



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her 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: June 2022

by

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

Outcome of visit

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

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan to show how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school following receipt of the action plan, to ensure that it is suitable and likely to bring about the required improvements. Inspectors will visit the school again, in a further four to six months' time, to monitor progress in addressing a sample of the recommendations. Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may not be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

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

The school has faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including staff and pupil absence. The team acknowledge the effect this has had on the work of the school and the standard of pupils' skills, and recognise the high levels of commitment that all staff have made to keeping pupils safe.

In lessons, around half of pupils are making suitable progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. They demonstrate some basic recall of their prior learning, for example events in a novel or key subject vocabulary. However, a similar proportion of pupils are making only limited progress. Generally, this is the result of teaching that does not challenge them sufficiently, as well the lack of a co-ordinated, strategic approach to the progressive development of pupils' skills.

A few pupils contribute to discussion activities enthusiastically, and a very few explain their ideas fluently and articulately. The majority listen carefully to their teachers and peers and participate suitably in pair and group work. These pupils use

basic subject terminology appropriately. However, many pupils use a narrow vocabulary, which limits their expression. This is often because teachers do not encourage them to develop their answers. A minority are either reluctant or unable to participate, or struggle to express themselves beyond very basic responses.

The majority of pupils demonstrate basic reading skills that enable them, for example, to locate relevant information suitably and write a simple summary. They make appropriate comments to describe the usefulness or reliability of sources, although a minority make either superficial observations or demonstrate misunderstanding regarding the material. More able pupils summarise and categorise a range of factors, for example the local, global and economic effects of deforestation. Around half of pupils take notes competently, although the remainder rely too heavily on copying. However, this is often because teachers guide them to. In many instances, pupils do not demonstrate a sufficient range of reading strategies with which to tackle unfamiliar words.

The majority of pupils produce generally suitable pieces of extended writing, although they are only asked to do so for a limited range of purposes and audiences. A few write fluent, well-constructed pieces. However, too often pupils of all abilities do not use paragraphs appropriately and make frequent basic errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. In general, pupils do not use a wide enough range of vocabulary in their writing.

Many pupils are able to use the four operations of number satisfactorily. The majority can apply their basic skills to, for example, calculate speed, distance and time. They have a suitable understanding of fractions, and can convert between fractions, decimals and percentages. Many construct graphs accurately in mathematics lessons and in a very few other subjects. However, across the curriculum, graph work is weak. In some cases, this is because teachers do not ensure that pupils use a ruler, label axes or use an appropriate scale. In some cases, however, it is because teachers ask pupils to draw graphs that do not support their numeracy skills or their subject understanding. Overall, pupils' ability to apply and develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum is hampered by limited cross-curricular provision.

The school has taken suitable steps to raise the profile of the Welsh language and culture, for example by holding a school Eisteddfod and introducing the pupil group 'Criw Cymraeg'. The school has strengthened the Welsh department by appointing permanent, specialist staff. This has had a notable impact on the presentation and completion of work in pupils' books. When given the opportunity to write at length, pupils produce well-structured written accounts, for example when writing a diary about their holidays or a dialogue discussing their favourite TV programmes.

Outside of information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, pupils produce basic presentations, for example about their ideal school. Overall, provision to develop pupils' digital skills remains underdeveloped.

Around the school and in lessons, pupils behave well. They are polite, courteous and friendly. In lessons, most are compliant, and remained focused on tasks. However, too often pupils are rendered passive by over-directed teaching, and they lack independence in learning as a result. They do not show resilience on the occasions they come across work they find difficult, relying on asking the teacher or simply not

completing the task. This is often because teachers do not challenge them to find strategies to move forward.

R2. Improve attendance

Since the core inspection, the school has established a range of systems and strategies to support improvements in attendance. These are beginning to have a positive impact.

During the pandemic, staff demonstrated considerable care for pupils' well-being and maintained regular contact with them through home visits and regular telephone calls. The school developed a valuable re-engagement tracking system, which continues to provide a useful overview of trends in attendance and engagement with school. This is used well by pastoral staff to identify pupils with poor attendance, allocate appropriate support and monitor pupil engagement with strategies to help them become better at attending school.

A range of useful initiatives to help address poor attendance have had a positive impact on pupils' engagement with school. These include a peer-to-peer mentoring scheme, head of year mentoring workshops with specific groups of pupils and Monday morning text reminders to parents of pupils with poor attendance with the aim of motivating them to encourage their children to attend school. Pupils and families who require additional help to secure good attendance receive valuable support from the school attendance officer, educational social worker and school-based youth workers.

