



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Dewstow Primary School
Woodland View
Caldicot
Newport
Monmouthshire
NP26 4EE**

Date of visit: April 2024

by

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

Outcome of visit

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

As a result, His 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 leadership at all levels

Since the core inspection, staff and governors have transformed the school's ethos. Pupils are calm, attentive, and eager to learn. They often engage well in their learning experiences. Staff feel happy and valued and appreciate the many opportunities to develop as professionals.

The headteacher and governors have made significant progress in developing a stable and coherent leadership structure. The headteacher leads with vision and drive and, together with senior leaders, they have created a team eager to work as a collegiate body in moving the school forward. Staff are clear about their roles, responsibilities, and lines of accountability. Staff at all levels are keen to lead in their areas of responsibility. They proactively consider how to make improvements and often take the initiative when seeking support and professional development opportunities.

Leaders have put in place a range of effective processes to support staff to develop and improve their practice. Monitoring activities focus appropriately on pupils' learning and well-being and on improving the consistency of teaching across the school. Staff, including teaching assistants, appreciate the feedback and support they receive which often results in improved performance. Most teachers have a clear understanding of the expectations for teaching and support pupils' learning and progress well.

Leaders evaluate school improvement honestly and accurately, identifying what is going well and where improvement is needed. Their plans for development focus suitably on the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas of development in the work of the school. They are committed and willing to bring their individual knowledge and strengths to the role, providing suitable support and challenge. They have benefited from support from the local authority's school improvement partner in developing their skills and understanding. Many of the governors are visible in the

daily life of the school, and have formed worthwhile working relationships with staff, allowing them to engage increasingly in gathering first-hand evidence about the work of the school.

Pupils in leadership groups enjoy supporting the school to make decisions, for example about improving the school environment. They communicate well with other pupils to gather their thoughts and ideas and are beginning to put these into action.

R2 Improve evaluation and improvement processes

Leaders have put in place a useful timetable of monitoring and evaluation to help them gather information about the school's performance. They use a broad range of evidence from activities, such as listening to learners and learning walks, and evaluate much of this evidence carefully to plan for continuous improvement. For example, when evaluating the quality of teaching they identify the aspects where support is needed and put effective strategies in place. As a result, many teachers challenge and support pupils well.

Teachers contribute purposefully to monitoring the quality of the school's work. For example, they provide useful evaluations of the impact of their feedback on pupils' progress. This enables leaders to build an accurate picture of the schools strengths and areas for development.

Leaders take good account of the views of pupils and parents, and this allows their points of view to influence the school's improvement journey positively. For instance, feedback from pupils leads to improvements in the support available to enhance their well-being. As a result, the school is a more productive and engaging learning environment.

The wide range of evaluation strategies focuses well on the impact of provision on areas such as pupils' confidence and independent learnings skills. However, leaders' monitoring does not always focus strongly enough on evaluating pupils' knowledge and skills. This means that these processes do not always present a clear enough picture of where pupils' skills are developing well and where improvements need to be made.

Leaders are beginning to consider how initiatives funded through the pupil development grant have a beneficial impact on pupils, for example on their engagement and enthusiasm. They are at the early stages of evaluating how well spending supports the progress of pupils from low-income households.

R3 Improve the quality of teaching and learning experiences across the school

The school has transformed its environment to enable productive and independent learning that engages most pupils effectively. Teachers in the younger classes use

play and play-based learning well to encourage exploration and creativity. Older pupils use inviting spaces effectively to enhance their growing independence.

The school has developed its curriculum in response to Curriculum for Wales effectively. The learning experiences provided engage pupils well. A range of visitors and trips now enrich the curriculum appropriately. For instance, older pupils develop their understanding of online safety during workshops delivered by a visiting theatre group.

Strategies put in place by the school are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Across the school, teaching is improving and is now more successful in supporting pupils to make effective progress. Across the school, pupils use classroom 'working walls' successfully to support their own learning, for example, they refer to the structure, setting and characters when creating folk tales. The school has continued to invest in their outdoor learning environments and teachers make effective use of opportunities for all pupils to benefit from the attractive and intriguing activities on offer outdoors, in all weather.

In nearly all lessons, teachers make learning intentions clear, and overall, most teachers have appropriately high expectations for pupils' progress. In most lessons, teachers adapt learning to meet pupils' needs and across the school they identify suitable success criteria to support pupils to achieve the learning objective. Where teaching is strong, in many classes pupils make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. In a very few classes, pupils' progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills is limited.

In many lessons, teachers use authentic resources to engage pupils effectively. For example, older pupils examine a sheep's heart when learning about how the heart works. As a result, they develop their understanding and technical vocabulary well.

R4 Plan for the progressive and systematic development of pupils' skills across the curriculum, including regular opportunities for them to develop their writing skills

The school has developed its curriculum to include learning experiences that enable pupils to build appropriately on their skills across the curriculum. Staff monitor pupils' individual progress in skills suitably and in many classes use this information to plan next steps effectively. In a minority of classes, teaching does not focus closely enough on pupils' individual needs.

The school's work to develop pupils' independence and resilience has a positive impact on their oracy skills. Many pupils develop their oracy skills well. They use a growing range of vocabulary and are developing confidence in speaking for a variety of purposes and audiences. Across the school, pupils work well to improve their work in pairs and within small group discussions. They listen and respond appropriately in

whole class learning situations and, in a few classes, offer thoughtful ideas and solutions to problems. In many classes, pupils recall and articulate their learning well.

