the

reasons for population growth in towns in south Wales during the Industrial Revolution. Key stage 4 pupils analyse data from graphs when studying motion in physics to calculate acceleration. In business studies they compare the market share of different companies and calculate percentage changes over time. In a very few instances, pupils have useful opportunities to extend their thinking, for example when constructing graphs and using the tangent of the curve to determine the rate of photosynthesis at different light intensities.

During learning and mentoring sessions, key stage 3 pupils have opportunities to practise their mental calculations. However, these sessions are not delivered consistently well enough. Staff do not always explain appropriate processes clearly or take the necessary steps to ensure pupils are able to complete the calculations accurately. As a result, these activities have a limited impact on pupils' progress in developing their numeracy skills.

Initiatives to improve the effective acquisition and purposeful application of relevant information and communications technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum are at an early stage of development. In a few cases, pupils have beneficial opportunities to develop these skills. For example, in science pupils use spreadsheets appropriately to calculate the average efficiency of a range of fossil fuels. Key stage 4 pupils use specific applications usefully, for example to design leaflets endorsing food store products or to develop a website promoting smart equipment to improve home comforts and security.

Skills co-ordinators have developed a number of beneficial initiatives to develop pupils' ICT skills such as a Year 8 focus day. Pupils are beginning to build on their prior learning, for example in contributing to the introduction of green screen technology to enrich pupils' learning experiences.

The school provides bespoke training for staff to assist them to plan relevant tasks to support pupils to develop their numeracy and ICT skills within their own subject areas. Leaders carry out regular scrutiny of pupils' work that considers the breadth of skills provision within and across subjects. However, overall, reviews focus primarily on provision and do not evaluate robustly the quality of these experiences and pupils' progress in applying these skills.

#### **R4. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, the school has developed a suitably strategic approach to improving the quality of teaching and assessment. This includes using information from monitoring activities to identify particular aspects of teaching that need to improve across the school. The school has also introduced a broad range of beneficial initiatives to support improvements in these areas.

In many cases, teachers develop constructive and supportive working relationships with pupils. Many provide clear explanations and use a range of suitable resources

that engage pupils and support their learning well. They are good language models who focus suitably on developing pupils' effective use of subject terminology. For example, in Welsh, pupils use terms such as mutations and connectives appropriately. The majority of teachers use questioning appropriately to reinforce pupils' understanding and to support their learning.

In a few cases, teachers have high expectations and encourage aspiration and ambition in their pupils. In these instances, teachers plan creatively and tailor activities carefully to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities. As a result, pupils have valuable opportunities to work independently, or in small groups, to develop their ideas and to reflect on their learning. For example, in design technology pupils explore concepts such as the use of gears and levers when designing their mechanical toys.

In a minority of instances, teachers do not plan well enough to ensure that activities match pupils' abilities. In these cases, teachers do not provide suitable challenge or have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, activities do not enable pupils to build progressively on their knowledge and skills. In general, teachers do not use questioning well enough to encourage pupils to develop their responses or to think deeply to extend their understanding and to enhance their communication skills.

The school has refined suitably its marking and assessment policy. Many teachers provide pupils with helpful and timely feedback that supports pupils well to improve the accuracy and specific features of their work. In these cases, teachers ask pupils to provide more detail when responding to questions or to reach a considered conclusion when analysing evidence. There is a developing emphasis on ensuring that pupils respond to teachers' advice, for example by refining their work or correcting spelling and grammatical errors. In science, for example, pupils reflect well on advice from teachers by clarifying and extending their explanations of iron ore reduction.

In a few cases, teachers do not monitor pupils' progress closely and do not address errors or misconceptions sufficiently well or quickly enough. A minority of teachers do not provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work. As a result, there remains too much variation in how well teachers' feedback supports pupils' progress.

All staff engage in relevant professional learning opportunities to develop effective teaching and assessment strategies. These include access to coaching support to address specific areas for improvement. These initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and assessment. However, despite improvements, there remains too much variation in how effectively staff implement the school's strategies. As a result, teaching and assessment has not had sufficient impact on pupils' progress, their skills or the standards they achieve.

## **R5. Review and strengthen the school's arrangements for tackling bullying**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R6. Improve the quality and consistency of middle leadership to ensure that they secure sufficient improvements in standards and wellbeing within their areas of responsibility**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R7. Improve the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

The school has introduced a suitable range of useful initiatives to increase the rigour of self-evaluation activities and to strengthen improvement planning arrangements. However, these approaches have not had sufficient or sustained impact on the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.

The headteacher has introduced a systematic programme of evaluative activities. This includes departmental reviews, lesson observations and regular formal work scrutiny with a particular focus on pupils' skills as well as the effectiveness of assessment. There are also developing opportunities for leaders to consult pupils about their learning experiences. Leaders use these activities appropriately to identify specific areas for improvement. Senior leaders have developed suitable guidance to promote consistency of approach in carrying out these activities. This is helping leaders to reinforce the clear expectations they have about key aspects of teaching and learning.

Throughout the year, middle leaders undertake structured reviews of work in their areas that include relevant evaluations of pupils' progress. These evaluations include an appropriate emphasis on performance data that takes note of specific groups of pupils and precise GCSE item level data as well as a useful focus on particular features of teaching and learning. In addition, there is a robust analysis against specific criteria of the effectiveness of departmental leadership.

These activities are helping leaders to make realistic evaluations of the school's strengths and to have a secure understanding of relevant priorities for improvement as well as an indication of where additional support may be required.

Senior leaders articulate clearly the school's primary ambitions and set out related improvement priorities and initiatives to achieve these goals. Middle leaders implement a suitable range of actions that are aligned closely to the school's priorities and reflect those areas for improvement identified through departmental evaluations.

Despite these developing strengths, aspects of the school's improvement processes lack rigour. For example, leaders too often focus primarily on processes and

compliance rather than evaluating the impact of provision on pupils' learning and skills.

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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: Estyn monitoring**

**Newtown High School  
Dolfor Road  
Newtown  
Powys  
SY16 1JE**

**Date of visit: February 2018**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Newtown High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2015.

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 special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Improve performance at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and mathematics**

Since the core inspection, the school has not made sufficient and sustained improvement at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and mathematics. In 2017, key stage 4 performance does not compare well with that in similar schools and is lower than at the time of the core inspection in nearly all indicators. In addition, pupils make significantly less progress than expected in many indicators.

In each year since the core inspection, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has been below expectation and is well below in 2017. Performance in English and mathematics at level 2 has also declined since the core inspection and does not compare favourably with that in similar schools.

The performance of boys, girls and pupils eligible for free school meals improved immediately following the core inspection but declined in 2017 and is below that of the same groups of pupils in similar schools.

In lessons, many pupils are attentive and engage appropriately in their learning. They demonstrate sound recall of prior learning and apply this to new contexts suitably. However, many pupils of all abilities do not make enough progress, frequently due to insufficient challenge in lessons.

A minority of pupils contribute to discussions suitably and respond appropriately to questions using subject specific language. A few express their views fluently. For example, in religious education, pupils discuss thoughtfully the spiritual significance of the city of Varanasi and the purpose of holy pilgrimages. However, a minority of pupils lack confidence in their verbal skills and either read out written answers or provide brief, underdeveloped responses.

The majority of pupils produce writing that is technically secure. A few pupils produce writing that demonstrates a suitable understanding of purpose. For example, they write persuasively to explain why Henry VIII should be permitted to divorce Catherine of Aragon. However, though many understand the purpose of their writing, only a few have a secure sense of audience. Consequently, many make incorrect language choices and their writing lacks the correct tone. The majority of pupils provide brief, underdeveloped written responses to questions and make too many basic errors in their work. Many pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for improving the content, technical accuracy and presentation of their work before they hand it in to teachers. Very few pupils respond purposefully to feedback from teachers.

The majority of pupils read successfully for understanding. A few pupils use inference suitably to interpret meaning in text. For instance, they interpret appropriately the way in which Dickens presents Scrooge in A Christmas Carol.

The majority of pupils produce accurate and suitably presented graphs and charts to record and compare numerical information. For example, in geography, pupils draw suitable graphs to compare weather and climate across Britain. The majority of pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to present their work appropriately. For instance, they create presentations competently on Christian and Hindu beliefs. However, overall, pupils' skills in numeracy and ICT are underdeveloped.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve attendance and reduce fixed term exclusions**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a range of appropriate strategies to improve pupils' attendance and behaviour. These include a suitable rewards system to encourage good attendance and an effective behaviour management system to address instances of poor behaviour.

Overall, since the time of the core inspection attendance has improved. Strategies to improve attendance were particularly successful between 2014 and 2016. However, attendance fell in 2017 and although it remains better than at the time of the core inspection, it is below expectations and does not compare favourably with that in similar schools. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved between 2014 and 2016 but fell in 2017 and does not compare favourably to that in similar schools.

The school has recently strengthened procedures for managing pupil behaviour. A suitable stepped approach to behaviour management has been introduced, following

consultation with pupils. It is beginning to have a positive impact on behaviour in lessons and around the school. However, the implementation of the policy is too variable. The number of fixed term exclusions has reduced slightly since the core inspection.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve provision for developing pupils' numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum**

The school has very recently strengthened appropriately its provision for developing pupils' numeracy, as well as ICT skills. However, in general, the provision for improving their numeracy skills has not had sufficient impact on pupils' standards.

In a minority of subjects, there are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills, particularly using data and drawing and interpreting graphs. For example, in science, Year 7 pupils investigate the impact on penguins' body temperatures when they cluster together. The school also provides pupils with a few valuable opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. In geography, Year 8 pupils use climatic data well to consider why people choose a particular location to live in or to go on holiday. However, this aspect of numeracy provision is underdeveloped. Pupils do not currently have sufficient worthwhile opportunities to develop these skills, either within their mathematics lessons or in other subjects.

Leaders use data from a range of external tests appropriately to identify those pupils who require support in developing their basic numeracy skills. These pupils follow very recently introduced individualised programmes to help them to improve these skills. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these programmes.

The school is implementing beneficial initiatives to develop pupils' ICT skills. The majority of subjects offer pupils relevant opportunities to develop these skills, especially their presentation skills. The 'pupil dashboard' provides pupils with valuable opportunities to engage with digital applications that help to prepare them suitably for real-life situations, such as using mobile technology to record rewards for attendance and behaviour. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their data and logical problem solving skills.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented an appropriate range of initiatives to attempt to improve the quality of teaching. However, teachers have not implemented these consistently enough and teaching has not had enough impact on pupils' progress, their skills or the standards they achieve.

Senior leaders and staff have identified an agreed set of common expectations for all lessons. Most teachers understand how they can use the guidance on effective lessons to help them with their planning. This approach provides a useful basis for modelling and promoting effective practice and helps leaders identify those staff who need support to improve the quality of their teaching. The school has organised worthwhile training to support staff to implement particular teaching strategies, for example the use of effective questioning and group work.

In many lessons, there are constructive and supportive working relationships between teachers and pupils. In around half of lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and use a range of engaging resources that help pupils to gain a secure understanding of new concepts and topics. In these lessons, teachers focus suitably on helping pupils to extend their subject-specific vocabulary.

In around half of lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. The pace of learning is too slow and the level of challenge not high enough. The questioning skills of the majority of teachers are underdeveloped. These teachers do not probe and extend pupils' understanding or challenge them sufficiently to think carefully and develop their verbal responses.

Many teachers provide helpful verbal advice, for example to clarify or reinforce pupils' understanding. The school has refined its marking and assessment policy to focus directly on ensuring teachers provide clear feedback that identifies specifically how pupils can improve their work. However, the majority of written feedback does not provide pupils with clear enough guidance on how to improve their work. Most teachers do not check rigorously how well pupils have responded to their comments. While the majority of pupils correct identified spelling errors and include additional information, only a very few produce suitable responses to teachers' feedback. Overall, teachers' feedback to pupils is not contributing well enough to supporting their progress.

#### **Recommendation 5: Review and strengthen the school's arrangements for tackling bullying**

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented effective strategies to prevent bullying and deal with any cases that arise. As a result, the number of bullying instances has decreased significantly. Many pupils are now confident that the school deals effectively with any case of bullying.

The school has introduced a number of valuable strategies to raise pupils' understanding of the nature and impact of bullying. These include presentations in assemblies and specific workshops on the effects of bullying.

Nearly all pupils are aware of the ways in which they can report any concerns regarding their wellbeing, for example using the school's dashboard digital tool or by visiting the wellbeing centre. Heads of year follow clear and consistent procedures that ensure that the school is able to deal effectively with any reported incidents of bullying. There are also well-understood sanctions applied for any pupils who reoffend. A member of the senior leadership team monitors closely all allegations of bullying.

#### **Recommendation 6: Improve the quality and consistency of middle leadership to ensure that they secure sufficient improvements in standards and wellbeing within their areas of responsibility**

Since the time of the core inspection, there have been significant changes to the leadership of the school with the appointment of a second headteacher in as many years as well as other significant changes to the membership of the leadership team. While the school has made progress in addressing a few of the recommendations from the core inspection, leadership changes have presented challenges to the school and overall the school has not maintained a strong enough focus on

addressing key recommendations, such as teaching, skills provision, leadership and standards. As a result, progress in important areas has been too slow.

Following his appointment to the school in September 2018, the new headteacher has begun to introduce a series of suitable strategies to address important areas for improvement. However, it is too soon to comment on how effectively middle and senior leaders implement and sustain the strategies or the impact of this work on standards and teaching.

Since the time of the core inspection strategies to develop middle leadership in the school have mostly been ineffective. Recently, the school has provided suitable training and introduced systems to support accountability. However, many senior leaders do not use these systems well enough or hold middle leaders to account robustly enough. Governors have also not held many middle leaders properly to account. Consequently, these measures have not resulted in sufficient or sustained improvements to the quality and impact of middle leadership.

Many middle leaders are developing a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This includes pastoral leaders, who have supported improvements in aspects of wellbeing such as a reduction in instances of bullying and improved systems to monitor attendance. However, there have not been sufficient improvements in the standards achieved by pupils and the quality of teaching. Many middle leaders have an overly positive view of teaching within their subject areas as they do not evaluate well enough the impact that teaching has on the standards pupils achieve. Although they list data and provide a little analysis of it, they do not consider trends in performance and the progress that pupils make, or offer any evaluation of how teaching may have contributed to pupil progress

### **Recommendation 7: Improve the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since the core inspection, the school has used a variety of quality assurance and improvement planning processes. However, this has not led to sufficient or sustained improvements in important aspects of the school's work, including attendance, the quality of teaching, meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills, and the standards they achieve overall.

During this academic year, the school has introduced another cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes that is systematic and understood by most staff. Although these arrangements have the potential to be more robust and consistent, senior leaders in particular, and middle leaders, do not apply these well enough. Consequently, they do not have the impact they might otherwise have.

The school draws upon a suitable range of evidence, including pupil performance data, to inform self-evaluation. However, there is very limited evaluation of that data, and lesson observations and work scrutiny do not focus well enough on the progress that pupils make or on the development of their skills. As a result, the self-evaluation report is too generous in judging important aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and of leadership.

Departmental evaluations follow a useful common format. Although middle leaders now use data more systematically to consider pupils' achievement, they do not

evaluate pupils' performance well enough. This contributes to an overly positive view of teaching and an inability to identify specific areas of it that need to improve. In addition, their evaluation of leadership is mostly superficial and takes little account of the impact, or otherwise, that it has had on provision and pupil outcomes.

The school and departmental development plans use a consistent approach that focuses suitably on key developmental priorities. However, development planning, particularly at departmental level, is too variable. Around half of the actions designed to bring about the improvements needed are not precise or robust enough. This is exacerbated by success criteria, most commonly for leadership, that are actions and are not linked well enough to standards. Senior leaders have helped middle leaders to refine and develop their documentation. However, the quality and usefulness of departmental improvement plans as a tool for school improvement are limited. This is because of the inconsistent and ineffective quality assurance and line management by many senior leaders. In addition, governors have not been involved sufficiently in the school's self-evaluation processes or in monitoring robustly progress against improvement plans at departmental or whole-school level.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



Arolygiaeth El Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: Special Measures**

**Newtown High School  
Dolfor Road  
Newtown  
Powys  
SY16 1JE**

**Date of visit: June 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Newtown High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve performance at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and mathematics**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve attendance and reduce fixed term exclusions**

The rate of pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the time of the core inspection and now compares very favourably with that of similar schools. Persistent absence is also lower than at the time of that inspection.

The school has made effective use of a range of helpful strategies, such as informative posters, assemblies and the rewards system to encourage strong pupil attendance. Absenteeism is monitored robustly and Heads of Year provide helpful, targeted support for those pupils who have weak attendance. This includes effective



communication with parents to raise their awareness of the importance of their children attending school.

The number of fixed term exclusions has reduced considerably since the core inspection and is very low. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last two years and incidents of serious misbehaviour have decreased significantly. The school has implemented suitable strategies to support pupils in danger of disengagement and works appropriately with a range of outside agencies to support vulnerable learners.

The number of pupils being sent to the internal exclusion room remains high and has not declined in the last year. The school gathers valuable information about these pupils but does not use it well enough to identify patterns and possible causes of misbehaviour, or to address such problems effectively.

A majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. However, low-level disruption occurs in a minority of lessons and interferes with pupils' learning. This is often because teachers do not plan well enough to capture pupils' interest and ensure an appropriate level of challenge. In addition, they do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently or robustly enough.

### **R3. Improve provision for developing pupils' numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R4. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R5. Review and strengthen the school's arrangements for tackling bullying**

The school has used assemblies and anti-bullying workshops effectively to help pupils develop a clear understanding of bullying and how to react if it occurs. All staff are clear about how they should deal with any incidents they become aware of. Most pupils have no concerns about bullying and many believe the school deals well with the significantly reduced number of incidents that are reported. The school monitors these incidents suitably and provides appropriate support for those involved.

**R6. Improve the quality and consistency of middle leadership to ensure that they secure sufficient improvements in standards and wellbeing within their areas of responsibility**

Since the core inspection, the headteacher has implemented a range of useful systems intended to improve the capacity of leadership and the effectiveness of line management. However, there remains too much variation in the quality and impact of leadership at all levels.

Subject and faculty leaders meet regularly with their line managers to follow common agendas that focus suitably on assessment information. Reviews of key stage 4 outcomes help the majority of middle leaders to hold their departments to account appropriately by identifying underperformance and the measures required to address it. However, the line management of pastoral leaders is underdeveloped. This has contributed to limited progress being made in improving a minority of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour outside of lessons.

The school has provided suitable professional learning opportunities for leaders at all levels, including bespoke support where required. Middle leaders conduct work scrutiny and lesson observations but around half do not focus well enough on the quality of teaching or the impact it has on pupil progress. The focus on compliance with school policies limits the ability of leaders to identify accurately the aspects of teaching, including the development of pupils' skills that are most in need of improvement.

**R7. Improve the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.



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: Special Measures**

**Newtown High School  
Dolfor Road  
Newtown  
Powys  
SY16 1JE**

**Date of visit: November 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Newtown High is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve performance at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and mathematics**

During this first monitoring visit, the inspection team did not report on the standards seen in lessons and pupils' books. However, the inspection team reported on the school's most recent performance data.

Since the core inspection, the school's performance at key stage four has been variable. In 2018, performance improved in many key indicators. In the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, performance improved by more than nine percentage points. The proportion of pupils achieving level 2 in English and level 2 in mathematics improved in 2018 and compares favourably with similar schools. The capped 8 points score, however, declined slightly. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A\* or A grades at GCSE in 2018 is similar to that at the time of the core inspection. In the majority of the main indicators, performance remains below that of similar schools.

In 2018, girls performed better than girls in similar schools in a majority of indicators at key stage 4. Boys' performance, however, was above that of boys in similar

schools in only a minority. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals generally improved in 2018, but it continues to compare poorly to the average for this group of pupils in similar schools.

## **R2. Improve attendance and reduce fixed term exclusions**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R3. Improve provision for developing pupils' numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has introduced a variety of appropriate strategies to enable pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, it has introduced a numeracy intervention programme for all pupils at key stage 3 to improve their mental calculation skills. Each department has a numeracy link teacher and all staff have received relevant training to enable them to identify opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills in their subjects.

In a few subjects, pupils have useful opportunities to develop their numeracy skills. In these subjects, many pupils undertake numerical calculations effectively. In history, for example, pupils calculate and compare the growth in population in England, Scotland and Wales across different centuries. In design and technology, pupils calculate the number of printed circuit boards needed to be cut up from a larger sheet and identify the cheapest supplier from a range of options. However, overall, many of the school's strategies are in the early stages of development and have not had sufficient impact on developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum.

The school provides a few appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their basic information and communication technology (ICT) skills. However, there is a lack of suitable opportunities for pupils to develop broader skills in ICT, for example in the use of databases and computational thinking. Overall, there has been insufficient strategic planning to develop pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum.

## **R4. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R5. Review and strengthen the school's arrangements for tackling bullying**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R6. Improve the quality and consistency of middle leadership to ensure that they secure sufficient improvements in standards and wellbeing within their areas of responsibility**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R7. Improve the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has strengthened suitably its arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning. This is beginning to have a positive impact, for example on key stage 4 outcomes.

The school's processes for self-evaluation provide more rigour, accuracy and consistency than at the time of the last visit. They are systematic, understood by all and provide leaders with worthwhile first-hand evidence. However, these improvements are very recent and have not had enough impact on the quality of teaching or the development of pupils' skills.

The school draws upon an appropriate range of evidence to inform its self-evaluation. This includes a thorough analysis of data that provides the school with useful comparisons with similar schools and an evaluation of performance within departments and across the school. Leaders have strengthened appropriately how closely activities such as lesson observations and work scrutiny focus on pupil progress. This gives them a more realistic picture regarding standards and the quality of teaching.

Recently, the school has developed a useful evaluation tool for evaluating the work of subject areas. This 'department on a page' approach provides leaders with a suitable overview of pupils' standards, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership. It draws on data analysis, lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupils' views and helps the school to identify specific strengths and areas for improvement.

Middle leaders use self-evaluation evidence appropriately to plan for improvement. Generally, they identify suitable actions and success criteria. However, in a few instances, there is insufficient clarity regarding how progress toward identified objectives will be monitored and evaluated.



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: special measures**

**Sir Thomas Picton School  
Queensway  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 2NX**

**Date of visit: January 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Sir Thomas Picton School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

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

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan. Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards and improve performance across key stage 3 and key stage 4, particularly that of boys**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, performance in the main indicators at key stage 4 have improved slightly. However, this performance places the school in the lower half of similar schools based on levels of eligibility for free school meals. Pupils make limited progress from previous key stages in almost all indicators. Performance in the level 2 indicator that includes English and mathematics is well below modelled outcomes based on eligibility for free school meals. The percentage of pupils achieving 5 A\*-A grades at GCSE has declined over the past three years and is below that of similar schools in 2015-2016.

Performance in English and mathematics improved in 2016, but remain below the performance of similar schools. Performance in science has declined during the past three years, but is similar to that of other schools in the family.

In 2016, boys' performance has improved overall, but remains below the performance of boys in similar schools in many indicators. Girls' performance has declined and is below that of girls in similar schools in all indicators. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below that of similar pupils

in the family of schools.

At key stage 3, the percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator has declined. In 2016, performance in the core subject indicator is well below modelled outcomes based on eligibility for free school meals. Performance in mathematics and science has remained at similar levels to the previous year.

Many pupils make sound progress in lessons and have a positive attitude to learning. They recall previous work well and apply this knowledge successfully to new situations. However, a minority of pupils make slower progress, have difficulty in recalling previous work and remembering key concepts.

Most pupils contribute well to individual and group tasks and whole class activities. Many pupils answer teachers' questions willingly and more able pupils give extended answers. However, a few pupils are reluctant to ask or answer questions orally.

Most pupils write clearly and accurately. They express their thoughts clearly and write confidently about a range of different topics and for different purposes. However, less able pupils make frequent errors in their written work and are less accurate with punctuation and grammar.

More able pupils are developing their numeracy skills appropriately and are beginning to use them confidently across a range of subjects. They apply these skills successfully to solve a range of everyday problems. However, middle and lower ability pupils are less confident when recalling basic numerical facts, are slow to recall their tables and to carry out basic calculations without using a calculator.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve the leadership skills of middle leaders**

No judgement applied

The school is implementing a suitable range of appropriate strategies to improve the leadership skills of middle leaders. However, these approaches have not had enough impact on raising standards.

The acting headteacher has clarified the roles and responsibilities of heads of department and has communicated expectations to these leaders more explicitly. This has helped to increase levels of accountability for pupil performance and outcomes in all subject areas. She has introduced systematic quality-assurance arrangements that are set out clearly in the quality-assurance calendar. As a result, middle leaders are beginning to monitor work in their areas more closely with a sharper focus on analysing data, tracking pupils' progress, reviewing the standards they achieve and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching.

The responsibilities of heads of year have been redefined specifically to track the progress of pupils in their year groups and to ensure those who are not performing in line with their personal targets are identified and receive appropriate support.

Line-management arrangements have been refined and strengthened. Regular meetings between senior and middle leaders focus primarily on pupils' performance

and aspects of learning. These meetings identify specific actions to be undertaken and generally include feedback on previous actions. Middle leaders are beginning to address more consistently the priorities identified in their meetings with senior leaders.

To support middle leaders in their work, the school has carried out an audit of leadership skills and is beginning to target professional development more directly to meet identified needs. This is helping staff, for example to analyse data competently to evaluate pupil performance. A few middle leaders have benefited from attending relevant leadership training courses. Many leaders engage in a useful range of activities to promote 'best practice' in teaching and learning.

Performance management arrangements have been strengthened to ensure staff objectives relate directly to whole-school and departmental priorities as well as personal career aspirations. Staff performance objectives are now more specific and measurable, such as the performance of particular groups of pupils.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning by middle leaders**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has established a common approach to its self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. However, many of these actions are very recent and these processes have not had time to impact on raising the standards achieved by pupils, particularly at key stage 4.

The quality of departmental self-evaluation is improving. Many departmental self-evaluation reports include a thorough analysis of performance data, analysis of trends and the progress of groups of specific pupils over time. However, many do not use the findings from lesson observations and work scrutiny well enough to identify areas for improvement.

School and departmental improvement plans have clear priorities and appropriate targets. Staff are beginning to understand and play their part in implementing strategies for raising standards. However, in a minority of departmental improvement plans, there is a lack of clarity in identifying specific areas for improvement, particularly in teaching and learning, and assessment to raise standards.

The quality and consistency of pastoral evaluations and improvement plans are improving. They now focus appropriately on important issues such as pupil performance and attendance. However, a minority of plans lack measurable success criteria or clear milestones with which to evaluate progress.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve pupils' attendance**

No judgement applied

The school has recently introduced clear processes and protocols to improve pupils' attendance. However, these initiatives are new and have not had enough impact on

improving overall attendance. Attendance for 2015-2016 fell slightly and remains below modelled outcomes and places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools.

Senior and middle leaders monitor attendance data thoroughly and implement appropriate strategies to improve attendance. There are effective fortnightly meetings to identify pupils whose attendance falls below the school's target of 95% and to plan interventions to help these pupils to improve their attendance. At the time of the monitoring visit, attendance is slightly better than that for the same period in the previous academic year.

The school monitors suitably the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals. This, along with appropriate strategies to support these pupils, is beginning to have a positive impact on their attendance. The school is beginning to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who are persistent absentees.

**Recommendation 5: Address the health and safety concerns raised during the inspection**

No judgement applied

The school has addressed suitably the health and safety issues identified during the core inspection. As a result of the audit of security and health and safety at the school, all exterior doors are locked during the school day. All visitors enter the school through one door and all staff and visitors are issued with colour coded lanyards for identification. Key access areas are monitored by the school's CCTV cameras.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.

Although there was no recommendation at the time of the core inspection to improve the quality of teaching, inspectors will continue to evaluate the school's progress in addressing shortcomings in teaching during future visits.



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: Estyn monitoring**

**Sir Thomas Picton School  
Queensway  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 2NX**

**Date of visit: June 2016**

**by**

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

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### **Outcome of monitoring**

Sir Thomas Picton is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

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 special measures are required in relation to this school. 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 three months' time to evaluate the school's action plan and identify any early improvements to the provision.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff. Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards and improve performance across key stage 3 and key stage 4, particularly that of boys**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

In 2015, following the core inspection, performance improved in all indicators at key stage 3. However, at key stage 4, performance fell in every indicator and was lower than at the time of the inspection.

Over the past four years, performance in the majority of key stage 4 indicators has fallen, moving the school from being in the top 25% to the bottom 25% of similar schools, according to levels of eligibility for free school meals.

In 2015, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics dipped for the third consecutive year and has been below modelled outcomes for the past two years. In 2015, this places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools, after placing it in the lower 50% at the time of the inspection, as is the case with mathematics. Performance in the level 2 threshold, the level 1 threshold and in English dipped below the national average in 2015 and also places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools after placing it in the lower 50% at the time of the inspection. A decline in the capped points score and in the core subject indicator now places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools after placing it in the upper 50% at the time of the inspection. Performance in science also fell and this now places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools after placing it in the top 25% at the time of the inspection.

The progress pupils make by the end of key stage 4 has fallen over the last three years. In 2015, pupils made less progress than expected, from previous key stages, in every indicator.

At key stage 3, in 2015, performance in the core subject indicator improved by ten percentage points and places the school in the upper 50% of similar schools after placing it in the bottom 25% at the time of the inspection. Improvements in the core subjects individually place the school in the upper 50% of similar schools for mathematics and in the lower 50% for English and science after the bottom 25% at the time of the inspection. Unverified data for 2016 suggests a slight improvement in science but a dip in the core subject indicator and in English, with mathematics remaining at the same level.

In 2015, at key stage 3, the performance of boys improved in all key indicators and was above the family average for the first time in three years. However, at key stage 4, their performance fell, and was lower than at the time of the inspection, in many indicators. Over the past three years, the performance of boys at key stage 4 has mostly been below the family average in many indicators and in 2015 is below the national average in the majority.

At key stage 3, in 2015, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in every indicator but remains below the family and national averages as it

was at the time of the inspection. However, the performance of this group of pupils at key stage 4 fell significantly in the majority of indicators and is below the family and national averages for all indicators except science where it is below the family average.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the leadership skills of middle leaders**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has identified suitable external support to improve the leadership skills of both senior and middle leaders. However, this support for all levels of leadership has not had sufficient impact in important areas of the school's work, such as raising standards in key stage 4.

A minority of middle leaders have received useful external training to support them in their leadership role. Most middle leaders now have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities than at the time of the core inspection. Around half of heads of department analyse data competently to evaluate performance. However, the role of the head of year is underdeveloped and does not support the academic progress of pupils sufficiently.

There are clear line management arrangements for all middle leaders and regular meetings take place with senior leaders. Although these meetings focus increasingly upon pupil progress, the minutes from these meetings do not identify clear, robust action points. Furthermore, performance management targets, based upon pupil performance, are not sufficiently precise or challenging. Partly as a consequence, senior leaders do not monitor effectively the progress of middle leaders towards agreed goals or hold them to account well enough.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning by middle leaders**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has established a common approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning. However, these processes have not had sufficient impact on raising the standards achieved by pupils, particularly at key stage 4.

The quality of departmental self-evaluation is too variable. Around half of heads of department produce plans that analyse data effectively. A minority of plans are sufficiently evaluative and use first hand evidence appropriately. However, the value of first hand evidence such as lesson observations and work scrutiny is limited, as they do not place enough focus on the progress of pupils, the quality of their learning or the development of their skills.

A minority of departments' self-evaluation outcomes link effectively with their improvement plan to provide documents that can support improvement effectively. However, a majority of departmental improvement plans focus only on whole school targets and are therefore not specific enough to address the areas requiring improvement in the respective department.



The quality of pastoral evaluations and improvement plans is also too variable. A minority of plans fail to evaluate important areas of their work, for example attendance.

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve pupils' attendance**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has very recently reviewed its processes for monitoring pupils' attendance. It has introduced a new attendance policy and protocols following consultation with pupils and staff. However, these processes have not had a positive impact on the rate of pupils' attendance, which has remained below modelled outcomes for the last three years.

Following the core inspection, the rate of pupils' attendance improved slightly. The extent of this improvement since the inspection, and also that over the last three years, is slightly less than the average improvement in schools nationally. In 2015, the rate of attendance places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the second time in three years, after placing it in the lower 50% at the time of the inspection. In 2015, persistent absence was the highest for five years. Unverified figures for attendance in 2016 show a very slight fall in attendance and an increase in persistent absence.

The school now monitors suitably the attendance of all pupils by year group and by gender. However, the monitoring of the attendance of groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, remains underdeveloped.

#### **Recommendation 5: Address the health and safety concerns raised during the inspection**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has addressed suitably the health and safety issues identified during the core inspection.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Sir Thomas Picton School  
Queensway  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 2NX**

**Date of visit: March 2018**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Sir Thomas Picton School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the Sir Thomas Picton School from the list of schools requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards and improve performance across key stage 3 and key stage 4, particularly that of boys**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has implemented successfully a comprehensive range of strategies that have had a positive impact on standards in key stage 3, key stage 4 and on the performance of boys in particular.

In 2016, when the school was placed in special measures, performance had declined in all indicators following the core inspection. Since then, performance has improved in the majority of indicators and compares favourably with that of similar schools in around half of them.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has improved steadily since 2016. In 2017, performance in this indicator compares well with levels in similar schools and is above expectations for the first time in four years. However, performance in the capped points score has declined since 2016 and does not compare favourably with levels in similar schools.

Since 2016, the performance of boys has improved in many indicators. Their performance in the indicators including English and mathematics has improved steadily and now compares well with the average for boys in similar schools.

Since the core inspection, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has been variable but has improved in around half of indicators. In 2017, the performance of these pupils improved in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, although it remains lower than the average for this group of pupils in similar schools.

At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator has improved steadily over the last four years. This performance compares very favourably with the average for similar schools.

Most pupils make suitable progress in lessons. Many have positive attitudes to learning, apply themselves industriously to a range of tasks and recall prior learning effectively. Many pupils apply their knowledge and skills to new situations well. For instance, in art, pupils experiment with their understanding of how they can use colour, texture and shape when completing portraits in the style of Picasso. The

majority show resilience when presented with challenging tasks. However, a few pupils lack persistence and find it difficult to remain on task. In these cases, pupils make insufficient progress in lessons.

Most pupils listen carefully and ask for clarification if they do not understand what is required of them. They use a suitable range of vocabulary when answering questions. For instance, in Welsh they use and pronounce unfamiliar words such as 'archfarchnad' with assurance. Many pupils make worthwhile contributions to discussions and confidently share their work with each other. For example, in information and communication technology (ICT), pupils explain clearly how and why they have used hyperlinks and hot spots in their web sites. However, a few pupils do not listen to, or engage with, discussion well enough.

Most pupils retrieve information from a range of texts suitably and many read purposefully to extract information from sources to inform their own ideas. For example, in design technology, pupils extract carefully the important requirements from design briefs and use this to develop their own specifications. The majority of pupils interpret meaning in texts confidently and produce accurate summaries of important information. For example, following the viewing of a film about the London riots, they summarise effectively the consequences of this event on local people and businesses.

Many pupils produce accurate, well-structured writing and present their work well. They write at length using an appropriate range of language and subject specific terminology. For example, in music, pupils write a critique of 'Tubular Bells' showing a sound awareness of the tempo, pitch and texture of the music. The majority of pupils write skilfully for a range of purposes. In doing so, they use a varied and mature vocabulary and communicate their messages clearly. These pupils use a range of literary features, such as rhetorical questions and hyperbole, to create effective tone and meaning in their writing. For example, pupils present compelling arguments about why teenagers are misunderstood and include powerful examples of the pressures placed on young people by society. A few pupils do not take enough care with their writing and make too many basic spelling and grammatical errors. Furthermore, a few pupils have work missing from their books.

Many pupils complete basic numeracy tasks accurately. For example, in Welsh, pupils analyse population data on counties in Wales and represent this in appropriate graphs. However, a few pupils do not take enough care with their numeracy work and present unclear calculations or fail to label graphs accurately.

When provided with suitable opportunities, many pupils use their ICT skills suitably. For example, they use spreadsheets appropriately to collect and analyse data on surveys.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve the leadership skills of middle leaders**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the appointment of the acting headteacher in 2016, senior leaders have developed an inclusive and trusting culture within the school. This approach has had a positive impact on the leadership skills and effectiveness of middle leaders. As a

result, the work of middle leaders has contributed significantly to improvements in pupils' standards, particularly boys' performance, the quality of teaching and improvements to pupils' wellbeing and behaviour.

Senior and middle leaders work together well and have established supportive, yet robust, working relationships. Subsequently, the quality of middle leadership has improved considerably since the core inspection. Most departmental and pastoral middle leaders have developed their leadership skills well and take full responsibility for improving the areas that they manage. They understand their roles and responsibilities fully and place a strong emphasis on raising the standards of pupils' work, improving wellbeing and the quality of teaching and learning.

Many departmental middle leaders continually review and improve classroom practice. For instance, they share effective teaching and learning strategies through useful departmental and whole school review and development sessions. This work has made an important contribution to improving teaching and the standards achieved by pupils in lessons. Pastoral leaders work together well and have established effective systems to monitor and improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. However, there remains variability in the quality and effectiveness in the work of a few middle leaders. As a result, standards in a few subjects have not improved enough.

The school has strengthened beneficially lines of accountability through effective line management arrangements. They focus appropriately on raising standards and improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning by middle leaders**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection, the acting headteacher and senior leaders have supported subject and pastoral middle leaders successfully to develop strong and responsive self-evaluation and improvement planning practices. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, wellbeing and standards achieved by pupils.

Many subject leaders conduct robust and valuable self-evaluation based upon a suitable range of evidence. They analyse data effectively, compare the performance of pupils to those in similar schools accurately and use this information to identify appropriate areas for improvement. Many subject leaders have a sound understanding of the standard of pupil work within their areas. However, a few do not evaluate the progress that pupils make in lessons well enough.

Many subject leaders evaluate the quality of teaching within their areas appropriately. They use work scrutiny exercises well to evaluate the impact of teachers' feedback on the progress made by pupils. Many have responded well to the recently strengthened emphasis on teaching and learning. They have consulted effectively with their teams to identify which aspects of teaching and learning require improvement in their areas and are using this understanding to further improve their lesson observation and work scrutiny exercises. However, in a few instances, subject leaders do not identify specific areas for improvement in teaching well enough.

