



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**

**Penygaer Primary School
Bryndulais Avenue
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 8RS**

Date of visit: January 2016

by

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

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The monitoring team

Rhona Edwards	Reporting Inspector
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Outcome of monitoring

Penygaer Primary School 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 requiring significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve standards in literacy and mathematical development in the Foundation Phase, especially for boys

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the last inspection, pupils' performance at the end of Foundation Phase in literacy and mathematical development at the expected level has improved, but is still below average when compared to levels in similar schools. In this period, the percentage of boys who underperform at the expected level has reduced significantly and they perform better than girls at the higher than expected level in both areas of learning.

The school has been successful in introducing a range of strategies and resources to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. These are beginning to make a positive difference to the progress that many pupils make in both areas.

Many pupils listen carefully to adults and respond to instructions appropriately. They listen attentively to a partner and they play listening games well. For example, many pupils in Year 2 use appropriate adjectives to describe characters from familiar stories.

Most pupils now write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences and make satisfactory progress with their writing skills. Many older pupils usually spell familiar words correctly and apply their knowledge of letter sounds appropriately when writing more challenging words. The majority of pupils use simple punctuation with increasing accuracy and a few who are more able are beginning to use commas and speech marks to enhance their work. However, these improvements are at an early stage of development.

Most pupils use new mathematical equipment confidently and competently to make improved progress in numeracy. This enables pupils in Year 1, for example, to recognise and use number bonds within 10 and older pupils to understand place value in two digit numbers. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils measure accurately and make sensible estimates. In nursery and reception, many pupils sort objects from the local environment well and many older pupils record their findings in simple pictograms. However, the ability of pupils to apply their numeracy skills across other areas of learning remains underdeveloped.

Recommendation 2: Improve the quality and range of pupils' independent writing both in English lessons and in work across the curriculum

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since its core inspection, the school has broadened its provision for independent writing in English lessons and in literacy work across the curriculum. A good range of training supports this process well and as a result, by the end of key stage 2, most pupils achieve good standards in their writing, particularly in focused English lessons.

Teachers plan interesting activities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and to develop their vocabulary through a range of activities, which prepare them well for writing tasks. In key stage 2, most pupils' writing is interesting and lively and they often use words vividly to capture the interest of the reader, for example when they write an extended recount of their visit to Parc y Scarlets. Most spell words accurately in line with their ability and they make good use of punctuation and paragraphing to organise their work. By the end of key stage 2, the handwriting and presentation of most pupils are very good.

Most pupils are beginning to transfer their writing skills well to other areas of the curriculum. This is particularly the case in science, where many pupils record detailed and accurate accounts of the investigations they undertake, for example when they investigate the conditions needed for mould to grow successfully. However, pupils' independent writing is constrained occasionally by the over-use of worksheets in other subject areas.

Recommendation 3: Develop curriculum planning for literacy, and science that enables all pupils to acquire knowledge and skills systematically and progressively

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Leaders have adapted a commercial scheme of work well so that all pupils develop their literacy skills progressively as they move through the school. This adapted scheme provides teachers with clear guidance about the appropriate oracy and reading skills that pupils need to underpin the development of their writing skills. It enables teachers to provide pupils with interesting opportunities to write pieces of fiction and non-fiction for a range of purposes and audiences.

The school has recently introduced a published scheme to support the development of pupils' science investigation skills. Teachers now provide pupils with regular opportunities to develop their investigative skills in a range of interesting contexts. Pupils use a suitable range of useful resources and equipment to support this work. However, these arrangements have only been in place for one term and the school has not yet completed an audit to ensure full coverage of this element of the curriculum.

Recommendation 4: Provide learning experiences that challenge all pupils at an appropriate level

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Nearly all teachers adapt numeracy tasks to meet many pupils' different needs and abilities appropriately. In the Foundation Phase, teachers normally provide interesting numeracy tasks to support and challenge most pupils at an appropriate level. In key stage 2, nearly all teachers differentiate mathematics tasks effectively. They organise pupils into appropriate ability groups and provide work that enables them to make suitable progress in line with their abilities.

