

Monitoring

of

**Ysgol Betws y Coed
Bro Gethin
Betws-y-Coed
Conwy
LL24 0BP**

School number: 6622012

Date of inspection: January 2012

Ysgol Betws y Coed was inspected during the autumn term 2010 and was judged to need significant improvement. As part of the Welsh Government's requirements for schools that require significant improvement, Estyn undertook a follow-up inspection in January 2012, focusing on the key issues identified in the Section 28 inspection.

The outcome of the re-inspection

Ysgol Betws y Coed has not made sufficient progress in the key areas for action which were identified in the Section 28 inspection of the school that was undertaken in the autumn term 2010. As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Education and Training in Wales is of the opinion that the school needs to be placed in the special measures category.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: to improve standards overall and especially so in Welsh across the school and English in key stage 2 and to give more able pupils a greater challenge in their work

The school has addressed the recommendation in part.

The oracy standards in the Foundation Phase are developing appropriately and effective use is made of songs and rhymes to reinforce language patterns across a range of subjects. The older pupils in the school were reticent to respond orally in the assembly and their thinking skills have not been developed sufficiently.

The reading standards of the majority of children across both key stages are developing appropriately. They show a liking for books and the best readers read with a degree of confidence and meaning that is in line with their age. In key stage 2, the higher reading skills are developing appropriately in both languages. The school has recently purchased a wide range of reading resources and these are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' reading standards. However, teachers' records

do not contain sufficiently detailed comments about individual pupils' progress in reading.

In key stage 2, pupils receive appropriate opportunities in both languages to write in different forms. However, the writing standards often do not show sufficient progress over a period. The work of the majority of children is untidy and cumbersome syntax is accepted too often in Welsh.

Pupils' contribution to the school newspaper, 'Llais Betws', has had a positive effect on pupils' information and communication technology skills. However, neither the data handling skills nor modelling have been developed sufficiently.

In key stage 2, there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop thinking skills or their ability to work more independently. This affects pupils' standards and progress. The most able and talented pupils are not challenged sufficiently to achieve as well as they should.

The school does not have adequate information about pupils' standards of achievement in key stage 2.

As a result of the small numbers of pupils in Years 2 and 6 in summer 2011, the performance data did not provide an adequate basis on which the inspection team could judge progress.

Recommendation 2: to improve the quality of marking in key stage 2 and the systems of assessing and tracking pupils' progress across the school

The school has addressed the recommendation in part.

There has been some improvement in the quality of marking across the school with more attention being given to making constructive comments on pupils' work in terms of language and setting targets for improvement. However, the marking is not sufficiently penetrating across the range of subjects to ensure improvement in pupils' standards of work.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils' progress is assessed regularly, with effective use of assistants being made in order to share information about progress. There is a clear structure in place for setting individual targets and the majority of pupils know their personal targets. In key stage 2, the targets that are set are not sufficiently specific. The school has begun to use appropriate assessment for learning strategies in the classroom.

The school does not have appropriate arrangements for measuring pupils' progress between the Foundation Phase and the end of key stage 2 or assessing pupils' work between the two key stages. In addition, the school has not developed subject profiles at the end of key stage 2 in order to ensure the validity of levels.

The school has begun to develop a tracking system for monitoring pupils' progress based on a standardised reading score in both languages and spelling in English. However, except in reading, staff do not analyse the assessments in sufficient detail in order to target pupils that are underachieving.

Recommendation 3: to improve the quality of leadership and management by operating according to the requirements of the school's and authority's policies, developing more effective self-evaluation processes, ensuring improvement through the school development plan and developing a more effective partnership with parents

The school has addressed the recommendation in part.

The school has adopted an appropriate timetable for self-evaluation based on a three-year cycle. However, important shortcomings still remain in the self-evaluation arrangements. There are no records based on examining samples of pupils' written work and the monitoring reports of subject co-ordinators do not identify the aspects for improvement.

Leaders have a lack of understanding of quantitative data and, as a result, the school has not set sufficiently challenging targets to raise standards in specific aspects.

The format of the school improvement plan is based appropriately on the school effectiveness framework and Estyn's inspection framework. However, the improvement plan does not address sufficiently the need to improve standards overall across the school. The monitoring reports do not provide a sufficiently accurate picture of the progress made.

The school has worked hard to improve communication with parents.

Recommendation 4: to develop the role of governors to have more influence on standards and leadership and address the recommendations of the 2004 inspection in full

The school has addressed the recommendation in part.

Governors have received useful guidance on developing their accountability. Following monitoring reports from members of the body, the governing body has a better knowledge of standards. However, the governing body does not have a sufficient understanding of the school's performance to enable the body to challenge the school and to work effectively as a critical friend.

There are shortcomings in the school's policy and arrangements in relation to safeguarding.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- R1 continue to improve the standard of writing in Welsh and English in key stage 2;
- R2 improve the teaching in key stage 2, especially in developing pupils' thinking skills and their development as independent learners;

- R3 strengthen the self-evaluation processes, especially the quality of the monitoring reports and the use of data to measure performance;
- R4 develop assessment processes, giving particular attention to the quality of marking, the use of progress-tracking information and ensuring the validity of teachers' assessments;
- R5 develop the role of the governing body as a critical friend; and
- R6 address the shortcomings in the safeguarding arrangements.

Estyn inspectors will be monitoring the school's progress each term.