



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**

**Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn
Ffordd Dyffryn
Llandudno
Conwy
LL30 2LZ**

Date of visit: April 2014

by

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

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The monitoring team

Richard Lloyd	Reporting Inspector
Jane McCarthy	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring visit

Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2012.

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: Raise standards in English, mathematics and science

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has introduced structured guided-reading sessions in the Foundation Phase and at key stage 2, as well as a phonics-based system for improving literacy skills. This is having a positive impact on standards of reading and pupils' enjoyment of books. Many pupils are developing a clear knowledge of phonics and letter and sound recognition. Assessments by staff show that most pupils have improved their reading and writing skills considerably since the introduction of these initiatives.

There has been a significant improvement in the standard of writing, particularly at key stage 2. Pupils make good use of their writing skills in English lessons and across the curriculum, for example, in writing conclusions of scientific investigations and historical reports. More able pupils respond well to additional challenge and produce engaging pieces of extended writing for a variety of purposes. This writing is often organised into effective paragraphs and includes a range of powerful vocabulary and punctuation that clarifies meaning effectively for the reader.

The school is continuing to make good progress in improving pupils' mathematical skills. The use of a published scheme is helping pupils at all levels to make the expected progress. This is having a positive impact on standards throughout the school. Overall, the school has been successful in developing pupils' ability to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum. However, the level of challenge in numeracy tasks across the curriculum is not always high enough. This is particularly evident in the upper Foundation Phase. As a result, a few more able pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Teachers have adopted an appropriate scheme of work for science across the school. As a result, planning now ensures that provision meets National Curriculum requirements. Recent work in pupils' books shows an increasing amount of investigative work, generally at the appropriate level. Most pupils across the school respond well to challenging problem-solving tasks. A majority of the older pupils are beginning to use their reasoning skills appropriately when discussing their results.

The school records and monitors pupils' progress effectively. Managers and staff use this information well to plan lessons and to identify the correct level of support and challenge for pupils. As a result, many pupils make good progress overall. The school has suitable procedures to ensure that teacher assessment judgements are

an accurate reflection of pupils' work.

The school's performance data shows that it is still performing below family and Wales averages in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2. The school is in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools at the expected outcome (outcome 5) at the end of the Foundation Phase in all areas of learning. There is a similar picture at the end of key stage 2, where the schools' performance is also in the bottom 25% of similar schools in all core subjects.

Recommendation 2: Improve planning for the progressive development of pupils' key skills across the curriculum

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school's use of a number of commercial schemes has helped to ensure that curriculum coverage meets statutory requirements. Senior leaders have established a consistent whole-school approach to planning to ensure continuity and progression. As a result, there are coherent plans in place to develop pupils' skills in a progressive way in both the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2.

Work in pupils' books shows a good range of opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. Older pupils have regular opportunities to write extensively in a range of forms. Teachers' marking of written work focuses appropriately on developing specific writing skills and pupils respond well to written and oral feedback to improve or refine their work. This process helps many pupils to make good progress in developing their writing skills.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils have regular opportunities to develop numeracy across areas of learning. An example of this is pupils recording scientific results using tally charts and producing graphs independently. However, the level of challenge within these activities is not always sufficiently high. There are regular opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to use numeracy skills across the curriculum. Most pupils use their problem solving and thinking skills effectively to draw conclusions from data and question their results. However, pupils have fewer opportunities to apply number skills at a suitably challenging level.

Pupils across the school make good use of information and communications technology (ICT) skills for a wide range of purposes, for example, the use of multimedia presentations following group research on the use of magnets in everyday life.

Recommendation 3: Improve the provision for supporting pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Staff provide well for pupils with additional learning needs. The additional learning needs co-ordinator has established good systems for ensuring appropriate provision for pupils with additional learning needs within mainstream classes and in small groups. She monitors pupils' work and progress effectively, and works closely with a

skilled team of learning support assistants to plan and deliver an appropriate range of intervention strategies for any pupil whose progress is not as good as it should be. The detailed records enable them to adjust the level of intervention according to the progress that each pupil makes.

The school now identifies pupils with additional needs at an early age. Timetabled support sessions enable pupils who are at risk of falling behind to make good progress. This has resulted in instances of key stage 2 pupils having made significant progress that has enabled them to integrate in mainstream classes.

Recommendation 4: Provide a clear strategic direction for the work of the school that promotes high expectations of all

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

There have been significant changes to the management of the school recently that have ensured a clear strategic direction for the work of the school. The current 'commissioned' headteacher has provided effective leadership and has ensured that the school continues to address its improvement priorities in the interim period. A new permanent headteacher will take up post in September 2014. The acting deputy headteacher has returned to his class teaching role and this, along with a newly appointed permanent teacher, has ensured consistency in teaching and learning for pupils throughout key stage 2.

The school's leadership team provide pupils with an effective and stimulating education to enable them to reach their potential. Members of the senior management team have well defined areas of responsibility. They use their expertise well to bring about improvements, for example in pupils' behaviour, and in helping the governing body to gain a better understanding of pupil attainment. The school has effective subject leaders for English, mathematics, science, and additional learning needs.

Regular staff meetings ensure that senior leaders consult with and involve all teachers before implementing new initiatives and procedures. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and share a common commitment to raising standards. However, a few teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently.

The school has established a strong and effective partnership with another school within the same local authority in order to raise standards of teaching, learning and school governance. Teachers and governors have taken part enthusiastically in a wide range of activities that all have a strong focus on improving provision. The improved provision is having a positive impact on pupils' standards, for example in the improvement in writing skills in key stage 2.

The current school development plan incorporates the post-inspection action plan and identifies suitable actions to improve standards of teaching and learning.

Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of the governing body

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The governing body has worked effectively with another local school and, more recently, the regional education consortium to improve its work. Governors now provide worthwhile support and challenge to the school that leads to improvements in teaching and learning. Governors analyse data and the school's progress against the post-inspection action plan carefully. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's current performance and future improvement plans.

A few governors now visit the school regularly to monitor the work of the school. They report on these visits to the full governing body. These visits have given them a better understanding of teaching and learning and how the school works on a daily basis.

The governing body has made important decisions regarding the current and future leadership of the school. These developments have brought greater stability to the school.

Recommendation 6: Implement a rigorous system of self-evaluation and improvement planning that uses first-hand evidence of standards and the quality of provision

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school's self-evaluation processes are effective. Leaders have established appropriate monitoring activities within an annual timetable that include the scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and the analysis of data. Reports produced following observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work focus directly on pupil progress. Leaders use the information gathered during monitoring activity well to identify appropriate priorities for improvement and to review and measure the impact of any initiatives on pupils' outcomes. The school has produced a detailed report based on the outcomes of all self-evaluation procedures. It includes a useful and comprehensive analysis of data, and clearly identifies the school's strengths and appropriate areas for development.

A cycle of performance management for teachers is now in place and all teachers have targets relating to improving outcomes for the pupils in their classes. A self-evaluation tool for teaching is enabling teachers to reflect on their practice and identify strengths and areas for development.

The school has continued to engage with parents and pupils well. As a result, the school has re-established a parents' association and introduced clinics where parents raise any concerns that they have about school related issues. Leaders have regular, worthwhile meetings with the school council to gather pupils' views or to engage them in purposeful activity.

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.