



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**Report of visit**  
**Level of follow-up: Estyn monitoring**

**Coedpenmaen County Primary School**  
**Coedpenmaen Close**  
**Pontypridd**  
**RCT**  
**CF37 4LE**

**Date of visit: September 2013**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Dyfrig Ellis	Reporting Inspector
Barry Norris	Team Inspector
Susan Walker	Local authority representative

## **Outcome of monitoring visit**

Coedpenmaen County Primary School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in April 2012.

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 which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in science and Welsh**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Since September, standards in Welsh second language are beginning to improve throughout the school. However, only a minority of older pupils are able to communicate appropriately in Welsh.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase have good listening skills and respond appropriately to simple instructions in Welsh. The majority of pupils participate enthusiastically when activities to introduce and develop new words and phrases include songs in Welsh. Older pupils can write simple short sentences within limited contexts. A few pupils that are more able demonstrate good progression in reading, making appropriate use of prior knowledge and understanding.

The majority of pupils in key stage 2 use simple vocabulary and phrases within formal situations to convey ideas and feelings. Planned oral activities lack challenge and are often limited to pupils responding to how they feel or what they like or dislike.

The school has reviewed its short-term plans for Welsh. This is a recent development, which ensures more challenging provision for pupils. However, is too early to measure its impact on standards.

The school has recently introduced a suitable research approach to science that is heavily skills based. Teacher planning is beginning to ensure that scientific enquiry is at the core of the pupils' work, providing stimulating opportunities for questions. However, this level of detailed planning is inconsistent in pupils' books.

Many older pupils in the Foundation Phase are starting to record observations using symbols, pictures and simple signs or phrases. Most are beginning to make some informed choices about materials and equipment to complete given tasks successfully.

End of key stage 2 assessment indicates that standards in science have improved significantly. However, only a few more able pupils show increasing ability to work independently and to plan the method to be used for their enquiries. A minority of older pupils are beginning to use appropriate scientific knowledge and understanding to explain their findings. Many teachers do not take sufficient account of pupils' prior learning and do not provide clear and consistent advice on how pupils can improve their work further. As result, many pupils' progress in science is limited.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve pupils' ability to apply their skills across the curriculum**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has plans in place for developing pupils' skills. However, this level of planning is not reflected in pupils' work. Consequently, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities during activities, to apply their skills in other subjects, especially numeracy and literacy skills. The inconsistent delivery of short term planning for skills development is having a detrimental effect on raising standards.

A minority of Foundation Phase pupils practise and apply their literacy skills effectively. A few pupils write independently and use vocabulary and syntax that are appropriate to their age and ability. However, inconsistent planning has led to many pupils being unable to make informed choices and decisions about form and purpose when writing.

Many key stage 2 pupils use a rich and extended vocabulary in a variety of forms during English language lessons. Many structure their written work effectively and write for different purposes in different styles. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across the curriculum. Their ability to write extended pieces of writing is restricted to language lessons and planned opportunities to write for a real purpose and audience are limited. Many lessons do not provide pupils with a wide enough range of different contexts and genres in which to use and practise these skills.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils show good progress in mathematics. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking and reasoning skills across all areas of learning, especially activities that involve numbers and money.

At the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils are able to give a mathematical explanation to support their methods and their conclusions during mathematical lessons. However, few pupils are able to apply skills and understanding creatively and logically to solve problems within a variety of contexts. Pupils' abilities to apply their numeracy skills are not developed sufficiently across the curriculum.

The majority of pupils develop their information and communication technology skills well across the curriculum. The standard of many pupils' presentations as well as data-handling work is good.

### **Recommendation 3: Match learning activities accurately to pupils' abilities**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has a register of more able and talented pupils and undertakes a wide range of intervention programmes to support less able pupils. For less able pupils, early identification and targeted support are appropriate. There is a suitable range of intervention strategies to support these pupils, for example through catch-up programmes in literacy. There is appropriate tracking of the outcomes of these programmes and pupils appear to make good progress as a result.

In their short-term planning, teachers have begun to include more systematically the ways they intend to adapt activities to meet the needs and abilities of the pupils in their classes. However, the extent and quality of differentiation in classes vary too much and the resulting work in a sample of pupils' books is often too uniform across pupils of different abilities. At present, the quality of marking does little to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work, especially more able pupils.

Across the school, there is little systematic monitoring of the way teachers have implemented initiatives linked to this recommendation to ensure consistent and effective progress in all classes.

### **Recommendation 4: Develop governors' understanding of their responsibilities and their role as a critical friend**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

A number of aspects of the work of the governing body have improved. Governors have undertaken a suitable amount of training and they have completed a self-evaluation of their work. They have considered the Governors' Wales handbook and have begun to work towards achieving accreditation for their work.

As a result of very recent changes in the management of the school, the governing body has benefitted from more opportunities to engage directly with staff. The level of communication between governors and the acting headteacher is sound and reports to the governing body on important messages about the school's performance are concise and evaluative.

However, many changes are recent and are not secure. The on-going uncertainty about the leadership of the school has limited the scope of the governing body's discussions and made it difficult for it to act fully as a 'critical friend'. No meetings of the governing body or its sub-committees have taken place since June and it is unclear when the next meetings will take place. The uncertainties over leadership need to be resolved quickly in order for recent improvements to become more secure in the long term.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen communication and partnerships with parents and carers**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Since the inspection, parents and carers are better aware of day-to-day activities in the school through the introduction of weekly newsletters. The publication of a termly calendar supports this. The newsletter includes attendance percentages for the whole school and the Welsh phrase of the week. Parental questionnaires in March 2013 indicate that 98% of parents are satisfied with the school. The findings from the questionnaire have been analysed and shared with all stakeholders and the school has responded with appropriate action.

The effective use of new external notice boards around the school is a response to issues raised by the communication liaison group. This group has also drafted a communication policy that has been positive in ensuring a consistent approach to the sending out of parental information and dealing promptly with issues. The use of the virtual learning environment is beginning to support school to home links. However, it is too early to judge how effective this is in raising standards.

**Recommendation 6: Sustain recent improvements in attendance**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school continues to follow local authority guidelines for addressing poor attendance and punctuality. The acting headteacher has worked successfully with parents to eradicate any pattern of arriving late and most pupils arrive at school punctually. The school has recently produced and implemented an appropriate attendance policy. It has established systems to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality and these have begun to have a positive effect.

All pupils' attendance levels are monitored and analysed in detail by staff and individual cases of absence are responded to by working with parents as necessary. The link governor for attendance meets on a regular basis with the school link officer for attendance and welfare, as well as the headteacher and school clerks, to ensure that the school implements systems and procedures appropriately.

The provisional figure for the school's attendance in 2012/13 is 93.31%, which is slightly below the school target set at 94.2%. The school needs to continue with the clear focus on improving attendance in order to raise attendance levels so that they compare better with those of similar schools in terms of the proportion of pupils who are entitled to receive free school meals.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work towards meeting the inspection recommendations that have not yet been fully addressed.