



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 activity: Special measures

Ysgol Betws y Coed
Bro Gethun
Betws-Y-Coed
Conwy
LL24 0BP

Date of visit: March 2013

by

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



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The monitoring team

Glyn Roberts	Reporting Inspector
Helen Morgan-Rees	Team Inspector

Outcome of visit

It is judged that Ysgol Betws y Coed has made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2010.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from any follow-up activity.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Continue to raise standards of writing in Welsh and English in key stage 2

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has established a strong partnership with schools within the catchment area to develop appropriate language schemes, in order to raise standards of literacy in the school. This effective co-operation has led to purposeful joint planning in order to try to stimulate pupils' interest, enrich their experiences and aim to ensure that the language curriculum is delivered fully. Schemes of work identify appropriate opportunities to write at length in a variety of forms across the curriculum.

The majority of key stage 2 pupils now make good progress in their written work. They write thoughtfully across a range of topics, using correct syntax in Welsh and English. However, only a minority of pupils use cursive handwriting.

Nearly all pupils in Years 5 and 6 write at length in an orderly way and in an appropriate tone in diaries, letters and in persuasive pieces.

Written work is differentiated purposefully but it does not always succeed in meeting the individual learning needs of a minority of pupils.

Recommendation 2: Improve teaching in key stage 2, especially developing pupils' thinking skills and their development as independent learners

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

In an effort to raise standards of teaching, the school's staff have visited schools in the catchment area and beyond in order to observe good practice. Through modelling lessons and regular monitoring by the headteacher and the authority, there has been clear improvement in the quality of teaching.

Staff plan lessons that build appropriately on previous experiences. Thinking skills receive appropriate attention in lessons and suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently in small groups. Lessons extend pupils of higher ability effectively but learning does not always ensure that less able pupils make as much progress as they could.

Learning objectives and success criteria are shared appropriately with pupils. However, success criteria do not always match with objectives in full. Effective questioning leads to the participation of the majority of pupils in learning activities.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen self-evaluation processes, especially the quality of monitoring reports and use of data to measure performance

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The self-evaluation process is now effective and identifies clearly the areas to be developed within the school. A good range of appropriate monitoring activities is used, including data analysis, observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. All the school's stakeholders have an opportunity to contribute to the process of creating an evaluative overview of the school.

The headteacher observes teaching and learning regularly and co-operates with a local authority officer and governors to ensure consistency. This evidence is used effectively to measure progress on the basis of implementing the recommendations of the inspection and as a basis for setting suitable targets in the school development plan.

Through this process, the school and the governing body identify strengths and are aware of areas to be developed. Their understanding of the school's data is developing well, in addition to their ability to challenge the school in relation to pupils' performance and achievements.

Recommendation 4: Develop assessment processes, with particular attention to the quality of marking, use of progress tracking information and ensuring the validity of teachers' assessments

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Pupils' written work is marked regularly. Comments refer specifically to what the pupils need to do to improve the standard of their work. Opportunities are given for pupils to assess their own work against level descriptions and they identify what needs to be done to improve their work. This is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' achievements.

The school has created profiles of pupils' work in Welsh and English for the end of key stage 2. It has also created a personal and social development portfolio in the Foundation Phase. The school standardises work jointly with the other two schools in the cluster. This has strengthened teachers' recognition of level and outcome criteria and has reinforced teachers' ability to be more accurate when levelling pupils' work.

The school's assessment system includes information about all pupils' attainment in numeracy and literacy, based on the outcomes of the Foundation Phase and national curriculum levels. The information is analysed effectively in order to target pupils for providing additional support. The school sets challenging quantitative targets for the end of the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

The school's electronic system for tracking individuals' progress enables teachers to provide differentiated tasks for different cohorts of pupils.

Recommendation 5: Develop the governing body's role as a critical friend

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The body receives comprehensive reports, based on the three key questions in Estyn's framework, on a termly basis from the headteacher and members of the data working party. Under the headteacher's effective guidance, governors' understanding of the school's performance is developing well. This enables the governing body to discuss and challenge the school about its performance and act effectively as a 'critical friend'.

Regular meetings of the governing body are held to discuss the implementation of the post-inspection plan. The school's efforts to raise standards are a regular item on the agenda for these meetings.

Appropriate sub-committees have been formed, including a data sub-committee. This committee is responsible for receiving and analysing data on pupils' attainment. Representatives of the governors are regular visitors to the school as part of the monitoring process. They are invited in to observe lessons after deciding on a specific focus, and the full body receives a detailed report following the visits.

Recommendation 6: Address shortcomings in the safeguarding arrangements

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has taken appropriate steps in order to address shortcomings in the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work on the recommendations that have not been addressed to date.