



*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 Min-Y-Ddol**  
**Lon Plas Kynmaston**  
**Cefn Mawr**  
**Wrexham**  
**LL14 3PA**

**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
Iwan Roberts	Team Inspector

## Outcome of visit

It is judged that Ysgol Min Y Ddol has made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2011.

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: Raise pupils' standards in extended writing across the curriculum**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Pupils now have a variety of opportunities to develop their ability to write at length across a range of curriculum subjects. As a result of producing pupil profiles, and a writing portfolio, teachers have a better understanding of the progress that pupils make in their written work. Provision is now beginning to have a positive effect on standards of writing across the school.

Foundation Phase pupils are making appropriate progress in their writing skills. By the end of the Foundation Phase, many of them produce pieces for different purposes, which include a sequence of sentences, and make appropriate use of basic punctuation. However, more able pupils are not always challenged to write at length.

There has been obvious progress in key stage 2 pupils' ability to write at more length in both languages. The school's older pupils' translanguaging skills are developing well. At the end of key stage 2, most pupils have a strong awareness of the characteristics of various written forms. The majority of pupils make appropriate use of paragraphs and punctuate their work accurately. Many pupils' grasp of basic syntax in Welsh is sound and their spelling has developed in both languages. Pupils are beginning to use redrafting skills appropriately to improve the content and accuracy of their work. A minority of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work is untidy.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure that pupils develop as independent learners who understand how they learn, and what needs to be done to improve their work**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase are developing well into independent learners. They work independently in pairs and groups confidently and support each other's learning appropriately.

In key stage 2, pupils develop their research skills well. The school's recent investment in laptops ensures that pupils have more opportunities to glean information from the web and undertake an appropriate range of research tasks across subjects. Most pupils across the school apply themselves to their learning when they work as individuals or in groups.

A system of setting targets to help pupils to improve their work is developing appropriately at the end of the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2. Targets are now more specific and challenging. However, the school's oldest pupils are not taking an active enough part in terms of setting their targets, nor in reviewing their progress against them regularly enough.

The school's marking policy has been reviewed recently and pupils' written work is marked regularly and in a consistent way. Comments from teachers identify clearly what pupils need to do in order to improve the quality and accuracy of work.

**Recommendation 3: Raise pupils' attendance levels**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has worked hard to raise attendance levels. Pupils' patterns of attendance are analysed in detail and the school makes effective use of the welfare officer to work with families. Good attendance is promoted successfully by raising pupils' awareness of their attendance levels, in addition to the reward system.

As a result of these initiatives, attendance levels have improved considerably, with a significant increase of about four percentage points to 95% between summer 2011 and June 2012. This figure is likely to compare favourably with figures for similar schools on the basis of last year's comparative data.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that the whole-school schemes of work meet the requirements of the full range of pupils, including developing their skills**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has reviewed schemes of work in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2, and has paid good attention to long-term planning on a whole-school basis. This has been done effectively by using appropriate commercial programmes. It has built on previous work and strengthened progression in pupils' learning experiences. The headteacher monitors the quality of weekly planning across the school. Specific attention is paid in staff meetings to matters that arise, which promotes effective joint planning.

In general, plans differentiate learning activities appropriately for pupils, according to age or ability. Plans identify clearly the progression in skills. The school has planned for the implementation of a new literacy strategy for September 2013.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment across the school by eliminating the shortcomings identified**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The quality of teaching that was seen in the most recent monitoring visit across the school is consistently good. In general, activities are stimulating and build on pupils' previous experiences. Effective questioning encourages pupils to think for themselves. Tasks that are set are differentiated and are usually relevant for various abilities and ages.

Computer programs are used effectively to track pupils' progress regularly and in detail. In the Foundation Phase, the school is developing individual learning profiles for all pupils and tracking their progress in detail. Staff have taken part in standardisation and moderation activities internally and as a cluster of local schools.

Individual learning profiles are in place in key stage 2, and an electronic system is used appropriately to identify pupils' progress on a termly basis. Recently, pupils have had more opportunities to assess their own work and their peers' work regularly. This is beginning to have a positive effect on standards of pupils' work.

**Recommendation 6: Establish a thorough process of self-evaluation and planning for improvement that includes all the school's stakeholders, and that leads to a development plan that focuses clearly on raising standards and improving provision**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

To date, the school improvement plans have been based on the post-inspection plan, and give appropriate priority to activities that address the recommendation. An appropriate timetable has been produced for completing the first self-evaluation since the inspection. Effective arrangements are in place to discover parents' and learners' opinions. The school has also analysed 2012 performance data and has identified appropriate improvement priorities that arise from this.

The school has collected and collated direct evidence on standards and quality from a range of other sources. The self-evaluation document now identifies appropriately the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve.

The governing body monitors progress against the intentions of the post-inspection action plan. Governors' confidence and ability to use data to measure the school's performance is increasing, and they have begun to challenge the school's performance appropriately. However, to date the role of staff and the governing body in terms of producing the self-evaluation report has not been fully developed.

**Recommendation 7: Build clear and timely communication systems with parents**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Ysgol Min y Ddol's parents play a prominent part in the school's life and work and a strong feeling of belonging is an obvious feature. A number of beneficial partnerships have been established, which have contributed significantly to improving communication with parents. Parents assist with activities such as reading and educational visits. Cooking and Welsh learner classes have been established, in addition to a 'Friends of Min y Ddol' association. These partnerships are very successful as a medium of communication with parents.

The school communicates regularly with parents through weekly newsletters that inform them of events and work at the school. The school is in the process of producing a school website in order to enrich this partnership. Very effective use is

being made of modern technology for communicating with parents from day to day. The school handbook is attractive and full of relevant information about the life and work of the school. Parents receive relevant information about their child's progress on a termly basis.

Parents are invited to attend the weekly prize giving assembly on Friday mornings, in order to celebrate pupils' successes. The school has also established a breakfast club, and half of the pupils attend it regularly.

**Recommendation 8: Ensure that all the school's documentation meets statutory requirements**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The governing body has received a range of school policies during the period since the inspection and has reviewed them successfully. The statutory policies have now been updated and adopted by governors and there is a suitable programme in place for reviewing them as necessary. Appropriate arrangements are in place in order to provide an annual report by the governors to parents which meets requirements fully.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve upon this progress, the school should continue to work on recommendations that have not been fulfilled to date.