Most pastoral leaders have worked effectively with senior leaders to develop valuable self-evaluation processes that assess the development and progress of pupils over time. These include detailed tracking of the performance of groups of pupils and identification and implementation of suitable interventions to support learning. This work has made an important contribution to improving performance, particularly that of boys.

Since the core inspection, the quality and rigour of improvement planning has improved significantly. Nearly all middle leaders set realistic yet ambitious targets. They identify clear actions for improvement that address departmental, pastoral and whole-school priorities well and monitor progress against these priorities suitably. Robust line management arrangements ensure that senior leaders hold middle leaders to account effectively in relation to the progress made against priorities for improvement.

The school has established a responsive culture of evaluation and improvement. Most middle leaders, working closely with the senior leadership team, are particularly responsive when addressing areas for improvement as a result of internal or external evaluations of the work of the school. They ensure that appropriate actions to secure improvements are swiftly identified, shared with staff and implemented effectively. This rigorous approach has had a positive impact on important areas of the work of the school.

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve pupils' attendance**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, attendance, including that of pupils eligible for free school meals, has increased. However, despite these improvements, rates of attendance remain below those in similar schools.

The school has developed beneficial strategies for improving attendance that are beginning to have a positive impact. Systems for rewarding high levels of attendance have instilled positive attitudes to attendance across the school. Most pupils are aware of their current attendance and realise why good attendance helps them make progress in school. The school has developed valuable provision to engage and support vulnerable pupils to improve their attendance. This includes a nurture centre for pupils who might find attendance at school a challenge.

Pastoral middle leaders make an important contribution to improving attendance. Working with a team of learning coaches, they analyse data well to identify individual pupils at risk of falling below their attendance target and refer these pupils to a wide range of worthwhile interventions.

#### **Recommendation 5: Address the health and safety concerns raised during the inspection**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has addressed the health and safety issues identified during the core inspection, and suitable procedures are in place to identify and manage health and safety concerns.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.





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: special measures**

**Sir Thomas Picton School  
Queensway  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 2NX**

**Date of visit: May 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Sir Thomas Picton School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may not be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards and improve performance across key stage 3 and key stage 4, particularly that of boys**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has deployed a suitable range of strategies to improve standards. This includes, for example, appropriate support for pupils preparing for examinations. However, overall, these strategies have not had sufficient impact on the standard of pupils' work.

Many pupils have a positive attitude to learning, engage well in tasks and make sound progress in their lessons. The majority recall their prior learning well, and apply their understanding successfully to new contexts. These pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for their learning and maintain focus and concentration well. A few pupils have well-developed independent learning skills and this helps them to make strong progress. However, a minority of pupils do not engage with activities quickly enough and do not maintain concentration sufficiently well. As a result, they complete too little work and do not make enough progress.

The majority of pupils write clearly and accurately for a suitable range of purposes. When given the opportunity to write at length, these pupils structure their work

appropriately. A few pupils produce lively and engaging writing that makes effective use of a wide range of vocabulary, including subject-specific terminology. However, a minority of pupils across the ability range make frequent spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. In addition, they do not check or improve their own writing carefully enough.

Many pupils use reading strategies such as skimming or scanning competently to identify key information in texts. A very few pupils use higher order reading skills well, for example to synthesise information from a range of sources and reach reasoned conclusions. However, a minority of pupils do not deploy reading strategies well enough in order to understand and interpret texts.

During group or pair activities, many pupils contribute successfully to discussion work and support each other's learning well through sharing their ideas. The majority make suitable contributions to whole-class discussions, and a few provide well-developed oral responses supported by a sound grasp of subject terminology. However, a minority of pupils are either reluctant to participate in discussion work or make only brief, underdeveloped responses. Many of these pupils are not sufficiently confident in their use of subject-specific vocabulary.

The majority of pupils have sound number skills. When given the opportunity, they use these skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when performing time, distance and speed calculations in science. However, a minority of pupils lack confidence in carrying out mental calculations and do not construct graphs and charts with sufficient accuracy.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve the leadership skills of middle leaders**

No judgement applied

The school continues to implement a suitable range of strategies to improve the leadership skills of middle leaders. However, there remains too much variability in how well middle leaders fulfil their roles.

The school's revised line management arrangements, including the development of a new quality assurance calendar, are helping to increase accountability. Middle leaders have a developing understanding about important areas of the school's work that require improvement in direct relation to their responsibilities. However, in line management meetings, senior and middle leaders do not identify areas for action with enough clarity or evaluate with sufficient rigour how well these actions have been implemented. Furthermore, many actions do not have a strong enough focus on improving the quality of teaching or pupil progress.

Middle leaders continue to benefit from a wide range of targeted professional development activities. The school undertakes a thorough evaluation of the contribution these activities are making to improving outcomes and provision. Although middle leaders have received helpful support and training on the effective use of data, a minority of them do not make sufficiently effective use of data in their self-evaluation and improvement planning.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning by middle leaders**

No judgement applied

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has undertaken a suitable range of actions to strengthen the quality of middle leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning. However, these activities have not had sufficient impact on pupil standards or the quality of teaching.

The analysis of performance data by heads of department continues to improve, but there is still too much inconsistency in the rigour of these evaluations. Middle leaders now carry out regular lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work, but in the majority of cases they do not focus closely enough on the impact on pupil progress or identify areas for improvement precisely enough. As a result, middle leaders have not been successful in identifying and addressing important areas for development in teaching, such as low expectations, limited questioning techniques and ineffective lesson planning. Furthermore, whilst the school has taken suitable actions to strengthen line management processes, there is still too much variation in how robustly self-evaluation activities are monitored by senior leaders.

Although the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the link between self-evaluation findings and improvement plan priorities, in the majority of cases this link is still not clear enough. In a minority of instances, improvement plans do not have sufficiently specific or measurable success criteria.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve pupils' attendance**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has taken an appropriate range of actions to improve attendance. The school's own data indicates that attendance for the first two terms of this year has improved in comparison to the same period last year.

Senior leaders are beginning to use data well to analyse the attendance rates of groups of pupils as well as individuals. This has helped them, for example, to identify accurately patterns of persistent absence among specific groups of pupils. The school uses this information appropriately to plan suitable interventions to improve attendance.

The school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the role of middle leaders in monitoring and improving attendance. However, there is still too much variation in how effectively middle leaders carry out this role.

The school has recently revised its system for rewarding high levels of attendance in light of pupil feedback. This has had a positive impact on pupils' understanding of the importance of good attendance.

**Recommendation 5: Address the health and safety concerns raised during the inspection**

No judgement applied

We reported in our monitoring visit of June 2016 that the school has addressed suitably the health and safety issues identified in the core inspection.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the Sir Thomas Picton school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Sir Thomas Picton School  
Queensway  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 2NX**

**Date of visit: October 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Sir Thomas Picton School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards and improve performance across key stage 3 and key stage 4, particularly that of boys**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection the school has introduced an appropriate range of strategies to improve standards. These include more effective targeting of different groups of pupils to ensure that they make suitable progress. Unverified data for 2017 indicates that pupils' performance in many key indicators in key stage four has improved. This includes the performance of boys.

At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator has improved in 2017 and is now higher than at the time of the core inspection. This improvement places the school above modelled outcomes and in the top 50% of similar schools. In 2017, boys' performance improved in English and science and is better than that at the time of the core inspection. In maths, performance has improved since 2016 but remains slightly lower than at the time of the core inspection.

Many pupils have positive attitudes to learning and make satisfactory progress. They focus well on tasks, and collaborate effectively by contributing valuable ideas to group work and class discussions. The majority of pupils recall previous learning well and apply this effectively to new situations. A few pupils complete independent tasks well. They demonstrate resilience and determination to improve their work. However, a minority make limited progress in their learning. They do not apply what

they have learnt well enough to help them to understand new concepts. Furthermore, they do not sustain focus on tasks to complete them to a suitable standard.

Many pupils communicate clearly in writing using simple sentences and vocabulary. The majority plan their work well paying appropriate attention to content and structure. They write at length suitably for a variety of purposes including letters to communicate their opinions on local issues and reports on science experiments. A minority express their ideas fluently using a range of language techniques such as the use of rhetorical questions in persuasive writing. For example, when writing about ethics and religion. A few pupils communicate sensitive issues confidently. For instance, when writing about the ways in which first world war poetry captures the impact of conflict on society. However, a minority of pupils do not write accurately or challenge themselves to improve the quality of their extended writing.

Many pupils read confidently and competently. The majority of pupils use a range of reading strategies well to extract information from a variety of sources. A few pupils use higher order reading skills effectively to draw conclusions and synthesise information from a range of texts. However, a few pupils merely draw simple conclusions from texts and do not use a wide enough range of reading strategies to deepen their understanding.

Most pupils listen well in class, both to the teacher and to other pupils. They speak clearly and confidently to communicate their views and justify decisions. The majority of pupils listen carefully to advice from teachers and their peers about how to improve their work. For example, in drama, pupils respond well to direction. A minority of pupils ask useful questions to help them to complete writing tasks, and they respond well to advice. However, a few pupils are less confident in answering questions or in using subject specific language.

Most pupils demonstrate appropriate skills in numeracy. Many use units appropriately in calculations, for example, when calculating energy efficiency, densities, frequencies and velocities in science. However, a few lack confidence with mental calculations, and a few do not plot graphs and draw tables accurately enough.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve the leadership skills of middle leaders**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school continues to use an appropriate range of strategies to improve the leadership skills of middle leaders. Senior leaders have supported middle leaders well to improve key aspects of their work. This includes helpful support and appropriate professional learning on using performance data, improving leadership skills and effective approaches to performance management. As a result, middle leaders have an improved understanding of their responsibilities and of important areas of the school's work that have require improvement. Middle leaders have been empowered by senior leaders to take more ownership of their areas of responsibility. However, middle leaders have not given a high enough priority to improving teaching and learning.

Professional learning activities have been particularly useful in supporting middle leaders to improve their understanding, use and analysis of pupil performance data. Pastoral middle leaders are now making better use of data to monitor and improve pupil attendance. Middle leaders are improving their data analysis skills to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning.

The school evaluates appropriately the contribution that professional learning activities make to the work of middle leaders. However, these evaluations are not precise enough to evaluate the impact actions for improvement are having on progress and standards. Furthermore, actions are not focused well enough on improving the quality of teaching across the school.

Overall, the skills and effectiveness of middle leaders are still too variable. As a result, they do not all undertake their roles to a consistently high standard, and there is too much variation in the performance of departments across the school.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning by middle leaders**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school continues to refine and update arrangements for managing the quality and consistency of the work of departments. Senior leaders have improved the quality assurance plans to clarify the responsibilities and expectations of middle leaders. Information from departmental reviews, work scrutiny, lesson observations and learning provides middle leaders with a broad overview of performance. Middle leaders have an important role in monitoring the quality of standards and provision. However, not all middle leaders use information from monitoring activities and data on pupil performance robustly enough.

Senior leaders have developed useful new approaches to departmental improvement planning. This has led to departments having a stronger focus on whole school strategic priorities and the link with departmental targets. As a result, leaders at all levels are able to monitor progress against priorities and targets suitably. Although departmental plans are improving, their quality and usefulness continues to vary too much between departments. Middle leaders work well collaboratively with the senior leadership team. Most middle leaders are beginning to take more responsibility for the areas that they manage and feel well supported to carry out their role.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve pupils' attendance**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the previous visit, the school has strengthened further the range of actions to improve attendance. Attendance overall, and the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals, have increased and both figures are higher than at the time of the core inspection. However, attendance remains below that of similar schools.

Senior leaders' use of data to analyse the attendance rates of groups of pupils and individuals is developing well. For example, they identify patterns of persistent

absence among specific groups of pupils and use this information appropriately to plan interventions to improve attendance. This has had a significant impact on the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

The school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the role of pastoral middle leaders in monitoring and improving attendance. However, this is still at an early stage of development, and it is too early to measure its full impact.

The school continues to revise its system for rewarding high levels of attendance in the light of pupil feedback. Furthermore, it is developing pupils and parents' understanding of the link between attendance and standards. This has had a positive impact on their understanding of the importance of good attendance.

**Recommendation 5: Address the health and safety concerns raised during the inspection**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has addressed the health and safety issues identified during the core inspection, and procedures are in place to identify and manage health and safety concerns.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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**

**St David's High School  
St David's Terrace  
Saltney  
Chester  
Flintshire  
CH4 0AE**

**Date of visit: June 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

St David's 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 the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### R1. Improve standards at key stage 4

Since the core inspection there has been an improvement in pupils' standards and progress. In lessons, the majority of pupils recall previous work well. They apply their new knowledge successfully, for example when identifying persuasive techniques in various texts. A few pupils make strong progress.

Many pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to other pupils. The majority speak confidently using short phrases with sound subject-specific vocabulary. They engage well in discussion activities. A few pupils explain effectively how their current work relates to the broader topic studied. However, in a few cases, pupils do not listen to teachers' explanations and the views and opinions of others well enough.

Many pupils extract appropriate information from sources and present the evidence clearly. This is exemplified by their work in analysing recruitment posters to join the British army during World War 1 and studying the conditions in the trenches as described in the poem 'The Green Fields of France'. The majority of pupils make appropriate inferences and deductions and identify the key features of different text types, for example when analysing the content of poems such as 'Dulce Et Decorum Est', 'The Soldier' and 'All together Now'.

Most pupils generally structure their written work coherently. Many write short summaries independently and accurately. More able pupils write with appropriate sophistication, for example when arguing against poaching wildlife in Africa. Many pupils demonstrate a sound grasp of purpose and audience when, for example, writing persuasively to argue that the internet has improved the lives of many. A few pupils only produce short pieces of writing, do not choose language that is suitable for the purpose of the task, and make frequent spelling and grammar mistakes.

Many pupils display competent number skills and solve simple every day numerical problems successfully for example, when working out proportions to use in recipes. Most plot information in suitable graphs and analyse them appropriately. They use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills confidently for basic tasks such as producing slides for presentations, searching for information from the internet and editing text.

Since the core inspection, performance in key stage 4 has improved in the majority of indicators and now compares more favourably with that in similar schools.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics improved significantly in 2017. It is above that the average for similar schools for the first time in four years. Performance in the capped points score has declined since the core inspection and is below the average for similar schools. In general, pupils make better progress in many indicators from one key stage to another than at the time of the core inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A has improved slightly since the core inspection but remains below the average for similar schools.

At key stage 4, girls' performance in most key indicators is below that of girls in similar schools. Boys' performance in 2017 is in line with or above that of boys in similar schools in many indicators.

## **R2. Improve attendance and reduce the disruptive behaviour seen in a minority of lessons**

The school has developed suitable strategies to address poor attendance, including the appointment of a designated attendance officer and reviewing arrangements for care, support and guidance. As a result, the school now monitors attendance closely and provides valuable support for pupils with poor attendance. This has had a positive impact on the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Since the core inspection attendance, rates of attendance have improved very slightly but remain below those of similar schools. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in the same period. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent increased and remain above average for similar schools.

The school has strengthened its arrangements for dealing with pupils' poor behaviour, including a re-launch of the behaviour policy and establishing a valuable alternative provision centre. This provides pupils with opportunities to receive suitable support for their behavioural, social and emotional needs and to alter their attitude towards learning. These arrangements have effectively reduced the number of incidents of disruptive behaviour.

In lessons, many pupils show a positive attitude towards learning. They behave well, show respect towards adults and are polite. A majority of pupils carry out tasks swiftly and maintain their concentration well. When given the opportunity, they work productively in pairs and small groups to form opinions and draw conclusions. A very few pupils demonstrate poor attitudes to learning and show limited interest in their work.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a new teaching and learning policy, which supports the identification and sharing of good practice. This is beginning to have an impact on a few areas such as the impact of feedback and assessment. However, overall, the quality of teaching is inconsistent within departments and across the school.

In the majority of cases, teachers plan a suitable range of carefully-sequenced tasks and use resources effectively to engage pupils. They set specific learning objectives and success criteria that help pupils to understand clearly the requirements of tasks. In a few instances, teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils that help them to make strong progress in their learning.

In a minority of cases, teachers do not plan effectively enough to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils spend too much time on undemanding tasks, the pace of learning is slow and pupils do not make enough progress. In a few instances, teacher introductions to activities are too long. As a result, a minority of pupils lose interest and do not develop their independent learning skills well enough.

In the majority of instances, teachers provide helpful and constructive verbal feedback to pupils. Many teachers make effective use of assessment forms ('pink sheets') to provide useful written feedback that shows pupils clearly how to improve their work. Many pupils respond positively to this feedback, and use it productively to improve their work.

The school has a suitable tracking system to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. It uses this information well to identify any underperformance and to plan effective interventions for those pupils in need of additional support.

### **R4. Ensure that self-evaluation processes are robust and used effectively for improvement planning**

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened suitably self-evaluation and improvement planning processes by introducing appropriate quality assurance and monitoring activities. Systems to monitor and track progress made towards identified targets for improvement are suitable and developing well.

Senior leaders have provided beneficial training and guidance to teachers regarding target setting and monitoring. This now means that staff are able to set challenging and achievable targets for pupils, monitor their progress and swiftly identify any underachievement. As a result of these improvements, performance has improved in the majority of key indicators at key stage 4.



Senior and middle leaders analyse accurately overall pupil performance at the end of key stage 4 and make suitable comparisons with performance in similar schools. However, leaders do not evaluate other important aspects such as pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the provision for skills consistently enough.

The school has introduced a well-planned annual quality assurance calendar, which sets out clearly relevant monitoring activities for monitoring pupil progress and provision. Regular scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and learning walks enable leaders at all levels to gain worthwhile information on the quality of the school's work. Senior leaders have made effective use of these activities to improve a few aspects of provision, such as the quality of assessment. However, leaders at all levels do not make sufficiently comprehensive use of the evidence gathered from these activities to fully evaluate pupils' standards in skills or the quality of teaching across the school.

The school has successfully strengthened its processes to gather the views of pupils and parents. Leaders make productive use of findings from regular questionnaires to make beneficial changes to provision. For example, results from parental questionnaires highlighted weak communication. As a result, the school introduced a newsletter for parents and now regularly shares interesting news about its work through its new social media accounts.

Governors know the school very well, provide strong support to the school's improvement strategies and provide robust challenge to any underperformance. Members of the governing body play a valuable part in the school's quality assurance work. For example, they conduct learning walks, interview pupils about aspects of the school's work and scrutinise pupil books. They hold middle leaders to account well through the newly-formed standards committee.

#### **R5. Fulfil the statutory requirements of providing a daily act of collective worship and reporting to parents on pupils' progress in numeracy**

The school has taken prompt action to ensure that it provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. A structured and valuable programme of reflections and questions for use in daily tutor time has been introduced. The school monitors the delivery of the programme closely. Assemblies link suitably with the weekly themes, which make effective use of current events.

Pupils' progress in numeracy is reported on appropriately.

#### **R6. Eliminate the deficit budget**

Since the core inspection, the headteacher, business manager and governors have continued to monitor the budget rigorously. They have acted prudently in ensuring

that spending is affordable and beneficial for pupils. An example of this is securing funds for alterations to the changing facilities, upgrading the school hall and purchasing additional computers.

The school has an agreed recovery plan with the local authority to address the deficit budget over five years. Substantial restructuring and changes to staffing have resulted in significant sustainable savings.



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**

**St Julian's Comprehensive School  
Heather Road  
St Julian's  
Newport  
NP19 7XU**

**Date of visit: June 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

St Julian's Comprehensive School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the St Julian's Comprehensive School in about six months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### Recommendation 1: Improve standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2014, performance at key stage 4 has declined in all key performance indicators. As a result, pupils continue to make insufficient progress from previous key stages. Performance at key stage 3 has improved in all indicators, but the school remains in the lower 50% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals for many of these indicators.

In 2015, at key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, and in the capped points score were well below modelled outcomes. Performance in the level 1 threshold, core subject indicator and science all fell. Performance in all these indicators places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools. The decline in performance in the level 2 threshold and in mathematics places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. There was a marginal fall in the performance in English, although this remains in the top 50% of similar schools.

In key stage 3, performance in the core subject indicator has improved noticeably since the core inspection. However, the school remains slightly below modelled outcomes and places the school in the bottom 50% of similar schools.

Performance in English and in mathematics at level 5 and above have noticeably improved since the core inspection. However, the school remains in the bottom 50% of similar schools for these indicators. Performance in science at level 5 and above has risen sharply since the core inspection, placing the school in the upper 50% of similar schools.

The performance of boys at key stage 4 improved slightly in 2015 in most key performance indicators and increased in English. However, there was a sharp decline in the performance of girls in all indicators.

In 2015, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved marginally in the core subject indicator and in mathematics. Performance remained similar to the time of the core inspection in the level 2 threshold including English and

mathematics, and in the level 1 threshold. Standards declined slightly for this group of learners in science and more sharply in the level 2 threshold, the capped points score and English.

In a minority of lessons, pupils make strong and in many lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress. Most pupils behave well and many display positive attitudes to learning. A minority of pupils work well independently and show resilience and enthusiasm.

Most pupils listen attentively in lessons. A minority of pupils respond with confidence verbally, although a few provide brief, underdeveloped responses.

Most pupils use appropriate techniques to locate information from texts and many read with a suitable degree of understanding. A few show strong inference skills and research effectively. While many pupils write with an appropriate sense of purpose, only a few have a secure grasp of audience, which leads them to making weak vocabulary choices. Most pupils write with a reasonable level of accuracy. More able pupils produce well-crafted responses which are technically sound.

Most pupils use basic number skills well to make calculations. Many undertake graph work competently, while a few show confidence in more advanced skills such as designing histograms. Many pupils are able to understand and respond appropriately to a range of data tasks linked to real life situations.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy and numeracy**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has improved and extended its approach to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, not all strategies are applied consistently or embedded well enough in current practice. Consequently, they have not had a sufficient impact on standards overall.

Staff have been provided with useful training to help them support the development of pupils' skills. The school's website has also been developed to provide useful information for parents so they are able to support their children's learning more effectively.

All schemes of work identify specific opportunities to develop pupils' skills in line with the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. There are now more opportunities for pupils to produce extended writing across a wider range of subjects. Although there are suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills, teachers do not signpost the skills sufficiently well across the curriculum. This limits the way teachers develop and embed these skills for pupils. The school's approach to marking for literacy is not always applied consistently enough and has had insufficient impact on improving pupils' skills.

The school monitors the provision for supporting the development of pupils' skills suitably through work scrutiny and lesson observation. However, the current

approach does not consider well enough the impact that teaching has on pupils' skills or provide a sufficiently detailed and accurate evaluation of the standards of pupils' literacy and numeracy.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, marking and assessment**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced appropriate processes to develop and to review teaching and assessment practices. However, these have not had enough impact on the quality of teaching, assessment and the standards that pupils achieve.

In most lessons, teachers plan activities carefully to provide a useful range of learning opportunities for pupils. In many lessons, the pace of learning is at least appropriate and there is a suitable level of challenge. However, only a minority of lessons offer enough challenge to enable pupils to make strong progress. In a few lessons, pupils have useful opportunities to work independently and to develop their resilience.

In a minority of lessons, teachers' questioning challenges pupils to extend their understanding and to secure their learning. However, a few lessons are too teacher led and do not develop pupils' responses well enough through questioning.

The school has developed useful strategies to ensure that there is consistency of approach to marking through its 'Praise/Raise' and 'Dedicated Improvement Reflection Time' strategies. In many cases, teachers' marking is diagnostic and helps to show pupils what they need to do to improve. As a result, the school has increased the frequency with which pupils respond to teacher feedback. However, there is too much inconsistency in the quality of the feedback tasks set for pupils. This reduces the impact of this helpful strategy on pupils' long-term development of skills, understanding and knowledge.

The school is tracking the performance of pupils more consistently, which gives a clearer picture of the progress made than at the time of the core inspection.

The school has provided helpful training opportunities to share good practice in teaching and assessment. It has developed its capacity to reflect on teaching and assessment through its review processes at all levels of the school. This is improving the school's understanding of its strengths and shortcomings in teaching and assessment. However, there is not enough focus on the impact both teaching and assessment have on pupils' progress which is limiting the precision with which it can improve these areas.

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a calendar of useful and clearly understood self-evaluation processes. However, these processes have not had a sufficient impact on raising the standards achieved by all pupils, particularly at key stage 4.

The whole-school self-evaluation report includes an honest evaluation of performance data. Senior leaders gather relevant evidence from a suitable range of sources, including lesson observations and work scrutiny. However, these records do not take sufficient account of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and the development of their skills. Consequently, the school's assessment of its progress in key areas, such as the quality of teaching, is overly generous.

Many middle leaders evaluate pupil performance against targets well. Although middle leaders are involved in lesson observations, they do not evaluate the overall quality of teaching or of leadership in their areas.

Parents and pupils' involvement in self-evaluation has increased since the core inspection. The governing body is now fully informed and involved in the self-evaluation process and provides effective challenge to the school.

There is a suitable link between the school's self-evaluation report and improvement plan. The school has sharpened the clarity of success criteria in relation to pupil performance in whole-school and department improvement planning. However, for many improvement priorities, the success criteria are not always clear or measurable, especially at subject level. In a minority of these cases, the actions designed to bring about improvement are not sufficiently precise or robust.

#### **Recommendation 5: Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for standards, provision and the quality assurance of the work of their departments**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has improved its arrangements for holding middle leaders to account and to strengthen their role. However, there is too much inconsistency in the effectiveness of quality assurance by middle leaders.

The school has clearly defined middle leaders' responsibilities. Middle leaders have received useful training to help them fulfil their roles more effectively. This includes training on the use of data, leadership and accountability. This has led to most middle leaders increasing their focus on standards within their departments since the time of the core inspection. They are now involved in a wider, more suitable range of activities to monitor and evaluate pupil performance such as work scrutiny and shared lesson observations. As a result, many middle leaders now have an improved understanding of current strengths and areas for development in their departments. However, there remain inconsistencies in the quality of the evaluation



and the ways that middle leaders hold their teams to account.

Since the core inspection, the school has improved its line management arrangements. As a result, middle leaders are held more accountable, and are better challenged and supported. Line management meetings focus more consistently on pupil performance and standards, and include suitable actions for development. However, a few of these actions lack measurable criteria or timescales.

**Recommendation 6: Meet statutory requirements for the annual report to parents on their child's progress**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school now meets statutory requirements and provides a full annual report to parents on their child's progress.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the St Julian's Comprehensive should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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**

**St Julian's Comprehensive School  
Heather Road  
St Julian's  
Newport  
NP19 7XU**

**Date of visit: June 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

St Julian's School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

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 special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will visit the school in approximately 3 months to evaluate the quality of the plan.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Improve standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, performance at key stage 4 in 2015 fell in every indicator. In 2016, it was slightly better than at the time of that inspection in half of the indicators but much lower in the rest. Overall, performance in 2016 compares poorly with that in similar schools. This comparison is much weaker than at the time of the inspection. In each of the last three years, most pupils have made significantly less progress than expected from previous key stages.

In 2016, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics is very close to where it was when the school was inspected. However, in each of the last two years it has fallen further below modelled outcomes and does not compare favourably with similar schools. In 2016, performance in the capped points score is much lower than at the time of the inspection. It has fallen further below modelled outcomes and continues to compare poorly with similar schools.

In 2016, performance in the level 2 threshold is much lower than at the time of the core inspection, as is the proportion of pupils who achieve five GCSE passes at grades A or A\*. Neither compares well with similar schools.

Performance at key stage 3, in 2016, is higher than at the time of the core inspection in every indicator. However, it compares poorly with that in similar schools in all indicators, and performance in the core subject indicator remains below modelled outcomes.

In 2016, the performance of boys at key stage 4 fell in many indicators, largely due to their performance in science. Their performance is below the average for boys in similar schools in all indicators. Although the performance of girls improved in the majority of indicators, it remains below the average for girls in similar schools in many. Since the core inspection, the performance of boys and girls at key stage 4 has been below the averages for boys and girls respectively in similar schools in most indicators.

The performance in 2016 of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the average for the same group of pupils in similar schools in all indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4. This is slightly weaker than at the time of inspection.

In a majority of lessons, just over half of pupils make suitable progress. In a few lessons, many pupils make better progress, and recall previous learning securely. Many pupils behave well and display positive attitudes to their learning. A minority have limited concentration and lack resilience in their work, and this impedes their progress.

Many pupils listen with respect and attention during lessons. The minority who do not, miss important information and instructions. A majority of pupils are willing and able to make brief verbal contributions, usually in response to the teachers' questions. A few provide confident and well-developed responses, using subject specific vocabulary appropriately. However, a minority of pupils make little or no contribution to class or group discussions, due to a lack of effort or of confidence in their verbal skills.

Many pupils skim and scan suitably to retrieve information from various texts but only a few use inference and deduction suitably, for example to enhance their understanding of themes in Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men' or to examine the causes of the Russian revolution. A very few pupils synthesise well, such as when considering different historical sources regarding the social and political challenges in America at the start of the 20th century. However, around half of pupils do not possess a sufficient range of reading strategies to enable them to make good enough progress.

Many pupils understand the purpose of their writing but only a few have a secure sense of audience. As a result, they make incorrect language choices and their writing lacks the correct tone. A few more able pupils produce writing that is technically secure, structured well and occasionally very engaging. However, many pupils do not take sufficient responsibility for improving the accuracy and content of their writing before they hand it to the teacher. This contributes to them continuing to

make the same basic errors in their work.

A majority of pupils make suitable progress in developing basic measurement and calculation skills in subjects other than mathematics. This includes looking at time zones, currency exchange rates and the rate of population increases.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy and numeracy**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented various useful strategies to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This includes helpful professional development opportunities for teaching staff and the inclusion of all aspects of the literacy and numeracy framework in schemes of work. However, these strategies have not always been considered well enough, applied consistently or coordinated effectively. Consequently, they have not improved provision sufficiently or had enough impact on the standards that pupils achieve.

The majority of pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to produce extended writing in different subjects. However, the school's approach to providing pupils with feedback on their literacy skills is not applied consistently and has had insufficient impact on improving pupils' writing in particular. In addition, the school's approach to supporting the development of pupils' reading and numeracy skills remains underdeveloped.

The school uses national test data and other standardised testing suitably to monitor pupils' progress in the development of their skills. However, it is unable to assess the quality of provision and how well pupils use their skills in different contexts. This is because work scrutiny and lesson observations do not consider well enough the impact that teaching has on pupils' skills. Neither do they provide a sufficiently detailed and accurate evaluation of the standards of pupils' literacy and numeracy.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, marking and assessment**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced relevant strategies to strengthen and review teaching and assessment. However, these have not had sufficient impact on the quality of provision or on the standards that pupils achieve.

Most teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and many promote positive working relationships with pupils. A majority of teachers plan well-structured lessons that promote pupil engagement and enable beneficial pair and group work. In a few lessons, teachers use an appropriate mix of open and directed questioning to ensure that pupils contribute to discussions and deepen their understanding.

In a majority of lessons, teachers have insufficiently high expectations of pupils. They set tasks that occupy pupils but that do not challenge them well enough. In

these lessons, teachers' questioning is often weak and they do not monitor pupils' progress well enough.

A minority of teachers provide clear written feedback that helps pupils improve specific aspects of their work. As a result, a minority of pupils make suitable improvements to their work based on the feedback they receive. However, many pupils do not respond well enough to teachers' advice. In addition, many teachers' comments are frequently too generous, giving too much praise for minor accomplishments. Overall, feedback does not have sufficient impact on improving the standard of pupils' work.

A number of relevant and helpful professional learning sessions have taken place to address key aspects of teaching and assessment, through strategies such as 'Praise/Raise' and 'Dedicated Improvement Reflection Time'. However, these initiatives have had limited impact on improving the quality of teaching. Many teachers include the suggested strategies in their planning, but only a few implement them successfully.

Senior and middle leaders gather a suitable range of first hand evidence in order to evaluate the school's work. However, there is too much variation in the quality of lesson observation records and work scrutiny. Overall, evaluations are too generous, not least because the school's system does not distinguish sufficiently between pupil progress and aspects of teaching. Consequently, the school has too positive a view of teaching and assessment, and does not have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development.

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has refined suitably its self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. However, this has not been effective in securing sufficient improvements in important areas of the school's work such as the quality of teaching and the standards that pupils achieve.

The school's self-evaluation report does not give sufficient weight to important areas that require significant improvement. This includes the progress pupils make, particularly by the end of key stage 4, and the performance of boys.

Self-evaluation at all levels provides an overly positive view of the quality of provision and of leadership. This makes it very difficult for the school to identify precisely the areas that are most in need of improvement. Furthermore, many of the actions identified to bring about the improvements required are not sufficiently robust or precise.

The school has taken suitable actions to involve middle leaders fully in departmental self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Overall, the quality of departmental self-evaluation and improvement planning is too variable.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for standards, provision and the quality assurance of the work of their departments**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has improved processes for holding middle leaders to account and to strengthen their roles within the school. However, most middle leaders have not been held to account robustly enough by senior leaders, who endorse overly generous judgements on the quality of teaching and leadership within departments.

Regular line management meetings now have a common agenda and a suitable focus on pupil performance. However, these meetings do not generate clear, robust action points that are followed up, nor do they include sensible timescales.

Most middle leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They make appropriate use of first hand evidence, including pupil performance data and lesson observations, to inform their departmental reviews and action plans. However, there is too much variability in quality assurance by middle leaders.

Only a few middle leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and priorities for improvement within their subject areas. Consequently, most departmental improvement plans do not focus sharply or robustly enough on the most important areas in need of improvement.

**Recommendation 6: Meet statutory requirements for the annual report to parents on their child's progress**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

We reported in a previous monitoring visit that the school now meets statutory requirements and provides a full annual report to parents on their child's progress.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.





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: Special Measures**

**St Julian's School  
Heather Road  
St Julian's  
Newport  
NP19 7XU**

**Date of visit: June 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

St Julian's School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4**

Many pupils engage suitably with their learning and the majority make appropriate progress in developing their knowledge and understanding during lessons. They demonstrate a secure recall of prior learning such as the attitude of Lady Macbeth, knowledge of the Islamic and Muslim cultures, and the parts and function of the respiratory system. A minority apply their knowledge usefully in situations such as when explaining why a cube is a cube and not a cuboid, and in using the correct vocabulary when discussing employability. However, a minority lack resilience in their learning and often do not complete enough work, particularly when required to work independently. They give up too easily or prefer to remain passive. As a result they miss opportunities to consolidate their knowledge or extend their understanding, and make limited progress. In a minority of lessons, pupils are not challenged sufficiently, and the consequently slow pace of learning also limits their progress.

Most pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other. A very few provide suitably developed verbal responses and use subject-specific vocabulary confidently. While a majority of pupils are happy to share ideas and opinions, due to a limited vocabulary and confidence in their verbal skills, they most commonly provide only brief, underdeveloped responses to teachers' questions. On occasions, teachers'

questioning does not probe pupils' understanding or challenge them to develop their verbal responses well enough.

The majority of pupils use a suitable range of reading strategies to support their learning. They are able to identify persuasive techniques such as rhetorical questions, superlatives and imperatives when, for example, looking at how one writer questions the morality of Russia hosting the 2018 World Cup. A few, more able pupils, use inference and deduction very well when analysing characters such as Ralph and Piggy in Golding's 'Lord of the Flies'. They also understand well the impact of Golding's use of symbolism as he addresses the destruction of nuclear war, and pathetic fallacy as he highlights the boys' descent into chaos. A minority of pupils are able to make meaningful and insightful comments on dystopian fiction such as 'The Hunger Games' and when comparing the poetry of Wilfred Owen and Jessie Pope, though a majority are able only to discuss these texts at a superficial level. A few are able to synthesise well information from different texts including travel writing and informational leaflets on locations such as Bradford and Blackpool, while many read these texts with a suitable level of understanding.

The majority of pupils produce writing that is mostly technically secure and structured suitably. This includes detective and spy narratives and discursive essays such as the changing views of the character of King John and on comparisons of rural and urban settlements. A very few, produce particularly well-structured and thoughtful exposition writing on challenging topics such as whether dystopian futures merely mirror our own society. However, pupils of all abilities do not take sufficient responsibility for proof-reading their work and continue to make too many basic errors in their writing including misspelling important subject specific vocabulary.

Generally, the majority of pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately in subjects other than mathematics. This includes producing population, climate and pollution graphs, measuring lung capacity and determining any connection with the height of boys and girls, and the measurement of current and voltage.

## **R2. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy and numeracy**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R3. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, marking and assessment**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R4. Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

The school has revised and continues to review its quality assurance procedures and how suitably it uses the information gathered.

There is a useful calendar of self-evaluation and improvement planning activities. This includes peer reviews of teaching and learning within year groups, including

specific aspects such as literacy, and departmental self-evaluation reviews. These reviews include a wide range of useful evaluative activities including lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutiny, and pupil voice. The school also makes beneficial use of external evaluation to support the development of its evaluation strategies and its improvement planning.

A positive feature of the school is the developing culture of professional learning. This includes the involvement of all middle leaders in peer reviews which helps them to develop their capacity to evaluate standards of teaching and learning within their own areas of responsibility.

The school continues to develop well the links between self-evaluation activities and improvement planning to improve standards.

Despite the progress made, a number of shortcomings remain. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work do not focus sharply enough on the impact of provision, specifically on the standards of pupils' work and the progress they make in the development of their skills.

Peer reviews result in precise actions for improvement for individual teachers that help senior leaders to provide a suitable balance of challenge and support as required. The reviews also provide an overall evaluation, though this tends to be general and where shortcomings are identified in relation to teaching it is not clear which subjects these pertain to or the actions needed to address any issues.

Departmental review and action plans are updated and reviewed regularly. However, their usefulness is limited by the lack of precision in the evaluation of standards and progress in skills development. Also, a few do not have clear success criteria or identify precisely the actions needed to bring about improvement.

**R5. Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for standards, provision and the quality assurance of the work of their departments**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

**R6. Meet statutory requirements for the annual report to parents on their child's progress**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.



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: Special Measures**

**St Julian's School  
Heather Road  
Newport  
NP19 7XU**

**Date of visit: June 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

St Julian's School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendations during this visit.

### **R2. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy and numeracy**

The school has recently appointed a new assistant headteacher to lead on the provision for skills and she is supported appropriately by the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. This has contributed to a suitably renewed focus on improving the provision for skills and includes a number of new initiatives to support pupils' verbal and writing skills. However, these initiatives are very recent and since the core inspection there has been a limited and often confused approach to the development of pupils' skills across the curriculum. Consequently, very little progress has been made in this aspect of the school's work.

The school considers the development of pupils' oracy as a priority and has provided appropriate training for leaders on evaluating the standard of this skill. In addition, a minority of departments are trialling a range of suitable writing strategies. However, leaders' ability to evaluate the standards of pupils' different skills and to identify the aspects most in need of address is too variable. This remains a significant

impediment to identifying weaknesses and making the improvements where they are required most.