As they move through the school, many pupils build on their literacy skills suitably in their work across the curriculum. In many classes, teachers provide regular, meaningful reasons for writing, and pupils develop their writing well. The youngest pupils mark-make confidently in their play-based learning and by the time they reach Year 2 are beginning to write regularly for a range of purposes. They write independently to support their learning, for example when adding labels to their constructions. In most classes, teachers focus appropriately on developing spelling, punctuation, and grammar. They regularly plan opportunities for pupils to develop techniques that improve the quality of their writing to engage the reader. Pupils in Year 4, for example, identify synonyms and use them when re-telling a tale and use adverbs effectively in poems they create. Pupils in Year 6 use suitably formal language when writing an email to the Minister for Education. In a few classes pupils do not have enough opportunities to correct mistakes or revisit their written work to make suitable improvements. As a result, a few pupils do not develop their literacy skills well enough.

Many pupils continue to develop their mathematical skills appropriately. Teachers are beginning to develop suitable opportunities for pupils to apply these skills appropriately to other aspects of their work. Younger pupils for example create groups of numbers when planning where to plant the cabbages in Peter Rabbit's vegetable patch. Older pupils take measurements and create a variety of graphs when carrying out science investigations. Generally, however, opportunities for pupils to use numeracy in real-life situations are limited and, in a few classes, pupils do not develop their mathematical skills at a suitable pace.

R5 Strengthen assessment processes and feedback to pupils

Leaders and teachers use a broad and valuable range of strategies to help evaluate and monitor pupils' progress. This information helps leaders identify pupils' learning needs accurately. In many classes teachers are beginning to use this information to challenge and support pupils appropriately.

Many teachers use feedback well to help pupils improve their work and to extend their learning. They regularly provide pupils with useful immediate feedback during lessons. This supports pupils to address misconceptions and moves their learning on in a timely manner. Many older pupils respond well to written feedback, for instance when challenged to consider the effect of forces acting on a rocket. Most older pupils understand the expectation upon them to respond to teachers' feedback and recognise that this helps them to improve and helps learning to 'stick in their head'. On a few occasions, teachers do not monitor pupils' learning well enough to provide them with helpful feedback during lessons.

Teachers are beginning to provide pupils with a few suitable opportunities to consider and evaluate their own work and that of others. They use reflection time well to enable many pupils to begin to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers often provide a set of success criteria for pupils to check their work during lessons. However, the success criteria provided does not always match pupils' individual needs well enough and does not support them to evaluate their work effectively.

R6 Provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop pupils as independent learners

Most staff have a clear understanding of how to help pupils to develop as independent learners.

The school has developed its learning environment thoughtfully. Resources are well organised and learning spaces are inviting, enabling pupils to take ownership of their learning. Many pupils are now familiar with working independently and appreciate the trust staff put in them. Pupils respond well to the helpful routines and boundaries established across the school. They work well diligently, find solutions to problems, and remain on task.

Many teachers plan learning opportunities and provide a range of worthwhile resources that support pupils' developing independence. Younger pupils enjoy making choices and confidently explore learning in the classroom and in the extensive outdoor environment. Older pupils make suggestions about their learning and contribute to what they will learn. For example, they generate 'wonder' questions that form the beginnings of a series of lessons designed to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. During these lessons, pupils explore the source of a river, using practical apparatus, maps and atlases and online research. They create leaflets using digital programmes, selecting the important information, share their findings through informal presentations and develop their artistic skills, mixing watercolours to create effective paintings of rivers. These planned experiences enable pupils to make relevant and authentic links in their learning.

In many lessons, staff use observation and questioning well to support pupils' thinking and give them time and space to explore learning at a suitable pace. Most pupils work well together in groups. Younger pupils, for example, work successfully together to create an intricately designed home for Peter Rabbit. Older pupils take on different roles in a discussion, listening well to each other, contributing confidently and agreeing on decisions.

R7 Improve pupils' progress in Welsh and support them to apply their skills across the school

Leaders have a clear vision for the continued development of pupils' Welsh language skills. Across the school, teachers have developed their knowledge of appropriate Welsh vocabulary and sentence patterns. In many classes, they use Welsh confidently throughout the school day and provide interesting opportunities for pupils to apply their Welsh language skills across the curriculum. For example, many older pupils ask and answer relevant questions about characters from the Harry Potter series of books.

The school has recently developed a systematic approach to building on pupils' skills. This approach is beginning to ensure that younger pupils are immersed in the Welsh language and make good progress in developing their skills. They sing songs and play games in Welsh with increasing confidence. Older pupils are beginning to develop early Welsh language skills and with encouragement and support ask and answer a suitable range of basic questions, using appropriate intonation and pronunciation.

The Welsh language has a high profile across the school. Teachers display prompts and reminders on learning walls across the school, and pupils are beginning to use these to support their learning. There is a good range of Welsh texts available, and pupils use these effectively in Welsh guided reading sessions to improve their understanding of the language.

The establishment of the Criw Cymraeg has ensured that pupils are beginning to influence the school's provision for Welsh. They plan and lead assemblies, promote whole-school Welsh language events and work with staff to plan ways in which Welsh can be better promoted across the school.