

## RE-INSPECTION

OF

**Dylan Thomas Community School  
John Street  
Cockett  
Swansea  
SA2 0FR**

**SCHOOL NUMBER: 6704076**

**DATE OF INSPECTION: January 2012**

Dylan Thomas Community School was inspected in February 2010. Following the inspection, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training judged that the school required monitoring by Estyn. Estyn undertook a follow-up inspection in May 2011 focusing on the key issues identified in the Section 28 inspection report. At this inspection it was decided to visit again after six months. Estyn undertook a further follow-up inspection in January 2012 focusing on the key issues identified in the Section 28 inspection.

### **Outcome of the re-inspection**

Dylan Thomas Community School has not made enough progress in the key areas for action identified in the Section 28 inspection of the school in February 2010. As a result, and in accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress 12 months after the publication of this report.

### **Progress since the last inspection**

*Recommendation 1: Improve standards generally, particularly in the core subjects, and in the key skills of literacy and improving one's own learning and performance across the whole curriculum.*

This recommendation has been partly addressed

At key stage 3 in 2011, there was a slight improvement in performance in the core subject indicator and in the individual core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The school performed below the family average for English, mathematics, science and for the core subject indicator (the expected

performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science in combination). However, the percentage point difference between the school and the family averages narrowed slightly. The CSI in 2011 was 7 percentage points below the family average compared with 8 percentage points in 2010.

Although there were a few improvements at key stage 4 in 2011, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, and in the core subject indicator did not improve from 2010, although the school's position in the family did improve. When benchmarked against similar schools according to entitlement to free school meals, the school is in the fourth quarter for all key indicators.

The school has implemented a range of strategies to improve pupils' literacy skills. Pupils on intervention programmes generally improve their reading as a result. However, the impact of whole-school literacy strategies on pupils' work across the curriculum is limited. Although pupils make better progress in lessons, the standard of work in their books remains no better than adequate.

The majority of pupils have a good understanding of how well they are progressing and what they have to do to improve. However, many pupils do not act on this information to improve their work.

*Recommendation 2: Increase levels of attendance.*

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Attendance figures continue to show an upward trend in almost all year groups and is now above modelled expectations. Weekly attendance figures for the autumn term 2011 indicate that attendance is nearly one-and-a-half percentage points higher than during the corresponding period in 2010. There has been a continued reduction in unauthorised absence.

The school continues to implement a wide range of strategies to improve attendance and has maintained its close collaboration with a variety of partners to support this work. The school makes effective use of its comprehensive data on attendance to target the pupils who need intervention and support.

*Recommendation 3: Embed the assessment for learning policy by eliminating the shortcomings in teaching and learning identified in this report.*

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Marking has improved and nearly all teachers make useful diagnostic comments. However, the impact of marking on pupils' standards and progress is inconsistent. Although teachers comment on missing work, pupils do not act on the comments. Expectations about the presentation of work and the standards of literacy are uneven. A minority of teachers do not follow the new marking policy.

The quality of teaching has improved since the inspection as a result of a coherent strategic and sustained approach to monitoring. Teaching is now good overall. However, the monitoring procedures are not rigorous in their assessment and do not have enough impact on improving pupils' standards and progress.

*Recommendation 4: Improve subject and individual target setting and the monitoring of pupils' academic performance.*

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Senior and middle managers make good use of a wide range of data sources to set challenging targets and the pupil performance tracking system is much improved. Senior managers provide detailed data packs for subject leaders to use in their monitoring of pupils' progress and in identifying any underachievement. However, there continues to be an inconsistent approach between and within departments. Overall, middle managers do not focus enough on challenging underperformance.

All pupils are aware of their key targets and there are many examples of good subject specific targets. However, pupils do not always set their own targets. In the few cases where pupils do set their own learning targets, they are not specific enough to help them improve.

*Recommendation 5: Refine the role of leaders and managers so that strategic priorities are clearly identified, inconsistencies in teaching and learning are eliminated and best practice is monitored and disseminated rigorously.*

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Although senior managers' roles are clearly defined, there is duplication in their responsibilities.

The school has implemented a formal programme of line management meetings with common agendas. Even so, there remains too much variation in the focus and quality of these meetings. The majority result in the clear identification and monitoring of actions to improve standards. However, other meetings are less effective and are too concerned with discussing actions without assessing their impact.

There is an appropriate timetable for self-evaluation activities, these include lesson observations and book scrutiny. However, the outcomes of these activities are not used systematically to evaluate progress in learning or plan for improvement

Governors have an increasingly good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and they are providing a greater challenge. This is leading to decisions about staffing and curriculum based on a sound

evaluation of all the relevant factors. Governors are fully involved in monitoring the progress in the post-inspection action plan.

### **Recommendations**

In order to improve, the school should

- improve standards generally, particularly in the core subjects, and in the key skills of literacy and improving one's own learning and performance across the whole curriculum\*;
- improve performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, and the core subject indicator at key stage 4;
- embed the assessment for learning policy by eliminating the shortcomings in teaching and learning identified in this report\*;
- improve subject and individual target setting and the monitoring of pupils' academic performance\*;
- refine the role of leaders and managers so that strategic priorities are clearly identified, inconsistencies in teaching and learning are eliminated and best practice is monitored and disseminated rigorously\*;
- ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning has a clear focus on evaluating progress in learning; and
- use the outcomes of evaluations to identify actions to improve standards and learning.

\*Recommendations included in the S28 inspection February 2010