There are suitable opportunities for pupils to use their information retrieval strategies in worthwhile contexts, but pupils benefit from far fewer such opportunities to develop higher order reading skills including inference, deduction and synthesis. This creates a clear barrier to pupils' progress. The majority of teachers address suitably any technical errors in pupils' writing. However, there is considerable inconsistency in how well teachers ensure that pupils respond purposefully to their feedback.

There are valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their numerical reasoning and problem-solving skills within mathematics, though opportunities for them to do so across the curriculum remain underdeveloped. In a minority of instances, numeracy tasks do not offer a suitable level of challenge, or are not purposeful, such as when pupils are not required to analyse the graphs they have drawn.

The school has suitable arrangements for identifying those pupils in need of support with their literacy or numeracy and plans appropriate interventions to improve their skills.

### **R3. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, marking and assessment**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendations during this visit.

### **R4. Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to review and revise its quality assurance and improvement planning activities. These developments, such as providing a subject cluster focus for peer reviews, are helping leaders to gain a more realistic, though general, view of the quality of teaching. These revised processes have also highlighted the current inability of around half of leaders to focus sharply enough on the impact of provision, specifically on the development of pupils' skills. This continues to make it very difficult for the school to identify precisely, and support effectively, those areas most in need of development and contributes to a lack of progress in important areas of the school's work such as the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.

The school has continued to plan appropriately for improvements in provision and standards. It has implemented a relevant programme of professional learning opportunities, including the involvement of middle leaders in peer review activities, including joint lesson observations, to improve their evaluations of teaching. However, it has had limited impact. The choice of lessons observed has not always been relevant or helpful, and until recently has not been early enough in the academic year to allow the middle leaders to develop and apply their skills for the benefit of their respective subject areas. In addition, support for the development of aspects of pedagogy, such as questioning, has not led to sufficient improvements in classroom practice.

Many of the changes the school has made recently are sensible. However, since the core inspection, there has not been a clear, consistent, strategic approach to improvements, such as the development of pupils' skills. Consequently, and also because they are mostly recent, it is unclear at this time whether the information these processes may provide will be used effectively to bring about the improvements required.

**R5. Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for standards, provision and the quality assurance of the work of their departments**

Leaders at all levels recognise the need to raise standards and improve the quality and consistency of provision across the school. However, leadership has not secured sufficient or sustained improvements in the quality of teaching or in the progress pupils make.

Senior leaders are developing a suitable understanding of the strengths of middle leaders and their areas for development. For example, mid-term review meetings have enabled the majority of middle leaders to be more aware of their roles and responsibilities. However, many senior leaders do not challenge and support consistently and effectively, which has not helped middle leaders develop their capacity to improve teaching and learning.

The school has very recently appointed two assistant headteachers who are responsible for key areas of its work, namely the development of pupils' skills and attitudes to learning. In addition, the school has also very recently appointed progress leaders with a view to improving the support and guidance given to pupils, including tracking their progress more effectively. It is too early to judge the impact of these appointments.

The school provides appropriate professional development opportunities for middle leaders focusing, for example, on evaluating oracy skills and using software to analyse data. Overall, however, leaders have not been precise or strategic enough in securing improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, and the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills.

**R6. Meet statutory requirements for the annual report to parents on their child's progress**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendations during this visit.

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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: Special Measures**

**St Julian's School  
Heather Road  
Newport  
NP19 7XU**

**Date of visit: March 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

St Julian's Comprehensive School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4**

In 2017, the school's performance at key stage 3 and key stage 4 does not compare favourably with that in similar schools in any indicator. This is a slightly weaker position than at the time of the core inspection. Since that inspection, pupils have made less progress than expected from previous key stages in most indicators and significantly less in many.

At key stage 4, performance in 2017 is lower than at the time of the inspection in many indicators. This includes performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and in the capped points score, both of which remain below expectation.

The proportion of pupils who gained five or more A\*-A grades at GCSE or equivalent fell in 2017, as it has each year since the inspection.

In 2017, the performance of boys improved in many indicators but continues to compare unfavourably with boys in similar schools in the majority of indicators. The performance of girls improved in only a minority but was better than that of girls in

similar schools in the majority of indicators. Generally, since the inspection, boys and girls have not done as well as their counterparts in similar schools.

The performance at key stage 4 of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in 2017 and was better than at the time of the inspection in many indicators.

At key stage 3, performance improved in 2017 and is better than at the time of the core inspection in every indicator. However, the proportion of pupils who achieved the core subject indicator remains slightly lower than expected.

## **R2. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy and numeracy**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R3. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, marking and assessment**

As reported at the last visit, the school has continued to work to strengthen teaching and assessment. It has reviewed policies and increased the involvement of middle leaders in quality assurance processes. This is helping to increase the school's understanding of the precise aspects of teaching and assessment that need to improve. Although professional learning communities have been established to provide the support needed, there remains too much variability and inconsistency in the quality of teaching and assessment.

The quality of teaching overall remains very similar to that reported in June. As noted then, the positive relationships created by many teachers have a clear impact on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

In a few highly effective lessons, teachers establish beneficial routines and set highly challenging tasks that help to build pupils' resilience and independence. This helps them to make strong progress. For example, pupils in Year 9 work enthusiastically to apply their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar when translating a difficult passage from French into English.

In a few lessons, teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils' thinking, probe and develop their understanding and monitor their progress. However, in a majority of lessons, teachers' questioning does not challenge pupils to develop and extend their knowledge and understanding or their verbal responses well enough.

A minority of teachers provide valuable written feedback to pupils and give them time to respond and refine their work. As a result, the pupils make suitable improvements to their understanding and quality of work. However, a majority of teachers' comments are frequently too generous and do not concentrate on the precise areas which need to be improved. In addition, a majority of teachers do not consistently make sure that pupils respond suitably to their feedback.

Overall, teachers' feedback is not having sufficient impact on improving the standard of pupils' work.

#### **R4. Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

#### **R5. Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for standards, provision and the quality assurance of the work of their departments**

The school has recently strengthened processes for holding middle managers to account and to enable them to fulfil their roles more effectively. Many middle leaders now have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including how they are accountable for standards and the quality of teaching and assessment in their subject areas.

There are frequent line management meetings between senior and middle leaders, which focus appropriately on the need to improve the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve. However, there is still too much variation in the challenge senior leaders provide for middle leaders through the action points arising from the meetings and in the rigour with which they are followed up.

Middle leaders are an integral part of the recently introduced peer review cycle, which includes lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Joint lesson observations by senior and middle leaders have contributed significantly to improving expectations of teaching and standards. As a result, there is increased consistency in the quality assurance processes employed by middle leaders. However, there remains too much variation in the ability of leaders to use suitably the information gathered from these processes to bring about the improvements required.

#### **R6. Meet statutory requirements for the annual report to parents on their child's progress**

We reported previously that the school now meets this statutory requirement.



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: Special Measures**

**St Julian's School  
Heather Road  
Newport  
NP19 7XU**

**Date of visit: March 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

St Julian's Comprehensive School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4**

In 2017, the school's performance at key stage 3 and key stage 4 does not compare favourably with that in similar schools in any indicator. This is a slightly weaker position than at the time of the core inspection. Since that inspection, pupils have made less progress than expected from previous key stages in most indicators and significantly less in many.

At key stage 4, performance in 2017 is lower than at the time of the inspection in many indicators. This includes performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and in the capped points score, both of which remain below expectation.

The proportion of pupils who gained five or more A\*-A grades at GCSE or equivalent fell in 2017, as it has each year since the inspection.

In 2017, the performance of boys improved in many indicators but continues to compare unfavourably with boys in similar schools in the majority of indicators. The performance of girls improved in only a minority but was better than that of girls in

similar schools in the majority of indicators. Generally, since the inspection, boys and girls have not done as well as their counterparts in similar schools.

The performance at key stage 4 of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in 2017 and was better than at the time of the inspection in many indicators.

At key stage 3, performance improved in 2017 and is better than at the time of the core inspection in every indicator. However, the proportion of pupils who achieved the core subject indicator remains slightly lower than expected.

## **R2. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy and numeracy**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R3. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, marking and assessment**

As reported at the last visit, the school has continued to work to strengthen teaching and assessment. It has reviewed policies and increased the involvement of middle leaders in quality assurance processes. This is helping to increase the school's understanding of the precise aspects of teaching and assessment that need to improve. Although professional learning communities have been established to provide the support needed, there remains too much variability and inconsistency in the quality of teaching and assessment.

The quality of teaching overall remains very similar to that reported in June. As noted then, the positive relationships created by many teachers have a clear impact on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

In a few highly effective lessons, teachers establish beneficial routines and set highly challenging tasks that help to build pupils' resilience and independence. This helps them to make strong progress. For example, pupils in Year 9 work enthusiastically to apply their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar when translating a difficult passage from French into English.

In a few lessons, teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils' thinking, probe and develop their understanding and monitor their progress. However, in a majority of lessons, teachers' questioning does not challenge pupils to develop and extend their knowledge and understanding or their verbal responses well enough.

A minority of teachers provide valuable written feedback to pupils and give them time to respond and refine their work. As a result, the pupils make suitable improvements to their understanding and quality of work. However, a majority of teachers' comments are frequently too generous and do not concentrate on the precise areas which need to be improved. In addition, a majority of teachers do not consistently make sure that pupils respond suitably to their feedback.

Overall, teachers' feedback is not having sufficient impact on improving the standard of pupils' work.

#### **R4. Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

#### **R5. Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for standards, provision and the quality assurance of the work of their departments**

The school has recently strengthened processes for holding middle managers to account and to enable them to fulfil their roles more effectively. Many middle leaders now have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including how they are accountable for standards and the quality of teaching and assessment in their subject areas.

There are frequent line management meetings between senior and middle leaders, which focus appropriately on the need to improve the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve. However, there is still too much variation in the challenge senior leaders provide for middle leaders through the action points arising from the meetings and in the rigour with which they are followed up.

Middle leaders are an integral part of the recently introduced peer review cycle, which includes lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Joint lesson observations by senior and middle leaders have contributed significantly to improving expectations of teaching and standards. As a result, there is increased consistency in the quality assurance processes employed by middle leaders. However, there remains too much variation in the ability of leaders to use suitably the information gathered from these processes to bring about the improvements required.

#### **R6. Meet statutory requirements for the annual report to parents on their child's progress**

We reported previously that the school now meets this statutory requirement.





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: Special Measures**

**St Julian's School  
Heather Road  
Newport  
NP19 7XU**

**Date of visit: November 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

St Julian's School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendations during this visit.

### **R2. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy and numeracy**

Since the last visit, the school has reviewed suitably aspects of provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Although it is too soon to identify any impact on standards, there is an emerging clarity about what needs to be done and a notable increase in teachers' willingness to be involved. However, the ability of leaders at all levels to evaluate the standards of pupils' different skills and to identify the aspects most in need of address remains too variable. Currently, quality assurance activities do not focus well enough on the impact of provision on pupils' progress and the development of their skills.

The assistant headteacher responsible for the development of pupils' skills is beginning to provide appropriate strategic direction. She is supported suitably by

skills coordinators although, currently, they do not have enough time to fulfil their role effectively enough. The school has also started to make appropriate use of helpful links with other providers through the Learning Network Schools arrangement.

Many pupils continue to use information retrieval strategies in worthwhile contexts and the school now encourages pupils to read for pleasure during form tutor time. The assistant headteacher has also produced helpful guidance for staff to help them provide more meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their higher order reading skills. This has, for example, supported opportunities for pupils in history to use inference and deduction to inform their discussions of the merits or otherwise of Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine Parr, and in religious studies to use synthesis when looking at the Koran and prediction when considering the Greater Jihad. However, other previously identified shortcomings in the support of literacy, such as improving the technical accuracy and developing the structure of pupils' writing, and teachers' questioning that challenges pupils to develop their verbal responses remain very inconsistent.

Mathematics lessons continue to provide pupils with valuable opportunities to develop their numerical reasoning and problem-solving skills. In a minority of instances across the curriculum, pupils use their numeracy skills purposefully and progress suitably when, for example, they interpret graphs on topics including factors influencing enzyme activity, rainfall and population. However, overall, other than producing graphs, worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum remain underdeveloped.

### **R3. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, marking and assessment**

The school has very recently introduced a departmental review process to involve curriculum leaders in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning within their respective areas. In order to establish the most opportune time to review provision, including teaching, the headteacher has encouraged curriculum leaders to produce their own calendar of quality assurance activities. However, currently, these activities focus too closely on compliance and the completion of tasks, and not sharply enough on pupils' progress and the development of their skills. This makes it very difficult for the school to identify precisely which aspects of teaching have developed appropriately and those which remain most in need of improvement. Consequently, the professional learning opportunities provided, including a very recent approach to improving teachers' questioning skills, are too broad and do not meet specific needs exactly enough.

During this visit, in those lessons where pupils make sound progress, teachers establish positive, purposeful relationships with pupils and manage any misbehaviour skilfully so that it minimises disruption to learning. In a few lessons, teachers plan interesting and suitably challenging tasks that develop pupils' knowledge, skills and

understanding well. They use questions skilfully to probe pupils' understanding and challenge them well to develop their verbal responses. These teachers provide constructive verbal and written feedback. They set suitably challenging 'DIRT' tasks then check pupils' responses. This helps pupils to consolidate and expand their learning.

Where teaching is less effective and pupils do not make enough progress, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. Often, they provide tasks that keep pupils busy rather than challenge them, and do not plan well enough to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful contexts. These teachers ask too many closed questions and do not address common misconceptions and mistakes. Frequently, teachers talk too much and do not allow time for pupils to work independently or in small groups. The feedback they provide does not give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work. In addition, 'DIRT time' is not used consistently or well enough, and teachers do not revisit pupil responses to check if sufficient progress has been made.

#### **R4. Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendations during this visit.

#### **R5. Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for standards, provision and the quality assurance of the work of their departments**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendations during this visit.

#### **R6. Meet statutory requirements for the annual report to parents on their child's progress**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendations during this visit.

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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: Special Measures**

**St Julian's School  
Heather Road  
St Julian's  
Newport  
St Julian's  
NP19 7XU**

**Date of visit: October 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

St Julian's School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards in key stage 3 and key stage 4**

Provisional data for 2018 indicates that the school's performance at key stage 4 improved in many indicators but does not compare well with that in similar schools in any of those indicators.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, improved and was slightly above expectations for the first time in the last five years. In the capped points score, performance also improved but remains below what might be expected, as it has each year since the inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A improved very slightly but remains below that in similar schools.

In 2018, the performance of boys improved in nearly all indicators while that of girls improved in the majority. Since the core inspection, the performance of boys and that of girls has generally been below that of their counterparts in similar schools.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals fell in 2018, and was below that of their counterparts in similar schools in all indicators. It was also lower than at the time of the inspection in just over half.

## **R2. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing literacy and numeracy**

Since the core inspection, the school has continued to review its approaches to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, limited clarity in the approach to addressing this recommendation has contributed to progress being too slow and to an insufficient impact on standards overall.

The recently appointed literacy and numeracy coordinators, together with the local consortium, have provided staff with useful training to help them support the development of pupils' skills. However, not all strategies are applied consistently or embedded well enough in current practice. The school's approach to marking for literacy has developed suitably and generally now guides pupils suitably in improving the technical accuracy of their work in different subjects. The school provides helpful support for those pupils with weaker skills that enables them to make sound progress.

The school's quality assurance programme helps leaders to identify where pupils have opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This programme includes peer reviews, work scrutiny and lesson observations. However, these processes do not consider well enough the impact that teaching has on pupils' skills or provide the school with a sufficiently detailed and accurate view of the standards of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

## **R3. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, marking and assessment**

Since the last visit, the school has continued to work to strengthen teaching and assessment. This includes subject-specific guidance and support with joint lesson observations from colleagues in other schools. However, processes to evaluate the quality of teaching do not identify precisely enough the main strengths and aspects in need of improvement. This makes it very difficult for the school to address effectively those aspects of teaching that continue to require improvement. As a result, there remains too much variability in the quality of teaching.

Leaders' work to develop the quality of assessment has led to clear improvements. The majority of teachers give helpful feedback that highlights for pupils the specific strengths and aspects of their work that need improvement. These teachers provide beneficial tasks or pose questions that encourage pupils to respond to their feedback. Many pupils complete these tasks well and their work improves as a result.

In many lessons, teachers have strong working relationships with pupils that impact positively on their behaviour and attitudes. In a few particularly effective lessons, where pupils make strong progress, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. These teachers ask probing questions and do not accept superficial responses from pupils. They plan skilfully a sequence of challenging tasks that build pupils' resilience and develop their independent learning skills well.

In a minority of lessons, teachers prepare helpful resources and plan beneficial tasks that enable pupils to make suitable progress. These teachers check pupils' progress and understanding well through effective questioning and monitoring of their work. Learning support assistants work well with pupils and teachers.

In a majority of lessons there is a lack of challenge and teachers' expectations are too low. In these lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and teachers do not plan carefully enough to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers talk too much, ask too many closed questions and allow pupils too much time to complete basic tasks. As a result, pupils do not make enough progress or complete enough work.

#### **R4. Improve self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

#### **R5. Strengthen the role of middle leaders so that they are fully accountable for standards, provision and the quality assurance of the work of their departments**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

#### **R6. Meet statutory requirements for the annual report to parents on their child's progress**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.





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: special measures**

**St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School  
Albert Avenue  
Flint  
CH6 5JZ**

**Date of visit: February 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2016.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may not be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff. Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### Recommendation 1: Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4

No judgement applied

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has made little progress in improving its performance in most of the key indicators in key stage 4. Pupils' performance has been below or well below that of pupils in similar schools in most indicators.

In 2016, at key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics has declined. This performance is below modelled outcomes and well below outcomes of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals.

Following the core inspection, performance in the capped point score has been below modelled outcomes and remains in the bottom 25% of similar schools. Similarly, performance in the Level 1 threshold continues to place the school in the lower 50% of similar schools'. Performance in the level 2 threshold has declined and has placed the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools'.

In 2016, the proportion of pupils gaining five A\* - A GCSE grades at key stage 4 improved slightly. However, this performance places the school well below the average of similar schools. Performance in English also fell significantly and continues to place the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools. Although performance in mathematics had improved at the time of the core inspection, this

also declined in 2016 and places the bottom half of similar schools.

Since the core inspection, the performance of boys and girls has fallen considerably in many of the key indicators. In 2016, the performance of the pupils eligible for free school meals is below the average for this group of pupils in similar schools in the majority of indicators.

In most lessons, most pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and the views of their peers. Pupils are very well-behaved and are supportive of each other.

In many lessons, most pupils recall prior learning well and many apply their knowledge and skills suitably in new contexts. In the majority of lessons, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. Many pupils speak clearly and confidently and, when given the opportunity, work effectively in pairs and groups. The majority of pupils read confidently and competently. They extract information accurately from a range of different resources and use the information appropriately to draw conclusions. The majority of pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences and express themselves clearly. However, a minority of pupils make careless spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors and often present their work poorly.

In relevant lessons, many pupils use a range of number strategies appropriately in a variety of contexts. Many pupils analyse data accurately and produce suitable graphs to display their results.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This work is now co-ordinated and planned appropriately by designated senior and middle leaders.

The school has developed suitable activities to help improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. These include appropriate training for staff and increased opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their skills in lessons. The school has introduced additional literacy lessons that focus on writing and speaking skills in particular. Many departments have revised their schemes of work suitably in order to focus on literacy and numeracy. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these activities on pupils' progress in developing their skills.

The school has started to make appropriate use of diagnostic analyses of the outcomes of a variety reading and numeracy tests. This helps staff to identify the needs of individual pupils and support those pupils with weak reading and numeracy skills.

The school has recently introduced an appropriate policy that requires teachers to comment on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills when marking their work. In a few

cases, teachers make useful suggestions to help pupils improve their skills. However, this practice is not consistent enough across the school.

Despite an increasing suitably co-ordinated approach to improve provision for literacy and numeracy, this has had little impact on pupils' progress in developing these skills.

**Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and effectiveness of assessment**

No judgement applied

Following the core inspection, there is an appropriate emphasis on improving standards of teaching and learning across the curriculum. The school now has a clearer picture of the strengths and areas for development in teaching and assessment. The interim headteacher has provided constructive feedback to staff on the quality of their teaching. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these strategies.

Nearly all teachers foster positive working relationships with pupils, and most demonstrate strong subject knowledge. The majority of teachers maintain suitably high expectations of pupils as part of well-planned, effective lessons. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not match activities appropriately to the abilities of all pupils. A minority of lessons lack a suitable variety of activities and rely heavily on teacher direction. In these lessons, learning activities do not enthuse pupils and they do not benefit from sufficient opportunities to learn independently.

Around half of teachers regularly provide helpful written advice to pupils about how to improve their work. However, the quality of teachers' feedback is inconsistent and in a minority of cases does not lead to improvements in standards. In these instances, teachers' comments are superficial and overly praise pupils' work.

The school has recently introduced a common strategy to ensure that pupils improve their work in response to teacher feedback. In a minority of cases, pupils' respond constructively to teachers' comments. However, this approach is not consistent across the school.

**Recommendation 4: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability in all areas of the school's work**

No judgement applied

The school is implementing a suitable range of appropriate strategies to improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels. However, these approaches are at an early stage and have had little impact on raising standards.

The interim headteacher provides astute leadership, firm direction and sets out high expectations for all areas of the school's work. She provides valuable mentoring support to many colleagues. The roles of the senior leadership team have been

refined to ensure responsibilities are clear, appropriately balanced and focus directly on the school's core purpose.

There are well-defined line-management arrangements. These are beginning to provide a suitable degree of support and challenge for staff. Fortnightly meetings between senior and middle leaders focus primarily on pupils' performance and the quality of teaching and learning. These approaches are contributing to a sharper analysis of data and to identifying relevant areas for improvement. These arrangements are helping to increase levels of accountability for performance and outcomes in all subject areas.

Despite suitably systematic arrangements, there remains a lack of consistency in the rigour and effectiveness with which many senior and middle leaders manage, monitor and quality assure work in their areas. The use of data continues to be uneven at departmental level.

Performance management arrangements are not sufficiently robust. They do not provide an effective means to support staff professional development and to hold staff to account for the quality of their work.

The governing body is beginning to acquire a suitable level of understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

#### **Recommendation 5: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has begun to introduce rigorous systems and processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning. The school's most recent self-evaluation report is honest and evaluative. The overall analysis of standards is comprehensive and robust. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes on pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and assessment.

Middle leaders are beginning to use data to analyse pupils' achievements. However, the quality of departmental self-evaluation reports continues to vary considerably and many do not address the key aspects of provision.

Although the post inspection action plan provides a clear focus for key improvement activities, planning for improvement at departmental level remains weak.

A recent programme of lesson observations, led by the interim headteacher, provides useful information on current standards of teaching and learning. However, established lesson observation procedures are not sufficiently robust to support self-evaluation and performance improvement processes. The school has recently introduced systematic procedures for the scrutiny of pupils' work. These are helping to identify common strengths and areas for improvement.

Recent initiatives to invite the views of pupils and parents have provided valuable feedback. However, procedures for listening the views of pupils and parents remain underdeveloped.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School  
Albert Avenue  
Flint  
Flintshire  
CH6 5JZ**

**Date of visit: June 2017**

**by**

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



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## Outcome of monitoring

St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2016.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may not be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4**

No judgement applied

We commented fully on pupils' performance based on 2015-2016 data as part of the previous monitoring visit.

Nearly all pupils are respectful of each other and their teachers. Most listen attentively and maintain concentration throughout their lessons. Many pupils recall prior learning well and apply their knowledge and skills effectively to new contexts. In a minority of lessons, pupils make only limited progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills.

The majority of pupils make useful contributions to classroom discussions, explaining ideas clearly and using subject terminology appropriately. A very few pupils ask insightful questions to extend their understanding. However, a minority of pupils make only brief verbal contributions.

Many pupils have sound reading skills. They extract relevant information from a range of sources to answer questions and draw conclusions. These pupils identify

clearly the techniques used by writers, for example when analysing how characters are portrayed in 'Of Mice and Men'. A few pupils have stronger reading skills, for example they synthesise and summarise key information from a wide range of texts.

The majority of pupils write clearly for a suitable range of purposes and audiences. They structure and organise their writing well and produce technically accurate written work. However, a minority of pupils do not have a secure enough understanding of purpose and audience. As a result, they write in a tone that is not well suited to the context of the work. These pupils make regular spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.

Many pupils have secure number skills and use them effectively in a variety of contexts. For example, in geography, pupils construct appropriate graphs and use them well to analyse climate patterns in Antarctica. In science lessons, pupils compare the atmospheric composition of different planets by calculating and constructing accurate pie charts.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy. However, this has not had enough impact on developing these skills.

The school is beginning to develop appropriate opportunities for pupils to practice and improve their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Overall, the quality and suitability of the tasks are too variable and they are not consistently effective in helping pupils improve their skills. The school does not plan well enough to evaluate the impact of strategies to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

The school has begun to make appropriate use of assessment data to identify whole-school priorities and the specific needs of individual pupils. This is supporting a beneficial whole-school strategy to develop pupils' numeracy skills.

The majority of teachers pay due attention to the technical accuracy of pupils' work. However, the impact of teacher feedback on improving pupils' skills is too variable.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and effectiveness of assessment**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching. For example, the school has recently introduced useful opportunities for teachers to share good practice, such as peer lesson observations and professional learning communities. However, this has not had sufficient impact

on the quality of teaching.

Nearly all teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and foster effective working relationships with pupils. Many explain concepts clearly and use carefully-prepared resources to support their teaching. The majority of teachers use questioning suitably to assess and develop pupils' understanding. In these lessons, teachers plan a variety of activities that challenge all pupils appropriately. In a very few lessons, teachers adapt activities skilfully in response to pupils' progress.

In a minority of instances, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. In these lessons, teachers do not plan tasks that are challenging enough. They do not provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop independence in their learning or use questioning well enough to deepen pupils' understanding.

A majority of teachers provide pupils with helpful verbal feedback. In a few cases, they monitor progress closely to provide pupils with carefully-tailored guidance as to how they can improve their work. However, a minority of teachers provide overgenerous feedback in lessons and do not challenge pupils sufficiently to improve their work.

Around half of teachers provide pupils with useful written feedback that helps them understand what they have to do to improve their work. However, a minority of teachers do not identify errors in pupils' written work consistently enough. They do not monitor pupils' written work closely enough or set targets for improvement that relate directly to the purpose of the task. A minority of teachers do not ensure that pupils take responsibility for improving their work.

**Recommendation 4: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability in all areas of the school's work**

No judgement applied

The school has implemented a range of appropriate strategies to improve the effectiveness of leadership. These approaches are beginning to provide suitable direction to important areas of the school's work. However, they are at an early stage of development and have not had enough impact on the quality of teaching and assessment, or the progress pupils make.

The recent appointment of a substantive headteacher is providing valuable stability to the leadership of the school. Leaders at all levels are clear about their roles and responsibilities, particularly with regard to addressing the school's key priorities.

There is a structured programme of meetings at all levels. The support and challenge meetings, together with middle leader meetings, are helping to provide clear direction and raise expectations for all areas of the school's work. These meetings focus suitably on pupils' performance and progress. There is a developing emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and establishing secure quality assurance processes. These arrangements are helping to strengthen the capacity of

leaders to support improvement strategies and are contributing appropriately to increasing levels of accountability. However, there remains too much inconsistency in the rigour and effectiveness with which senior and middle leaders manage, monitor and quality assure work in their areas.

Performance management arrangements are not sufficiently robust. They do not provide an effective means of supporting professional development and holding staff to account for the quality of their work.

The recently established interim executive board of governors is developing a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It is beginning to provide an appropriate degree of support and challenge to the school.

### **Recommendation 5: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has consistently taken appropriate steps to strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. However, this has not had sufficient impact on standards or the quality of teaching.

The school has established a clear and well-understood cycle of self-evaluation activities. Regular lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work are beginning to contribute appropriately to leaders' understanding of key strengths and areas for improvement. In many cases, these activities are not sufficiently evaluative and do not focus closely enough on the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' progress.

The school has taken suitable steps to develop the use of parent and pupil feedback. Overall, this work is at an early stage of development.

The school has taken appropriate actions to develop the role of pastoral leaders in self-evaluation and improvement planning. However, their analysis of, for example attendance rates, is also at an early stage of development.

Senior and middle leaders are developing suitably their analysis of performance data. On a whole-school level, they do not focus clearly enough on comparing the school's performance to the performance of similar schools.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School  
Albert Avenue  
Flint  
CH6 5JZ**

**Date of visit: November 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic school is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2016.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### Recommendation 1: Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has focused its efforts well on developing suitable strategies to raise the achievement of pupils in key stage 4, especially in English and mathematics. The school monitors pupil progress closely and employs a suitable range of interventions to support pupils. This had a very positive impact on outcomes at the end of key stage 4 in 2017.

The school improved its performance in most of the key indicators in key stage 4 in 2017. Pupils' performance in these indicators is now above that of pupils in similar schools and well above that at the time of the core inspection.

In 2017, at key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics improved significantly and is better than at the time of the core inspection. This performance is above modelled outcomes and places the school in the top 25% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals having been in the bottom 25% for each of the previous three years.

Performance in the capped point score in 2017 is above that at the time of the core inspection. It is broadly in line with modelled outcomes though remains in the lower 50% of similar schools. Performance in the level 1 threshold has been variable over the last three years and remains in the lower 50% of similar schools. Performance in the level 2 threshold places the school in the upper 50% of similar schools after being in the bottom 25% for the previous three years.

The proportion of pupils gaining five A\*- A GCSE grades at key stage 4 has improved each year since the core inspection. However, in 2017, performance in this indicator continues to place the school below the average of similar schools. Performance in English improved significantly in 2017 and places the school in the top 25% of similar schools for the first time in five years. Performance in mathematics also improved in 2017 and is similar to that at the time of the core inspection. This places the school in the top 25% of similar schools.

Since the core inspection, the performance of boys has fallen slightly but the performance of girls has improved significantly. In most indicators, boys and girls perform better than their counterparts in similar schools. In the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has been above the average of this group of pupils in similar schools for two of



the last three years.

In key stage 3, performance in the core subject indicator has improved since the core inspection and, in 2017, places the school in the upper 50% of similar schools for the first time in three years.

Since the core inspection, in Year 13, the proportion of pupils that achieve the level 3 threshold has fluctuated but remains above the national average. The performance of pupils in the average wider points score also remains above national averages. Over the same period, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\*-C at A-level or equivalent has declined and is well below the average across Wales for the last two years. The proportion of pupils that gained three grades A\* or A has fluctuated and is below the national average.

Nearly all pupils behave well and display positive attitudes towards their learning. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and the views of other pupils. They work productively in pairs and groups, and sustain concentration well.

In many lessons, pupils make suitable progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. In a few lessons, they make strong progress. Many pupils recall previous learning well and the majority apply their skills and knowledge successfully to new contexts.

Many pupils speak clearly and explain their ideas well. They participate in classroom discussion and contribute eagerly, for example, when discussing characters in 'Heroes' in English. Many pupils engage successfully with a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction texts such as poems, novels and reports. They extract information competently and draw accurate conclusions such as determining the best treatment of illnesses in biology. However, only a few pupils analyse texts in depth and detail, and make sufficient use of a wide vocabulary to explain their viewpoints fully.

Many pupils organise their written work appropriately. The majority of pupils write suitably for different audiences and purposes through, for example, personal reflective writing, persuasive speeches, letters and newspaper articles. A few pupils write maturely, vary sentence types skilfully and have a rich vocabulary. However, a majority of pupils do not express themselves well enough. For example, they have sound ideas but weak expression, and poor presentation detracts from the quality of their work.

Many pupils apply their basic numeracy skills successfully where appropriate and show confidence in selecting suitable strategies, for example, in solving equations and rearranging formulae. Many pupils display and analyse data suitably. For example, in science lessons they draw appropriate line graphs to show the effect of different concentrations of bleach on bacteria.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken valuable steps to strengthen provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. All subject areas provide appropriate opportunities to practise skills in relevant contexts and many teachers provide suitable support for pupils to develop their skills in lessons. Coordinators support departments well, for example by providing training, advising on the quality of tasks, and helping formulate success criteria and feedback policies. In addition, members of the mathematics and English departments provide support and guidance to other subject areas. While this work is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' skills in all key stages, a minority of tasks do not develop pupils' skills well enough.

Leaders use assessment information appropriately to identify pupils in need of extra support to improve their skills. They use this information to plan appropriately for whole school literacy and numeracy development needs. However, the school does not have clear success criteria by which to measure the progress of pupils on all literacy intervention programmes.

Curriculum leaders have benefitted from opportunities to review books and share good practice. However, book reviews and lesson observations do not focus well enough on the standard of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, or on the impact that teaching and assessment is having on those skills.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and effectiveness of assessment**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, there has been continued focus on improving teaching and assessment. This includes providing worthwhile opportunities for teachers to share good practice. This has had a positive impact on standards at the end of key stage 4 but has not had sufficient impact on the development of pupils' skills in lessons.

In most lessons, teachers have good working relationships with pupils. They have sound subject knowledge and are good language models. Nearly all teachers start lessons purposefully with well-established routines.

Many teachers plan lessons well with activities that build appropriately upon prior learning and enable pupils to make suitable progress. A very few teachers, through highly effective planning, enable pupils to make very strong progress. A majority of teachers have suitable expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide an appropriate level of challenge. These teachers provide useful examples of the standard of work expected. However, a minority of teachers do not provide sufficient challenge or plan work that meets the needs of all pupils, including the more able, well enough. In these lessons, the pace of learning is inappropriate and pupils do not make enough progress.

Many teachers provide pupils with useful verbal and written feedback on how they can improve their work. Many focus well on the accuracy of pupils' written work. As a result, many pupils respond appropriately by correcting errors or redrafting work in

the light of teachers' comments. A few teachers annotate pupils' written work closely to highlight areas for development. A majority of teachers question pupils well to stimulate discussion and encourage them to extend their answers successfully. They check pupils' understanding frequently and a few use this information highly effectively to provide immediate, targeted feedback to the class and individual pupils. These strategies enable pupils to build on their subject skills and improve the quality of their work effectively.

The quality of assessment remains too variable. A minority of teachers do not question effectively enough to extend pupils' thinking. A similar proportion provide written comments that are too general or focus exclusively on technical accuracy. In a few instances, teachers' feedback is overgenerous. As a result, pupils are not able to improve the quality of their work well enough.

**Recommendation 4: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability in all areas of the school's work**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened significantly its leadership structures and accountability processes. These changes have had a positive impact on outcomes at key stage 4 and on the leadership and management skills of leaders at all levels.

The new headteacher provides assured leadership and a clear and well-understood vision for improvement. The leadership team has been reorganised and extended with leadership responsibilities now shared more widely. As a result, the team has strengthened and roles match the skills of individual leaders well.

The school has provided valuable training and guidance on important aspects of leadership, including data analysis and self-evaluation. It has also established regular opportunities for leaders to share good practice. Consequently, leaders now understand their roles and responsibilities well and work collaboratively towards achieving shared goals.

The school has strengthened and improved its accountability systems. There is now a clear calendar of useful quality assurance activities and a structured programme of regular meetings at all levels. These meetings focus appropriately on pupil progress and standards, and are helpful in holding leaders to account and raising expectations. For example, data review meetings offer suitable challenge on outcomes at all key stages. However, a few meetings are not effective enough, particularly in terms of the level of challenge offered, the degree of follow up from one meeting to the next, and the focus on teaching and learning.

The school has recently revised its performance management arrangements but the changes are at a very early stage of development. Objectives are generally suitable and there are clear links with professional development. The school has dealt appropriately with underperformance.

The interim executive board, established following the core inspection, is well informed and has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is providing more support and challenge to the school than at the time of the core inspection.

Despite the significant improvements brought about by strong leadership, it has not had enough impact on a few areas of the school's work. These areas include attendance, aspects of teaching and assessment, and the provision for developing the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils.

### **Recommendation 5: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, improved quality assurance arrangements are helping the school to focus well on what needs to improve. The headteacher and the interim executive board have provided clarity about the purpose of self-evaluation and its value for improvement planning. This has resulted in much improved pupil achievement, particularly at key stage 4.

The school has considerably strengthened self-evaluation and planning. The links between whole school and team self-evaluations and improvement priorities are clear. For example, the priorities to increase attainment at higher levels and to improve attendance are based clearly on evaluation of outcomes and data. Middle leaders are now far more aware of the value of data, how to interpret it and make use of it to improve standards within their areas of responsibility. Many leaders analyse performance data rigorously in order to reach a realistic view of outcomes.

There is a clear and well-understood cycle of self-evaluation activities, this includes lesson observations, work scrutiny, thematic reviews, peer observations, support and challenge meetings, pupil voice activities, parent surveys and data reviews. These focus appropriately on the overarching school priorities. Leaders at all levels make purposeful use of the findings from these activities and regularly review the whole-school and team self-evaluations.

The regular lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work are contributing appropriately to leaders' understanding of key strengths and areas for improvement in relation to teaching. However, scrutiny of work and lesson observations do not focus sufficiently on the progress of pupils and the standards of their skills. As a result, the school does not identify well enough specific weaknesses in relation to skills and aspects of teaching and assessment that need focused improvement.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: special measures**

**Tonypandy Community College  
Llewellyn Street  
Rhondda  
Penygraig  
RCT  
CF40 1HQ**

**Date of visit: June 2015**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Tonypandy Community College is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2014.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards at key stage 3 and key stage 4;**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has focused the majority of its efforts on strategies to raise the achievement of Year 11 pupils, especially in English and mathematics. This has included a suitable range of actions to support pupils, based on a comprehensive system for tracking their progress. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these strategies.

In a minority of lessons, pupils make good progress. In these lessons, nearly all pupils engage successfully and enthusiastically with activities. They listen carefully to their teachers and respond well to the tasks set, often working with each other effectively to enhance their learning. In these lessons, pupils recall previous learning and apply their skills and knowledge to new situations well.

In a few lessons, pupils expand on their oral responses effectively, and make thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Strong independent learning skills enable these pupils to progress well in these lessons.

However, in a majority of lessons, pupils make limited progress. In these lessons, pupils are too dependent on support from their teachers, and they lack confidence when expressing their ideas either orally or through written activities. As a result, their responses are often underdeveloped and not clearly explained. In these lessons, many pupils are unable to sustain focus and concentration on their work.

