

Monitoring
of
Usk Church in Wales Primary School

Monmouth Road
Usk
Monmouthshire
NP15 1SE

School number: 6793022

Date of Section 28 inspection: November 2010

Usk Church in Wales Primary School was inspected in November 2010 and judged as requiring significant improvement. As part of the Welsh Government's requirements for schools requiring significant improvement, Estyn undertook a monitoring visit in June 2012 focusing on the key issues identified in the Section 28 inspection.

Outcome of the monitoring visit

Usk Church in Wales Primary School is judged to have made good progress in relation to the recommendations for improvement identified in the Section 28 inspection in November 2010. As a result of this progress, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools requiring significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school so that pupils' standards of achievement are raised, particularly those of more able pupils

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

In nearly all classes, there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the inspection in November 2010. The organisation of the teaching of literacy and numeracy into ability groups has improved consistency across the school. This enables teachers and support staff to provide well differentiated activities that

challenge many pupils. Support staff provide particularly effective teaching in specific elements of literacy and numeracy.

In most lessons where teaching is good:

- learning objectives and success criteria are discussed and agreed by pupils;
- lessons are well structured with good pace;
- differentiation is generally effective, targeting the needs of groups of pupils;
- learning activities engage and motivate pupils;
- management of behaviour is effective;
- independent learning and thinking are encouraged well;
- interventions are generally timely and appropriate; and
- opportunities for self and peer assessment are good.

However, a few teachers do not:

- challenge pupils well enough to improve the quality of presentation of their work;
- make enough use of resources to help all pupils achieve the learning objective; or
- provide enough opportunities for pupils to write at length for a range of purposes in both English or across the curriculum.

Scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's data on their progress show that, overall, most pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Assessments at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in both 2011 and 2012 show improved performance at the expected level. Results for pupils at the higher levels in both key stages were good in both of these years.

Recommendation 2: use a wide range of assessment strategies more effectively to help pupils move forward in their learning

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has made good progress in improving its assessment practices and in ensuring that assessment helps move pupils forward in their learning. As a result, teachers have a better understanding of assessment and its importance in improving pupils' standards.

Teachers use a range of assessment for learning strategies well to help pupils to understand how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Staff use questioning effectively to extend pupils' learning. Most share and discuss learning objectives and success criteria appropriately. Pupils of all ages have good opportunities to peer and self-assess and they do this in ways that are suitable to their age and stage of development.

All teachers mark pupils work regularly and a majority make constructive comments that help to move pupils' learning forward. However, there are inconsistencies in the standard of marking in different subjects within the same class and between classes. All pupils are aware of their personal improvement targets and, in the best examples, they discuss their progress with the teacher and amend targets appropriately.

The headteacher and assessment co-ordinator have put effective systems for tracking the progress of pupils into place. As a result, all staff access and use data relating to individual and groups of pupils. They analyse this regularly and use the outcomes effectively to group pupils for literacy and numeracy and to provide effective additional support.

All teachers are involved in moderating work within the school and with other primary and secondary schools in the cluster. The end of key stage assessments are generally accurate. Tracking pupils' progress into secondary school provides further useful information on the accuracy of the school's end-of-key stage assessments.

Recommendation 3: develop rigorous self-evaluation procedures that include all interested parties, identify the most important targets for improvement and regularly evaluate progress towards meeting them

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The headteacher has put in place a robust and comprehensive self-evaluation process. The school analyses and evaluates data thoroughly, and uses the information to target improvements for groups of pupils in an effective way.

All teachers now have a clear view of pupil performance from a range of sources and track their progress effectively as they move through the school.

The governors' data group scrutinises all relevant data with the headteacher. The role of this group in challenging and questioning the school is well developed. This enables the governing body to have a clear understanding of the school's performance and targets.

Suitable questionnaires for pupils and parents are used well to obtain their views on various aspects of school life. The school council is also active in this respect, and has an influence on school life. The headteacher ensures that any issues or concerns that become evident are resolved or targeted for improvement quickly and effectively.

Recommendation 4: enable senior managers and governors to participate more fully in determining the strategic direction of the school

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The governing body and the headteacher have a clear vision for the school and have implemented the school improvement plan consistently and carefully. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.

The governing body has strengthened the senior management of the school through the appointment of a permanent headteacher and deputy headteacher. The headteacher has continued to make appropriate improvements that are clearly focussed on actions necessary to improve the standards of pupils' work and the quality of teaching.

The senior leadership team now have a better understanding of their whole school responsibilities. They contribute regularly to senior leadership meetings that focus appropriately on school improvement. They have worked well with the governing body to implement the school's post inspection action plan.

Recommendation 5: continue to work with the local authority to reduce the budget deficit

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The headteacher and the governing body have put an appropriate range of strategies in place to reduce the deficit budget. The finance committee monitors expenditure robustly. As a result of improved procedures and careful financial management, the school has been able to make considerable reductions in its expenditure. The budget for the current financial year anticipates a small end-of-year surplus.

Recommendations for improvement

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school needs to:

- R1 improve the quality of the presentation of pupils' work;
- R2 ensure all teachers use a good range of resources to help pupils achieve the learning objectives;
- R3 provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length, for a range of purposes, both in English and across the curriculum; and
- R4 further improve consistency in the standard of teachers' marking.