



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: special measures**

**Hendre Infants School
St Cenydd Road
Trecenydd
Caerphilly
CF83 2RP**

Date of visit: October 2014

by

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

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The monitoring team

Richard Lloyd	Reporting Inspector
Eleanor Davies	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring visit

Hendre Infants School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2013.

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: Improve pupils' writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The quality of writing in pupils' books continues to improve throughout the school. Older pupils often have good, creative ideas and can choose interesting and effective words to describe their feelings and recount events. Many older pupils produce extended pieces of work of a good standard. They apply their writing skills well across the curriculum and for a wide range of purposes, for example in writing captions and labelling their illustrations. They are now able to spell common, simple words accurately and consistently and older pupils now use punctuation correctly.

Overall, standards in numeracy are good. Most older pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of number facts. Most pupils in Year 2 can double and halve effectively, round numbers to the nearest 10 and sort items into relevant groups using Venn diagrams. Pupils apply their numeracy skills across a wide range of learning areas and, for example, use bar charts to present their findings. However, a few pupils in older year groups have an insecure knowledge of basic numerical principles such as number bonds.

Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills have developed well since the school improved pupils' access to appropriate equipment. Pupils manipulate ICT equipment independently and are beginning to use relevant applications confidently. They use computer applications to create presentations on topics that they have researched using the school's vibrant outdoor learning environment.

Recommendation 2: Improve attendance

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school's arrangements for promoting and supporting improved attendance by pupils are effective. Most pupils respond well to the school's systems to reward high levels of attendance, such as certificates for individuals and weekly awards for classes with the best attendance. The school provides a useful booklet on attendance procedures for all parents. This highlights the impact of non-attendance on pupils' learning appropriately. The school responds quickly to any unexplained absence and has suitable arrangements for a graduated response to persistent attendance issues.

The school analyses attendance outcomes systematically and tracks its performance well against relevant data from the previous year. The overall attendance rate for the academic year 2013-2014 year was slightly above 93 %, which is in line with the school's target for the year. This improvement has brought the school's attendance rate up to the overall target set by the local authority for its primary schools. While this initial progress is promising, it is too early to say at this stage what the long-term trend in overall attendance rates will be or what the full impact of the school's initiatives will be on tackling persistent non-attendance by a few pupils.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that learning experiences are progressive and meet the needs of all pupils

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

There are effective arrangements for planning across the school and staff work well together to ensure that they use consistent practices within and across year groups. Staff use a suitable theme-based scheme to underpin the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. They have revised their lesson planning to take greater account of the need to adapt work for pupils of different abilities. They have established group guided reading successfully in classes. This supports the progressive development of reading skills well.

The school has a clear and detailed plan for the development of skills across the Foundation Phase. Skills are mapped across the curriculum effectively and take good account of the literacy and numeracy frameworks. Pupils' topic books now show use of the wider curriculum to develop and apply their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Teachers' planning in relation to writing has improved and is beginning to ensure that pupils have enough phonological knowledge and understanding to spell most common words accurately. The improved planning of opportunities for the development of specific writing skills and genres across the curriculum is reflected in more imaginative and creative writing in all areas of the curriculum.

The school has made many recent improvements to the outdoor learning environment. It provides vibrant and stimulating areas that are child friendly. Staff now make much better use of the outdoors to support effective learning.

Pupils now have much improved access to a range of computers and tablet devices in all year groups. Pupils and staff are beginning to make effective use of ICT equipment regularly as part of their learning and teaching.

Recommendation 4: Improve the quality and consistency of teaching

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

All teachers conduct lessons at a brisk pace to engage all learners successfully. In lessons, teachers manage the behaviour of nearly all pupils well by planning exciting activities that captivate pupils' imagination. Teaching assistants are effective in helping many pupils, particularly the less able, to concentrate, behave well and learn effectively.

Teachers take good account of pupils' starting points and tailor work effectively to meet their needs. They differentiate tasks clearly to meet the needs of pupils of all ability levels. This has helped to improve the pace of lessons and pupils make better progress as a result. Teachers throughout the school give pupils much improved opportunities to record their learning independently, especially in their topic work.

Teachers have established a vibrant indoor learning environment, which includes exciting classroom displays and interactive learning areas. The quality of the outdoor learning environment is much improved and teachers use this well to extend pupils' learning effectively.

All teachers receive pertinent feedback from the headteacher about the quality of provision in their classrooms. This has also helped to improve the profile of teaching and learning across the school. The school shares good practice across the classes, and staff have visited other schools to gain a better understanding of good practice.

Recommendation 5: Improve the quality, accuracy and use of assessment

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school's arrangements to ensure the accuracy of teacher assessment at the end of the Foundation Phase are good. Regular staff meetings to moderate pupils' work are beneficial. They enable teachers to assess work confidently, with accuracy across all areas of learning. The school has produced a useful moderated portfolio of work in writing. This helps teachers to have clear understanding of the standards expected and further supports robust teacher assessment. The school has recently implemented systems to moderate teachers' assessments of pupils' work in conjunction with staff from the neighbouring junior school in order to validate judgements and improve transition.

The school has comprehensive systems to track pupils' progress, which give leaders accurate and relevant information. Leaders analyse the data well to monitor pupils' rates of progress. They identify learners who need additional support and challenge in their learning appropriately. Teachers use this information effectively to provide suitable intervention programmes, for example to enable targeted pupils to catch up with their peers. They track the impact of intervention programmes carefully. Teachers are also beginning to use the results of assessment more effectively to inform their planning and delivery of lessons.

Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, adhering to the school's policies on marking and assessment for learning. Their written comments help pupils to improve their work. Pupils regularly assess their own work and that of their peers, for example during plenary sessions at the end of lessons.

Recommendation 6: Establish a stable leadership team that focuses consistently on improving pupils' standards

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has been led well by acting headteachers during the absence of the substantive headteacher. They have provided a much-needed strategic direction to the school's work, and improved staff morale very effectively. As a result, staff have worked together as a cohesive team to bring about recent improvements.

The senior leadership team have demonstrated the capacity to implement sustainable change effectively and improve outcomes for pupils. They have clear roles and responsibilities and provide good continuity to the work of the school. They have brought about significant improvements in a relatively short period of time, particularly in developing an effective curriculum and sound assessment procedures. They monitor teachers' work and give useful feedback, in order to secure further improvements. This monitoring role has contributed well to the school's much-improved self-evaluation practices as well as the consistency of provision between classes.

Regular, well-focused staff meetings and relevant professional development have helped teachers to improve the quality of their work. These are having a positive impact on the standards that pupils achieve.

Recommendations

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.