Around half of pupils demonstrate sound writing skills. These pupils structure their writing appropriately, and make suitable language choices to make their work effective. However, around half of pupils continue to make basic errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. A very few more able pupils write fluently and use a range of techniques to express themselves. However, a majority of pupils are not able to structure pieces of extended writing effectively and a minority lack confidence when using subject specific terminology.

In a few instances, pupils demonstrate satisfactory number skills, for example when selecting and explaining the key features of data in graphs and charts. However, many pupils continue to demonstrate weak number skills. These pupils lack

confidence in performing mental calculations and are often too reliant on using calculators. They do not construct graphs accurately and struggle to select and deploy appropriate mathematical methods.

**Recommendation 2: Improve behaviour in the lessons where pupils' learning is disrupted too much;**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved. Pupils now exhibit higher levels of respect for the school, their teachers and their peers.

The school has introduced an effective behaviour policy that sets out clear expectations and guidance for pupils, staff and parents. All staff have undergone appropriate training on classroom management and the application of sanctions. Most teachers apply the policy consistently and are supported well by the school's behaviour team. The school monitor incidents of poor behaviour carefully. Leaders analyse data and use it effectively to identify where strategies to promote good behaviour should be targeted.

In almost all lessons observed during the monitoring visit, pupils behaved well. They showed interest in their work and had a positive attitude to learning. Most pupils believe that the behaviour around the school and in lessons has improved since the time of the core inspection. However, poor behaviour by a minority of pupils continues to disrupt the learning of others in the few lessons taught by supply teachers.

The number of fixed-term exclusions has risen slightly since the core inspection, but is lower than local authority and national averages. Excluded pupils have an appropriate re-admittance interview and are placed on a personal support programme that includes suitable and specific targets. This has had a positive impact on the standards of behaviour of these pupils.

**Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment;**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has deployed a suitable range of appropriate strategies to improve the quality of teaching, including whole-staff training and support programmes for those teachers with significant areas for improvement. However, these strategies have yet to have a substantial impact on the overall quality of teaching.

In a minority of lessons, teachers plan an effective range of challenging activities that engage pupils and encourage them to build well on prior skills and knowledge. In these lessons, positive working relationships and carefully prepared resources help pupils to make good progress. Teachers use skilful questioning to develop pupils' understanding and plan activities that successfully encourage pupils to be



independent learners.

In the majority of lessons, teaching is less effective. Teachers do not plan activities carefully enough or use a sufficient variety of strategies to engage pupils successfully and to ensure that they make good progress. They often rely too heavily on a teacher-led approach and set tasks that are not sufficiently challenging. As a result, pupils in these lessons do not develop their thinking, are unable to sustain concentration and make insufficient progress. In a few instances, pupils make very limited progress because teachers use resources that are not well matched to pupils' age and ability or do not explain concepts clearly enough.

Staff absence continues to have a negative impact on pupils' progress and standards of behaviour. The school is beginning to deploy suitable strategies to improve the quality of these lessons, but it is too early for these actions to have had a significant impact.

The school has revised its policies and procedures for the monitoring of teacher assessment, including refining the criteria for the scrutiny of pupils' work. It has identified strengths and weaknesses in its assessment systems. However, many teacher assessments of pupils' work at both key stage 3 and key stage 4 are still overgenerous.

Senior leaders have improved systems for the collection and analysis of assessment data. The school uses this data effectively in Raising Achievement Plan ('RAP') meetings to identify and monitor pupils requiring additional support. Middle managers are improving their tracking of individual pupils and groups of pupils, and now identify underperformance more quickly.

There have been improvements in the frequency of marking in most subjects. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and take a consistent approach to correcting errors in pupils' spelling and punctuation. A majority of pupils carry out spelling corrections identified by their teachers. However, in a minority of cases, teachers do not identify or correct errors consistently enough.

The quality and consistency of marking and written feedback varies too much between and within subjects. Teachers' written feedback is often too generous and does not reflect accurately the quality of pupils' work. In many cases, teachers' written feedback does not identify areas of weakness or show pupils how to improve their work clearly enough. Many staff do not check whether pupils respond to their comments or make sure that they complete missing work. Many pupils complete peer and self-assessment activities, but in the majority of instances these activities have little impact on their learning or progress.

**Recommendation 4: Improve provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including a focus on further improving work with primary schools;**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has continued to develop its provision for the development of pupils' skills. However, these strategies have not yet had a positive impact on standards of literacy and numeracy.

Two skills coordinators and a senior leader work together appropriately to plan and implement a whole-school approach to literacy and numeracy. The skills coordinators use a suitable range of strategies to help middle leaders raise awareness of the role of all teachers in improving pupils' skills across the curriculum.

A recently appointed transition teacher works with partner primary schools to develop common systems for improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, these systems are not yet established and it is too early to evaluate the sustained impact of this role on the development of pupils' skills.

In most subjects, teachers identify suitable opportunities for skills development in schemes of work and lesson plans. However, in most lessons, teachers do not use effective strategies to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of leadership and strengthen accountability across the school; and**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has undertaken a number of useful measures to strengthen leadership and has taken a systematic approach to improving accountability. However, these processes have yet to have a significant impact on improving standards.

The school has recently reviewed its leadership structure. The new structure is designed to focus on ensuring that middle leaders are held more securely accountable for standards and wellbeing. However, the spans of responsibility in the new structure are uneven.

A few senior and middle leaders are undertaking suitable training to improve their leadership skills. There are appropriate in-school opportunities for leaders to receive coaching to increase their effectiveness, especially in developing other staff. A few leaders have visited other schools, and this has been useful in allowing them to identify good practice to emulate.

Performance management arrangements have been strengthened since the time of the core inspection. Objectives are now more focused on pupil outcomes at the end of key stages. There are rigorous procedures to appraise the performance of staff moving to higher pay scales. Senior leaders deal robustly with teachers who do not perform well enough.

Across the school, there is an increased focus on developing teaching and learning. There are regular meetings at all leadership levels, and these focus well on standards, areas for improvement and include opportunities to identify and share good practice. 'RAP' meetings provide regular and useful opportunities to discuss

and monitor pupil performance, wellbeing and attendance.

Middle leaders report regularly to governors about the progress in their areas of responsibility. These presentations focus suitably on standards, and in subsequent meetings, actions for improvement are reviewed. This helps governors to hold these leaders to account for progress in their subjects more effectively.

**Recommendation 6: Improve the focus and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes;**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced many opportunities to gather more first –hand evidence, including lesson observations by senior staff, scrutiny of work and feedback from pupils. Many of the new processes are helping senior leaders form a more accurate view of the school's work.

Faculty self-evaluation reports are detailed and contain a helpful analysis of performance data. However, the reports are often too descriptive, and do not evaluate sufficiently approaches and processes in terms of their impact on standards. Generally, faculty evaluations of teaching and learning are too positive and do not identify key actions for improvement well enough.

The school self-evaluation report now provides a more accurate appraisal of the school's strengths and areas for development. The report contains a detailed analysis of performance data, but information gleaned from lesson observations and work scrutiny about pupil progress is too positive in many cases. The evaluation of teaching identifies many useful areas for development. However, this section of the report is also overly positive.

Faculty reviews provide a more incisive view of the strengths and areas for development in each subject. They include information from lesson observations by senior leaders, and joint observations by staff. They also draw from a useful summary of pupils' views and evidence from lesson observations and book scrutiny. However, it is not clear how faculties will implement improvements based on this information.

Lesson observations by senior staff and external reviewers are becoming a more regular feature of school life. There are agreed protocols and criteria for these observations. The criteria provide useful guidance for observers. However, the basic features of what makes a good or excellent lesson are not explicit enough to enable teachers to improve their practice.

Regular book reviews have helped middle leaders to identify good practice in assessment and areas for development. They have also helped them to assess pupils' progress more accurately. Senior leaders share an overview of outcomes from work scrutiny with staff. However, these processes have not yet helped to improve the consistency and quality of marking across the school, nor have they helped teachers improve pupils' standards in key areas, such as numeracy and literacy.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Tonypandy Community College  
Llewellyn Street  
Rhondda  
Penygraig  
RCT  
CF40 1HQ**

**Date of visit: June 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Tonypandy Community College is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2014.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards at key stage 3 and key stage 4;**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school continues to have a clear focus on raising pupil standards and has undertaken a range of suitable actions to address the shortcomings noted in previous monitoring reports. Overall, the standard of pupils' work shows improvement from that observed in previous visits.

In many lessons, pupils make sound progress. Most pupils show a positive attitude to learning and engage well with tasks. The majority maintain their concentration successfully throughout their lessons. Many recall prior learning well, and a majority apply their understanding successfully to new contexts. Most work productively in pairs and groups and many pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to their peers. A few pupils, when given the opportunity, demonstrate strong independence and resilience in their learning. In a few instances, pupils use self and peer assessment activities effectively to develop their understanding.

However, a minority of pupils across the ability range do not demonstrate sufficient independence in their learning. These pupils lack confidence when answering questions in written and oral activities. A few pupils do not listen well enough to their teachers, which limits their ability to follow instructions or to understand new knowledge or concepts. These pupils struggle to maintain concentration throughout their lessons. A very few pupils demonstrate poor behaviour which inhibits their learning and that of other pupils.

Many pupils write accurately and use subject terminology with confidence. A majority produced well-structured extended writing for a range of purposes and audiences. A few pupils produce sophisticated and thoughtful analyses of a range of source materials. However, a minority make too many basic errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar and do not structure extended pieces of writing well enough.

Many pupils have sound reading skills, and select relevant information from a range of sources to answer questions and carry out research well. A few demonstrate well-developed higher order reading skills, and make perceptive inferences and deductions. However, a few pupils do not read aloud with confidence, and have not developed a sufficient range of reading strategies to enable them to interpret unfamiliar words.

The majority of pupils make clear and thoughtful oral contributions to class discussion and group work, using a wide vocabulary which includes a sound grasp of subject terminology. However, a minority of pupils lack confidence in making oral responses and demonstrate a limited vocabulary when attempting to develop their answers.

Many pupils have sound number skills, and apply these skills well across the curriculum, for example when calculating angles of reflection in science. However, a few pupils demonstrate weak basic number skills.

**Recommendation 2: Improve behaviour in the lessons where pupils' learning is disrupted too much;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's behaviour policy continues to be applied well to improve standards of behaviour. The school provides appropriate support for pupils with challenging behaviour, and most staff apply sanctions consistently and in line with the school policy. As a result, most pupils behave well in lessons and show a positive attitude to their learning. However, in a very few instances, teachers are inconsistent in their use of sanctions and praise systems.

The use of restorative approaches is beginning to contribute well to the reduction of instances of poor behaviour and levels of fixed term exclusions. The rewards system is starting to have a positive impact on improving pupils' engagement in lessons.

The school provides useful support for supply teachers to help them manage behaviour successfully. However, in a very few lessons taught by supply teachers, there are still incidents of poor behaviour.

**Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment;**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school continues to have a suitable focus on improving the quality of teaching. The lead practitioner, supported by the senior leadership team, has undertaken a



range of effective strategies to support the development of good practice at a whole-school and individual level.

Nearly all teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge. Most have developed good working relationships with their classes and manage pupil behaviour well where necessary. These teachers produce well-prepared resources which are matched carefully to pupils' ability and engage them successfully.

In many lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan challenging activities which promote good progress and pace in learning. A majority make effective use of plenary activities to assess pupils' progress. In a minority of cases, teachers use effective questioning to develop pupils' responses. In a few instances, teachers use self and peer assessment techniques well to enhance pupils' understanding.

However, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not use questioning well enough to engage all pupils in their learning or to develop their responses. In these lessons, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their independence in learning. In a few lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to allow pupils to consolidate or reflect on their learning.

In most cases, marking is regular and up to date. However, there are inconsistencies within and between departments in the quality of marking. Many teachers use 'Close the Gap' activities well to help pupils improve their work. In a few instances, teachers are very effective in directing pupils to make substantial improvements to the quality of their work. However, in a few instances, teachers' comments are not clear enough about what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Many pupils respond to teachers' written feedback and a majority develop their work well in response to these comments. However, a minority of pupils make only brief or insubstantial changes to their work.

Many teachers monitor pupil progress carefully and give helpful oral feedback. However, in a few instances, teachers are overgenerous in their praise in both their written and verbal comments.

Senior and middle leaders use assessment data well to track progress closely and plan suitable interventions. This continues to have a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

**Recommendation 4: Improve provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including a focus on further improving work with primary schools;**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has continued to develop suitably its provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It has identified an appropriate range of opportunities across the curriculum for the teaching and assessment of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. However, these developments have not had enough

time to make a consistent enough impact on the standards of pupils' skills.

The school tracks carefully the progress that individual pupils and groups of pupils make in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. The school continues to provide effective interventions to help those pupils with weaker skills.

The literacy and numeracy coordinators provide valuable guidance for teachers on how to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in their subjects. This includes beneficial whole school and departmental training, and a handbook that identifies a wide range of useful strategies for teachers. However, at present, these strategies have not had sufficient impact on the standards that pupils achieve in lessons.

The transition teacher continues to work effectively with the school's partner primary schools. This has helped to develop a coordinated approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills as pupils move from key stage 2 to key stage 3.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of leadership and strengthen accountability across the school; and**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has focused suitably on refining and embedding existing practices. This is helping to establish a strong culture of accountability. The work of middle leaders is monitored closely by the senior team. Line management processes in many instances now ensure that deadlines are met and action points are addressed and reviewed suitably. However, these more robust procedures are not established securely in a few areas.

Many leaders analyse data well, but a minority do not implement strategies to improve the performance of specific groups of pupils effectively enough.

Many leaders focus well on strategies to improve the quality of teaching, including beneficial activities to share good practice. However, working groups for developing professional practice have not had sufficient impact on the quality of teaching.

Since the last visit, performance management targets have been revised appropriately. Targets are now suitably robust and are linked appropriately to pupil outcomes and standards of teaching.

The governing body continues to use its sound understanding of the school's performance well to hold senior and middle leaders to account, and to challenge any underperformance robustly.

**Recommendation 6: Improve the focus and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes;**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Leaders at all levels have been successful in establishing higher expectations and a greater level of challenge in lessons. However, a few leaders are not self-critical

enough in their evaluation of standards and the quality of teaching.

A collaborative culture for evaluating progress and improving planning is developing appropriately. Valuable strategies such as ‘buddy book reviews’ have been introduced since the last monitoring visit. End of term reviews are used suitably to inform departmental self-evaluation and improvement planning. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators provide worthwhile support to departments to improve planning for the development of pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills. However, the impact of these strategies in raising standards and improving the quality of teaching is variable at present.

Overall, improvement planning is suitably focused on identified areas for development. However, in a few instances, success criteria in departmental improvement plans are not robust enough.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Tonypandy Community College  
Llewellyn Street  
Rhondda  
Penygraig  
RCT  
CF40 1HQ**

**Date of visit: March 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Tonypandy Community College is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2014.

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

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards at key stage 3 and key stage 4;**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

In the last monitoring visit we commented fully on pupils' performance from 2015 data. Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to focus appropriately on raising standards. Pupil progress is tracked robustly and the school's data suitably informs leaders of current standards against all indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4. Unverified data following early entry of Year 11 pupils shows an improvement in the percentage achieving a GCSE A\* to C grade in mathematics and English language when compared with the 2014 cohort.

Pupils make strong progress in a significant majority of lessons. In these lessons, the majority of pupils recall prior learning well and make valuable contributions to class discussions. They give well-reasoned explanations for their answers and listen with respect to their peers and teachers. They provide valuable comments on each other's work. Many pupils read well and are able to skim and scan text effectively to extract information for a range of purposes. The majority of pupils organise their written work well and use subject specific terms appropriately. They have a sound working relationship with their teachers and support other pupils well. Most pupils

work well in groups or pairs.

In a few lessons, pupils work independently and do not rely on the teacher for support. In these lessons more able pupils are very effective in supporting their peers.

In a minority of lessons, pupils do not make enough progress. A minority of pupils in these lessons do not concentrate well enough and do not stay on task for the whole lesson. They lack confidence in their reading ability and the quality of their written work is weak. They make regular errors in their spelling and punctuation. A few pupils are not confident in discussing their ideas and do not expand their verbal answers sufficiently. In a few lessons, pupils are passive and are not fully engaged in their learning.

In the majority of subjects, many pupils write accurately and at length for different audiences and purposes. However, a few pupils do not use paragraphs confidently to structure their work.

In a few subjects, many pupils are competent in handling data, drawing graphs and deducing the correct method to solve problems. In key stage 3, the majority of pupils cope well with the numeracy requirements of work across the curriculum, in particular with mental calculations.

**Recommendation 2: Improve behaviour in the lessons where pupils' learning is disrupted too much;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Nearly all staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently to address instances of poor behaviour. The school records and uses information regarding incidents of poor behaviour well to support individual pupils and staff.

There has been a steady decline in the number of fixed term exclusions since the summer term 2015 to the end of February 2016.

The school has introduced a suitable rewards system and provided restorative training for staff. However, it is too early to see the impact of these changes on improving behaviour or further reducing the number of fixed term exclusions.

In most lessons, pupils behave well. In the very few lessons where pupils disrupt the learning of others, teachers act promptly and manage the situation effectively. However, in lessons taught by a few supply teachers, poor behaviour by a few pupils continues to limit pupils' progress.

**Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment;**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to provide useful training for all teachers that focuses on improving the quality of teaching. A seconded assistant headteacher provides strong leadership on teaching and learning. Her work is beginning to have an impact on the overall quality of teaching across the school. Working groups of teachers focus suitably on specific aspects of teaching that need improving.

In many lessons, teachers plan work that is interesting and engaging. They have strong subject knowledge and set suitable expectations for their pupils. Teachers in these lessons make effective use of a variety of teaching methods to ensure that pupils make strong progress. A variety of good quality resources complements the teaching well. Many teachers have a constructive working relationship with their pupils. In these lessons, they provide useful feedback to pupils and check progress regularly in order to help pupils improve their work. In a majority of lessons, teachers use a sound knowledge of the ability of individuals to tailor work skilfully to meet their needs.

In a minority of lessons, teaching does not enable pupils to make enough progress. In these lessons, teachers do not set an appropriate pace of learning. As a result, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to consolidate and demonstrate their understanding. In these lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to develop pupils' skills and their expectations are too low. In a few lessons, teachers do not question pupils well enough and do not challenge them sufficiently to expand their answers.

The school continues to take appropriate actions to improve its assessment practices. Regular book scrutiny by senior and middle leaders generally identifies suitable areas for improvement in the quality of written feedback. This is starting to have a positive impact on the quality and consistency of marking. However, in a minority of cases leaders do not pay sufficient attention to the impact that feedback has on the standard of pupils' work.

In most cases, marking is regular and up to date and has an appropriate focus on the accuracy of pupils' writing. However, in a few subject areas, the approach to marking is too inconsistent. The majority of teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, and use the 'close the gap' strategy well to ensure that pupils make suitable improvements. In a minority of cases, this helps pupils to develop their work substantially.

Senior and middle leaders use assessment data well to track progress closely and plan suitable interventions. This continues to have a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

**Recommendation 4: Improve provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including a focus on further improving work with primary schools;**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has strengthened its coordination of skills provision across the curriculum. This is beginning to have an impact on standards of



pupils' literacy and numeracy as seen in books and lessons.

All departments benefit from useful support provided by the skills co-ordinators and working groups. Many departments provide pupils with an appropriate range of opportunities to consolidate and use their literacy and numeracy skills. However, a minority of departments do not plan effectively enough for the development of these skills.

The school tracks the skills development of individual pupils closely. Departments are developing processes to assess specific strands of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. The school continues to provide useful interventions to improve the reading and numeracy skills of pupils with identified weaknesses. Pupils on these programmes are carefully monitored and as a result, make suitable progress.

The transition teacher continues to work well with partner primary schools to develop common systems for improving pupils' skills.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of leadership and strengthen accountability across the school; and**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to take appropriate steps to strengthen leadership, and this is making a suitable contribution to improving standards.

The remodelling of leadership roles continues to address suitably issues of underperformance in a few subject areas. The school has taken appropriate steps to ensure that good practice in middle leadership is shared effectively.

Line management processes are more consistent and are monitored closely by the headteacher. These arrangements now hold middle leaders to account more robustly. However, in a minority of cases, actions identified in line management meetings are not sufficiently specific or reviewed thoroughly enough.

Many middle leaders analyse performance data well, and have a suitable focus on improving standards and teaching. However, in a few cases, they do not identify specific areas for improvement in pupil standards clearly enough. The lead practitioner plays a useful role in helping to develop the range and effectiveness of teaching approaches.

Performance management systems are generally well focused on improving pupil outcomes, and in a few instances targets have been suitably amended to focus more sharply on raising standards. However, in a minority of cases, targets are not specific enough or measurable.

The governing body continues to offer an effective level of support and challenge to the school.

**Recommendation 6: Improve the focus and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes;**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has continued to respond positively to the areas for improvement noted in the last monitoring visit. Nearly all staff are aware of the key features of effective teaching. Middle managers have received worthwhile training in the skills of teaching and learning and recognising good practice. A beneficial culture of sharing good practice is developing within the school.

The school's overall judgement on the quality of teaching across the school is more robust than at the time of the last visit. Leaders use evidence from lesson observations to challenge underperformance when necessary and provide valuable support plans to support staff. However a minority of leaders do not successfully maintain a focus on standards of pupils' work, their progress and the challenge of the work set.

The faculty reviews undertaken since the last visit include fewer, more focused action points to address the areas for development identified. However, in a few of these reviews the success criteria for improvement are not precise enough.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Tonypandy Community College  
Llewellyn Street  
Rhondda  
Penygraig  
RCT  
CF40 1HQ**

**Date of visit: November 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Tonypandy Community College is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools/PRUs requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards at key stage 3 and key stage 4;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, there has been a clear improvement in pupils' performance at key stage 4. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics has improved by over twenty-one percentage points and has been slightly above modelled outcomes for the last two years. Although performance in the capped points score has declined since 2014, it remains in line with modelled outcomes.

Performance in the level 1 and level 2 thresholds has declined over the last two years, as has the proportion of pupils gaining 5 grades at A\* or A. However, performance in English, in mathematics and in the core subject indicator has increased substantially since 2014. Performance in mathematics is over twenty-four percentage points higher than at the time of the core inspection and now places the school in the upper half of similar schools. Performance at key stage 3 has also improved well in all indicators since the core inspection.

At key stage 4, the performance of both boys and girls has shown substantial improvement in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, in the core subject indicator and in mathematics. Boys' performance in English has also improved significantly. However, boys' performance remains below the family average in a majority of indicators, and girls' performance in half of them. At key stage 3, the proportion of both boys and girls achieving the core subject indicator has improved and is now above the average for similar schools for both groups of pupils.

Since the core inspection, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved by more than twenty percentage points in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics. There has also been a strong improvement in these pupils' performance in English and mathematics over the same period. However, overall, their performance remains below national averages. At key stage three, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving the core subject indicator has improved since the core inspection, and has been above the national average for this group of pupils for the last three years.

In many lessons, nearly all pupils engage well with their learning and make strong progress. Most pupils maintain concentration successfully and listen well to their teachers and their peers. Most pupils demonstrate good recall of their prior learning and many apply this effectively to new contexts. Most pupils work well both

independently and in pair or group work. These pupils present and organise their work effectively. A very few pupils struggle to maintain focus throughout their lessons.

Most pupils write clearly and accurately. Many produce well-structured extended writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences. A few pupils write at length with fluency and sophistication and deploy a variety of effective techniques. However, a few pupils make too many basic errors in their writing.

Most pupils demonstrate sound reading skills and are able to select relevant text to answer questions. Around half use inference and deduction well when interrogating written texts, and a few summarise and synthesise information effectively. However, a few pupils lack confidence in deploying suitable reading strategies.

Many pupils make worthwhile contributions to class discussion, supported by an appropriate grasp of subject terminology. A few provide well-developed and articulate verbal responses. However, a minority of pupils make limited contributions to oral work and are content to remain passive during discussion activities.

Many pupils have sound number skills and apply these well across the curriculum, for example when interpreting nutritional data in science.

**Recommendation 2: Improve behaviour in the lessons where pupils' learning is disrupted too much;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, there has been a marked improvement in the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school. Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and most show a positive and enthusiastic attitude to learning.

The school has developed strong processes for promoting good behaviour and it provides beneficial support for all staff to help them manage behaviour effectively. Most staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently and this contributes well to improving standards of pupil behaviour.

Senior and middle leaders monitor pupils' behaviour carefully. They provide effective support for those pupils with challenging behaviour. Where necessary, the school liaises closely with external agencies to support these pupils.

The rewards system has been refined successfully in light of pupil feedback, and it has a positive impact on pupils' engagement in their learning. The school's use of restorative approaches contributes well to reducing incidences of poor behaviour and to the continuing reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has deployed a wide range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and assessment since the core inspection. This includes valuable whole-school training and effective individual support for teachers. There is a strong culture of sharing good practice. As a result, the school has been successful in improving the quality and impact of teaching and assessment.

Nearly all teachers have established strong working relationships and clear routines with their classes. Most use carefully-prepared resources that engage pupils well and they are successful in involving the majority of pupils in class discussion. In many cases, teachers have high expectations, set clear learning objectives that link clearly to prior learning and plan their lessons carefully so that they are matched closely to pupils' ability. These teachers provide a skilful balance of subject and skills development. This helps many pupils to make strong progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

In a minority of cases, teachers use skilful questioning techniques to explore and develop pupils' understanding. However, in a minority of instances, teachers' questioning does not challenge or extend pupils' thinking sufficiently.

In most instances, teachers' written feedback provides pupils with helpful targets for improvement. 'Close The Gap' activities have a positive impact on pupils' progress in most cases and a minority of pupils make substantial improvements to their work in light of teachers' comments. Most teachers' feedback focuses well on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The school monitors pupils' progress very closely and plans effective interventions to support improvement.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including a focus on further improving work with primary schools;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has given a suitably high priority to improving the standards of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It has identified clearly a wide range of opportunities across the curriculum for the development of these skills. As a result, pupils' ability to apply successfully their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of subjects has improved substantially. This improvement is particularly notable in the quality of pupils' extended writing.

The school provides comprehensive guidance for teachers on how to incorporate the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills into their teaching. The literacy and numeracy coordinators provide beneficial training and individual support for teachers. As a result, many teachers plan activities that are effective in helping pupils

to consolidate and improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

The school monitors very closely pupils' progress in their literacy and numeracy development. It provides effective interventions to help those pupils with weaker skills.

The work of the transition teacher is effective in ensuring a coordinated approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across key stages 2 and 3. This has a positive impact on pupils' transition from partner primary schools into Year 7.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of leadership and strengthen accountability across the school; and**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, strengthened leadership has contributed substantially to improved pupil outcomes.

Senior leadership roles have been refined suitably and are understood well by all staff. The school has been successful in establishing a strong culture of accountability, and senior leaders hold middle leaders to account robustly for performance in their area of responsibility. Strengthened line management arrangements ensure that action points are addressed appropriately and promptly. Regular meetings between senior and middle leaders focus well on improving teaching and pupil standards, and ensure that suitable support and challenge is provided to all staff.

Most middle leaders are effective in their roles. They analyse pupil performance rigorously, which enables them to identify and address underperformance promptly and effectively.

The school has strengthened suitably its performance management processes. Objectives focus clearly on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and they align closely with the school's improvement priorities.

Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance. They provide regular and effective support and challenge to senior and middle leaders.

**Recommendation 6: Improve the focus and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has been successful in developing rigorous processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning. This has contributed well to improvements in pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching.

Most leaders use first hand evidence well to evaluate robustly all aspects of their work. They use a wide range of evidence, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and pupil feedback to identify clearly strengths and areas for



improvement. Their evaluations focus well on pupil progress and the impact of teaching and assessment practices. As a result, most leaders have a secure understanding of the school's performance. However, in a very few instances, middle leaders' self-evaluation reports are insufficiently evaluative or robust.

Quality assurance processes have been strengthened well to ensure the consistency and accuracy of self-evaluation activities. The school has been successful in establishing a strong culture of reflection regarding professional practice that has a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Identified improvement priorities at a whole-school and middle leadership level align clearly with self-evaluation evidence. Targets are suitably challenging and have clear timescales and measurable success criteria.

The governing body makes an effective contribution to the school's self-evaluation processes and plays an active role in setting its improvement priorities.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Tonypandy Community College  
Llewellyn Street  
Rhondda  
Penygraig  
RCT  
CF40 1HQ**

**Date of visit: October 2015**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Tonypandy Community College is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2014. As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards at key stage 3 and key stage 4;**

No judgement applied

At key stage 3, standards in the core subject indicator and separate core subjects have improved since the core inspection in November 2014. In 2015, performance in English and mathematics at level 5 or above is above the average for their family of schools and places the school in the upper 50% of similar schools in terms of free-school-meal benchmarks. While standards in science have improved slightly from the core inspection, performance in 2015 has fallen below the family average and in the bottom half of similar schools. Performance in the core subject indicator in 2015 is now above modelled outcomes.

At key stage 4, in 2015, provisional data indicates that there has been a significant improvement in level 2 English and mathematics. This has improved performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics and the core subject indicator. Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has improved by 19 percentage points from the time of the core inspection. This now places the school just above modelled outcomes, above the family average and in the lower half of similar schools based on free-school-meals benchmarks. There is a similar improvement in the core subject indicator. Standards in level 2 mathematics improved by 17 percentage points, and in English by 12 percentage points, moving the school's performance in these indicators from the bottom quarter to the lower half of similar schools. Both indicators are now in line with the family average from previously being well below the family average.

Provisional data shows that standards in the level 1 threshold and level 2 science improved by two percentage points in 2015, and the school's performance in these indicators remains in the upper half of similar schools and above the family average.

In 2015, performance in both the capped points score and level 2 threshold declined. Provisional data indicates that performance in these two indicators continues to place the school in the upper half of similar schools and above the family average.

At the time of the November 2014 inspection, performance in many GCSE subjects was weak. In 2015, many of these GCSE subjects continue to underperform.

At both key stage 3 and key stage 4, boys' performance has shown significant improvement in many indicators in 2015. At key stage 3, boys now perform better than girls in the core subject indicator, mathematics and science. This is an improvement from the core inspection when girls outperformed boys in all core subjects. At key stage 4, boys' performance improved by 20 percentage points in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, reducing the difference between their performance and that of boys in their family of schools to just five percentage points. However, the difference between the performance of girls and boys in this indicator remains over twice the difference seen nationally. This is the same as at the time of the core inspection. In English, boys have improved their performance in 2015 by 23 percentage points, although the difference between boys and girls in this subject remains much bigger than that in the family of schools. In mathematics, while boys improved their performance by 14 percentage points, girls improved by 19 percentage points and now perform better than girls in the family from previously underperforming.

At key stage 4, both pupils eligible for free school meals and those not eligible for free school meals made significant improvement in the headline indicators that include English and mathematics. Both groups of pupils now perform in line with similar pupils in their family.

At the time of the core inspection, more able pupils at key stage 4 did not achieve well enough in GCSE subjects. In 2015, provisional data show that the proportion of pupils who gained five A\* or A grades or equivalent qualifications declined and this proportion is lower than the family average, from previously being higher than the family average. In particular, very few boys achieved five A\* to A grades.

In around a half of lessons, pupils make good progress. In these lessons, most pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Many recall prior learning well and can apply this knowledge well to the new tasks in lessons. Many pupils listen well to each other and their teachers. They speak confidently and build on others' ideas to expand their opinions and arguments orally. Many pupils read with confidence and fluency.

However, pupils make limited progress in around a half of lessons. In these lessons, a minority of pupils do not develop their oral responses in group and whole class discussion. They lack resilience and confidence and show little understanding of previous learning. In a few lessons, a minority of pupils do not sustain concentration well, are frequently off-task or distracted. They struggle to participate productively in the lesson. Often this is due to tasks and materials that do not engage their interests and abilities well enough.

A majority of pupils use inference and deduction skills well in selecting relevant information from texts, developing their research skills and extending their knowledge suitably. However, a minority of pupils demonstrate brief responses to simple comprehension tasks. They locate simple features in texts but do not use reading strategies confidently enough to develop their analysis.

Around half of pupils demonstrate sound writing skills. They regularly correct spelling errors but only write extensively for a more limited range of purposes and audiences,

for example diary entries, letters and descriptions. A few more able pupils structure their writing suitably and develop vivid narratives and detailed essays analysing characters and themes well. However, the writing skills of around half of pupils are under-developed. They make basic errors in their punctuation and grammar and do not use subject specific terminology or a wider vocabulary to develop their expression or ideas well enough.

In books and lessons during the monitoring visit, where pupils are given the opportunity, many demonstrate sound number skills, including using their measuring skills well in science practical activities and in drawing accurate graphs.

**Recommendation 2: Improve behaviour in the lessons where pupils' learning is disrupted too much;**

No judgement applied

The school's behaviour system is well understood by staff and pupils. Information on incidents of poor behaviour is used suitably to target support to individual pupils. The school collects information about incidents of poor behaviour at an individual level and leaders are beginning to use this information appropriately to refine teaching strategies and inform planning for groups of pupils.

In many lessons, pupils behave well. However, a minority of pupils in a few lessons continue to disrupt the learning of others. The rate of fixed term exclusions for five days or fewer rose sharply in 2014 – 2015, compared with the figure noted in the core inspection for the previous year. For the year 2014 – 2015, the school's rate of fixed term exclusions was significantly above national figures. In addition, since the core inspection in November 2014, there have been two permanent exclusions.

The school has introduced an internal reflection room since the last monitoring visit as a way of reducing the number of fixed term exclusions. However, this is a recent development and while it is helping to reduce disruptive behaviour in lessons, it has not had a positive impact on reducing the rate of fixed term exclusions. In addition, the school has not put appropriate protocols in place for its use.

The school has reduced the number of supply teachers deployed from September 2015. Despite more stability among teaching staff, it is too early to judge whether this is having a more positive impact on pupils' behaviour and progress.

**Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment;**

No judgement applied

The school has continued to focus appropriately on improving the quality of teaching and assessment through whole-staff training on questioning techniques, creating a teaching and learning handbook for staff, and setting up teaching and learning working groups to tackle areas for improvement identified in the previous monitoring visit. The school has recently seconded a middle leader as associate assistant headteacher to lead on teaching and learning and professional development activities. As many of these actions are very recent, they have yet to have a

significant impact on the overall quality of teaching.

In around a half of lessons, teachers share clear learning objectives and plan engaging and well-timed sequences of activities that develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. In these lessons, teachers monitor pupils' progress regularly and provide beneficial oral feedback. They have high expectations and develop positive working relationships. Teachers use probing questions well to develop pupils' thinking and encourage more detailed oral responses.

In a minority of lessons, teaching is less effective. Teachers do not use questions effectively enough to develop all pupils' responses and deepen their understanding of topics and concepts. Expectations are not high enough in these lessons and teachers do not plan activities well enough to develop higher order reading skills or support the development of pupils' writing.

In a very few lessons, pupils make very limited progress because teachers do not plan well enough to match relevant and engaging resources to pupils' abilities. In these lessons, too much teacher direction limits the creativity and development of pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils become disengaged, inattentive and disrupt the learning.

The school continues to improve its assessment practices appropriately and this has led to a greater consistency of approach. Teacher marking and assessment is monitored routinely through work scrutiny exercises where strengths and shortcomings are identified. However, it is not always clear how areas for improvement, once identified, lead to changes in practice. Senior and middle leaders use assessment data effectively to track progress and identify pupils who require further support and intervention. Following this, the progress of these pupils is rigorously monitored in 'Raising Achievement Plan' meetings. This has had a positive impact particularly at key stage 4 on the 2015 examination performance in English and mathematics.

Nearly all work is regularly marked. Most teachers use positive comments on written feedback and a few teachers use the 'closing the gap' question well to create opportunities for pupils to expand their thinking and deepen their understanding. Overall, the use of the 'closing the gap' question varies too much and has limited impact in developing the quality of pupils' writing and thinking.

**Recommendation 4: Improve provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including a focus on further improving work with primary schools;**

No judgement applied

The school provides useful interventions to improve the reading and numeracy skills of pupils with identified weaknesses. Pupils on these programmes are tracked carefully and make suitable progress. The mathematics and English departments have adapted schemes of work appropriately to address identified deficits in pupils' skills. In 2015, pupils' performance in many of the national literacy and numeracy tests has improved. However, the performance of more able pupils has not improved

to the same extent.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has identified appropriate departments to implement the literacy and numeracy aspects of the national framework. Coordinators have recently set up working groups to support department leaders with this task. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these recent initiatives on developing literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Currently, the school does not have a clear overview of where and how well literacy and numeracy skills are being developed across the curriculum. As a consequence, it does not plan for and prioritise improvements in this area well enough. The school's useful handbook on improving teaching and learning does not provide sufficient guidance to staff on how to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in their subjects. As a result, in many lessons, teachers do not use strategies well enough to ensure that pupils develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively.

The transition teacher works well with partner primary schools to develop common systems for improving pupils' numeracy skills. However, there is no clear plan to develop a common approach in improving pupils' literacy skills.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of leadership and strengthen accountability across the school; and**

No judgement applied

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to develop worthwhile measures to improve the quality of leadership and strengthen accountability. This has made a valuable contribution in ensuring better performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics.

Since September 2015, the school has remodelled the leadership structure, reducing the senior leadership team to seven members. They all have well defined roles and most have clear line management responsibilities, many with an increased focus on teaching and learning. However, the allocation of responsibilities across the whole senior leadership team remains imbalanced. Middle leaders are developing their skills appropriately and processes for holding them to account are more robust than at the time of the core inspection. The remodelling of the faculties has contributed well in addressing issues related to the underperformance of a few middle leaders. However, since the last monitoring visit, the strategic development of leaders through training has been limited.

Regular line management meetings between senior and middle leaders have developed a greater degree of consistency of focus on teaching, learning and outcomes. However, many middle leaders are unclear about the specific strengths and weaknesses in teaching and pupil progress in their subject areas. Although there is an increased focus on developing teaching and learning across the school, it has not had a significant impact on standards in the lessons and pupils' work observed during this visit.



All leaders continue to be held to account well by the governors, through regular reviews and meetings on standards. In particular, the chair of governors provides strong support and challenge to leaders in the school.

**Recommendation 6: Improve the focus and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes;**

No judgement applied

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to strengthen its use of first-hand evidence to evaluate its work. Lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil feedback are all used systematically for this purpose. Evaluation, both at faculty and school level, is also informed by the robust analysis of data. The school self-evaluation report provides a generally accurate analysis of its strengths and areas for development. Its analysis of strengths and areas for development within teaching shows an increasing level of accuracy. The inspection team's judgements on the strengths and areas for improvement within teaching broadly match those of the school's. However, the overall judgement for the quality of teaching across the school in the self-evaluation report is still too generous.

