



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

## **Report following monitoring**

**Level of follow-up: Significant improvement**

**Ysgol Rhosnesni  
Rhosnesni Lane  
Wrexham  
LL13 9ET**

**Date of visit: March 2023**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Rhosnesni is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, His 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

### **R1. Raise standards at key stage 4 and improve the progress that pupils make in developing their skills, especially literacy, Welsh and information and communication technology**

Leaders and staff have a clear commitment to supporting pupils to achieve their potential. The school's strategy is appropriately balanced between supporting older pupils to prepare for external examinations and developing the basic literacy skills of pupils, particularly as the recent profile of pupils on entry in Year 7 is well below average.

In a few lessons, pupils make strong progress and in the majority of lessons pupils make sound progress in their learning. Where teaching is most effective, pupils demonstrate good recall of prior learning, make effective use of subject vocabulary and develop their literacy skills well. In a minority of lessons, pupils make more limited progress. This is because teachers' expectations are too low or that pupils do not focus well enough on their learning.

Many pupils listen well to instructions and explanations from the teacher and a majority contribute appropriately to classroom discussions. A few pupils provide extended responses to questions,, although generally pupils are more comfortable providing more limited responses.

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has refined its approach to developing pupils' literacy skills. This is helping to improve pupils' vocabulary and leading to more frequent and accurate use of subject specific terminology. The majority of pupils have a suitable vocabulary and a minority have a broad vocabulary. They use this well, for example in English lessons when explaining how and why Steinbeck uses animal imagery to describe Lenny in *Of Mice and Men* or in geography when explaining the factors impacting population density.

Many pupils read a range of suitably challenging texts and gather relevant information successfully. The majority are developing their annotation skills as well as their ability to infer meaning appropriately, for example in history lessons when considering why the suffragette Dora Montefiore was arrested. More able pupils analyse sensitively and show appreciation of writers' style and ideas such as when exploring poetry in English lessons.

The majority of pupils structure their writing appropriately and a few produce thoughtful and well-constructed pieces of writing. They organise their ideas coherently and write with suitable accuracy. In a minority of subjects, pupils produce extended pieces of writing in a suitable range of forms, showing an awareness of audience and purpose. However, a minority of pupils make common spelling and grammatical errors in their written work and often provide brief responses to written tasks.

In mathematics, pupils develop their numeracy skills well. For example, they use the four rules of number confidently and accurately in Year 8 to solve simple problems in context and in Year 11 they calculate competently with powers giving answers in standard form. In subjects across the curriculum, pupils draw graphs suitably using mostly correct conventions. For example, in science they draw graphs to illustrate the relationship between current and voltage and draw sensible conclusions. In humanities subjects, they draft climate graphs about the Amazon, draw line graphs to show the relationship between unemployment and Nazi votes and analyse census information appropriately to identify trends and changes in religious identity.

The school has recently audited its digital provision across the curriculum and the digital co-ordinator is working with the regional consortium to develop a digital strategy. The school has recently invested in laptops to improve the range of equipment available for pupils to use across the curriculum, although it is too early to see the impact of these developments on pupils' skills.

In PE, a majority of pupils make strong progress in developing their physical skills over time, for example finding space in netball and passing under pressure in football.

Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Their work is neat and well presented. In the majority of instances when pupils are given purposeful opportunities, they respond well to teachers' highlighter box feedback and use feedback to develop their understanding or improve the quality of their work.

Since the time of the core inspection, the school's approach to developing pupils' Welsh language skills has been transformed. With the appointment of two permanent members of staff and strong support from the headteacher, the Welsh language has a high profile across the school. Many pupils have positive attitudes towards learning Welsh and over time the proportion of pupils studying the full course GCSE has increased significantly. The establishment of the Criw and Cewri Cymraeg pupil groups has helped to promote the benefits of learning Welsh and encouraged pupils to promote the Welsh language with their peers. For example, the school hosted a school Eisteddfod in March with pupils organising and running the event. In addition, pupils in Year 10 presented information about themselves and their future career plans to real life employers in the Welsh Careers Fair. The majority of older pupils write accurately in Welsh. They have a broad vocabulary and use language mats provided to support them with their work. A few more able pupils write skilfully in Welsh.

## **R2. Improve attendance**

The school continues to use a wide range of worthwhile strategies to promote good attendance, including a weekly focus on attendance in registration and a system of rewards for excellent and improved attendance. Staff employ many beneficial strategies to support pupils whose attendance is a concern. For example, heads of year and form tutors mentor low attenders, leading to improvements in the attendance of the majority of these pupils. Staff run helpful workshops in which older pupils learn about the impact of poor attendance in the workplace.

This academic year, leaders have widened the scope of the school's 're-engagement tracker' so that all pupil absences are now monitored rather than only those of pupils whose attendance is a concern. As a result, staff have identified patterns of non-attendance among pupils who generally attend school regularly and have intervened appropriately to bring about improvements. Furthermore, the pastoral team has relocated to a central well-being hub, which has made communication, support and the monitoring of pupils' attendance, behaviour and well-being more efficient and collaborative.

During the period November 2022 to February 2023, the school was without an education support worker or permanent attendance support officer, which reduced its capacity to deal with the most serious attendance issues. Nevertheless, this academic year, the school's overall attendance, including that of pupils eligible for free school meals, is in line with the national average and is improving slowly.

## **R3. Strengthen leadership, in particular how well leaders plan for improvement and hold staff to account**

Since the core inspection and the most recent monitoring visit, the school has made positive progress in terms of strengthening leadership. Leaders' vision for the school is clear and well understood by staff. School improvement planning focuses appropriately on the recommendations from the core inspection and issues raised on the last visit, and there is a clear strategy for improvement in each area. Overall, positive progress has been made against the recommendations from the core inspection.