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

Leaders remained committed to supporting the well-being of pupils and staff throughout the pandemic and placed a high importance on keeping the school open for all pupils. They are ambitious for the school and have a desire to secure improvements. However, they do not have a clear enough strategic vision for improvement that is understood by all staff.

Since the core inspection, the headteacher has created additional leadership roles to increase the capacity of the senior team. This has helped to secure improvements in pupils' behaviour, but it has not led to sufficient improvements in important aspects of the school's work, such as the quality of teaching or the provision for the progressive development of pupils' skills. This is limiting the progress that pupils are making.

Overall, senior leaders do not hold middle leaders to account robustly enough. Although line management meetings focus suitably on staff and pupil well-being, they do not consider the quality of teaching or its impact on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. The focus on compliance with school procedures at the expense of the quality of provision is hampering the development of middle leaders. Furthermore, most middle leaders find it difficult to identify strengths and weaknesses, or plan for improvement in standards and teaching within their areas

The school has recently restarted its evaluation and improvement planning processes and has developed a generally suitable programme of activities to gather a range of first-hand evidence. However, leaders at all levels do not focus closely

enough on the impact that provision has on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Although leaders regularly scrutinise pupils' work and conduct 'coaching' lesson observations, their evaluations do not consider pupil progress sufficiently. As a result, the school's evaluation of its work is overly positive. Leaders do not identify accurately important specific aspects requiring improvement, in particular with regard to the provision for skills and the quality of teaching. In addition, middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in improvement planning and, as a result, do not have a clear enough understanding of how to bring about improvements in teaching and learning.

The school has a planned programme of professional learning, which includes staff sharing practice with each other through, for example, the 'Teaching and Learning Journal'. However, practice shared is too often not effective enough and the school does not evaluate the impact of professional learning sufficiently.

Governors are enthusiastic supporters of the school and place a high level of trust in the staff. They are developing a clearer picture of the challenges the school has faced and are beginning to ask suitably challenging questions about aspects such as pupil attendance and uniform. However, as senior leaders have an overly positive view of the school's work, governors are not provided with sufficiently accurate information about important aspects such as pupil progress and the quality of teaching. This limits their ability to challenge the school to secure improvements.

Overall, although leaders have made some progress in addressing the recommendations from the core inspection, they are not currently demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements.

R4. Improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment

As a strategy to improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment, following the core inspection, the headteacher identified and introduced the 'Rhosnesni Top 10'. This ambitious range of pedagogical expectations is research based and identifies various characteristics of effective teaching. In addition, it is intended that professional learning, and effective coaching and collaboration, will support the improvements needed. Currently, this is not having the impact necessary on classroom practice. The school has an overly positive view of teaching and has not made sufficient improvements to teaching and assessment, including to the shortcomings identified in the core inspection.

In around half of lessons where pupils make appropriate progress, teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and foster purposeful relationships that help to create a positive learning environment. They plan a good range of activities, provide engaging resources and structure their lessons suitably. Where required, they provide a helpful level of support such as scaffolding that helps pupils of all abilities to write at length. These teachers provide clear explanations and make sensible use of model responses. On occasions, they use questioning suitably to stimulate pupils' thinking and to provoke interesting class discussions. In the best cases, they use questioning to challenge some of pupils' assumptions, although most often it is to determine knowledge or opinion.

In close to half of lessons, pupils do not make enough progress. Often, this is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low, and they are too

accepting of underdeveloped verbal responses, and poorly presented or incomplete work. Quite commonly, they plan for what they want pupils to do rather than what they want them to learn. In addition, these teachers often present pupils with low-level tasks such as copying or completing wordsearches, and essentially ill-considered tasks such as drawing and colouring in. In these lessons, teachers talking too much contributes to pupil disengagement, and asking too many closed questions overly directs pupils' learning and denies them opportunities to develop their thinking skills.

Most teachers give pupils 'yellow box' feedback in line with school policy, and in a few cases their comments provide pupils with clear direction about how to develop their work. However, many comments from teachers do not support pupils' learning well enough because they are perfunctory or simply summative, or because they do not focus upon the main learning intention. Too many teachers make overgenerous comments and tick, occasionally even congratulate errors or misunderstandings, which impedes pupils' progress. A minority of teachers check pupils' responses to written feedback carefully and identify improvements or any remaining misconceptions. However, a majority do not review responses carefully enough and do not recognise those that are superficial, vague, or incorrect. Where pupils' responses are underdeveloped, it is, occasionally, because teachers' comments are perfunctory or simply summative. Apart from a few examples of pupils being asked to copy out spellings correctly, there is little evidence of teachers' feedback supporting the development of pupils' literacy. In addition, far too many comments such as "revision leaflet taken home" and "verbal feedback given" seem to be aimed at an external audience.

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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