Recent faculty reviews draw on a wide range of first-hand evidence and form a robust data base from which middle and senior leaders can evaluate performance and plan for improvement. The resulting action points are generally detailed and rigorous. However, there are too many action points for teachers to address them fully. As a result, similar actions carry over from one review to another without showing strong enough progress. Recent work scrutiny and lesson observations, particularly when they occur in paired contexts, have enabled the school to improve the accuracy of its judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. There are clear published criteria which outline the features of successful teaching. In addition, individual teachers are given specific areas for improvement as a result of lesson observations. However, overall, there is still an insufficiently strong shared understanding amongst staff about the key features of good and excellent teaching.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Ardudwy  
Ffordd y Traeth  
Harlech  
Gwynedd  
LL46 2UH**

**Date of visit: December 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Ardudwy is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in around four to six months to review progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### R1. Improve standards in key stage 4

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has introduced a number of sensible strategies in order to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. This includes beneficial training sessions to agree on a list of core features on which teachers will focus when teaching and assessing. Teachers have benefitted from the valuable opportunity to scrutinise the work of pupils from other secondary schools and the work of Year 6 pupils from partner primary schools in order to identify good practice. This has raised teachers' expectations as they see the level of challenge with which these pupils are able to cope. There are also purposeful opportunities for teachers to discuss and reflect on their teaching practices in 'Rhannu a Rhagori' (Share and Excel) groups. These strategies have had a positive influence on the school's culture, and many staff are more willing to discuss strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning. However, these strategies have not succeeded in ensuring that the quality of teaching and assessment is consistently good across the school.

Most teachers have sound subject knowledge and are good language models. They foster a productive working relationship with their pupils and encourage them to show a positive attitude towards their work.

Around half the teachers have high expectations in terms of pupils' commitment and what they are able to achieve. They explain concepts effectively and give clear instructions. When planning their lessons, these teachers give careful consideration to what pupils will learn rather than what they will do. They prepare a series of activities that build on pupils' subject knowledge and develop their literacy and numeracy skills effectively. The activities that these teachers provide offer a high level of challenge for pupils. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to work independently or in small groups, and monitor pupils' progress carefully. Where necessary, they intervene purposefully and provide valuable oral feedback.

In around a half of cases, shortcomings in teaching mean that pupils do not make enough progress. These teachers often plan tasks to keep pupils busy rather than giving careful consideration to what they can achieve, and ensure that this is at the heart of planning. In these cases, teachers do not nurture pupils' independent learning skills well enough.

A minority of teachers ask pupils probing questions and ensure that they think deeply and extend their responses. However, overall, a majority of teachers' questioning skills are limited and they are too willing to accept brief or superficial answers from pupils. As a result, they miss opportunities to reinforce learning and do not check pupils' real progress thoroughly enough. In a majority of cases, teachers give useful comments on pupils' work, which allow them to know exactly how to improve their work. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to improve their work based on feedback and ensure that pupils respond purposefully. In a minority of cases, the feedback that teachers note on pupils' work is not personal or specific enough for pupils to know how to improve their work.

### **R3. Improve provision to develop pupils' literacy skills**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R4. Improve the quality and effect of leadership at all levels**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R5. Improve the use of findings from self-evaluation activities to plan improvement**

Since the core inspection, the school has developed its self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements purposefully. Overall, leaders at all levels are beginning to use the information that is gathered from self-evaluation activities appropriately. They have an increasingly suitable awareness of strengths and areas for improvement. However, they do not yet use all of this information effectively enough to ensure improvements.

As a result of self-evaluation processes, leaders have identified the main priorities appropriately to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school has recently established a 'Rhannu a Rhagori' group in order to include teachers in the process and create a culture in which teachers are willing to discuss their own practice. To date, the group has agreed appropriately to act on five important areas for improvement. However, it is too early to evaluate the effect of this strategy.

The school has developed a calendar of self-evaluation activities appropriately in order to ensure that all quality assurance processes are clear to all. These include scrutinising pupils' work, observing lessons and seeking pupils' views. Leaders are beginning to act appropriately on findings after identifying areas for development. For example, as a result of consultation with a Year 11 forum, the school has adapted revision resources for GCSE examinations. Although leaders at all levels comply appropriately with the arrangements, they are not consistent or incisive enough in identifying and acting on important areas for improvement.

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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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Ardudwy  
Ffordd y Traeth  
Harlech  
Gwynedd  
LL46 2UH**

**Date of visit: July 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

The provider is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four to six months' time to inspect progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards in key stage 4**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, leaders have provided useful guidelines for staff on the features of effective teaching and assessment. They have identified key teachers who will work with the new deputy headteacher to lead teaching and learning from September onwards. The school has also begun to network with other secondary schools and officers from the regional school improvement service in order to expand opportunities for professional development and share good practice. However, the training that has been provided since the core inspection to improve teaching and learning has not been co-ordinated and implemented strategically enough, and has not had a positive influence on the quality of lessons. A majority of staff have not adapted and developed their methods effectively enough to improve their practice in the classroom. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is similar to what was seen during the core inspection.

Most teachers have an appropriate working relationship with pupils and manage behaviour effectively. Many have sound subject knowledge and are consistently good language models. A few teachers plan beneficial activities that ensure that pupils make strong progress in their knowledge and subject skills. These teachers

adapt their plans skilfully on the basis of effective assessment of pupils' previous progress.

In many cases, teachers do not plan lessons in enough detail to ensure that the level of challenge is suitable for all pupils. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils are able to achieve are not high enough. They also do not give sufficient consideration to pupils' previous achievement when planning. As a result, these lessons do not succeed in engaging pupils' interest, and the tempo of the lesson is often too slow. These shortcomings have a detrimental effect on the standards that pupils, including those who are more able, achieve.

A few teachers ask pupils probing questions and challenge them to deepen their understanding and develop their thinking skills and oracy skills. However, in many cases, teachers' questions are too superficial and focus only on checking factual information. These teachers do not probe pupils' conceptual understanding by asking them to explain their logic.

The school has recently adapted its assessment policy suitably. A majority of teachers provide useful written feedback on pupils' work, which allows them to know exactly what they need to do to improve. However, in a minority of cases, feedback is not specific enough and teachers do not explain clearly and consistently enough how pupils can improve the content and expression of their work.

### **R3. Improve provision to develop pupils' literacy skills**

Since the core inspection, the school has planned appropriate activities and strategies in order to improve provision to develop pupils' literacy skills. The new literacy co-ordinator works regularly with an experienced co-ordinator from a nearby school in order to plan strategically to develop pupils' literacy skills. The 'literacy leadership team' has given beneficial guidance to all heads of department on planning and presenting rich literacy tasks. In order to raise pupils' linguistic standards, the school has recently re-established a suitable marking code. However, there is too much inconsistency in teachers' use of this code and, overall, not enough emphasis is placed across departments on improving pupils' expression, either orally or in writing.

As a result of appropriate initial planning, clear guidelines have been set to support departments to develop rich literacy tasks for pupils. In a few departments, the effect of this planning work can be seen in pupils' books, but on the whole it is not consistent across the school. Planning to develop pupils' literacy skills is not co-ordinated enough to ensure appropriate progression and challenge to develop pupils' literacy skills.

The shortcomings in teachers' questioning skills mean that pupils are not given opportunities to respond at length and, by doing so, develop their oracy skills. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills, particularly their higher order reading skills, such as reasoning and coming to a conclusion. Overall, opportunities and guidance to nurture pupils' ability to write at length for different purposes and audiences are limited. Opportunities for pupils to be independent are limited by teachers' over-reliance on simple and superficial



worksheets. On the whole, these worksheets have not been planned skilfully enough and, as a result, this limits pupils' thinking skills and creative skills.

**R4. Improve the quality and effect of leadership at all levels**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

**R5. Improve the use of findings from self-evaluation activities to plan improvement**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

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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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Bryn Alyn  
Church Street  
Gwersyllt  
LL11 4HD**

**Date of visit: July 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Bryn Alyn is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4 and the progress that pupils make including the development of their skills**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve pupils' attendance and behaviour**

The school's own data for this year suggests that attendance has continued to fall and is much lower than at the time of the core inspection. The recent implementation of a wide range of strategies, including staff appointments and reallocated responsibilities, has not led to improved attendance.

The attendance of girls has fallen sharply since the core inspection and is a particular concern that has not been addressed. This has had a significant impact on whole-school attendance, the level of persistent absence and on the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a range of suitable strategies, including a stepped behaviour policy, to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. This policy is understood clearly by most pupils and they are fully aware of the sanctions for misbehaviour. During this visit, the majority of pupils behaved appropriately around the school and in lessons, where they generally displayed positive attitudes to learning. However, the inconsistent application of behavioural procedures and the lack of effective support for supply staff has contributed significantly to the high number of fixed term exclusions which has increased substantially since the core inspection.

Arrangements to support the behaviour policy include an electronic recording system. However, this is not used effectively as there is too much inconsistency in recording referrals by teachers and, until recently, by supply staff in particular.

At the time of the last visit, which coincided with the introduction of the 'Behaviour 4 Learning Policy', the overall number of referrals to 'Tawelfan' had risen significantly. The number of pupils being referred, including those with additional learning needs, has now reduced but remains high.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupils engage fully with their learning**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to focus appropriately on improving the quality of teaching and assessment. However, this has not led to sufficient improvements and has not had enough impact on the standards pupils achieve or the progress they make.

The school provides suitable professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop their teaching and assessment. Teachers benefit from sharing best practice identified in this school and in others. For example, in the teaching and learning forum, they share ideas on how to improve the learning culture and how to develop questioning. The school also provides helpful support plans for those teachers who most need to improve aspects of their work. However, overall these approaches are not having sufficient impact on pupils' learning.

Around half of teachers have a purposeful working relationship with pupils. They plan tasks that build well on prior learning and engage pupils suitably with a variety of interesting tasks. They share learning outcomes effectively and provide clear

explanations and instruction. A few teachers give constructive verbal feedback that helps pupils to make appropriate progress.

Many teachers ask closed questions to determine recall but only a few ask incisive, challenging questions. As a result, pupils do not extend their answers or deepen their understanding well enough.

Around a half of teachers do not provide an appropriate level of challenge to pupils. In these cases, the pace of learning is too slow. Often, this is because teachers talk too much and do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can do. In addition, teachers do not plan well enough to meet the needs of all pupils and use a limited range of strategies to ensure pupils' engagement.

A few teachers provide useful 'feed forward' written comments to inform pupils how to improve the quality of their work. As a result, in a few subjects, pupils expand their answers and deepen their understanding appropriately. However, the quality of teachers' comments remains too variable. In particular, the 'feed forward' comment is often not specific enough and there is considerable inconsistency in teachers' application of the school's marking for literacy policy.

#### **R4. Strengthen leadership at all levels including the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and the precision of improvement planning**

Since her appointment, the headteacher has focused suitably on strengthening leadership at all levels. She has challenged underperformance robustly, made significant changes to the senior leadership team and recently completed the restructuring of middle leadership roles for next academic year. These strategies have the potential to improve leadership and the quality of provision. However, it is too early to evaluate their impact and currently there is too much variability in the quality of leadership at all levels. Consequently, it has not led to sufficient or sustained improvements in the quality of teaching or to pupils' attendance, behaviour and the standards they achieve.

The headteacher provides suitable direction for the school and communicates her expectations clearly. This includes through recently introduced and suitably robust processes to manage the performance of staff, which focus appropriately on the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve. Line-management meetings now have common agenda and a primary focus on pupil progress. However, the rigour with which senior leaders support and challenge subject leaders is inconsistent, and the line management of achievement coordinators is underdeveloped. This contributes to too much variability in, and limited impact of, middle leaders.

There is a clear and well-understood calendar of quality assurance activities. The thorough review of pupil outcomes is helping to identify subject areas and leadership that are in need of improvement, though the same rigour is not applied to evaluating the work of pastoral leaders. Lesson observations and work scrutiny provide appropriate information on teaching approaches and compliance with the school's assessment policy. However, currently, neither takes sufficient account of the impact of teaching, learning opportunities and teacher feedback on pupil progress and particularly on the development of their skills. Consequently, it is very difficult for the school to make secure evaluations of the quality of teaching and to be precise in identifying those aspects that are most in need of improvement.

Since the core inspection, there have been some notable changes, including leadership, to the governing body, which is now beginning to challenge the school appropriately regarding its performance.

#### **R5. Provide robust financial management to eliminate the deficit budget**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.



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: Special measures**

**Ysgol Bryn Alyn  
Church Street  
Gwersyllt  
Wrexham  
LL11 4HD**

**Date of visit: December 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Bryn Alyn is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4 and the progress that pupils make including the development of their skills**

Most pupils display positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons. These pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and follow instructions promptly. A few pupils are easily distracted and do not sustain concentration throughout the lesson.

A minority of pupils recall prior learning well, such as when they recall the safety rules for using an abra saw in technology lessons. However, the majority of pupils do not have sufficiently secure recall of prior knowledge and struggle to apply their learning to different contexts. Overall, pupils' progress and potential is limited by the diet afforded to them in



lessons. The majority of pupils do not make sufficient progress because of low expectations regarding the quantity and quality of work they are expected to produce.

The minority of pupils express themselves well and explain their reasoning coherently, using subject specific terminology confidently. When given the opportunity, pupils engage enthusiastically in class discussion. However, the majority of pupils do not participate in discussions or offer only short, underdeveloped responses. In most cases, this is because they are not required to contribute verbally or are not prompted to develop their ideas or express their opinions in detail. The majority of pupils do not use subject specific terminology well enough.

Many pupils locate information efficiently and have a secure understanding of basic meaning in reading texts. For example, they gather information successfully from different sources about conditions in the trenches in World War I. A minority of pupils infer and deduce meaning successfully, but the majority do not use or develop these skills well enough across the curriculum. The majority of pupils do not analyse the style of writing in enough depth or detail and do not use technical terminology appropriately to support their analyses.

Many pupils organise their written work logically. They use paragraphs appropriately and punctuate their work accurately on the whole, though they make frequent spelling errors. The majority do not use a sufficiently rich and broad vocabulary in their writing. Pupils are eager to expand their vocabulary but do not always understand how to use new words in the right context. They do not have a sufficiently secure understanding of audience, purpose and tone when writing. The majority of pupils have creative imaginations and develop their creativity well when given the opportunity. In particular, they have well-developed empathy skills and write authentically about being a pauper in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or an orphan in Africa in their English lessons.

The majority of pupils use the four rules of number suitably. They apply these appropriately to calculate the mean, median and mode, and a minority have a sufficient understanding of factors, multiples and prime numbers. Many are able to draw an appropriate range of graphs in mathematics lessons and a few other relevant subjects. For example, they produce accurate line graphs showing the amount of oxygen produced by pond weed under different light conditions when studying photosynthesis in science. However, the majority of pupils struggle to apply their mathematical knowledge to more challenging and real life contexts. The minority of pupils do not label graphs correctly and the majority do not analyse findings from graphs well enough.

Many pupils are supportive of each other and interact well in pairs. However, pupils have limited opportunities to work in pairs and groups and do not develop these skills suitably. Pupils are, in general, eager to learn and improve. However, many are too passive in lessons and do not develop well enough as resilient, independent learners. This is largely because they are given too much help and tasks that are too easy. They are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their resilience and learn from making mistakes.

Performance at key stage 4 is weak, and shows little improvement since the core inspection. In 2019, performance remains well below expectations. The performance of pupils eligible

for free school meals in 2019, however, is largely in line with that of this group of pupils in similar schools.

## **R2. Improve pupils' attendance and behaviour**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

## **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupils engage fully with their learning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

## **R4. Strengthen leadership at all levels including the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and the precision of improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

## **R5. Provide robust financial management to eliminate the deficit budget**

The headteacher, business manager and Governing Body regularly monitor expenditure and consider carefully the impact of any planned spending in order to reduce unnecessary costs. They work closely with middle leaders to ensure that best use is made of available funds. These actions have supported the school well to reduce its outgoings and match spending appropriately to the school's priorities.

Leaders have worked successfully to eliminate the deficit budget and are projecting a small surplus budget for the current financial year. They conducted a beneficial exercise of reviewing all outgoings to ensure that all spending provides them with value for money. They made savings by making changes to the school day, for instance. They have also secured additional funding for projects to enhance pupils' learning involving reciprocal arrangements with European schools.



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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Bryn Alyn  
Church Street  
Gwersyllt  
Wrexham  
LL11 4HD**

**Date of visit: March 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Bryn Alyn is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4 and the progress that pupils make including the development of their skills**

A minority of pupils demonstrate secure recall of various topics including the nature of trench warfare and how rivers shape the landscape, and make suitable progress in lessons. However, a majority of pupils do not recall previous learning well enough and a few simply guess. These pupils often lack resilience and give up too easily when faced with an increased level of challenge including when they are asked to apply previous learning in different situations.

The majority of pupils listen to their teachers with attention and respect but those who do not miss instructions and important information that would be helpful to their learning. A minority of pupils collaborate suitably in group discussions on topics ranging from care of our environment to the creation of audience engagement in Bond films. A few pupils provide well-developed verbal responses when given the opportunity, though many pupils offer only very brief, underdeveloped responses or do not involve themselves in any forms of discussion.

A minority of pupils use inference and deduction suitably to enhance their understanding of characters in novels such as ‘Stone Cold’ and ‘Heroes’. Many skim and scan appropriately to find information on topics including the work of Martin Luther King, the social and historical context of specific literary texts and the benefits or otherwise of globalisation. However, pupils do not develop or use their reading skills frequently or often enough in different subjects.

More able pupils produce writing that is technically secure and structured suitably. This includes discursive pieces on the importance of forgiveness, and on relationships in ‘Romeo and Juliet’. However, many continue to make common errors in their writing and despite frequent completion of discrete language exercises, do not transfer that understanding and skill to their own work.

Many pupils understand area and perimeter, and ratio and proportion. A minority interpret graphs suitably on topics such as the distribution of Indian migrants and use a range of appropriate measuring skills. However, pupils’ construction of their own graphs is frequently careless and inaccurate, and does not lead to any meaningful conclusions or hypotheses being drawn. Overall, pupils do not use their numeracy skills well enough in subjects other than mathematics to solve real-life problems.

In 2018, the school’s performance at key stage 4 improved in every indicator. However, it remains weaker than that in similar schools, and most pupils continue to make less progress than expected.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, improved slightly, but remains well below expectation. However, performance in the capped points score which improved well is now broadly in line with expectation and the proportion of pupils achieving five GCSE grades at A\*-A is slightly above expectation following a considerable improvement in 2018.

In 2018, the performance of girls improved in every indicator and that of boys in the majority though, generally, both continue to do less well than their counterparts in similar schools. This is also the case with pupils eligible for free school meals despite their performance in 2018 improving in nearly every indicator.

## **R2. Improve pupils’ attendance and behaviour**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced appropriate procedures for improving behaviour. These include a useful framework of rewards and sanctions to reinforce positive behaviour which is understood clearly by pupils, applied consistently by many staff and monitored efficiently by the school. The school supports appropriately pupils who display challenging behaviour through the internal exclusion room (Tawelfan), interventions to address issues such as anger management and helpful links with outside agencies. However, too many pupils with

additional learning needs are placed in the internal exclusion room which limits the impact of the resource for those pupils and any others present at the time. In addition a minority of pupils demonstrate a lack of pride and interest in their work, and display negative attitudes to learning, which hampers their progress.

Very recently, the school has introduced more robust strategies to improve pupils' attendance. The school now rewards high attendance and reinforces the importance of it suitably through assemblies and parents' evenings, and with posters around the school. The school has recently set up helpful calendared meetings between senior leaders and achievement coordinators which focus appropriately on improving rates of attendance. Although the school now tracks attendance thoroughly, many of these initiatives are very recent and have had limited impact. Current attendance rates are below those at the time of the core inspection.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupils engage fully with their learning**

The school has introduced a useful range of relevant initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. However, these approaches have not contributed sufficiently to ensuring pupils make suitable progress and to raising standards.

There is a systematic programme of lesson observations and work scrutiny carried out by senior and subject leaders. Although these reviews do not focus sharply enough on pupils' progress, they are helping to identify strengths and specific areas for improvement in both teaching and assessment.

The introduction of subject learning plans that are shared with pupils is helping to promote consistency in teaching approaches and assessment arrangements. Action plans and personalised support programmes have been implemented for particular departments and individual staff where concerns about the quality of teaching and assessment have been identified. In the majority of cases, these approaches are contributing to improvements in aspects of provision although in a few instances progress is too slow.

Senior leaders have introduced a regular programme of professional learning activities to promote best practice in teaching and learning. This is beginning to address key priorities such as managing behaviour, raising teachers' expectations and increasing the level of challenge for pupils. However, these approaches are at an early stage and are not having sufficient impact on pupils' learning and the progress they make.

In around half of lessons, teachers plan suitable activities that build successfully on pupils' knowledge and understanding, and provide clear explanations of new topics and concepts.

In a few cases, teachers ask probing questions to encourage pupils to think carefully and to extend their understanding of particular topics such as the effectiveness of different types of weapons in World War 1. These teachers encourage pupils to extend their verbal responses and support them well to develop their subject-specific vocabulary. They help pupils to prepare for the requirements of GCSE examinations, for example by modelling effective responses.

Where teaching is less effective, pupils are not engaged in their learning and do not make sufficient progress. This is most commonly because the pace of learning is too slow and tasks are not matched well enough to the needs of different groups of pupils including those that are more able. Too often, teachers' expectations are too low and learning activities, such as undemanding worksheets, are not suitably challenging. In these lessons, teachers do not provide clear explanations or use resources effectively to help pupils acquire a secure understanding of new concepts. Teachers' questioning does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to think carefully and to provide extended verbal responses.

The school is taking suitable action to strengthen the effectiveness of assessment including a structured programme of formal assessments that is helping to identify those pupils who are underachieving and require further support. There is an increasing emphasis on the use of 'feed forward' diagnostic comments that is beginning to help pupils refine and improve the quality of their work. However, the quality of assessment varies too much both within and across subjects. In particular, advice to improve is not precise enough and there is inconsistency in the extent to which staff apply the school's literacy marking policy.

#### **R4. Strengthen leadership at all levels including the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and the precision of improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

#### **R5. Provide robust financial management to eliminate the deficit budget**

The headteacher and business manager monitor all expenditure carefully as the school continues to implement very responsibly the licensed deficit and recovery plan agreed with the local authority. The school is now projecting a surplus budget by the end of the next financial year in line with that plan.

Projected savings have been identified following reviews of the curriculum, the structure of middle-leadership and of the school day. The school has also placed successful bids to secure additional funding to develop transition arrangements, and

to enhance pupils' learning through a project involving reciprocal arrangements with other European schools.

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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: Special measures**

**Ysgol Bryn Alyn  
Church Street  
Gwersyllt  
Wrexham  
LL11 4HD**

**Date of visit: November 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Bryn Alyn is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4 and the progress that pupils make including the development of their skills**

Provisional data for 2018 indicates that the school's performance improved, albeit mostly slightly, in every indicator. However, it does not compare well with that in similar schools and pupils continue to make significantly less progress than expected.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, and in the capped points score, improved slightly but both remain well below expectations and compare poorly with that in similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A improved well but also remains below that in similar schools.

Since the core inspection, the performance of boys has improved in the majority of indicators and that of girls in many. However, the performance of both remains well below that of their counterparts in similar schools. In 2018, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals compares poorly with that of the same group of pupils in similar schools in many indicators.

## **R2. Improve pupils' attendance and behaviour**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

## **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupils engage fully with their learning**

Since September, the school has renewed its focus on improving the quality of teaching and assessment. Revised quality assurance processes identify broad areas for improvement, but do not take sufficient account of the impact of teaching and feedback on pupils' progress. This makes it very difficult for the school to identify precisely the aspects of teaching in particular that most need improvement. The school has implemented an appropriate and sensible programme of professional learning opportunities but much of it is very recent and it is too soon to determine whether it will support the improvements necessary.

In those lessons where pupils engage well with their learning and make suitable progress, teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils can do and match tasks well to meet their needs. These teachers have suitably high expectations of their pupils. They ask many open questions which probe pupils' understanding, and use a variety of approaches, such as structured group work, well.

Where pupils do not engage suitably with their learning or make sufficient progress, it is often because teachers do not consider well enough the ability and prior learning of all pupils. Their expectations of what pupils can do are either too low or unrealistically high, and they plan work that is either too easy or too hard which contributes to pupil disengagement. Pupils' progress is also limited by teachers talking too much and asking mostly closed questions. This slows the pace of pupils' learning, denies them opportunities to learn independently and does not encourage them to think deeply or develop their verbal responses. Other aspects which limit pupil engagement and progress, include an over-reliance upon undemanding worksheets and contrived literacy and numeracy tasks, which do little to develop or allow worthwhile assessment of pupils' skills.

The school provides useful professional learning opportunities that focus suitably on improving the quality of written feedback and pupil response. A minority of teachers apply the literacy marking policy consistently and provide pupils with useful comments on how to improve their work. However, in general, written feedback is not precise enough, nor do teachers ensure that pupils respond purposefully to their

## **R4. Strengthen leadership at all levels including the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and the precision of improvement planning**

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented relevant initiatives that have the potential to strengthen leadership and improve the quality of provision. However, there has been limited impact on the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve and there remains too much variability in the quality of leadership.

The recently appointed headteacher provides suitable direction and communicates expectations clearly, for example through the introduction of departmental learning plans. She has increased accountability for all areas of the school's work and revised the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team appropriately. This provides a suitable focus on the school's key improvement priorities including pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher now has appropriate overall responsibility for quality assurance, self-evaluation and performance management while the deputy headteacher leads on teaching and learning as well as staff professional development.

Line management at all levels has been strengthened to ensure a consistent approach that focuses primarily on the progress of all pupils, including those eligible for free school meals. The headteacher has refined performance management arrangements suitably to ensure that staff objectives relate directly to the standards pupils' achieve and the quality of teaching and learning.

There is a well-defined calendar of quality assurance activities. This includes a recently introduced, systematic approach to reviewing pupil outcomes and the effectiveness of leadership as part of departmental evaluations. This is helping to identify more precisely relevant areas for improvement and to implement suitable actions to strengthen these aspects, for example through 'rapid action plans'.

#### **R5. Provide robust financial management to eliminate the deficit budget**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

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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 Brynhyfryd  
Mold Road  
Ruthin  
Sir Ddinbych  
LL15 1EG**

**Date of visit: September 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Brynhyfryd is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2015.

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: Improve standards at key stage 4.**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has made strong progress in improving performance in all of the key indicators at key stage 4. Unverified data for 2016 shows that the school has made solid improvement in those indicators which include English or Welsh and mathematics in particular.

Unverified data for 2016 shows that performance in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics has improved on the static performance of the previous three years. This data indicates an improvement of nearly 10 percentage points on 2015 figures.

Unverified data indicates that performance in the core subject indicator in 2016 has improved by over 12 percentage points on both 2014 and 2015 figures. Outcomes in this indicator have placed the school in the bottom 50% of similar schools in each of the three years between 2013 and 2015.

Unverified data for 2016 shows that performance in the level 2 threshold has also improved significantly on previous years' figures. The data indicates that outcomes in 2016 are around 13 percentage points better than in 2015 when performance placed the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools.

Based on unverified data, performance in the level 1 threshold in 2016 is the school's strongest performance in the last four years.

Unverified data indicates that the school has reversed the declining trend in recent years in the proportion of pupils gaining five A\*-A grades. Performance in this indicator has improved by nearly eight percentage points since 2015.

During the last four years performance in the core subjects individually has been variable. Unverified data for 2016 shows that performance has improved well.

Unverified data shows that the performance of both boys and girls has improved in nearly all indicators in 2016. Boys' performance in English has improved and the gap in performance has narrowed. However, girls have made more gains than boys in the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics.

Unverified data shows that the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved significantly since the time of the core inspection. All of these pupils attained the level 1 and level 2 thresholds in 2016 and most gained the level 2 threshold including English or Welsh and mathematics. All pupils eligible for free school meals gained a level 2 qualification in mathematics.

Nearly all pupils behave very well in lessons and display a positive attitude towards their work. They maintain concentration well and move easily between tasks.

In many lessons, nearly all pupils recall prior learning effectively and build on this to make further progress and deepen their understanding. They use subject terminology confidently and make valuable progress in their subject knowledge and skills. In a few lessons, where pupils make exceptional progress, they apply newly gained knowledge and skills creatively.

Many pupils listen attentively in lessons and are confident when speaking in class and in pairs.

Many pupils write accurately for a wide range of purposes. In a majority of cases, pupils develop their thinking skills well and succeed in writing extended pieces of work. A few pupils develop strong, independent and creative writing skills, which engage the reader effectively.

Many pupils across the range of ability are competent readers. A minority of pupils develop higher order reading skills successfully and are able to support their opinions with sound evidence.

In general, pupils make sound progress in numeracy in lessons. However, pupils make insufficient progress in developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve the provision for skills, particularly literacy and information and communication technology (ICT)**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to restructure the leadership and provision for skills. This has led to greater consistency and clarity in the implementation of skills across the curriculum.

The literacy co-ordinator provides beneficial guidance and support to staff. As a result, there are suitable opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills within key stage 3 learning programmes and across the school. However, the process for tracking pupils' progress in literacy across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

The school has recently made appropriate arrangements to enhance the opportunities for pupils in key stage three to improve their reading skills. In addition, the school has introduced a targeted reading programme for pupils who require additional support. However, it is, too early to measure the impact of these initiatives.



The school has very recently appointed an ICT co-ordinator. However, the provision for ICT across the curriculum is at a very early stage of development.

**Recommendation 3: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and written feedback**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken positive steps in order to improve consistency in the quality of teaching within and across subjects. When planning and evaluating teaching, the school's attention is now firmly focused on the progress that pupils make during lessons. The school has developed carefully planned learning programmes, which clearly identify the skills, knowledge and understanding to be developed in all lessons.

In nearly all lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. In most lessons they plan effectively for pupils' learning and communicate clear learning outcomes.

In many lessons teachers, provide beneficial examples of work so that pupils understand fully what is expected of them. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills suitably by modelling key terminology and aspects of language that are important to their subjects. Many teachers establish good pace to their lessons and make effective use of questioning in order to reinforce learning.

In the majority of lessons, teachers provide work that is sufficiently engaging and challenging for pupils. However, in a few lessons, teachers provide too much support for more able pupils, which restricts the development of their ability to think and write independently.

In many lessons teachers provide valuable feedback that gives pupils clear direction on how to improve their work. Written feedback on pupils' work accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement and pupils respond positively to this. In addition, teachers effectively plan the next step in pupils' learning by providing them with challenging extension questions. As a result, pupils make further progress in their learning.

The school has implemented a clear policy on marking pupils' work and the quality of written feedback. As a result, there is now a high degree of consistency across all subjects. The school has developed a very useful tracking system, which enables leaders to analyse pupil progress at regular intervals. The implementation of these new systems has had a significant impact on outcomes at key stage 4 in 2016.

**Recommendation 4: Improve provision for pupils with additional learning needs across the curriculum**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, the school carried out a thorough review of its procedures to support pupils with additional learning needs. It has introduced robust

baseline assessments for all pupils on entry to the school. This has enabled the school accurately to identify pupils' needs and provide timely and appropriate support to meet their individual needs. The additional learning needs register is now accurate and up to date and the school has developed a useful wider matrix to identify pupils in need of additional pastoral support. The school has effective arrangements for regularly monitoring and tracking the progress of pupils on the additional learning needs register.

The individual development plans (IDP) are detailed documents, which contain a range of useful information to support pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream lessons. Most targets link well to pupils' identified needs. However, the targets in many of these are neither specific nor measurable. A few plans have clear success criteria. However, most teachers do not use the strategies in the IDP or access strategy document well enough to support pupils with additional learning needs in lessons.

The school has developed appropriate provision to support most pupils' literacy and numeracy skills during morning tutor sessions. The school makes effective use of specialist services to provide support for pupils with specific and complex needs. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for individual pupils in lessons. There is suitable provision for pupils with specific learning needs and complex needs in mainstream lessons.

At key stage 4, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress across nearly all performance indicators.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of leadership and ensure that there is rigour and consistency in improvement planning so that leaders at all levels are fully accountable for all aspects of provision and standards within their areas of responsibility**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, there has been a significant re-structuring of both senior and middle leadership, governance and the curriculum at Ysgol Brynhyfryd. The newly appointed headteacher places a very strong emphasis on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. He articulates a clear and precise vision for the school's improvement and is well supported by the effective senior leadership team. Leaders at all levels have been inspired by this vision, which focuses relentlessly on attempting to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

The wider distribution of leadership responsibilities now ensures that lines of accountability are clear. Underperformance is identified quickly and challenged robustly. Middle leaders play a particularly powerful role in securing improvement. The new faculty structure provides clarity and consistency in the implementation of school improvement strategies and effective accountability for progress and outcomes. Staff are held fully accountable for their own performance and heads of faculty provide effective support and challenge to teachers in their teams. As a result, there is a strong sense of team work and a common pursuit of improvement.

Whole-school self-evaluation and quality assurance processes are comprehensive and thorough. Leaders have identified correctly the strengths and areas for development and have prioritised those areas that require most urgent improvement. As a result, there has been a significant improvement in outcomes in key performance indicators at key stage 4 in 2016. The school's analysis of its current performance is honest and accurate, and leaders recognise that progress in a few important areas has been slow. However, there are well-considered plans to address these shortfalls.

Middle leaders' contribution to self-evaluation and quality assurance processes is developing well. New faculty team improvement plans are of consistently good quality and include a detailed and transparent schedule to monitor progress. The school's curriculum leader monitors developments closely through regular and focused line management meetings.

In a short period of time, the school has implemented a range of policies that have secured improvements in teaching and learning. These include well-planned subject learning programmes, a clear assessment calendar and a sophisticated pupil tracking system.

#### **Recommendation 6: Strengthen partnerships with parents**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened relationships with parents. There is a clear communication strategy and parents are now notified of all new developments at the school. The recent appointment of a communications officer ensures that parents and the local community are well informed about the life and work of the school.

The school now actively encourages parents to be involved in their child's learning. The learning programmes inform parents about their child's learning in lessons and through homework and how they will be assessed every half-term. The school places a strong emphasis on responding to parental feedback and concerns. For example, it has recently reviewed its approach to target-setting in response to concerns raised by parents.

Parents make a valuable contribution to improvements at the school. The parent forum effectively strengthens the link between the school and parents. A wide range of well-attended open evenings makes sure that parents are firmly supported in helping their children move on to the next stage in their learning.

#### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle  
Ffordd Y Brenin  
Penygroes  
Gwynedd  
LL54 6RL**

**Date of visit: October 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools that require special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school's performance in nearly all key indicators in key stage 4 has improved. Provisional data for 2016 represents the school's best ever performance in most of these indicators, and shows further progress on the improvements that were seen in 2015.

In the indicator that includes five grade A\*-C GCSEs including English or Welsh, and mathematics, data for 2016 shows that the school's performance has increased by nearly ten percentage points since the core inspection. This places the school in the lower half of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, and closer to the modelled outcomes than at the time of the core inspection.

Performance in the core subject indicator and the capped points score has also improved since 2014, but continues to place the school below the family average and in the lower half of similar schools in terms of eligibility for free school meals.

The school's performance in the level 2 threshold has improved by over nine percentage points since 2014. The school's performance in the level 1 threshold has also improved, and places the school in the top quartile of similar schools based on the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals for the second consecutive year.

In the indicator that includes five grade A\*-A GCSEs, the school's performance has declined since the core inspection.

Performance in Welsh at level 2 has improved since 2014 and places the school in the top quarter of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals. Although performance in English at level 2 improved in 2015, the school's performance in 2016 has declined and is very similar to the performance at the time of the core inspection. Performance in English places the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools.

In mathematics at level 2, the school's performance has improved by 13 percentage points since the core inspection in 2015. However, this continues to place the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals. Performance in science at level 2 has improved since 2014 and places the school among the top quarter of similar schools.

Since the core inspection, boys' performance has improved in nearly all key indicators in key stage 4. Data for 2016 shows that boys' performance has improved significantly in the indicators that include Welsh or English and mathematics. Girls' performance has also improved in a majority of indicators, including mathematics and science. However, girls' performance has declined in Welsh, English and the capped points score since 2014.

Since 2014, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals has improved in around half of the key indicators in key stage 4. However, these pupils' performance in the level 2 threshold that includes Welsh, English and mathematics has declined.

In nearly all lessons, nearly all pupils are very well-behaved and show strong motivation to learn and work. They respect their teachers, listen carefully and respond positively to tasks. Nearly all pupils work together productively in pairs or in a group. Most pupils recall previous information successfully and apply their knowledge and understanding skilfully when making progress in their learning.

In most lessons, many pupils make valuable progress in thinking skills when responding creatively to tasks and when solving problems. They show maturity when working independently and take responsibility for their own learning. In these lessons, many pupils develop effective reading strategies and show their robust translanguaging skills. A majority of pupils write correctly and at length, and use subject vocabulary correctly and appropriately. Many pupils make sound progress in their Welsh communication skills. However, in general, many pupils lack confidence when speaking in English lessons, and they do not offer extended answers orally.

Many pupils use number strategies effectively in a variety of contexts. A majority show appropriate and skilful calculation skills when using the four number rules independently. However, pupils only apply their information and communication skills appropriately in a few subjects.

In a very few lessons, a minority of pupils do not concentrate sufficiently and do not listen carefully enough. As a result, these pupils do not make the expected progress in line with their age and ability.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the robust focus on improving teaching and assessment across the school has had a positive effect on pupils' standards throughout the school, particularly the progress that many pupils make in lessons.

In a few lessons, teachers plan in great detail and ensure a clear structure and ambitious objectives. In these lessons, there is a series of coherent activities and a lively pace, which ensure progress. In addition, teachers use a wide range of teaching methods, for example probing questions that engage pupils' interest and challenge them to achieve to the best of their ability.

In most lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge and are robust language models. In these lessons, teachers have a productive working relationship with their pupils and they control the class effectively. They plan lessons purposefully and carefully in order to ensure that pupils make progress. They offer challenging and interesting tasks that give pupils opportunities to discuss and develop their oracy skills and thinking skills successfully. Teachers in these lessons present and explain information clearly. Many teachers circle the classroom regularly in order to lead pupils and offer appropriate challenge and support.

In a very few lessons, teachers do not plan tasks coherently enough to ensure that their pupils make progress. In these lessons, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking, reading and communication skills.