Leaders have further developed and strengthened the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning activities, which had only recently resumed at the time of the last visit. Senior and middle leaders benefit from valuable opportunities to conduct joint lesson observations and work scrutiny. There is now a more bespoke coaching model of support for middle leaders and professional learning on important topics such as self-evaluation. A series of useful quality assurance activities involving all leaders is calendared throughout the year. Senior leaders share helpful overviews of findings from whole-school quality assurance activities and have a generally accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Overall, lesson observation notes contain useful areas for reflection as well as suitable evaluations of teaching and, to a lesser extent, pupils' progress. There is a helpful focus on the school's main teaching priorities of disciplinary literacy and modelling/practice/feedback. Work scrutiny forms contain useful evaluations of provision, feedback and the presentation and completion of work. They also include

helpful areas for development and actions for improvement. In general, lesson observation and work scrutiny evaluations do not focus sufficiently on pupils' skills and progress, and it is sometimes difficult to see why areas for improvement have been identified.

Leaders are held to account through a series of line manager meetings, quality assurance activities, performance management and, where relevant, presentations to governors. Since the last visit, senior leaders have improved their processes for holding middle leaders to account. Line management meetings now focus more strongly on the school's improvement priorities and important aspects such as outcomes in Key Stage 4, attendance, whole school findings from quality assurance activities and aspects of assessment. There are sensible actions from these meetings. However, less attention is paid to findings from quality assurance activities and improvement planning at a departmental level and the standards, skills and progress of Key Stage 3 pupils. There are common performance management targets for all teaching staff. While these support the school's improvement priorities and the associated professional learning is tailored to individual needs, targets are broad and not always sufficiently personalised.

Pastoral and academic middle leaders regularly evaluate their work. Heads of Year evaluate their work on a half-termly basis by considering attendance, punctuality and behaviour data, bullying information and the impact of strategies they employ to improve attendance and behaviour. For example, they identified that sharing information through live documents resulted in a more co-ordinated and effective approach to improving the attendance of specific groups. On the whole, the majority of heads of department have a sound understanding of the work of their departments. They identify suitable strengths and improvement priorities from their self-evaluation activities, resulting in a more focused approach to improvement planning. However, in general heads of department are not always sufficiently evaluative and tend to focus heavily on provision and not as much on pupils' standards from lessons and books and the quality of teaching and assessment.

Since the core inspection, changes have been made to the membership of the governing body. There is a new chair of governors and new members who bring valuable expertise from a range of areas. They are very supportive of the school community and have a sound understanding of its context and challenges. Governors receive useful information from leaders. This is helping them to have a more accurate picture of the work of the school and to further develop their role in offering challenge.

#### **R4. Improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has refined appropriately its strategy to improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment. The school has worked with external providers and teachers within the school to provide a range of helpful professional learning, including coaching conversations, to develop aspects of teaching and assessment where good practice is shared. Teaching and learning journals provide helpful snapshots of practice along with links to relevant resources for teachers on specific themes, such as reading comprehension. Staff generally value the opportunities for professional learning and leaders have started to evaluate

the effectiveness of these in light of their impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

In lessons, most teachers foster positive working relationships with pupils. Where appropriate, they utilise support staff well to assist pupils in their learning and to help manage their behaviour.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and many of them manage pupils' behaviour well. These teachers circulate the classroom to check for understanding and provide helpful verbal feedback to pupils. This helps pupils understand what they are doing well and how they can improve. In addition, many teachers share success criteria effectively, and exemplify helpfully detailed solutions and worked examples for pupils. This helps them to assess for themselves how well they are doing and make improvements.

The pace of learning is matched appropriately to the ability of pupils in the majority of lessons. In these lessons, teachers have appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide helpful resources to engage and support pupils with their learning. These teachers provide pupils with clear explanations and plan lessons that helpfully break learning into small steps that build sequentially. This helps pupils to understand what they need to do to make progress in their knowledge, understanding, and skills. In these lessons, pupils make suitable progress.

In a few lessons, where teaching is particularly effective, teachers model their expectations helpfully and provide work to meet the needs of all pupils. These teachers ask questions that probe understanding and develop pupils' thinking skills well.

In a minority of lessons where teaching is not as effective, shortcomings limit the progress that pupils make. In these lessons, teachers provide pupils with tasks that do not challenge them well enough, or the pace of learning is too slow. Their expectations of what pupils can do are too low, and they often plan what they want pupils to do rather than planning carefully enough what they want pupils to learn. In addition, questioning does not support pupils' learning well enough. Teachers ask mainly closed questions, accept simple answers, and on occasions answer their own questions. In a few instances, behaviour management is not effective enough. As a result, in these cases, pupils do not sustain their concentration, and their off-task behaviour disrupts their own learning as well as the learning of others.

There is helpful feedback in many books, although in a few instances comments are overgenerous or praise incorrect work. In a minority of books across the curriculum, pupils' response to feedback is limited and 'highlighter box' feedback does not always identify well enough what pupils need to improve or how they should do so.

#### **R5. Address the health and safety issue identified during the inspection**

The school has addressed the health and safety issue identified at the time of the core inspection. It has revised its approach to its use of Pastoral Support Plans and improved systems for monitoring and assuring the quality of the plans. This includes designing new templates that feature important details about provision, and

confirmation that parents agree with this, including arrangements for off-site and part time provision.

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