In nearly all literacy lessons, teachers differentiate activities by outcome only. This means that all pupils complete the same writing tasks. As a result, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.

In a few lessons, a minority of teachers occasionally adapt success criteria to suit the different abilities within their class. However, in general, all pupils work towards achieving the same outcomes. As a result, pupils of different abilities are not always clear about what they need to do in order challenge themselves appropriately to achieve the next steps in their learning.

Teachers make good use of assessment information to identify accurately the range of needs and abilities within each class. The school uses this information to arrange worthwhile intervention programmes to improve the basic skills of targeted pupils, but does not use it well enough to plan a range of activities to challenge all pupils consistently.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that all teachers use assessment for learning strategies and provide pupils with useful written feedback consistently on how to improve their learning

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

All pupils set themselves worthwhile individual targets for improving their skills in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. They review their targets with teachers each term and change them to reflect the progress they make. Many pupils explain clearly why they chose their targets and how these help them to take responsibility for their own learning. As a result, most pupils are enthusiastic and engage positively with their work.

In most lessons, teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas with a partner. This is effective in helping pupils to understand the lesson objective and develops their speaking and listening skills well. Most teachers use a range of appropriate strategies to encourage pupils to engage actively in lessons. For example, teachers use lollipop sticks to select pupils randomly to answer questions or share their ideas. Many teachers share learning objectives and deliver useful plenary sessions at the end of lessons to encourage pupils to reflect on what they have achieved.

Many teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and provide them with beneficial written feedback about their achievements in relation to the learning objective. However, they do not always make clear to pupils what they need to do next in order to improve their work. Older pupils in key stage 2 respond occasionally to teachers' comments, but this practice is at an early stage of development.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that senior leaders carry out their strategic roles effectively and tackle underperformance robustly

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

During the last 18 months, the school has experienced a considerable number of staffing changes. The headteacher has managed the change process effectively and all staff now work well together as a team. Restructuring of the senior leadership team and a review and revision of responsibilities throughout the school mean that all staff are clear about their roles. They respond well to the much stronger strategic direction that senior leaders now provide. Leaders report regularly to the joint regional consortium and governing body improvement panel on progress in relation to meeting the recommendations from the inspection of November 2014. This process is helping to ensure a continued focus on raising standards across the school and is improving the skills of governors to ask more challenging questions.

The strengthening of performance management arrangements for teachers means that they are beginning to be held to account for the standards that their pupils achieve through improved systems to identify strengths and areas for development. However, this formal process does not include a review of the work of teaching assistants. There are good mentoring arrangements to support members of staff who are new to the profession to ensure that their work meets the higher standards that senior leaders now expect. Staff meetings focus well on reviewing progress against agreed targets and help to share good practice across the school.

The provision of a wide range of well-focused training and support from the regional consortium and the headteacher of another local school is having a positive effect on improving the overall quality of management, teaching and learning across the school.

Recommendation 7: Establish more formal and systematic self-evaluation processes for monitoring, evaluating and recording accurately the work of the school

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Close working with a neighbouring school is helping the school to introduce a range of robust self-evaluation systems. The basis of these is the careful analysis of data and other first hand evidence, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. These improved systems enable the school to judge its performance more accurately and identify where improvement is needed.

Senior leaders use data well to identify pupils who need additional support and to put in place a range of appropriate intervention systems to provide this. However,

leaders do not analyse the outcomes from additional support well enough to evaluate which strategies are the most effective in raising pupil performance or to identify and provide for those pupils who are more able.

Leaders throughout the school are improving their skills to evaluate more accurately the quality of lessons and pupils' work. Monitoring activities have a clear focus and staff receive good quality feedback on the outcomes at a whole school and individual level. However, although leaders identify areas of strength and concern with increasing accuracy, they do not always follow these up well enough to ensure that improvement takes place and new initiatives are properly embedded throughout the school.

The recent introduction of joint working with two other local schools is helping to share good practice, for example in developing leadership skills and assessing accurately pupils' work in key stage 2. The school has also shared its improving practice in assessment for learning across this group of schools. Pupils are very positive about how these assessment practices help them to improve their work.

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.