**Recommendation 3: Strengthen and ensure consistency in the provision for literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and for more able and talented pupils**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the provision for skills. In addition, provision for more able and talented pupils has improved.

In literacy in Welsh, the school now has appropriate policies and beneficial arrangements that ensure suitable provision for pupils, for example resources of a high standard to use in weekly morning sessions. The school has provided useful support to departments to devise rich and extended tasks for pupils. As a result, teachers set valuable literacy tasks for pupils in key stage 3.

Procedures to raise standards of English literacy are developing appropriately; for example, pupils improve their standards of language through specific exercises that arise from the 'language rule of the week' scheme. The school tracks pupils' progress in literacy appropriately. However, arrangements for monitoring progress have not led to raising standards of English in key stage 4.

In general, teachers ensure that pupils complete beneficial 'language at work' literacy tasks in their subjects. However, a few teachers do not correct pupils' elementary language errors and spelling errors consistently enough.

Since the core inspection, the school has proceeded to improve provision for numeracy appropriately. This includes introducing a suitable numeracy policy and a useful number booklet for teachers in order to ensure consistency in learning methods for elements of numeracy. The co-ordinator works positively with relevant departments to evaluate and refine their number tasks, and the number of departments that deliver appropriate number activities has increased. Beneficial weekly activities are arranged for pupils in key stage 3, such as 'Tackling Number' (Tacllo Rhif). The school analyses the results of number tests carefully. However, leaders do not make detailed enough use of evidence of pupils' performance in lessons and external tests to plan effectively for the most able pupils.



Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the core inspection. Teachers in an increasing number of subjects set suitable and interesting tasks that have been levelled appropriately. Following a recent audit to discover the staff's development needs in this area, the school has provided appropriate training for a few teachers. However, there is no coherent plan in place to expand teachers' skills further.

The school has made appropriate progress in the provision for more able and talented (MAT) pupils since the core inspection. Many teachers now have a culture of challenging MAT pupils, and there are careful arrangements to monitor these pupils' performance. MAT pupils are given valuable and regular opportunities to voice their opinion on the quality of learning and teaching with teachers.

Managers place robust expectations on departments to ensure challenging experiences and tasks for pupils. However, there is not enough consistency in the provision for more able pupils across the whole range of subjects. Despite progress in the provision for more able and talented pupils, this has not had enough of an effect on standards in key stage 4.

**Recommendation 4: Develop the role of leaders at all levels so that they undertake their strategic responsibilities fully**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The governing body has appointed a new headteacher since the core inspection. The headteacher has a clear and ambitious strategic direction, and she shares this unambiguously with all of her staff. With robust support from the senior leadership team, the headteacher sets a strong focus on raising standards, improving the quality of teaching and assessment, and strengthening leadership.

Nearly all middle leaders are fully committed to the headteacher's vision. Leaders understand their roles and responsibilities in full, and there is a high level of accountability attached to these responsibilities. The school has provided useful training for middle leaders on analysing and evaluating standards in their departments. As a result, most of the departmental self-evaluation reports are detailed, and are honest and accurate evaluations of standards and the quality of teaching and leadership. Whole-school priorities have been incorporated appropriately in departmental improvement plans, along with areas for improvement that derive directly from the departmental evaluations.

The school operates a robust system of conducting and recording management meetings at all levels. This has led to clear and beneficial communication between the senior leadership team and middle leaders. Link managers monitor the work of middle leaders carefully.

The governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's standards of achievement. The school has established a quality monitoring sub-committee to monitor progress against the recommendations from the core inspection. The committee conducts regular meetings in order to monitor and challenge the school's performance. These arrangements have succeeded in raising standards in many indicators, and have improved the quality of provision and leadership since the core inspection.

As a result of a consistent focus on improving the quality and consistency of leadership, the school has succeeded in making improvements in many important indicators in key stage 4.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen the continuous professional development programme for staff and ensure that there is more focus on improving learning and teaching and the quality of leadership**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, the school has given priority to raising standards of learning and teaching appropriately by producing a comprehensive and purposeful programme of training by internal and external providers; for example, a series of beneficial training sessions were given on the features of good teaching, such as effective questioning and developing reading strategies.

The school has delivered valuable guidance on important issues, such as scrutinising pupils' work and forming a judgement on standards and the quality of teaching when observing lessons. Leaders have conducted beneficial cross-school activities, such as a 'book scrutiny fair' in order to share good practice. The ability of leaders at every level to evaluate performance data and the standard of pupils' work in books and lessons has now been strengthened significantly.

Senior leaders have provided intensive support to departments and individual staff that need to improve, and this has had a positive effect on teaching and learning in most cases. There is now an orderly staff performance management cycle in place. The school deals with the very few cases of underperformance by staff robustly and appropriately.

The school has provided appropriate training on strategies to raise the level of challenge for pupils in lessons. Recently, as a result of consultation with pupils, a few departments have created a series of valuable extended tasks for more able pupils. It is too early to measure the effect of these on pupils' standards.

As a result of appropriate and beneficial training for staff, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of learning, teaching and leadership throughout the school since the core inspection.

**Recommendation 6: Improve pupils' and parents' contribution to decisions at the school**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a number of successful procedures that have ensured a significant increase in the contribution of pupils and their parents to the school's work.

The school council's status has been raised since the core inspection, and there is now a regular routine to their meetings. The school council makes an appropriate contribution to the school's self-evaluation arrangements. The council conducts

mature discussions on important issues, such as the quality of teaching and learning, and schemes to promote reading. It has also contributed valuable comments on the new reward system.

The school's links with its parents have improved significantly. The school provides an interesting and beneficial termly newsletter for parents. The school communicates effectively with parents through the website and shares important information, for example the school's performance data. There are useful parents' evenings on specific educational issues, for example parents' contribution to supporting their children's work. The school conducts a valuable forum for parents in order to discuss important issues.

Since the core inspection, the school has made appropriate use of questionnaires on the views of parents and pupils to plan for improvement. Many departments seek pupils' views on specific elements of their lessons, and make sensible changes as a result of these.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to maintain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations in which further progress is needed.



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 Gyfun Aberaeron  
Stryd Y Fro  
Aberaeron  
Ceredigion  
SA46 0DT**

**Date of visit: January 2016**

**by**

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

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## **Outcome of monitoring visit**

Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2014.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in approximately six months to monitor progress against the recommendations.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's performance in each of the important indicators in key stage 4 has improved since the core inspection in 2014. However, the school has not made sufficient progress in the important indicators including English or Welsh, and mathematics. In these indicators, the school's performance continues to place it in the bottom 25% of similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

In the indicator that includes 5 GCSEs grade A\*-C including English or Welsh, and mathematics, the school's performance has improved by 6.5 percentage points since 2014, but is lower than in 2013. This performance is significantly below the modelled outcomes for the second consecutive year. This continues to place the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools and below the family average. Performance in the core subject indicator is also better than in 2014, but lower than in 2013, and places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools and below the family average.

There has been very little change in the capped points score since the core inspection and it is close to the modelled outcomes for the second consecutive year. However, the school's performance continues to be below the family average and in the lower 50% of similar schools in 2015.

Since the core inspection, the school's performance in the level 2 threshold has improved and places the school in the upper 50% of similar schools and above the family average. The school's performance in the level 1 threshold has also improved; however, despite this, it places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools and below the family average.

In the indicator that includes 5 GCSEs grade A\*-A, the school's performance has declined since the core inspection and has decreased by 10 percentage points since 2014. The school's performance is among the lowest in the family in 2015.

Performance in Welsh at level 2 has improved by 13.3 percentage points since 2014 and is higher than in 2013. This is above the family average and in the upper 50% of similar schools in terms of eligibility for free school meals. Performance in English at

level 2 has improved by 9.4 percentage points since 2014 and is above the family average. However, it continues to place the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools.

In mathematics at level 2, there has been very little improvement since 2014. The school is in the bottom 25% of similar schools and below the family average for the second consecutive year. Although performance in science at level 2 has improved by 10.8 percentage points since the core inspection, it continues to place the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools and below the family average.

The performance of boys and girls has improved in most indicators in key stage 4; however, it continues to be below the family average in the majority of indicators.

Since 2014, the performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals has improved in the majority of indicators in key stage 4, but is significantly lower than in 2013. In the level 2 threshold including Welsh or English, and mathematics, performance has remained the same as in 2014 and continues to be below average for the family and Wales.

In most lessons, most pupils show strong motivation and are very willing to learn and work. They behave very well and are very supportive of each other.

In the majority of lessons, many pupils make progress that is appropriate for their age and ability. In these lessons, many pupils apply and recall previous learning effectively. They work independently successfully but also work together beneficially in pairs and groups. In the majority of lessons, many pupils write confidently and at length and use subject-specific words correctly and appropriately. In relevant lessons, many pupils demonstrate strong numeracy skills and complete challenging numeracy tasks successfully.

In a minority of lessons, a few pupils make sufficient progress. In these lessons, few pupils reach the standards that are appropriate for their age and ability. They do not apply their skills or knowledge successfully. A minority of pupils are too passive and ask for help immediately before attempting to complete tasks independently.

The school has improved its systems for tracking progress and has introduced a detailed and useful procedure. However, tracking performance and targeting pupils in the main indicators in key stage 4 are not sufficiently coherent and clear.

## **Recommendation 2: Strengthen provision for literacy and numeracy skills**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the inspection in November 2014, the school has improved provision for literacy and numeracy skills. The school has strengthened literacy provision for Year 7 by co-operating effectively with partner primary schools. The valuable work of the numeracy learning community can be seen in the effective numeracy tasks within relevant departments.

The school has created a suitable and useful portfolio of good practice in literacy and numeracy. Appropriate use is also made of posters and the school's intranet to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills. However, best practice does not permeate to all subjects across the curriculum. In addition, there continues to be a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop higher order literacy and numeracy skills in lessons.

Relevant sessions to reinforce literacy and numeracy are held on a weekly basis. However, the school does not measure pupils' progress in the sessions. As a result, the school is unable to evaluate the effect of this provision clearly.

The school has an appropriate policy for providing comments on literacy or numeracy when marking. In the best examples, there are useful suggestions for pupils on how they can improve their literacy and numeracy skills. However, the school does not ensure that good practice occurs consistently across subjects.

The school has a support programme for pupils who need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. However, the school does not analyse effectively which aspect of skills prevent pupils from making progress. In addition, the school does not evaluate the suitability and effectiveness of the support programmes sufficiently.

Despite the attempt to improve provision for literacy and numeracy, it has not had an appropriate effect on standards in Welsh, English and mathematics.

### **Recommendation 3: Develop provision in order to promote the Welsh language more effectively**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced many changes that have been successful in promoting Welsh more effectively. The school has appointed an officer to focus specifically on promoting the Welsh language and this has led to a number of improvements. These include the popular 'Welsh for All' ('Cymraeg i Bawb') club, practical support for teachers who lack confidence in using the Welsh language and beneficial use of members of the sixth form as language champions. However, in English-medium lessons, there is not enough use of the Welsh language to promote pupils' bilingualism. For example, there is not enough use of subject terms in both languages.

The number of pupils who study Welsh as a first language has increased since the core inspection, significantly in key stage 3. Strengthening provision in the immersion groups in Year 7 and Year 8 has enabled more pupils to reach the appropriate standard to study Welsh as a first language. In key stage 4, the number of pupils who study examination subjects through the medium of Welsh has also increased. Over 80% of Year 10 pupils now study at least three examination subjects through the medium of Welsh. The results of pupils who study non-core subjects through the medium of Welsh are strong. However, pupils are only able to study a minority of subjects through the medium of Welsh.



Standards in Welsh as a first language and Welsh as a second language in key stage 4 have improved. However, a few pupils continue to study Welsh courses that are not appropriate for their linguistic ability.

**Recommendation 4: Improve and ensure consistency in the quality of teaching, and ensure that there is enough challenge for more able pupils**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, leaders have increased the focus on improving and ensuring consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school. The school has strengthened and honed its lesson observation practice and monitoring pupils' work, and this has led to a better understanding among staff of the qualities that contribute to a successful lesson.

The lesson observation structure has been strengthened. Senior leaders and middle leaders monitor lessons regularly and there is now an appropriate focus on pupils' standards and the progress they make in lessons. As a result, leaders have a better overview and understanding of the aspects of learning that are a strength and the areas to be improved. However, too many areas for improvement have been identified and they have not been prioritised appropriately. In addition, there are no purposeful plans to respond to the most important issues that require attention.

In the majority of lessons, teachers plan purposefully to develop pupils' skills and build on their progress. In these lessons, teachers have a productive working relationship with pupils along with appropriate expectations of them. Lessons have a sensible progression and suitable pace, along with use of a variety of purposeful resources. Teachers give clear instructions and check pupils' understanding regularly. As a result, many pupils are able to work independently and produce work of an appropriate standard.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan purposefully to ensure that pupils make the necessary progress. In these lessons, teachers do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough and they do not make enough use of exemplifying work. Teachers in these lessons do not allocate enough time or offer enough opportunities to develop pupils' thinking skills and independent learning skills. In addition, questioning is not used effectively to prompt and extend responses.

In a few lessons, teachers plan purposefully to set beneficial tasks that are adapted to individuals' needs. They provide effective support to less able pupils and set a necessary extensive challenge for more able pupils. However, most teachers do not plan skilfully enough to ensure that there is enough of a challenge for more able pupils.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen the role of middle managers by ensuring that they are fully accountable for the standards and quality of teaching in their departments**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2014, the school has tightened processes that hold middle managers to account. Meetings between middle managers and their link in the senior leadership team now occur more regularly. These meetings have a more robust structure and there is valuable progression to the actions that are identified. The focus of these meetings on standards and on teaching and learning is robust. One useful development is the way in which leaders review progress and achievement against their priorities regularly with their line manager.

Useful support to core department leaders has been provided through the local consortium and through the support of the senior leadership team. However, this support tends to be for day-to-day issues and there is a lack of training to develop their role as strategic leaders.

In general, middle managers focus more on teaching and learning than in the past and there is more consistency in terms of the quality of their evaluation and planning work in comparison with the time of the core inspection. Another aspect that is being developed suitably is the role of progress managers in tracking pupils' attainment in addition to their pastoral work. However, there remains inconsistency in the quality of middle managers and non-core department heads have not received enough support to develop them as leaders.

The performance management system has been strengthened since September 2015 and targets for middle managers are incisive, with a robust link to pupils' performance and standards of teaching.

In order to ensure increased accountability, the senior leadership team monitors middle managers' work more rigorously. For example, they use findings from scrutinising work and lesson observations to hold middle managers to account more effectively. This has led to a better standard of work in the books that were seen. However, this has not had enough of an effect on standards of achievement, particularly in key stage 4.

**Recommendation 6: Strengthen the rigour of self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes at a departmental level and a whole-school level**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2014, the school has taken appropriate steps to improve the quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes, at whole-school level and departmental level. A useful calendar for these processes ensures that leaders evaluate consistently and plan in a timely manner.

Leaders at all levels are continuing to develop their understanding of performance data and make useful comparisons with similar schools. As a result, their evaluation is more honest and realistic than at the time of the core inspection. However, leaders' use and understanding of data in all of its detail are inconsistent.

Reviews of the mathematics and science departments in their new form provide detailed and beneficial evidence of their performance. However, it is too early to

measure the effect of these reviews on standards.

The whole-school self-evaluation report is a valuable document that is generally evaluative. Middle managers produce a suitable self-evaluation document in the same form. In many reports, there is rigorous analysis of results and clear evaluations based on a suitable range of evidence. However, in a few reports, statements are too descriptive and the link with direct evidence is not clear.

The revised school development plan is based on the post-inspection action plan. It includes appropriate success criteria, specific dates for achieving them and the responsibilities of key staff. The school now has useful arrangements to evaluate progress against aspects of this plan on a weekly basis.

Senior leaders have provided a useful template for departments for planning improvement and, as a result, plans are much more consistent in terms of form and content. Most plans give due attention to pupils' standards and link suitably with the school development plan. However, middle managers are unsure about whole-school priorities.

The school seeks the views of pupils and parents on a few issues, for example pupils' views on departments that are reviewed. However, this aspect has not been developed comprehensively.

Governors are beginning to develop a better understanding of progress against the school's priorities, for example through link meetings with managers who are responsible for post-inspection recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve upon this progress, the school should address those inspection recommendations in which further progress is required.



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 Gyfun Aberaeron  
South Road  
Aberaeron  
Ceredigion  
SA46 0DT**

**Date of visit: October 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools in need of significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2014, the school's performance in nearly all key indicators in key stage 4 has improved. Provisional data for 2016 represents the school's best ever performance in most of these indicators and shows further progress on the improvements that were seen in 2015.

In the indicator that includes five GCSE grades A\*-C including English or Welsh, and mathematics, provisional data for 2016 shows that the school's performance has increased by 16.7 percentage points since the time of the core inspection, and 10.2 percentage points since 2015. Performance in the core subject indicator in 2016 is also significantly higher than in the two previous years.

There has been very little change in the capped points score since the core inspection.

According to provisional data, the school's performance in the level 2 threshold has improved by 10.3 percentage points since 2014. The school's performance in the level 1 threshold has also improved.

In the indicator that includes five GCSEs grades A\*-A, the school's performance has declined since the core inspection.

Performance in Welsh at level 2 has improved by 3.8 percentage points since 2014, but is lower than in 2015. Performance in English at level 2 has improved by 11.5 percentage points since the core inspection, but remains lower than in 2013.

In mathematics at level 2, the school's performance has improved by 11.5 percentage points since the core inspection in 2014. Performance in science at level 2 has improved by 24.7 percentage points since 2014, and 13.9 percentage points since 2015.

Since the core inspection, boys' performance has improved in nearly all key indicators in key stage 4. Provisional data for 2016 shows that boys' performance has improved significantly in the indicators that include English and mathematics. However, boys' performance in Welsh has declined. Girls' performance has also improved in most indicators, but to a lesser extent than boys'.

In most lessons, most pupils show strong motivation and are very willing to learn and work. They are very well-behaved and are very supportive of each other.

In many lessons, many pupils make progress that is appropriate for their age and ability. In these lessons, many pupils apply and recall previous learning effectively. They work independently successfully and take responsibility for their own learning. They also work beneficially in pairs and groups. The majority of pupils write fluently and at length, and use subject terminology correctly and appropriately. A few pupils make basic spelling errors. In relevant lessons, many pupils use many number strategies suitably in a variety of contexts. However, in a minority of lessons, only a few pupils make adequate progress and attain the standards that are appropriate for their age and ability.

Since the core inspection, the school has improved and tightened its progress-tracking systems and has introduced a detailed and useful procedure. More coherent and clear arrangements for tracking performance and targeting pupils in the main indicators in key stage 4 have had a positive effect on standards.

## **Recommendation 2: Strengthen provision for literacy and numeracy skills**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen provision for literacy and numeracy skills.

Valuable co-operation with local primary schools has given teachers a better understanding of pupils' standards in the skills before they start Year 7. The school has also provided beneficial training in order to help teachers understand how to improve pupils' skills. As a result, departments have revised their schemes of work effectively in order to give more attention to literacy and numeracy. A minority of schemes give pupils rich opportunities to develop their skills. However, in many of the schemes, not enough attention is given to improving pupils' higher order skills.

The school's use of data to track progress in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills has improved. There are now coherent arrangements to support pupils with weak skills, and the school monitors and evaluates these arrangements carefully. The school makes appropriate use of diagnostic analyses of literacy and numeracy tests. As a result, they identify the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils in a timely fashion. A few departments make effective use of this information.

The school has an appropriate policy to make comments on literacy and numeracy when marking. In the best examples, there are useful suggestions for pupils on how they could improve their higher order literacy and numeracy skills. However, this practice is not consistent enough across the subjects.

Despite developments to improve provision for literacy and numeracy, they have not had enough of an effect on pupils' standards in these skills.

**Recommendation 3: Develop provision in order to promote the Welsh language more effectively**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has established robust structures that have succeeded in promoting the Welsh language more effectively. The school has appointed an officer to focus specifically on promoting the Welsh language, and this has led to a number of improvements. These include the popular ‘Cymraeg i Bawb’ (Welsh for All) club for pupils, and beneficial support for teachers who lack confidence in using the Welsh language. However, in English-medium lessons, teachers do not make enough use of the Welsh language to promote pupils’ bilingualism.

The school has introduced clear and appropriate arrangements for grouping pupils according to language medium. As a result, the numbers of pupils who study Welsh as a first language have increased significantly. In key stage 4, the number of pupils who study examination subjects through the medium of Welsh has also increased. Over 80% of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 now study at least three examination subjects through the medium of Welsh. However, pupils can only study a minority of subjects through the medium of Welsh.

**Recommendation 4: Improve and ensure consistency in the quality of teaching, and ensure that there is enough challenge for more able pupils**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, leaders have acted effectively in order to improve the quality of teaching across the school and ensure that it is consistent.

The school has strengthened and sharpened its practice on lesson observations and monitoring pupils’ work. Senior leaders and middle leaders now monitor lessons and books regularly, and there are beneficial processes to ensure that judgements are consistent. As a result, senior leaders and many middle leaders have a sound understanding of the main strengths and areas for improvement in terms of teaching. However, the quality of lesson evaluations and scrutinising work is not consistent enough and, in a few cases, not enough consideration is given to the progress and standards achieved by pupils.

Since the core inspection, the school has expanded opportunities for teachers to develop their teaching skills. The school has prioritised a few specific areas for improvement appropriately, and has arranged purposeful training on those areas. There are now useful opportunities for teachers to share and learn from good practice within the school and in other schools. Beneficial support and training are given to teachers who underperform and, as a result, the performance of specific teachers has improved.

In many lessons, teachers have sound subject knowledge and a productive working relationship with pupils. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of all pupils and the level of challenge is appropriate. They plan purposefully and use a



variety of useful resources. As a result, there is an effective progression of activities that build beneficially on each other in order to ensure progress. These teachers give clear instructions and check pupils' understanding regularly. Teachers and assistants give valuable support to pupils while circling the classroom. In these lessons, many pupils make strong progress.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan specifically enough in order to ensure that pupils make progress. In these lessons, there is no clear purpose to all activities and there is not enough use of exemplifying work. Teachers do not check pupils' understanding often enough or rigorously enough. For example, effective use is not made of questioning to probe and extend responses, and teachers tend to answer on behalf of pupils. In a very few lessons, teachers do not plan activities that are suitable for pupils' ability and do not give clear instructions.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen the role of middle managers by ensuring that they are fully accountable for the standards and quality of teaching in their departments**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the headteacher and the senior management team have introduced effective strategies to strengthen the role of middle managers. This has led to a positive culture among leaders and an agreed aspiration to improve.

The school has defined the nature of leaders' responsibilities and lines of accountability clearly. The performance management system has been strengthened since September 2015 and targets for middle managers are incisive, with a robust link to pupils' standards and the quality of teaching. All middle managers have received relevant training on their strategic role and useful guidelines on aspects of leadership. As a result, leaders have a better understanding of their roles and how to implement them.

In order to ensure increasing accountability, the senior leadership team now monitors the work of middle managers more rigorously. For example, they use findings from scrutinising work and lesson observations to hold middle managers to account more effectively. In addition, there is a regular procedure for line management meetings. They now focus appropriately on standards, setting targets, and teaching and learning, and there is a valuable progression to the identified actions.

There is more consistency in terms of the quality of middle managers' evaluation and planning work in comparison with the time of the core inspection. The majority of them make effective use of data and direct evidence to form a judgement on standards and the quality of teaching in their departments. Minutes of departmental meetings also show that middle managers focus more on appropriate issues such as teaching and learning than in the past. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of these minutes and action points are not always clear.

The role of middle managers has developed valuably to include monitoring pupils' progress. However, this aspect of their role has not been developed in full.

## **Recommendation 6: Strengthen the rigour of self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes at a departmental level and a whole-school level**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2014, the school has taken significant steps to strengthen the rigour of self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes. As a result, whole-school quality assurance processes are robust and comprehensive, and there is improved consistency at departmental level.

The school has sharpened and increased its monitoring and quality assurance processes, and there is now a coherent self-evaluation calendar that includes purposeful activities. The role of leaders in these processes is clear and unambiguous. This procedure ensures that leaders at all levels evaluate standards and provision regularly, and plan for improvement in a timely fashion.

The school has provided purposeful and beneficial training for leaders on the essentials of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. All leaders' understanding of performance data has now been strengthened. Leaders analyse a wide range of data in detail and make useful comparisons of the school's performance against that of similar schools. As a result, the school's evaluation of standards is a more honest and realistic picture than at the time of the core inspection.

The whole-school self-evaluation report is a valuable document that is evaluative, on the whole. The school development plan focuses appropriately on findings from the self-evaluation processes and recommendations from the core inspection. The school now has rigorous arrangements to evaluate progress against aspects of this plan regularly.

Departmental self-evaluation reports now include a rigorous analysis of results. In a majority of cases, there is an accurate evaluation based on a suitable range of evidence. Departmental reviews in their new format provide a detailed and beneficial evaluation of the performance of individual departments. However, in a few cases, leaders do not make sufficient use of direct evidence from lessons and books in order to form a judgement on standards, and teaching and learning.

Most of the departmental improvement plans give due attention to raising pupils' standards and improving the quality of provision. They also reflect whole-school priorities appropriately. Middle leaders evaluate progress against these plans regularly and in detail throughout the year.

The school seeks the views of pupils and parents on a few issues. However, this aspect has not been developed comprehensively. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The implementation board monitors progress against the core inspection's recommendations regularly and sets an appropriate challenge for leaders.

Improvements in the self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes have made an important contribution to raising standards in key stage 4.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to maintain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations in which further progress is needed.



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: Estyn monitoring**

**Ysgol Rhiwabon  
Ruabon  
Wrexham  
LL14 6BT**

**Date of visit: January 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Rhiwabon is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January, 2015.

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 special measures are required in relation to this school. 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 three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4 and particularly for boys**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, performance at key stage 4 in many indicators has declined. In 2015, performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics declined significantly. For two of the last three years, performance in this indicator has been well below modelled outcomes, in 2015 placing the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals. Performance in the level 2 threshold improved slightly to above the family average and places the school in the top 25% of similar schools. The capped points score has declined slightly since the time of the core inspection, although it remains above modelled outcomes for the fourth year in succession.

At key stage 4, performance in English declined in 2015. This places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. Performance in mathematics declined significantly in 2015. It is below the average for the family of schools and places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools. Performance in science is also well below the family average and places the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the fourth consecutive year.

In the level 2 threshold, the performance of boys improved in 2015 and is better than the average for boys in similar schools. However, their performance declined in 2015 in all other key performance indicators. At key stage 4, in 2015, the performance of boys is below the average for boys in the family in many indicators. In 2015, the performance of boys in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, core subject indicator, mathematics and science is significantly below the family average. No boys achieved five GCSE grades at grade A\* or A in 2015.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals at key stage 4 has declined in all indicators since the time of the core inspection. In 2015, the performance of these pupils in the majority of indicators was below the average for this group of pupils in the family of similar schools.

**Recommendation 2: Strengthen the quality of teaching and marking to meet the needs of all pupils and provide clear guidance to help them improve**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school recognises the need to improve the quality of teaching but has not made it a high enough priority since the core inspection. As a result, teaching has not had enough impact on raising standards.

The school uses lesson observations and work scrutiny to evaluate teaching but does not focus sufficiently upon the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning and progress. This does not allow the school to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching or to identify accurately the aspects of teaching most in need of improvement. A recently introduced support programme provides teachers with helpful strategies for improving teaching, but does not sufficiently address the specific areas that require improvement.

Most teachers mark work regularly and a majority clearly identify strengths in pupils' work. However, only a minority identify the weaker aspects of pupils' work accurately and provide them with clear, precise guidance on how to improve.

The school has recently introduced the SMART marking strategy to encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving the content and technical accuracy of their work. In a few cases, this helps pupils to improve their work. However, in many cases, pupils lack the skills and knowledge to do this effectively.

Leaders monitor marking on a regular basis and provide feedback to teachers. However, this feedback does not take sufficient account of the impact that marking has on pupils' learning.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that there is a systematic and progressive whole-school approach to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has been too slow to implement an appropriate, strategic and progressive approach to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, the actions that have taken place have not had a sufficient impact on the standard of those skills across the curriculum.

Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have only been in post since September but have started to put in place suitable classroom resources, including those used during form tutor time. The school has recently identified appropriate opportunities to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in most subjects at key stage 3. A majority of departments have made sound progress in updating schemes of work and lesson plans. However, overall this work remains at a very early stage.

Pupils with weaker literacy and numeracy skills are identified through national test results. Intervention programmes to support them are appropriate but have only

been in place for a very short time. Currently, the school does not monitor the quality of provision for developing pupils' skills across the curriculum, or assess the standards of those skills, effectively.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that middle leaders are held to account robustly for improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The senior leadership team recognise their role in holding middle leaders to account. However, they do not focus well enough on the important areas that remain in need of significant improvement, including standards and the quality of teaching.

Middle leaders meet regularly with their line managers, and there is greater consistency in the structure of these meetings than at the time of the core inspection. Most middle leaders understand the importance of their role in improving pupil outcomes. However, there remains too much variation in the capacity of middle leaders to bring about the required improvements in standards and wellbeing. Poor standards and low expectations in a minority of subjects have not been challenged robustly enough by senior leaders.

Middle leaders monitor pupil progress through lesson observations and work scrutiny. However, in common with senior leaders, they do not focus well enough upon pupils' achievement and progress in learning. As a result, the ability of all leaders to identify strengths and shortcomings in standards and teaching is limited. This does not allow senior leaders to hold middle leaders to account effectively. As a result, important areas in need of improvement, such as standards in science and mathematics and the performance of boys, have not been sufficiently addressed.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen improvement planning and ensure that the actions to bring about improvement are sufficiently robust**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, self-evaluation and improvement planning processes have not been effective in securing sufficient improvements in important areas of the schools' work.

Senior and middle leaders are developing an improved understanding of the school's performance against a range of performance indicators. However, their analysis, and particularly their evaluation of performance data, is not sufficiently robust. In addition, the evaluation of the skills and progress of pupils in lessons remains weak.

The school's self-evaluation report does not attach sufficient weight to important areas that require significant improvement such as standards in key stage 4 and the performance of boys. There is not a strong enough focus on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning through rigorous lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. The views of parents and pupils do not play a full enough role in school and departmental self-evaluation procedures.



The school improvement plan does not set out clear enough timescales to indicate when actions are intended to be completed. There is too much variation in the quality of improvement planning at departmental level. For example, a minority do not incorporate key whole-school priorities, define actions clearly enough or include specific enough timescales. In general, departmental improvement plans do not indicate clearly enough how success will be measured.

### **Recommendation 6: Improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, rates of attendance have improved. However, they remain below modelled outcomes and place the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. During this period, persistent absenteeism has reduced by 10 percentage points, but is still above local and national averages.

Unverified data for this academic year to date shows attendance rates to be below those at the same point last year. This is below the whole school target of 93.2% for this academic year and well below the school's aspirational target of 95%. Current unverified attendance data for Year 7, Year 8 and Year 10 is above the school target. However, attendance rates of Year 9 and Year 11 pupils, particularly those of girls, are significantly below.

The school has recently introduced a number of measures to improve attendance and raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance amongst pupils, staff and parents. These include providing staff with detailed data on pupil attendance and the introduction of appropriate daily systems to notify parents of any unreported absences.

Pupils are responding positively to the recently introduced rewards system. However, most of these strategies are in the early stages of development and have not had a significant impact on rates of attendance. The support of the attendance officer, the Education Social Work Service and the very recently appointed school parental engagement officer is enabling the school to improve pupil attendance more effectively. However, the planning and monitoring of interventions are not robust enough. As a consequence, progress in improving attendance is too slow.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Ysgol Rhiwabon  
Ruabon  
Wrexham  
LL14 6BT**

**Date of visit: June 2017**

**by**

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

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## **Outcome of monitoring**

Ysgol Rhiwabon is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

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

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4 and particularly for boys**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation.

In the monitoring visit report during the autumn term we commented fully on pupils' performance from 2015-2016 data.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to focus its efforts on developing suitable strategies to raise the achievement of pupils in key stage 4, especially in English and mathematics. In addition, the school tracks pupil progress robustly and implements a suitable range of interventions to support pupils as required. However, it is too early to evaluate the full impact of these strategies.

In the majority of lessons most pupils make suitable progress in their learning. In these lessons pupils recall prior learning well and most work productively on their own. In a minority of lessons, pupils do not make sufficient progress due to limited opportunities to work with others and to develop their independent thinking skills.

The majority of pupils write fluently and communicate clearly using basic language and simple grammatical structures. These pupils use subject-specific vocabulary appropriately. A very few pupils produce good quality extended writing. They use a broad and rich vocabulary and show sound understanding of audience and purpose.

A few pupils organise their writing very well. However, a minority do not structure their writing effectively in paragraphs and make too many spelling or grammatical errors. A minority of pupils, especially boys, do not take enough care in the presentation of their work.

Many pupils read well in order to locate information for a range of purposes. A minority of pupils are able to infer and deduce suitably. However, due to limited opportunities, pupils do not read aloud confidently.

In many lessons, pupils behave well and display positive attitudes to learning. Although most pupils respond appropriately to teachers, they offer very short verbal responses. Many listen attentively and respectfully to their teachers and peers. A minority of pupils are too passive in lessons as they do not use their independent learning skills often enough.

In a few lessons, many pupils collect and record data appropriately and demonstrate sound basic mathematical skills. Most pupils have suitable skills in information technology and communication (ICT). However, opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy and ICT skills in subjects across the curriculum remain limited.

**Recommendation 2: Strengthen the quality of teaching and marking to meet the needs of all pupils and provide clear guidance to help them improve**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation.

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced and refined strategies to improve the quality of teaching and marking. This includes useful opportunities for teachers to share good practice and receive training on teaching and marking. Quality assurance processes such as lesson observations, work scrutiny and impact reviews focus suitably on the quality of teaching and marking across the school. However, these processes are currently not rigorous enough to identify shortcomings in pupils' standards in skills. As a result, there has been limited impact on the standards pupils achieve.

In many lessons, teachers foster positive working relationships with pupils. They are good language models and have sound subject knowledge. They share learning objectives clearly and ensure that resources support learning effectively.

A majority of teachers have suitable expectations of pupils. They plan well-structured lessons that build successfully on pupils' prior learning. These teachers explain tasks clearly and use questioning techniques competently to probe pupils' understanding. The majority of teachers revisit learning objectives beneficially at key points during the lesson to probe and extend pupils' understanding. A few teachers move pupils on too quickly without confirming that they have completed tasks successfully.

In the minority of lessons, teachers do not plan activities carefully enough to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, many pupils do not make sufficient progress. Additionally, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work together

or individually without intervention.

In a few lessons, teachers talk too much and do not ensure that pupils apply themselves well enough to the work. As a result, the pace of learning is slow and a few pupils become disengaged.

Many departments apply the school's marking and feedback policy appropriately. They make suitable use of the 'SMART' marking strategy and provide valuable diagnostic feedback to pupils on the content of their work. The majority of teachers provide useful comments on how to improve pupils' work and focus suitably on spelling and grammar. In around half of subjects, pupils do not respond well-enough to teachers' comments and as a result, they do not improve their work.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that there is a systematic and progressive whole-school approach to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has further developed their plans to ensure progression in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have adapted a more strategic approach in planning to develop these skills. Across the curriculum, there have been more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills compared with their numeracy skills.

Tutor time is used appropriately to enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of key stage 3 pupils. However, there is too much inconsistency in the way teachers use available resources to support the development of pupils' skills.

The school is developing suitable processes to measure pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Work scrutiny and lesson observations focus appropriately on the provision for literacy and numeracy and on pupils' standards. However, these processes are not rigorous enough to identify clearly the standards achieved by pupils.

A few departments contribute effectively to the school's work in developing pupils' extended writing skills and this good practice is beginning to be shared across the school. A majority of teachers pay suitable attention to improving the technical accuracy of pupils' writing.

The school has begun to make use of a suitable evidence base in order to identify pupils who are in need of additional literacy and numeracy support and plan suitable interventions. However, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives in improving the quality of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that middle leaders are held to account robustly for improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation.

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened its line management processes suitably. Termly impact review meetings and fortnightly line management meetings include a suitable degree of challenge and facilitate careful tracking of pupil progress by heads of department.

The school has provided beneficial training for curriculum leaders on important aspects of their work such as data handling and leadership. In addition, leaders have ensured that all teachers have undertaken valuable development activities to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Curriculum leaders have recently begun to evaluate teaching and learning in their areas. However, this process is at an early stage of development and has not had a sufficient impact on the quality of teaching.

Senior leaders have recently evaluated and provided useful feedback to curriculum leaders on the quality of their self-assessments and improvement plans. However, only a very few departments have refined their plans to date.

Senior leaders hold pastoral leaders to account suitably for standards of pupils' wellbeing. As a result, this has had a positive impact on whole-school attendance, pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning. However, pastoral leaders do not use the range of information available effectively enough to support pupil progress across the subjects. Senior leaders have made suitable arrangements for the imminent restructuring of pastoral responsibilities to meet the needs of the school. This includes an increased focus on the role of pastoral leaders in tracking and directly supporting pupil progress.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen improvement planning and ensure that the actions to bring about improvement are sufficiently robust**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school continues to make suitable improvements using a comprehensive and detailed post-inspection action plan. This plan addresses suitably the key issues identified during the core inspection, with defined success criteria as well as actions that are specific and appropriate. Senior leaders review and report on progress against these criteria regularly.

Senior leaders hold frequent meetings with curriculum leaders to monitor progress and identify urgent intervention and improvement actions. The school's separate programme of impact review meetings allow for an appropriate medium-term developmental approach to improving key aspects of middle leaders' work. The school has raised its pupil outcomes targets. These are now suitably ambitious in light of the school's recent performance.

Many departmental improvement plans align appropriately to the areas of development identified by senior and middle leaders, and include suitably prioritised actions. A majority of subject leaders set appropriate success criteria. However, a few curriculum leaders produce improvement plans that are limited in their scope. They do not address the specific teaching and learning development needs within their department well enough.

The school has begun to gather the views of pupils on several aspects of its work to support its improvement planning. However, this practice is at a very early stage of development.

**Recommendation 6: Improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation.

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced new policies and procedures to promote good attendance. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent this year compared to the same period last year. Attendance for the period between September 2016 and the end of May 2017 is 0.6 percentage points higher than attendance for the same period last year.

The school now tracks pupils' attendance very closely. It analyses attendance data well to identify groups of learners causing concern and has implemented a wide range of suitable strategies to improve the attendance of all pupils.

Girls' attendance for the year to date has improved considerably when compared with the same period last year and is now marginally better than that of boys'. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is 1.6 percentage points above that of the same period last year. However, the overall attendance of boys for the year to date has declined slightly when compared with the same period last year.

Whole-school attendance has improved steadily year on year since September 2015 and has risen by 1.4 percentage points since the time of the core inspection.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.





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: special measures**

**Ysgol Rhiwabon  
Ruabon  
Wrexham  
LL14 6BT**

**Date of visit: March 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Rhiwabon is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in month year.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4 and particularly for boys**

No judgement applied

In the report on the last monitoring visit we commented fully on pupils' performance from 2015-2016 data.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued to focus its efforts on developing suitable strategies to raise the achievement of pupils in key stage 4, especially in English and mathematics. The school tracks pupil progress robustly and implements a suitable range of interventions to support pupils. While it is too early to evaluate the full impact of these strategies, the monitoring of pupils in Year 11 shows that girls continue to outperform boys significantly in nearly all subjects at level 2.

Overall, the standards of pupils' work seen in lessons and books remains broadly similar to that seen at the time of the last visit.

In a minority of lessons, pupils make suitable progress and develop their subject knowledge and understanding appropriately. In these lessons, most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and respond well to tasks set. They recall previous learning effectively and are able to apply this successfully in new contexts. Most pupils work productively on their own and with their peers. Many pupils read well in

order to locate information for a range of purposes. A minority of pupils use higher order reading skills successfully in order to develop their understanding of a range of historical and literary texts.

In the majority of lessons, pupils do not make enough progress. In many cases, this is because they are unable to recall prior knowledge well enough, and as a result, they lack confidence and resilience. The majority of pupils provide only brief underdeveloped verbal responses to teachers' questions and they lack key vocabulary to express their ideas fully or clearly. A few pupils demonstrate little interest in their work in lessons and are easily distracted. They show little enthusiasm or readiness for learning.

Around half of pupils have sound writing skills. They organise their writing effectively and a minority adapt their writing competently to suit their purpose and audience. A few more able pupils write accurately and confidently and use a suitable range of language to express their ideas. However, the content and technical accuracy of around half of pupils' work remains weak. These pupils make basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar and the presentation of their written work is poor.

Around half of pupils have numeracy skills that are broadly in line with their age and ability. However, opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in subjects other than mathematics remain limited.

**Recommendation 2: Strengthen the quality of teaching and marking to meet the needs of all pupils and provide clear guidance to help them improve**

No judgement applied

The school has continued to refine strategies to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. The school has recently introduced relevant initiatives to share good practice and stimulate discussion about teaching and assessment across the school. Lesson observations now focus suitably on the standards of pupils' skills and progress in lessons. However, this has not had enough impact on the standards pupils achieve or the progress they make.

In many lessons, teachers have positive working relationships with pupils. They share learning objectives clearly and ensure resources support learning effectively.

A minority of teachers have high expectations of pupils. They plan well-structured lessons that challenge pupils and build successfully on their prior learning. A few teachers revisit learning objectives at key points during the lesson to probe and extend pupils' understanding. These teachers use questioning techniques skilfully to provide effective guidance and feedback at a whole class and individual level.

In the majority of lessons, many activities are not sufficiently challenging and teachers do not match these carefully enough to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, the pace of learning is either too slow, or teachers move pupils on too quickly without confirming that they have understood fully. These teachers do not use questioning well enough to involve a broad range of pupils or to confirm and

extend pupils' understanding.

In a few lessons, pupils' lack of engagement and poor attention hinder the pace of learning. This is because of inconsistency across the school in teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning, and in their application of classroom routines.

Many departments have begun to apply appropriately the school's new marking and feedback policy. They make suitable use of the SMART marking strategy and provide valuable diagnostic feedback to pupils on the content of their work. However, this initiative is not used consistently enough to provide feedback to pupils on the technical accuracy of their literacy skills. In around half of subjects, pupils' response to teachers' comments is superficial and, as a result, they do not improve their work.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that there is a systematic and progressive whole-school approach to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

No judgement applied

Since the last visit, the school has developed appropriate plans to ensure progression in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It has strengthened its arrangements for the leadership of this work through the reorganisation of key roles and responsibilities. There is now a more strategic approach to developing the literacy and numeracy framework which focuses suitably on making rapid improvement in a limited number of subject areas.

Productive use is made of form tutor time in key stage 3 to enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils. The school has recently started to monitor the progress that pupils make in these skills. Work scrutiny and lesson observations focus appropriately on standards of pupils' skills and the provision for literacy and numeracy.

A few relevant departments contribute suitably to the school's work in developing pupils' extended writing skills. However, overall, teachers do not pay sufficient attention to improving the technical accuracy of pupils' writing.

The school has begun to make use of a broader evidence base in order to identify pupils who are in need of additional literacy support. For example, regular baseline testing has been introduced to complement national test results. However, it is too early to assess how effective these initiatives have been in improving the quality of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Planning for consistency in pupils' skills development during transition from the partner primary schools remains underdeveloped.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that middle leaders are held to account robustly for improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing**

No judgement applied

The school has continued to strengthen its line management systems. Termly impact review meetings and fortnightly line management meetings ensure appropriate tracking of pupil progress by heads of department and include a suitable degree of challenge. The progress reports of a majority of subject leaders are honest and evaluative. However, a minority of middle leaders do not evaluate the impact of their actions robustly.

Curriculum leaders have benefited from training on important aspects of their work such as data handling and leadership. In addition, all teachers have undertaken valuable development activities to improve teaching, learning and assessment. However, the role of middle leaders in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains underdeveloped.

All curriculum departments have suitable improvement plans in place. Senior leaders provide useful feedback to curriculum leaders on the quality of these plans and how they may be refined. However, pastoral leaders have not benefited from specialised training to assist them in their roles and do not meet regularly as a team. The development of their roles in promoting pupil resilience, supporting achievement, and ensuring positive behaviour for learning is underdeveloped.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen improvement planning and ensure that the actions to bring about improvement are sufficiently robust**

No judgement applied

The school has a comprehensive and detailed post-inspection action plan that addresses suitably the key issues identified during the core inspection. It specifies appropriate actions and success criteria in order to achieve each goal. Senior leaders review progress against these criteria regularly.

Senior leaders hold frequent meetings with curriculum leaders to monitor progress and identify relevant actions. These meetings are scheduled according to whole-school priorities and departmental performance. The school has recently revised its performance targets upwards. They are now suitably ambitious in light of the school's recent improved performance.

Many departmental improvement plans align well to the areas of development identified through self-evaluation and actions are suitably prioritised. A majority of subject leaders set appropriate success criteria. However, a few improvement plans are limited in their scope and do not address the specific teaching and learning development needs within each area well enough.

**Recommendation 6: Improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence**

No judgement applied

The school continues to track pupils' attendance closely. It analyses attendance data well to identify groups of learners causing concern and has implemented a wide range of suitable strategies to improve the attendance of all pupils. Overall,

attendance for the period between September 2016 and March 2017 has risen by around 0.4 percentage points when compared with the same period last year.

Girls' attendance for the year to date has improved appreciably when compared with the same period last year and is now marginally better than that of boys. The attendance of pupils entitled to free school meals remains around the same when compared to the same period last year. However, the overall attendance of boys for the year to date has declined when compared with the same period last year.

The school has continued to make progress in reducing the overall number of persistent absentees. However the proportion of girls who are persistent absentees remains too high.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Ysgol Rhiwabon  
Ruabon  
Wrexham  
LL14 6BT**

**Date of visit: November 2017**

**by**

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



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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Rhiwabon is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4 and particularly for boys**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has introduced a wide range of strategies to raise standards at key stage 4. As a result, there has been an overall trend of improvement in the standard of pupils' work and their outcomes at key stage 4.

Provisional data for 2017 indicates that performance has improved in a majority of indicators at key stage 4. In general, performance in these indicators now compares favourably with that in other similar schools.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics has improved by almost five percentage points since the time of the core inspection. Performance in this indicator is now in line with that in similar schools. Performance in the capped points score has declined since the core inspection, but is in line with performance in similar schools.

At key stage 4, boys' performance has improved in half of indicators since the core inspection. Overall, the gap between their performance and that of boys in similar schools has narrowed over this period. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved since the core inspection in many indicators.

Most pupils are well behaved and display positive attitudes towards their learning. They listen well to their teachers and to other pupils. Many sustain their concentration well and work productively in pairs and in groups. A minority of pupils provide extended verbal responses to teachers' questioning, although a majority provide only brief, underdeveloped responses.

Many pupils organise their written work appropriately. For example, they write well-structured paragraphs to describe the character of Scrooge, referring to relevant evidence from the text. Many pupils show a sound understanding of the features of persuasive writing. They identify these features successfully and explain their impact, for example when examining the language of propaganda in world war one. A few pupils write maturely, using a variety of sentence structures and a rich vocabulary to enhance the effectiveness of their work. However, a few pupils write brief, poorly-constructed sentences and present their work poorly.

A majority of pupils read aloud well with confidence and suitable intonation. Many extract information confidently from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. For example, they scan texts to identify key features to summarise the advantages and disadvantages of sea walls, groynes and rock armour in geography.

The majority of pupils apply their basic numeracy skills successfully in a range of different contexts. For example, they use their measuring skills accurately to calculate the time and temperature of the boiling points of different liquids in science. In addition, pupils apply their numeracy skills appropriately to everyday contexts, for example when calculating the cost of a carpet and skirting board based on calculating a room's perimeter and area.

Many pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately in subjects other than ICT. For example, in engineering, they use design software well when undertaking the design and build elements of their project work.

### **Recommendation 2: Strengthen the quality of teaching and marking to meet the needs of all pupils and provide clear guidance to help them improve**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a wide range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. Lesson observations, book scrutiny and department reviews now focus suitably on pupils' standards and progress in lessons. A comprehensive and well-considered programme of professional learning provides valuable opportunities for teachers to share good practice. These strategies have had a positive impact on key aspects of teaching and assessment and on the standards pupils achieve.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and provide pupils with valuable verbal feedback about their progress during lessons. Many establish productive relationships and classroom routines that support pupils' learning effectively. In the majority of cases, teachers set clear learning objectives and explain tasks well. These teachers plan a suitable variety of activities to engage pupils' interest and they ensure that resources are matched closely to pupils' abilities. In a minority of lessons, teachers have particularly high expectations of pupils. They plan stimulating lessons and use questioning skilfully to probe and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan consistently well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, activities are not always sufficiently challenging and there are only a few opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or develop their independent learning skills. In a few lessons, pupils' learning does not develop at a suitable pace and teachers' use of questioning does not always involve all pupils.

The majority of teachers provide useful guidance to pupils that shows them clearly how to improve their work. The majority of pupils respond appropriately to teachers' comments. However, a minority of pupils do not respond to feedback well enough.

### **Recommendation 3: Ensure that there is a systematic and progressive whole-school approach to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened the co-ordination of skills provision across the curriculum appropriately. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The school has provided worthwhile professional learning opportunities for all staff in order to reinforce whole-school planning and provision for skills development. For example, the weekly sharing of good practice on a Friday has given a high profile to literacy across the school. Since September 2017, numeracy has also been included and is now a strong feature of these sessions. This has helped to raise the profile of literacy and numeracy across the whole school.

The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators monitor the provision for improving pupils' skills suitably through regular scrutiny of their work. They also visit tutorial sessions to ensure resources are used consistently to enhance these skills. However, they do not focus well enough on exploring a few aspects such as the difference between the literacy and numeracy skills of boys and girls. Since 2016, a range of effective intervention strategies have started to influence pupils' standards positively. Additionally, the school has delivered a successful Year 7 skills programme, which focused relevantly on pupils' oracy, writing and numeracy skills. The recently appointed lead learner for Years 6 and 7 works suitably with partner primary schools on a weekly basis to ensure greater consistency in pupils' skills development. A majority of departments contribute effectively to the school's work in developing pupils' extended writing skills and this good practice is being shared further across the school. Generally, many teachers pay close attention to improving the technical accuracy of pupils' writing.

### **Recommendation 4: Ensure that middle leaders are held to account robustly for improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened appropriately its arrangements for ensuring that middle leaders are held to account robustly for improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing.

Staff roles and responsibilities have been refined suitably to ensure that there is an appropriate emphasis on raising standards, improving the quality of teaching and supporting pupils' wellbeing. In particular, pastoral leaders' roles and responsibilities are now more closely aligned to the needs of the school, focusing on, for example, transition arrangements and the monitoring of pupil progress.

The school has robust line management arrangements, including meetings between middle and senior leaders which focus rigorously on standards and teaching. During these meetings, discussions centre on important issues such as outcomes from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, and subject impact and

performance reviews. Senior and middle leaders review and record progress appropriately against targets and planned actions regularly to determine next steps. These arrangements link closely to performance management objectives and ensure that staff are held fully accountable for their work. Leaders use data well to identify areas which need improvement. They now use a wide range of assessment and performance data suitably to set challenging targets and to monitor progress. For example, they use the data from standardised assessments or examination boards to identify well specific topics and skills for improvement in teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen improvement planning and ensure that the actions to bring about improvement are sufficiently robust**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, senior and middle leaders have worked together successfully to strengthen the school's improvement planning and ensure that follow-up actions are sufficiently robust. This has had a positive impact on improving pupils' performance and attendance.

In most cases, senior and middle leaders fulfil their roles successfully. They have useful systems for undertaking regular lesson observations and for scrutinising pupils' work. They use this evidence well to identify specific aspects in need of improvement. Senior leaders respond appropriately to the areas identified for improvement by providing a comprehensive range of opportunities for professional learning. For example, staff work together purposefully during their weekly professional learning activity programme to discuss and share best practice identified through the school's lesson observation and 'open classroom' events. These activities are helping to drive improvements in teaching and learning across the school.

At whole-school and departmental level, leaders generally make suitable use of the wide range of evidence from the school's quality assurance activities to inform self-evaluation reports. This evidence includes analysis from lesson observations and performance reviews, with a clear link between self-evaluation and improvement plans. However, the performance and impact reviews of a very few subjects do not use the full range of evidence sources well enough to inform planning for improvements in teaching and learning.

Members of the governing body play an active role in the life of the school and are well informed about the school's performance. They provide the school with appropriate challenge and support.

**Recommendation 6: Improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a range of effective strategies to improve attendance. As a result, whole-school attendance has improved well.

Overall attendance rates are now 1.4 percentage points higher than at the time of the core inspection and compare well with those in similar schools. Over this period, the attendance rates of boys, girls and pupils eligible for free school meals have all improved well.

The school tracks pupils' attendance very closely and analyses attendance data well to identify and take action for groups of learners causing concern. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent in 2017 compared with the time of the core inspection.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Treffynnon  
Penymaes Road  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7EN**

**Date of visit: December 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Treffynnon is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four to six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4**

Since the core inspection pupils' performance at key stage 4 has declined overall. In 2018, performance in all of the key indicators is below that of pupils in similar schools and is falling increasingly below expectations. Girls' performance is particularly weak, and is below the performance of girls in similar schools. Outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals remains below that of their counterparts in similar schools.

### **R2. Improve levels of attendance**

Since the time of the core inspection, attendance has declined. Attendance improved slightly in 2018 following a fall in 2017, but remains below expectations. Attendance has been much lower than that in similar schools for the last two years. Since the time of the core inspection, the decline in girls' attendance has been particularly notable. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has also declined in the same period.



The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent decreased in 2018, but is still much higher than that in similar schools. The persistent absence of girls is a particular issue.

### **R3. Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R4. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

Since the last visit, leaders have focused closely on working to improve the quality of teaching. They have established a useful teaching and learning working group, and have started a programme of peer observations and an ‘open classroom’ approach. As a result, there is more discussion about teaching and a more proactive approach to addressing shortcomings in teaching. However, much of this work is at an early stage of development. There remain weaknesses in the school’s approach to improving teaching and as a result there has been an insufficient impact on pupils’ standards and the quality of teaching. For example, lesson observations do not give a sufficiently precise picture of the quality of teaching and learning, and there is a general lack of attention given to evaluating pupils’ skills and the impact of teaching on pupils’ progress and standards. In addition, the school’s strategies to improve teaching are too prescriptive, and result in an often formulaic teaching style. For example, teachers focus too much on providing two tasks in a lesson in order to follow the school’s lesson planning structure, as opposed to concentrating on providing the appropriate number and type of tasks to enable pupils to make progress.

Many teachers have sound subject knowledge and foster positive working relationships with their pupils. They prepare helpful resources and give clear instructions.

A majority of teachers have clear aims to their lessons and plan a suitable sequence of appropriate tasks that enable pupils to build on their understanding and make sound progress. In these lessons the pace of learning is appropriate and teachers’ expectations are suitable. However, in a minority of lessons the pace of learning is too slow and teachers’ expectations are too low. In these lessons, teachers provide undemanding activities and spend too much time on tasks. As a result, pupils become disengaged and they do not make sufficient progress.

A common feature of lessons is that teachers do not plan well enough to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and enable them to learn independently. For example, teachers over-direct the learning and talk too much, resulting in very little

time for pupils to think for themselves. In other instances, teachers give too much help and scaffolding and pupils become too dependent on this support, or teachers do not provide enough support for pupils with weaker skills.

Many teachers manage behaviour appropriately on the whole, but the majority remove pupils from class too readily, and often over trivial matters. A few teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough.

When circulating the classroom, a majority of teachers monitor pupils' progress appropriately and give helpful support and advice. However, a minority of teachers do not check or probe pupils' progress and understanding well enough or often enough. In a majority of cases, plenary activities at the end of lessons are superficial and have little value.

Most teachers question pupils effectively to check their knowledge and to make sure that they are on task. A few teachers use extended questioning well to challenge pupils and develop higher order thinking skills

Nearly all teachers are working diligently to implement new approaches to assessment. This includes using recently introduced diagnostic feedback stickers on a regular basis. These developments are beginning to help pupils to identify specific areas for improvement in their work. For example, in a few subjects, such as English, this diagnostic feedback includes generally helpful checklists for assessing tasks. In mathematics, weekly homework sheets are carefully matched to specific success criteria and help pupils consolidate their learning. However, teachers do not always encourage pupils to improve their work carefully enough, and many pupils do not write down their methods or correct their mistakes.

The majority of teachers provide helpful feedback on pupils' work. Many teachers provide advice to pupils on improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, a minority of comments are too generic, merely ask pupils to complete tasks or set them additional questions without providing advice on improving specific aspects of their work.

In a minority of subjects, teachers have clear expectations regarding how pupils should respond to feedback. As a result, pupils improve their work, for example by re-writing or adding paragraphs. However, overall, pupils' responses to written feedback are too variable, and teachers do not monitor carefully enough the quality of pupils' responses.

**R5. Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

**R6. Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

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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: special measures**

**Ysgol Treffynnon  
The Strand  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7AW**

**Date of visit: February 2018**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Treffynnon is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2016.

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

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan. Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Improve standards at key stage 4**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, performance at key stage 4 improved in many indicators in 2016. However, it fell sharply in 2017 and pupils generally made much less progress than expected from previous key stages. This performance is lower than at the time of the core inspection and compares poorly with that in similar schools in most indicators.

In many lessons pupils do not make the progress they should in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. The majority demonstrate limited recall of previous learning and are unable to apply it appropriately in different situations.

The majority of pupils listen with attention and respect but those who do not often miss helpful information and instructions. A minority of pupils provide appropriate responses to the teachers' questions while a few provide reasoned, supported answers on topics such as the carbon cycle and its connection with climate change.

Many pupils are able to read to extract information on topics such as improvements to transport during the Industrial Revolution, Sikhism and the leadership qualities of Saladin and Richard the Lionheart respectively. However, only a few use inference and deduction well, for example, when making insightful comments on the way in which written and visual texts present the physical and emotional features of

characters. Overall, many pupils do not demonstrate a suitable range of reading strategies, which makes it very difficult for them to make enough progress.

A few, more able, pupils produce writing that is well-controlled, suitably structured and technically secure. This includes discussing sustainable communities, comparing genre, style and character in 'Dracula' and 'The Picture of Dorian Grey' and diarising an ascent of Everest. However, around half of pupils' writing often lacks very basic control. They make frequent basic errors such as not punctuating their writing accurately and writing using subordinate clauses rather than full sentences. Around half of pupils, of all abilities, lack resilience and have missing or incomplete work in their books.

A minority of pupils produce simple bar graphs that are accurate and well presented to show, for example, the annual revenue of the biggest companies in the world and the cost of mountain expeditions. However, a majority are unclear how to present data suitably in graphs and their work is inaccurate and untidy. Overall, most pupils make very little meaningful use of their numeracy and information communication technology skills in subjects across the curriculum.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve levels of attendance**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, attendance has fluctuated but has remained below expectations. In 2017, the whole-school attendance rate was well below that at the time of the core inspection. In addition, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals was considerably lower than at the time of that inspection.

The school has implemented a wide range of worthwhile strategies to improve attendance. This includes prompt contact with parents, a suitable rewards scheme and raising the profile of attendance within tutor groups. In addition, the introduction of alternative curricular provision for pupils in danger of dis-engagement and non-attendance in key stage 4 has contributed to the improved attendance rates of those pupils. However, overall these strategies have not brought about the improvement required in attendance.

### **Recommendation 3: Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Following the core inspection, the school implemented a new behaviour policy. However, this has not contributed to a reduction in the high rates of fixed term exclusions.

Many teachers implement the behaviour policy consistently. Although the rewards system encourages positive behaviour and attitudes to learning, frequent incidents of low level disruption continue to blight the learning of pupils. Most commonly, this is in the many lessons where teaching does not challenge or engage pupils of all abilities well enough.

The introduction of alternative curricular provision for pupils in danger of dis-engagement and non- attendance in key stage 4 has contributed to the improved behaviour and attitudes to learning of the few pupils involved.

The school makes appropriate efforts to use external agencies to support particularly vulnerable pupils identified as requiring education more appropriate to their needs. Currently, most of the pupils receiving fixed term exclusions are those with additional learning needs.

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's response to this recommendation has been far too slow. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders of strategies to improve teaching has been, and remains, particularly ineffective.

The school has only recently introduced appropriate strategies to improve teaching. These include structures to support planning and a suitable focus on improving the quality of questioning. However, many teachers and senior leaders do not understand well enough how to use these strategies to improve pupils' learning.

A minority of teachers provide a suitable level of challenge for pupils. These teachers ask appropriately probing questions that check pupils' understanding and encourage them to develop their verbal responses. A few teachers set worthwhile tasks that stretch pupils and require them to apply their problem solving skills. However, many teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are far too low. They do not take sufficient account of pupils' prior learning and too often present them with simplistic tasks that occupy them but which do not help them make sufficient progress. For instance, much of the work for middle and lower ability pupils relies on the completion of basic worksheets or the brief annotation of texts rather than offering meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their skills.

A few teachers consistently plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their skills in lessons. However, only a very few teachers support the progressive development of pupils' literacy skills suitably in the tasks they set and in their written feedback. Meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics are very underdeveloped.

A minority of teachers provide appropriate feedback on how pupils can improve their work. A few teachers comment helpfully on pupil responses to this guidance. However, feedback in around half the books is overly generous of very modest work and very few teachers are sufficiently robust in ensuring that pupils actually complete work.

#### **Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**



#### Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection the headteacher has revised suitably his vision for the school and shared it appropriately with all members of staff, pupils and governors.

The significant staffing issues which prevailed during the last monitoring visit remain as there is insufficient capacity within the school to fill vacancies in key middle leadership roles. The headteacher has temporarily reallocated responsibilities in the senior leadership team to attempt to address these vacancies. In addition, the local authority has very recently agreed that a senior leader from a local school will join the leadership team two days a week to bolster its capacity. However, the majority of senior leaders are ineffective and have not been held to account robustly enough. Leadership has not led to improvements in important aspects of the school's work such as the quality of teaching and the attendance, behaviour and attainment of pupils.

Line management structures are clear but mostly ineffective. This is because the majority of senior leaders are overgenerous in their evaluation of standards and the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. They do not hold middle leaders to account well enough.

At whole-school level, self-evaluation is generally accurate and identifies appropriately, areas for improvement. However, the self-evaluation by most middle leaders lacks rigour particularly with regard to the quality of teaching and the impact of their leadership. Consequently, improvement planning at middle leadership level does not address precisely or robustly enough aspects of teaching and leadership that require significant improvement. In a majority of cases across the school, targets for improving standards are not specific or measurable enough.

A few members of staff have quantifiable targets, many teaching staff have targets which are not aligned clearly with measurable outcomes. In addition, targets for individual teachers to improve teaching and learning are too generic and do not relate specifically to their individual needs.

The governing body is supportive of the school and has developed a series of sub-committees to review progress against the recommendations. Although governors scrutinise the school's self-evaluation report and improvement plan, they do not hold senior and middle leaders to account rigorously enough.

#### **Recommendation 6: Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

#### Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school continues to implement the licensed deficit budget and recovery plan that has been agreed with the local authority. Since the last visit, the school has appointed a new business manager who provides the school with a much clearer awareness of the financial situation. The latest figures project the school's in year deficit will be resolved by 2021-2022, though this is dependent upon factors such as grant funding remaining at the current level and the maximum standard admission number of pupils being achieved. Nevertheless, at that point, the budget overall will

still remain in a significant deficit.

The school makes appropriate efficiency savings through the sharing of resources and facilities with the adjoining primary school. In addition, the increase in pupil numbers in the current Year 7 has brought additional funding into the school.

The school has allocated appropriately monies from grant funding but this has not, for example, led to improved attendance or performance of pupils eligible for free school meals.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Treffynnon  
Penymaes Road  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7EN**

**Date of visit: July 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Treffynnon is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R2. Improve levels of attendance**

The school uses a wide range of appropriate strategies to address poor attendance. These include early responses to pupils' absence and contact with parents through telephone calls and home visits. In addition, the school works with a wide range of external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families to help improve their attendance. However, although these initiatives have had a positive impact on the attendance of individual pupils, attendance overall continues to be lower than expected.

Pastoral staff analyse attendance data suitably to identify any patterns of poor attendance and meet regularly to share information on pupils whose attendance is causing concern. As a result, they know these pupils well and the issues that contribute to their poor attendance. In addition, an attendance panel meets on a fortnightly basis to identify and support students with significantly poor attendance and those at risk of disengagement. The school provides an appropriate alternative

curriculum, which has helped to ensure that a few key stage 4 pupils remain engaged in education.

There are appropriate systems in place to reward good attendance, which have been developed through consultation with pupils and the school works closely with parents to raise their awareness of the importance of good attendance for their children.

### **R3. Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R4. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

Since the previous visit, the school has focused attention appropriately on improving assessment. It has provided valuable guidance and training for all teachers on developing good practice and consistency in this aspect of their work.

Nearly all teachers follow a consistent approach to help identify specific areas for improvement in pupils' work. Many of the 'action' feedback comments give clear guidance and provide pupils with useful subject specific actions for improvement. When marking for literacy, a minority of teachers pay due attention to technical accuracy. However, they do not offer pupils advice on how pupils can improve the content and effectiveness of their writing.

Many teachers have clear expectations regarding how pupils should respond to their feedback. These teachers ensure that pupils complete follow-up tasks to develop specific aspects of their work. In these instances, many pupils respond positively to this feedback and use it productively to improve their work. However, a minority of teachers do not monitor well enough how pupils respond to their feedback.

### **R5. Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R6. Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

The school has a licenced deficit agreement with the local authority and a detailed financial recovery plan. The local authority monitors the school's expenditure monthly. The governors, headteacher and business manager monitor the school's budget and expenditure appropriately to ensure that they adhere to the deficit agreement. For example, any changes to staffing have to be agreed in advance with the local authority. The school has worked closely with the local authority to reduce costs where appropriate, including reviewing staffing structures and responsibilities and taking a more rigorous approach to managing sickness absences.

In order to reduce operating costs, the school continues to undertake an appropriate range of efficiency measures, including the sharing of site management and support staff costs with the adjoining primary school. As a result, the school was able to reduce substantially the licenced deficit for the 2018-2019 financial year. However, the school is unable to return an in-year balanced budget and is not predicted to do so in the near future. The local authority predicts a substantial increase in the school's large deficit by the end of the 2021-2022 financial year.

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Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring  
Level of follow-up: special measures**

**Ysgol Treffynnon  
The Strand  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7AW**

**Date of visit: June 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Treffynnon is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2016.

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

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Improve standards at key stage 4**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

In the November monitoring visit we commented fully on improved pupil performance at key stage 4 in 2016. However, despite these improvements there are significant shortcomings in the standards achieved by pupils as seen in lessons and books.

Many pupils behave well in lessons and a majority engage appropriately with their learning. However, a minority of pupils are too passive in lessons and most do not develop their independent learning skills well enough. Many pupils work productively in groups or pairs. However, a minority of pupils lose concentration and become involved in off-task behaviour. This impacts negatively upon their learning and that of others.

A minority of pupils recall prior learning appropriately and use this knowledge suitably in new and different contexts. However, in many lessons pupils do not make enough progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills in. In most lessons observed there were significant levels of pupil absenteeism. This has a negative effect on their progress.

A majority of pupils demonstrate competent listening skills. In the few lessons where teachers use questioning effectively, a few of the more able pupils provide more thoughtful and extended verbal responses. Overall a minority of pupils give only brief, underdeveloped answers.

A minority of pupils develop their writing skills appropriately. These pupils redraft their work effectively and improve the content and technical accuracy of their written work. A few more able pupils write skilful extended pieces of writing. For example, in geography when comparing discharge from different rivers. Overall a majority of pupils make too many basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Many pupils read and retrieve information suitably from a range of texts. A few pupils use inference and deduction appropriately to enhance their understanding of for example, characters and events in a range of literacy texts such as Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men'. A majority of pupils read aloud suitably. However, a minority of pupils lack confidence in reading aloud in class.

In a minority of subjects many pupils make suitable progress in developing their numeracy skills. However, in a majority of subjects, pupils do not apply their numeracy skills sufficiently due to a lack of opportunities.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve levels of attendance**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has continued to apply a range of appropriate strategies to improve attendance rates. This includes suitable engagement with parents and families, reward systems and mentoring programmes for vulnerable pupils. The appointment of an education welfare officer to the school has recently strengthened the school's ability to implement its attendance policy. However, the school's strategies are not applied consistently or with sufficient rigour. As a result unverified data indicates there has been a significant decline in attendance rates since the time of the core inspection.

In 2016, the school's attendance improved and was in line with modelled outcomes. However, since the last monitoring visit, attendance has declined and is currently nearly three percentage points lower than at the same time last year. At the time of this visit, the attendance of pupils' eligible for free school meals has fallen sharply by nearly five percentage points in comparison with the same point last year. The level of persistent absenteeism is currently higher than at any point since the core inspection.

The school has useful systems and procedures for collecting data relating to attendance. However, despite suitable analysis of this data, the school has not fully identified the reasons for the decline in pupil attendance during the current academic year. The school does not recognise sufficiently the link between high levels of attendance and academic success. During this visit there was a high level of absence in nearly all sessions observed.

### **Recommendation 3: Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions**

### Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

In order to reduce the level of fixed term exclusions and improve pupils' behaviour, the school has increased the capacity of relevant senior and middle leaders, through increased management time, and appointed a team of support staff to assist. The number of fixed term exclusions has been reduced significantly in comparison with the same period last year. However, the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions remains very high.

The school has developed appropriately its processes for gathering data and tracking incidents of inappropriate behaviour. However, the school does not respond decisively enough to ensure that interventions lead to improved behaviour. There are too many incidents of pupils being excluded on multiple occasions.

The school continues to implement an interim policy for managing classroom behaviour. While this provides useful guidance, a minority of staff do not apply the policy consistently and the school has not evaluated the impact of it on pupils' behaviour in the classroom.

Crucially, the school is not sufficiently proactive in making the link between behaviour, and teaching and learning. The 'Code of Conduct' for classroom behaviour is not having enough impact on behaviour in lessons. As a result, disengagement in learning is leading to low-level disruption by a minority of pupils. This is affecting their learning and that of other pupils.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

#### Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Overall, the quality of teaching is similar to that at the last visit. Many teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and promote positive working relationships with pupils. A minority of teachers plan well-structured lessons that ensure good pace and progress in pupils' learning. In a few lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils and match tasks and resources well to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, teachers' questioning develops pupils' thinking skills productively and there are useful opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their progress.

In many lessons, where pupils do not make enough progress, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of them. They do not challenge pupils of all abilities well enough and their questioning is not effective in encouraging pupils to develop their thinking skills and verbal responses. In these lessons, teachers give too much help and guidance and do not develop pupils' independent learning skills. In addition, teachers do not monitor pupils' understanding well enough or encourage them to reflect upon their learning.

A majority of teachers provide pupils with effective verbal feedback to help them overcome problems with their work. In addition, a minority of teachers provide clear written feedback that help pupils improve specific aspects of their work. However,

overall, feedback does not have sufficient impact on improving the standard of pupils' work.

The school is continuing to implement a suitable range of strategies and relevant professional learning sessions to improve teaching and assessment. However, many of these initiatives are at an early stage of development and have had limited impact on the quality of teaching. Many teachers do not fully understand the suggested approaches, such as 'think, pair share' or 'no hands up'. Although many include them in their planning, they are unclear why the strategies are used or how to implement them successfully.

The school has provided suitable training to gather first hand evidence to evaluate teaching and assessment. This includes periodic lesson observations and 'drop-ins'. The regular and collaborative work scrutiny has highlighted examples of good practice and has enabled beneficial dialogue between staff about effective written feedback. However, many lesson observation records and work scrutinies are too descriptive. Overall, evaluations are too generous as they focus too little on the impact of teaching and assessment on standards, progress and behaviour. As a result, the school has too positive a view of teaching and assessment and the improvements made.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has completed a management restructure to strengthen its capacity to address the challenges it faces. The senior leadership team now consists of the head teacher and two deputy head teachers who have responsibility for teaching and learning, and inclusion and behaviour. They have clear job roles and have an equitable allocation of responsibilities. The appointment of an Assistant Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) has enabled the deputy headteacher carrying out these duties to concentrate more on strategic issues.

The senior team work together well to set the school's strategic priorities, including an increasing focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning, and improving pupils' behaviour and attendance. Two Directors of Learning are beginning to take responsibility for the management of academic departments and care, support and guidance across the school. However, senior and middle leaders have not had enough support or development opportunities to carry out their strategic roles effectively. In addition, they do not have enough time allocated for them to carry out their duties effectively. Although there have been important changes at middle leadership level, they are not yet fully effective in driving forward the required improvements in key strategic areas.

Line management responsibilities are clear and the school has developed an appropriate structure of meetings for senior and middle managers. These are focussing more on improving standards and teaching and learning. This clearer schedule of meetings between senior and middle managers is starting to improve

levels of accountability. However, senior and middle management meetings focus too much on operational issues and not enough on improving key strategic priorities. These meetings do not always result in clear enough action points with measurable targets and success criteria.

The school has strengthened its performance management processes and they are aligned appropriately to the school's priorities. However, performance management targets do not reflect well enough the needs of individual staff and their targets for improvement are not always specific or measurable enough.

The governing body, under the leadership of the chair since September 2016, is developing usefully its role as a critical friend and its understanding of performance data and information received from the schools' self-evaluation processes.

Although there have been important changes and additions to the leadership and management of the school, leaders and managers at all levels have not been effective enough in improving key areas of the school's work, including pupil standards, attendance and behaviour, and the quality of teaching and learning.

### **Recommendation 6: Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school continues to implement a suitable licensed deficit and recovery plan which has been agreed with the local authority. The headteacher and business manager monitor spending thoroughly through regular meetings with governor, local authority and challenge advisor representatives. The five year budget plan is currently on track and the present in-year deficit is lower than originally projected for this year.

The school has undertaken an appropriate range of efficiency measures including the sharing of site management and staff costs with the adjoining primary school. For example, through employing an attendance officer, site manager and caretaker.

The level of staff absence continues to decrease. The local authority has provided funding to employ additional support and teaching staff. Recent appointments have helped ensure that very few staff teach outside their subject specialism.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: special measures**

**Ysgol Treffynnon  
The Strand  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7AW**

**Date of visit: March 2017**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Treffynnon is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2016.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Improve standards at key stage 4**

No judgement applied

In the last monitoring visit we commented fully on improved pupil performance at key stage 4 in 2016. This performance compares favourably with that in similar schools in a majority of indicators though mostly not in those that include English and mathematics.

As was reported in the last visit, around half of pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They listen to their teachers with attention and respect, and work purposefully, independently, or with others. A minority of pupils show good recall of previous learning and apply their knowledge suitably in different contexts. Generally, these pupils make good progress.

In many lessons, however, pupils do not make enough progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Around half of pupils do not listen well enough in class and miss useful instructions and information. Many pupils provide only brief, verbal responses and do not develop their oracy and thinking skills well enough.

A minority of pupils lose concentration too easily and become involved in off-task behaviour. This impacts negatively upon their learning and that of others. This



occurs frequently in lessons where teaching does not engage or meet the needs of pupils well enough.

A minority of pupils produce writing that is technically secure and well organised. This ranges from newspaper reports on crime and punishment to scientific evaluations on the properties of salt. A few pupils redraft their work effectively and produced well-crafted pieces, for example on the turbulent teenage years and evaluations of the influence of caffeine. However, many pupils do not take enough responsibility for improving the content and technical accuracy of their work, and continue to make far too many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

While many pupils skim and scan suitably to locate and retrieve information, they do not have a wide enough range of reading strategies to support their learning in all subjects well enough. A few pupils use inference and deduction suitably to enhance their understanding of, for example, characters and events in a range of literary texts such as Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men' and allegories including Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' and Bunyan's 'A Pilgrim's Progress. However, a minority of pupils have weak reading skills.

Around half of pupils demonstrate sound number skills. However, as was reported in the last visit, other than the analysis of data in science, there are too few opportunities outside of mathematics lessons for pupils to develop these skills.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve levels of attendance**

No judgement applied

The school continues to apply an appropriate range of strategies to improve attendance rates. This includes increased engagement with parents and families, reward systems and mentoring programmes. However, these strategies have not led to the improvement required.

In 2016, the school's attendance improved and was in line with modelled outcomes. However, since the last monitoring visit, it has fallen further and currently is significantly lower than at the same point last year.

At the time of this visit, the attendance of boys has improved well, but that of girls has fallen sharply in comparison with the same point last year. The attendance of pupils' eligible for free school meals. is also substantially lower than at this point last year

### **Recommendation 3: Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions**

No judgement applied

The school continues to take suitable action to reduce the level of fixed term exclusions and improve pupils' behaviour. This includes on-going consultation with staff, parents, governors and pupils to revise the school's behavior policy. In the interim, the school supports all staff with useful training on how to promote positive behavior. However, a minority of teachers do not apply the school's current behaviour policy consistently. As a result, the low-level disruption by a minority of

pupils effects their learning and that of others.

The school has involved pupils well in developing a new code of conduct to promote positive and respectful classroom behaviour. The school has developed suitable processes for recording and analysing incidents of inappropriate behaviour. This allows early identification and suitable support for those pupils at risk of exclusion.

The number of fixed term exclusions has declined significantly in comparison with the same period last year. However, the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions remains too high.

#### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

No judgement applied

The school is beginning to implement a suitable range of strategies to improve teaching and assessment. For example, teachers collaborate purposefully as part of professional working groups to address common aspects of teaching that need to be improved. However, many of these strategies are at an early stage of development, and have had very limited impact on the quality of teaching.

Many teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and promote positive working relationships with pupils. A minority of teachers plan well-structured lessons that ensure good pace and progress in pupils' learning. In a few lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils and match tasks and resources well to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, teachers' questioning develops pupils' thinking skills well and there are useful opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their progress.

In many lessons, where pupils do not make enough progress, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of them. They do not challenge pupils of all abilities well enough and their questioning is not effective in encouraging pupils to develop their thinking skills and verbal responses. In these lessons, teachers do not monitor pupils' understanding well enough or encourage them to reflect upon their learning.

A minority of teachers provide clear feedback that help pupils improve their work. A few pupils make suitable improvements to their work based upon the feedback they receive. However, many pupils do not respond well enough to teachers' advice. Overall, feedback does not have sufficient impact on improving the standard of pupils' work.

#### **Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**

No judgement applied

The school is beginning to strengthen its leadership capacity to meet more effectively the challenges it faces. Leaders are developing an appropriate range of quality assurance and improvement planning processes. However, this has not led to

sufficient improvements in important areas of the school's work.

The school has recently restructured its leadership roles and leaders are developing a better understanding of their areas of responsibility. However, senior and middle leaders do not have enough time to carry out their roles effectively and do not work together well enough. Furthermore, there is no coherent plan to develop leadership skills across the school and performance management arrangements remain underdeveloped.

There are improved processes to gather evidence of teaching and the views of pupils. However, these analyses do not focus well enough on the impact that teaching and assessment have on learning, the progress pupils make, and the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently it is very difficult for the school to be precise about aspects, of teaching in particular, that are most in need of improvement. Overall, the school's evaluations of its work are too numerous, insufficiently evaluative and too focused on processes.

The school has recently produced data packs to support improvements in subject areas. This has enabled middle leaders to identify underperforming pupils more efficiently and provide appropriate interventions. However, this data is not used well enough to detect patterns across subjects and groups of pupils.

There is an increasing range of useful opportunities for teachers to develop their skills. These include training programmes, an investment in technology to reflect on teaching, and professional learning groups. Most teachers are engaging positively with these activities. However, strategies to improve teaching and learning are not planned and evaluated sharply enough to address the most important areas for development.

Governors have an improved understanding of their role as critical friends of the school. They are aware of the school's main areas for improvement and are beginning to challenge the school more effectively.

### **Recommendation 6: Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

No judgement applied

The school continues to implement a suitable licensed deficit and recovery plan which has been agreed with the local authority. The headteacher and business manager monitor all spending closely and ensure that the governing body is kept well informed of this. The school has undertaken a suitable range of efficiency measures including the sharing of site management costs with the adjoining primary school.

Overall, the school is staffed appropriately in view of its financial constraints. Recent appointments have helped to ensure that only a very few staff teach outside their subject specialism. However, the level of staff absence has reduced since the last visit, but remains high overall this financial year.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.



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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Treffynnon  
Penymaes Road  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7EN**

**Date of visit: March 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Treffynnon is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### R1. Improve standards at key stage 4

In a few lessons, many pupils have secure prior learning and apply this well as they develop skills and deepen their knowledge. For example, they develop their understanding of purpose and vary what they write effectively to improve the quality of their persuasive writing. Around half of pupils make suitable progress overall. This is better than at the time of the core inspection. However, a minority make insufficient progress. This is often due to gaps in their prior knowledge, a lack of resilience or because of low expectations or over-direction by teachers.

Around half of pupils make appropriate contributions to class discussion. A few are confident and express their thoughts articulately. In a few lessons, pupils are developing their understanding and use of "professional voice" appropriately, for example they evaluate well the relative importance of problems in post war society. However, a minority of pupils lack the confidence to contribute or are reluctant to do so. Too many verbal responses remain brief and underdeveloped.

Overall, the presentation of pupils' written work and its quality is better than at the time of the core inspection. The majority of pupils write suitably, for example to explain, describe or persuade. When doing so, they are clear about the purpose of their writing. They structure their writing appropriately and are developing their ability to use language effectively to vary their expression to suit their audience and purpose. However, overall, pupils do not write confidently for a wide range of purposes. The clarity and quality of around half of pupils' writing is hindered by clumsy expression, weak spelling and grammar or an insufficient command of language structures. As a result, they do not convey their message confidently, or develop ideas and sustain the reader's attention well enough.

When reading, many pupils are developing their ability suitably to infer meaning, draw conclusions from text and use evidence suitably to support their ideas. For example, a few more able pupils analyse sources effectively when they summarise the effects of extremism. However, overall, pupils' higher order reading skills are underdeveloped.

Many pupils have a sound grasp of basic number work, decimals and fractions. However, many pupils do not understand basic algebraic functions and have difficulty manipulating negative numbers. Overall, there are too few meaningful opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. Many collect and sort data appropriately. In a few subject areas, pupils represent data suitably in graphs. However, overall, many pupils' graphs are presented carelessly, for example they are drawn in pen, or have axes that are not labelled or not labelled accurately.

A few pupils write extended texts in Welsh confidently. In these cases, their writing is expressed well, using an appropriate range of vocabulary and idiom. However, most written work in Welsh is brief and over-reliant on copying from sources. In general, pupils lack the confidence to speak in Welsh.

The majority of pupils display positive attitudes to learning. They participate appropriately in lessons and engage suitably in tasks. However, a minority either lack concentration or are too passive. A few pupils lack the resilience to remain on task in lessons and are easily distracted.

## **R2. Improve levels of attendance**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R3. Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions**

The school has taken suitable steps to address poor behaviour and engagement in lessons. There is now an appropriate range of support and alternative curriculum arrangements for pupils who do not engage purposefully in their learning. The school has also established clearer expectations regarding acceptable conduct in lessons and around school than at the time of the core inspection. While these actions contributed suitably to improved behaviour in lessons and to a notable reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions in the 2017-2018 school year, the number of the fixed term exclusions has increased again since September 2018. This is currently higher than in the previous school year and is as a result of the poor behaviour of a small group of pupils. The engagement and behaviour of a few pupils in lessons remains a concern.

### **R4. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

### **R5. Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since September 2018, the school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen leadership. This is beginning to have a positive impact on some aspects of the school's work, for example classroom behaviour, the quality of teaching and raising expectations. However, leadership has not had sufficient impact on the standards that pupils achieve or their attendance.

The school has restructured suitably leadership roles and responsibilities at both senior and middle level. This has helped to improve communication and develop a sense of common purpose amongst leaders. It has also had a positive impact on staff morale. In general, roles and responsibilities are balanced, clear and well understood by staff. However, in a few cases, there is a lack of clarity regarding leadership roles and a few senior leaders have too many responsibilities.

Middle leaders are held to account suitably, and are given appropriate support by senior leaders to improve their effectiveness. Heads of Faculty now have a clear understanding of their role in raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. They take a leading role in sharing good practice both within and across subject areas, for example through focused peer observations.



There have been significant changes to the governance of the school. An interim executive board (IEB) has replaced the governing body until September 2019. The IEB meets monthly to monitor the school's work closely. In doing so, it provides the school with suitable challenge and valuable support. For example, middle leaders now give regular presentations to the IEB on specific aspects of their work. As a result, members of the board have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities.

Leaders monitor pupil behaviour appropriately. They have deployed suitable strategies to improve classroom behaviour. However, over time leaders have not had enough impact on reducing fixed-term exclusions. In addition, the school does not have a sufficiently strategic approach to monitoring and improving pupil attendance.

The school has strengthened appropriately its arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning. It has established a clear and well-understood programme of activities to gather and evaluate first-hand evidence. Middle leaders have received valuable support to help them carry out this aspect of their role more effectively.

Heads of faculty are beginning to use lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work appropriately to evaluate the specific strengths and areas for improvement in their provision. This is helping them to secure consistent approaches to teaching and assessment and is starting to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching. However, when evaluating their provision, they do not focus consistently closely enough on the standards that pupils achieve, or the impact of teaching on their progress. As a result, judgements on teaching are often overgenerous and they do not always identify specific aspects that require improvement precisely enough.

The school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the role of pupil voice in their self-evaluation processes. Leaders are beginning to use this evidence suitably to adapt their provision in light of pupil feedback.

#### **R6. Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.



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: special measures**

**Holywell High School  
The Strand  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7AW**

**Date of visit: November 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Treffynnon is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2016.

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

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about three months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

### **Induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) (providers in special measures only)**

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013(1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Improve standards at key stage 4**

No judgement applied

In 2016, at key stage 4, performance in many indicators improved. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics improved by 12 percentage points although it remains slightly below modelled outcomes. Performance in this indicator places the school in the lower half of similar schools based on free-school-meal eligibility.

Performance in the capped points score improved in 2016 and is now above modelled outcomes. Performance in this indicator places the school in the upper half of similar schools, after having been in the bottom quarter in 2015. Performance in the level 2 threshold improved substantially in 2016. Performance in this indicator now places the school in the upper half of similar schools after having been in the bottom quarter in the previous year. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 GCSE grades at A\* or A also increased in 2016 and is now in line with the family average.

In 2016, performance in mathematics at key stage 4 increased by 13 percentage points and now places the school in the upper half of similar schools. Performance in English also improved, although it remains in the bottom quarter of similar schools.

The performance of both boys and girls at key stage 4 improved in 2016. Both boys and girls perform better than the family averages for boys and girls in half of indicators.

At key stage 4, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in the majority of indicators in 2016. In the level 2 threshold, including English and

mathematics, the performance of this group of pupils improved by five and a half percentage points. However, their performance remains below the national average for this group of pupils in the majority of indicators at key stage 4.

Around half of pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for their learning and participate well in tasks. These pupils listen carefully to their teachers and their peers and work effectively in pair and group activities. A minority of pupils recall their prior learning well and apply it successfully to new contexts. These pupils show good independence and resilience in their learning and as a result they make strong progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills.

A majority of pupils, however, make insufficient progress in their lessons. Around half of them do not listen well enough, struggle to maintain concentration throughout lessons and are slow to get started on tasks. Consequently, they do not complete enough work. A minority of pupils demonstrate immature behaviour which restricts their own progress and disrupts the learning of others.

A minority of pupils write clearly and accurately and produce appropriately-structured extended writing. A few write at length fluently for a range of audiences and purposes,

including formal letters and descriptive pieces. These pupils use drafting and redrafting well to improve their work. However, in the majority of cases, pupils do not demonstrate an adequate grasp of purpose or audience and do not make suitable language choices in their writing. Many pupils make too many basic errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Around half of pupils read aloud with confidence. A minority are able to select appropriate information from a range of texts to answer questions. A few pupils analyse perceptively a range of written and pictorial sources. However, a minority of pupils have weak reading skills.

A minority of pupils contribute appropriately to class discussions. A few explain their ideas articulately in group work and whole-class activities. However, around half of pupils make limited contributions to oral work and do not use subject terminology confidently.

Around half of pupils demonstrate sound number skills. In the few opportunities that they have, they apply these skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when analysing data in science. However, the number skills of around half of pupils are underdeveloped.

## **Recommendation 2: Improve levels of attendance**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a suitable range of strategies to improve attendance rates and to emphasise the importance of good attendance to pupils and parents.

In 2016, attendance rates improved for the fourth consecutive year and are now in line with modelled outcomes. This places the school in the lower half of similar schools based on free-school-meal eligibility after being in the bottom quarter for the previous four years. Girls' attendance is now above the average for girls in the family of similar schools, although the attendance of boys remains well below the family average.

The attendance rates of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in 2016. However, they remain well below the national average for this group of pupils. In 2016, rates of persistent absence declined for the fourth consecutive year. However, they remain well above local and national averages.

Overall, the school made suitable progress in improving rates of attendance during the last academic year. However, school figures indicate that current levels of attendance are substantially lower than at the same time last year.

### **Recommendation 3: Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions**

No judgement applied

Since the core inspection, the school has taken suitable actions to reduce the level of fixed term exclusions and improve behaviour. This includes a revision of its behaviour policy and the introduction of a rewards system for good behaviour. The school has also introduced support strategies for those most at risk of exclusion and an improved reintegration process to support excluded pupils back into school.

The number of fixed term exclusions has declined in comparison with the same period last year. However, the number of days lost to fixed term exclusions remains too high.

The school has set out clear expectations and guidance regarding behaviour for pupils, staff and parents. However, a minority of teachers do not apply this guidance rigorously or consistently enough. As a result, the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils disrupts learning in too many lessons.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

No judgement applied

The school has started to develop a suitable range of strategies to improve teaching. However, these strategies are at an early stage of development and have had a very limited impact on the quality of teaching.

Most teachers demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge and the majority are successful in building positive working relationships with their classes. In a minority of cases, teachers plan well-structured lessons which are successful in promoting good pace and progress of learning. These teachers prepare engaging resources that are suitably matched to pupils' ability and they use questioning appropriately to develop pupils' understanding. In a few cases, teachers have high expectations and

plan demanding activities which help pupils to make strong progress. These teachers manage pupils' behaviour well where necessary.

In many cases, however, teachers' expectations are too low. In these lessons, undemanding activities and limited opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills restrict significantly the progress that pupils make. The pace of learning in these lessons is too slow. In the majority of lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to develop pupils' skills alongside their subject knowledge and they do not monitor pupils' progress closely enough. In a minority of instances, teachers do not use effective or consistent strategies to manage pupils' behaviour.

The quality and impact of teachers' written feedback is too variable both within and across subjects. In a minority of cases, teachers give pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work. In a very few instances, pupils make substantial improvements to their work in light of this feedback. However, a minority of comments are too superficial to help pupils develop their work. The majority of teachers write extensive comments that have little impact on pupils' progress because pupils are not challenged sufficiently to take responsibility for improving their own work.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**

No judgement applied

The headteacher has a clear vision for the improvement of the school and a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, overall, leadership has not had enough impact on pupil standards or the quality of teaching.

Appropriate actions have been undertaken to restructure the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders. However, many middle leaders are not sufficiently effective in their roles and this has created excessive workload for the senior leadership team.

In the majority of cases, line management arrangements are not sufficiently robust or rigorous. There is too much inconsistency in how actions for improvement are identified and followed up. Performance management targets are not sufficiently specific to individual staff and do not focus well enough on improving teaching or raising standards.

Governors have a sound understanding of the school's areas for improvement. The governing body has been suitably restructured to address the key aspects for development. Governors are starting to play an important role in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

The school does not gather enough first hand evidence regarding the standard of pupils' work or the quality of teaching. Most middle leaders do not analyse performance data well enough. Self-evaluation at a whole-school and departmental

level is too descriptive and does not evaluate sufficiently important areas of the school's work. Subject improvement plans do not contain measurable success criteria and do not focus well enough on raising standards or improving the quality of teaching.

**Recommendation 6: Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

No judgement applied

The school is implementing a suitable licensed deficit and recovery plan which has been agreed with the local authority. Appropriate processes are in place to monitor spending and the governing body is kept well informed of progress. The school is undertaking a suitable range of efficiency measures. It has restructured its teaching and support staff which has resulted in valuable financial savings.

Overall, the school is staffed appropriately in view of its financial constraints. However, there is insufficient support for the few staff who teach outside their subject specialism.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.





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: Special Measures**

**Ysgol Treffynnon  
Penymaes Road  
Holywell  
Flintshire  
CH8 7EN**

**Date of visit: November 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Treffynnon 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 requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### R1 Improve standards at key stage 4

The standard of work that pupils produce in lessons has improved substantially since the core inspection. The improvements noted in recent monitoring visits have been sustained and developed. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and the majority make strong progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Performance of pupils at the end of key stage 4 has improved since the core inspection although, in general, progress is slightly below that expected.

In many lessons, pupils are developing and improving their oracy skills to be able to provide technical, detailed and correct answers. For example, in food technology lessons, pupils explain and evaluate the advantages of protein and carbohydrates on their health confidently. Many listen carefully to their teachers and their peers and support each other's learning well in group and pair activities. However, a minority of pupils lack the confidence to contribute in class discussions.

When reading, many pupils are developing their ability suitably to infer meaning, draw conclusions from text and use evidence well to support their ideas, for example in history, when considering the impact of poverty during the Tudor times.

Many pupils write suitably, for example to explain, describe or persuade. When doing so, they are clear about the purpose of their writing. They structure their writing appropriately and are developing their ability to use language effectively to vary their expression to suit the audience and purpose. However, a minority of pupils make regular basic errors in their writing.

Many pupils have a sound grasp of basic number work, decimals, fractions and percentages. Many pupils are able to construct and plot graphs accurately. They use numeracy skills appropriately to solve everyday problems, for example when calculating simple and compound interest on loans and savings.

### R2 Improve levels of attendance

The school uses a wide range of appropriate strategies to address poor attendance. These include early responses to pupils' absence and contact with parents through telephone calls and home visits. In addition, staff work with a wide range of external agencies to provide support for pupils and their families to help improve their attendance. These initiatives have had a positive impact on the attendance, although attendance rates remain lower than in other similar schools.

Pastoral staff analyse attendance data suitably to identify any patterns of poor attendance and meet regularly to share information on pupils whose attendance is causing concern. As a result, they know these pupils well and the issues that contribute to their poor attendance. In addition, an attendance panel meets on a fortnightly basis to identify and support students with significantly poor attendance and those at risk of disengagement. The school provides an appropriate alternative curriculum, which has helped to ensure that a few key stage 4 pupils remain engaged in education.

There are appropriate systems in place to reward good attendance, that have been developed through consultation with pupils. The school works closely with parents to raise their awareness of the importance of good attendance for their children.

### **R3 Reduce the number of fixed term exclusions**

The school has taken suitable steps to address poor behaviour and engagement in lessons. There is now an appropriate range of support and alternative curriculum arrangements for pupils who do not engage purposefully in their learning. The school has also established clearer expectations regarding acceptable conduct in lessons and around school than at the time of the core inspection. As a result, behaviour in general has been good and fixed term exclusions are lower than at the time of the core inspection. In addition, the quality of teaching and learning experiences provided by the school has had a positive impact on behaviour.

### **R4 Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, leaders have strengthened successfully its approach to improve the quality of teaching and assessment across the school. Senior leaders have provided staff with a range of useful opportunities to share good practice and organised beneficial whole-school and individual training and support. As a result of these initiatives, the quality of teaching and assessment has improved significantly since the time of the core inspection.

In most instances, teachers develop strong working relationships with their classes and establish classroom routines that support learning well. Many teachers are enthusiastic for their subjects. They plan lessons effectively and provide a range of engaging and purposeful activities that build well on pupils' previous learning and knowledge. They work well with teaching assistants to provide valuable support to pupils' learning. However, a minority of teachers do not develop pupils' independent learning skills well enough.

Many teachers use questioning effectively. They give pupils time to think and share their ideas and opinions clearly through a 'professional voice'. This helps pupils to provide clear, correct and detailed responses. Many teachers provide suitable levels of challenge and in these lessons, pupils make strong progress.

In most lessons, teachers provide pupils with useful verbal feedback in a timely and supportive manner. Key assessment tasks are used valuably to provide a clear focus when assessing what matters. Most teachers use 'action' feedback comments to identify specific areas for improvement well.

Many teachers have clear expectations regarding how pupils should respond to feedback. These teachers ensure that pupils engage well with follow-up tasks to develop specific aspects of their work. In many cases, pupils amend and improve their work in response to guidance beneficially.

### **R5 Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels through more rigorous accountability and stronger arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate action to improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels. During this time, there have been substantial changes in leadership, and the school has used this opportunity to reorganise and refine suitably roles and responsibilities. The headteacher and two deputy head teachers work well together as a team and share the same vision and values. Together, they set high expectations for all staff and pupils. They communicate these effectively to staff, pupils and parents. As a result of their decisive leadership, there have been significant improvements to the quality of teaching and to the standard of pupils' work. The senior leadership team has succeeded in improving staff morale and has developed a culture of openness and trust amongst staff and leaders. They have improved communication across the school and the consistency of all leaders in implementing key school policies and procedures. Through the work of the 'School Development Team', consisting of senior and middle leaders, the school has developed a beneficial, collegiate approach to improving the quality of teaching across all faculties.

Middle leaders have a clear understanding of their role in raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. They take a leading role in sharing good practice both within and across subject areas. They are taking a more forensic approach to analysing the effectiveness of teaching in their subject areas. This has resulted in positive attitudes to learning, and improved levels of participation and behaviour by most pupils.

There have been significant changes to the governance of the school. An interim executive board (IEB) has replaced the governing body. However, the shadow governing body works closely with the IEB to ensure a smooth transition in spring 2020 when the IEB comes to an end. The IEB meets monthly to monitor the school's work closely. In doing so, it provides the school with suitable challenge and valuable support. For example, middle leaders now give regular presentations to the IEB on specific aspects of their work. As a result, members of the board have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. Governors are well-informed, support the school well and hold senior and middle leaders to account appropriately. They have a clear understanding of the school's issues have challenged underperformance robustly.

The school has effective arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness of its work and to plan for improvements. It has established a clear and well-understood programme of activities to gather and evaluate first-hand evidence on the standard of pupils' work and the effectiveness of teaching. As a result, leaders have a sound understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. They use this information appropriately to plan for improvements.

The school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen the role of pupil voice in their self-evaluation processes. Leaders are beginning to use this evidence suitably to adapt their provision in light of pupil feedback. However, the contribution of parents and the wider community to school planning and decision making is underdeveloped.

## **R6 Resolve the budget deficit effectively**

The school has a licenced deficit agreement with the local authority and a detailed financial recovery plan. The local authority monitors the school's expenditure monthly. The governors, headteacher and business manager monitor the school's budget and expenditure appropriately to ensure that they adhere to the deficit agreement. For example, any changes to staffing have to be agreed in advance with the local authority. The school has worked closely with the local authority to reduce costs where appropriate, including reviewing staffing structures and responsibilities and taking a more rigorous approach to managing sickness absences. As a result, staff absences have reduced significantly.

In order to reduce operating costs, the school continues to undertake an appropriate range of efficiency measures, including the sharing of site management and support staff costs with the adjoining primary school. As a result, the school was able to reduce substantially the licenced deficit for the 2018-2019 financial year. However, the school is unable to return an in-year balanced budget and is not predicted to do so in the near future.

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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 Gader  
Dolgellau  
Gwynedd  
LL40 1HY**

**Date of visit: September 2016**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of visit

Ysgol y Gader is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in March 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing Ysgol y Gader from the list of schools that are in need of significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4, including improving pupils' numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology skills**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school's performance in nearly all key indicators in key stage 4 has improved. Provisional data for 2016 represents the school's best ever performance in most of these indicators. The school's performance in 2016 is much better than performance in nearly all indicators in 2015, and is also better than the stronger performance in 2014. According to the provisional data and free-school-meal benchmarks this performance places the school in the top 25% of similar schools in terms of eligibility for free school meals for most of the key indicators at key stage 4.

In the indicator that includes five A\*-C grade GCSEs including Welsh or English and mathematics, the school's performance has improved significantly in comparison with its performance in 2015, and has increased by 9.1 percentage points since 2014. Performance in the core subject indicator has also improved by 6.1 percentage points since 2014.

The capped points score has improved by 18 percentage points since the core inspection, and 31 points since 2015.

Since the core inspection, the school's performance in the level 2 threshold has increased by 15.4 percentage points, and the school's performance in the level 1 threshold has also improved.

In the indicator that includes five GCSEs grade A\*-A, the school's performance has declined since the core inspection. The percentage of pupils who gain five GCSEs grade A\*-A has decreased by 14.4 percentage points since 2014, and is also lower than the percentage in 2015.

Performance in Welsh at level 2 has improved by 5.4 percentage points since 2014, but remains lower than in the other core subjects. Performance in English at level 2 has improved by 6.3 percentage points since 2014, but the percentage of pupils who succeed in gaining level 2 in literature is significantly higher than for those who succeed in language.



In mathematics at level 2, the school's performance is 10.4 percentage points higher than in 2014, and significantly higher than in 2015. The school's performance in science at level 2 has remained steadily high over the last three years, despite a small decrease of 1.9 percentage points compared to performance in 2014.

According to the provisional data for 2016, the performance of boys and girls has improved in most of the indicators in key stage 4. There is not much difference between the performance of boys and girls, except in English language and Welsh.

The performance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is strong in 2016, and is better than the performance of pupils who are not eligible for free school meals in most of the key indicators in key stage 4.

In a majority of lessons, many pupils show strong oracy skills. They express themselves clearly and confidently, and explain their opinions sensibly. Many pupils read competently in order to gather information, and a majority, particularly pupils of higher ability, analyse texts confidently. Many pupils produce coherent and logical written work. They use paragraphs correctly and structure their work consistently well. However, there are basic language errors in Welsh and English in most pupils' written work.

Most pupils use the four number rules competently, handle units confidently and draw graphs and charts correctly. However, a minority of pupils are too dependent on a calculator and lack confidence when undertaking mental arithmetic.

Most pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately to create presentations and to undertake research work. However, there is little evidence of them practising and displaying higher order ICT skills.

In most lessons, more able and talented pupils do not reach standards that are appropriate to their ability.

## **Recommendation 2: Strengthen provision for skills and ensure robust linguistic progression for pupils**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has acted appropriately by introducing and reviewing procedures to improve provision for skills. This has led to clearer and more consistent guidance for staff.

The school has begun to develop cross-curricular provision for improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Increasing opportunities are offered for pupils to write at length, and there is more consistency in the way in which teachers mark and correct work. An appropriate emphasis on functional numeracy skills gives pupils valuable opportunities to develop these skills. There is a useful programme of interventions for pupils who need support to improve their skills. However, as yet, the effect of provision for literacy and numeracy on pupils' standards is limited. In addition, the school's understanding of pupils' standards in these skills is not robust or comprehensive enough.

Provision for ICT has improved in terms of resources, but there have been few developments in terms of developing pupils' ICT skills across subjects.

The school has acted robustly to improve linguistic progression in key stage 3. As a result, these pupils' attitudes towards using the Welsh language and studying through the medium of Welsh are positive. Initiatives such as 'Mudiad Adloniant Dolgellau' and 'Bydis Iaith' (Language Buddies) enrich pupils' Welsh medium experiences both within and outside the school. However, the percentage of pupils in key stage 4 who study their subjects through the medium of Welsh remains low.

### **Recommendation 3: Strengthen anti-bullying procedures and ensure that pupils play a full role in school life**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has acted robustly to strengthen its anti-bullying procedures since the core inspection. Most pupils now feel safe at school and believe that the school deals well with any cases of bullying. There are very few cases of bullying. Pupils have contributed valuably to adapting the anti-bullying policy, and the school ensures that its anti-bullying procedures have a high profile. The scheme of work for personal and social education (PSE) has been adapted purposefully to include specific units on different types of bullying.

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened the role that learners play in school life. The school council plays an increasingly important part in the school's work. The council meets regularly and now discusses a wide range of issues that are relevant to pupils, such as aspects of pupils' wellbeing and features of effective teaching and learning. Two members of the school council have now been elected to represent pupils on the governing body. However, to date, the school council has not done enough to inform fellow pupils of its work.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and strengthen the quality of associated professional development**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has developed a better awareness of how to teach effectively. Teachers and pupils have worked together productively to develop a shared understanding of the features of effective lessons.

Many lessons are coherent and are planned carefully. In these lessons, teachers explain effectively and give clear instructions. There are productive working relationships between teachers and pupils, and teachers are good language models.

In a majority of lessons, teachers prepare attractive and purposeful resources, and tasks build on each other beneficially in order to ensure that pupils make progress. In these lessons, teachers enable pupils to work independently successfully, as individuals and in groups and pairs. In a few lessons, questions are challenging and probe pupils' understanding effectively.

In approximately half of the lessons, teachers do not exemplify effectively in order to communicate their expectations of pupils. As a result, a minority of pupils do not understand what is expected of them in terms of attainment. In a minority of lessons, questions are not challenging enough and teachers do not take advantage of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy or numeracy skills in the context of their subjects. In a very few lessons, expectations are too low and tasks do not stretch pupils or engage their interest.

In most lessons, teachers do not adapt work to the needs of individual pupils effectively enough, and they do not ensure that there is enough of a challenge for more able and talented pupils.

The school has introduced a comprehensive programme of training and support in order to improve the quality of teaching. For example, 'teaching triads' have enabled teachers to share good practice and learn from each other. The school has provided beneficial support and training for underperforming teachers and, as a result, the performance of specific teachers has improved.

A programme of training has enabled leaders to be increasingly evaluative when observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. However, the quality of lesson evaluations is not consistent enough and not enough consideration is given to the standards that are achieved by pupils.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen the quality of leadership at all levels and ensure that middle managers play a full role in guaranteeing the quality of their departments**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the senior management team's responsibilities have been reorganised appropriately. The senior management team now includes the strategic headteacher, teacher in charge, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and two additional link members. Although the structure is fairly new, the senior management team work well together and set clear expectations for the school. New job descriptions include clear responsibilities, and they are more incisive and specific. There is a suitable balance between the senior management team's strategic responsibilities and their teaching duties. Departmental leaders are now responsible for all aspects of self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and include the school's priorities in all of the department's work. This has been an important element of the reorganisation.

As a result of the reorganisation, lines of accountability between the senior management team and middle managers are clearer. Regular and useful meetings are conducted to discuss standards, individual pupils' progress and improvement plans. Middle managers have prepared comprehensive and valuable self-evaluation reports. However, the standard of the reports varies too much.

All middle managers have received beneficial training for self-evaluation, analysing performance data and leading a department. As a result, leaders use performance data well to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and groups, and to arrange purposeful support and intervention.

Since the core inspection, governors have developed a sound understanding of the school's work, and they challenge underperformance consistently. The scrutiny sub-committee has begun to hold departments to account through challenging and purposeful meetings. For example, the sub-committee has identified the departments that need to be challenged and has already met with department leaders. There are link governors for each area of the curriculum, and purposeful termly meetings improve their recognition of their link departments' strengths and weaknesses.

### **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to maintain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations in which further progress is needed.



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: SI**

**Ysgol-Y-Grango  
Vinegar Hill  
Rhos  
LL14 1EL**

**Date of visit: October 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol-Y-Grango 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 requiring significant improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **R1. Improve standards at key stage 4, particularly those of boys**

Since the core inspection, standards at Ysgol Y Grango have improved and outcomes at key stage 4 are now broadly in line with those of similar schools.

In lessons, the majority of pupils make strong progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. Many pupils engage productively in their learning and are able to recall prior learning well.

Most pupils listen attentively and with respect to their teachers and their peers. Many, particularly boys, are eager to contribute to class and group discussions. They express themselves clearly and confidently, making good use of subject specific terminology. A minority explain their ideas maturely and articulately, for example when describing how to simplify surds in mathematics. Many pupils pronounce Welsh and French words and phrases well.

When given the opportunity, many pupils read aloud confidently. Most are confident in scanning a range of texts to locate and extract useful information. Many pupils use clues in text along with their prior knowledge to infer meaning or draw conclusions suitably. A minority are able to explore language highly effectively to uncover and discuss deeper layers of meaning.

Many pupils write well at length in a variety of forms, demonstrating a sound grasp of purpose and audience. A minority write maturely and use a range of techniques successfully for effect, for example to create tension when writing the opening paragraph of a gothic horror story. However, a minority of pupils make frequent basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The majority of pupils demonstrate competent numeracy skills when given worthwhile opportunities across the curriculum. In mathematics, they apply successfully their understanding of the four rules when solving problems in everyday contexts. The majority of pupils analyse data well, for example when comparing statistics such as life expectancy, percentage of pupils who attend secondary schools and GDP per capita for different countries. Many pupils plot graphs accurately and interpret their findings well to draw reasoned conclusions. Many pupils develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately in their information technology lessons.

In general, pupils have a positive attitude towards Welsh language and culture, and many pupils achieve a level 2 qualification in Welsh.

Since the core inspection, pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4 has improved in most indicators, and is now above that of similar schools in a majority.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and the capped points score is higher than at the time of the core inspection and is broadly in line with that of similar schools in both 2017 and 2018. The proportion of pupils that achieve five GCSEs at grades A\* to A or equivalent has been below that of similar schools for the last five years.

Since the core inspection, at key stage 4, the performance of boys has improved in most indicators and is now in line with that of boys in similar schools. The performance of girls fell in 2017 in most indicators, and although their performance improved in 2018, it remains below that of girls in similar schools in many indicators. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved and now compares well with that of their counterparts in similar schools.

## **R2. Improve provision for the development of pupils' skills, in particular numeracy and ICT**

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened its provision for developing pupils' skills, and now provides pupils with a wide range of valuable opportunities to develop their numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum.

Skills co-ordinators thoroughly evaluate the impact of provision for skills through analysis of data from a range of tests, and regular meetings with pupils to discuss their work. This information is used well by leaders to identify good practice and areas within provision that require strengthening. Over the last two years, the school has provided staff with beneficial training on classroom strategies to develop pupils' skills. This includes the valuable Friday morning 'Bitesize' session, where the skills co-ordinators share good practice and ideas seen within the school and elsewhere. The school has introduced beneficial arrangements whereby mathematics and English teachers act as literacy and numeracy links to support faculties to develop high quality literacy and numeracy tasks.

Provision for developing pupils' reasoning and problem solving skills within mathematics is now a strength and there are many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, in a few instances, numeracy tasks do not offer a suitable level of challenge for all pupils, or are not closely enough linked to the subject topic being studied.

The school has created an ICT working group with representatives from different faculties. The work of this group is starting to have a suitable impact on provision for developing pupils' skills. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to use ICT for research and to present work. There are a few opportunities for pupils to develop their data and computational thinking skills. However, in general, opportunities for pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum are focused on too narrow a range of purposes.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Since the core inspection, leaders have focussed successfully on addressing many of the key shortcomings identified in teaching and assessment. Staff have benefitted from a wide range of whole-school and individual training opportunities to help improve their classroom and assessment practice. This includes regular sharing of good practice.

Nearly all teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and most are good language role models. Most have developed strong working relationships with pupils. They create a purposeful atmosphere, supported by well-established classroom routines. These lessons are well-planned, appropriately challenging and include an engaging variety of activities, which promotes a strong pace of learning. In these lessons, teachers explain ideas clearly and provide relevant opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

In a minority of lessons, teachers provide a high level of challenge. They plan successfully to meet the needs of all pupils and sequence learning activities carefully to build pupils' understanding and their ability to think independently.

A few teachers do not always plan effectively to meet the needs and abilities of all pupils. They do not explain new concepts or demonstrate activities effectively enough, particularly for the lowest ability, or they do not give pupils sufficient time to explore difficult concepts. In a very few lessons, pupils' progress is limited by teachers' low expectations.

In many lessons, teachers monitor pupils' progress closely and provide valuable verbal feedback. They question pupils suitably to check their knowledge and to encourage them to explain their answers clearly. A minority of teachers use questioning skilfully to probe understanding and develop pupils' thinking. A few teachers focus their questions on too few pupils, especially on boys. In many cases, written feedback focuses well on technical accuracy and helps pupils to improve their work effectively.

### **R4. Improve the effectiveness of leadership and strengthen accountability at all levels**

Since the core inspection, the school has successfully restructured leadership roles and responsibilities and strengthened accountability systems. These changes have contributed effectively to improving the capacity and impact of leaders to secure improvements in important aspects of the school's work.

The revised performance management arrangements contribute well to promoting the implementation of specific school priorities. Roles and responsibilities, and line management arrangements are clearly defined. Senior leaders now monitor the performance of middle leaders carefully. These strengthened systems have allowed senior leaders to take appropriately robust action to address areas of underperformance.

Many middle leaders have benefitted from helpful training to strengthen their understanding of their roles and improve their effectiveness. Nearly all middle



leaders play an appropriate role in the quality assurance of their departments. They make good use of the outcomes of these activities, the information from tracking systems, and from senior leaders' lesson observations to monitor performance and make improvements in their areas of responsibility. However, the lack of opportunities for middle leaders to observe lessons limits their capacity to drive improvements in teaching and learning.

The governing body has restructured its committees to focus effectively on key improvement priorities. Governors are now linked beneficially to individual faculty areas and middle and senior leaders present regularly to them. As a result, they have a sound oversight of the school's work. Since the time of the core inspection, they have a significantly improved understanding of their role as critical friends, and now provide a suitable level of challenge, particularly on progress against the recommendations.

## **R5. Improve the effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning across the school**

### **Core inspection**

Since the core inspection, the school's arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning have been strengthened significantly. This has had a positive impact on important areas of the school's work, including pupil outcomes at key stage 4 and the quality of teaching and assessment.

Senior leaders analyse data well and compare performance of specific groups of pupils appropriately against those in similar schools. Most middle leaders review pupil performance data thoroughly and identify key areas for improvement. Senior leaders evaluate the progress that pupils make in lessons well. They identify strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and use this information to plan for improvement effectively. Leaders at all levels monitor pupils' work efficiently to check aspects of provision such as quality of feedback and the provision for the development of pupils' skills. The school plans effectively to improve areas for development identified through their self-evaluation and leaders at all levels monitor progress against improvement plans robustly.

Pupil voice is a strength. The school and faculties gather the views of all pupils comprehensively through various activities such as 'feedback Friday'. This includes canvassing their opinions on teaching and learning. The school gathers the views of parents suitably.

## **R6. Work with the local authority to eliminate the deficit budget**

Since the core inspection, the headteacher, business manager and governing body have managed the budget carefully under increasingly challenging circumstances.

The school works closely with the local authority to ensure that mounting financial pressures do not adversely impact on pupils' experiences and outcomes. It has successfully secured significant extra funding for staff professional development, intervention programmes for literacy and additional resources for faculties. Further

savings have been made through managing staffing levels carefully and renegotiating contracts and leases.

The deficit has increased over the last two years due to unforeseeable increases in costs. A new suitable recovery plan has been agreed with the local authority to eliminate the deficit over the next five years.

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