



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: special measures**

**Bwlchgwyn C.P. School
Brymbo Road
Bwlchgwyn
Wrexham
LL11 5UD**

Date of visit: November 2014

by

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

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The monitoring team

Susan Davies	Reporting Inspector
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Outcome of monitoring visit

Bwlchgwyn Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2013.

As a result, Her 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

Recommendation 1: Raise pupils' standards of reading in the Foundation Phase and writing in both key stages

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school tracks pupils' progress in reading and writing effectively. All teachers analyse data well and use this information to identify pupils in need of support and to inform their future planning appropriately. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in pupils' reading skills. Most pupils undertaking reading intervention programmes make suitable progress.

Most Foundation Phase pupils read at a good standard for their age and ability. They discuss books they enjoy confidently and retell stories correctly. Most pupils use a suitable range of phonetic strategies to read familiar and unfamiliar words well. By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils that are more able read clearly and with good understanding. They make effective use of punctuation and expression to aid fluency. A majority of older pupils demonstrate a suitable understanding of higher order reading skills. They can scan a range of texts and extract relevant information quickly. There are only a very few pupils reading below their chronological age and these are making appropriate progress from their starting points.

Many younger Foundation Phase pupils produce short pieces of independent writing successfully and many older Foundation Phase pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately. They can write for a variety of purposes effectively and present their work neatly. Many pupils that are more able are beginning to write at length and to use a variety of vocabulary to sustain the reader's interest. Most teachers in the Foundation Phase ask pupils to pose questions they would like answered at the start of a topic or after listening to a story. This engages pupils successfully and promotes independent writing opportunities well.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils achieve good standards in their writing and pupils' skills in spelling and punctuation are developing well. The presentation and the content of their written work are appropriate for the age and ability of the wide range of pupils in classes. Most pupils have numerous opportunities to write extended pieces across the curriculum, for example diary extracts, recounts and news reports of visits, as part of their topic work. Many older key stage 2 pupils use the skill of redrafting and paragraphing well in order to improve their work and extend their vocabulary to engage the reader successfully.

The whole-school focus on developing pupils' literacy skills is having a positive impact on the standards of reading and writing that most pupils currently achieve. The school has taken a number of steps to promote positive attitudes to reading among its pupils, for example extending resources for group and guided reading sessions, developing an attractive and well-stocked library area and using older pupils as 'reading buddies'. Daily reading sessions encourage and sustain pupils' interest in books and reading effectively. Standards in writing have risen across the school due to a well-implemented series of actions and a whole-school focus on improving opportunities for pupils to engage in writing in a range of contexts across the curriculum.

Recommendation 2: Raise pupils' standards of numeracy in key stage 2

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school has established long-term and medium-term planning for numeracy, which ensures that teachers plan for a broader range of numeracy skills across all subjects. In general, these plans show appropriate opportunities for pupils to build on their previous skills as they move through the school. The planning takes good account of the demands of the National Literacy and Numeracy Frameworks. The planning for mathematics lessons is detailed and secure. There are good examples of pupils using their numeracy skills in other lessons, for example in geography and science across key stage 2. In a few cases, teachers' weekly planning identifies relevant opportunities for the development of pupils' numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics clearly. However, weekly planning in relation to topic work does not identify these opportunities clearly and consistently in all cases. Teachers take suitable account of the school's numeracy and calculation policies in their work with pupils.

In key stage 2, many pupils are able to use their numeracy skills to undertake work in statistics. Many are confident in calculating the median, mode, mean and range of a set of numbers. They can partition numbers appropriately and pupils that are more able, in lower key stage 2, can work confidently with simple decimals. Most older key stage 2 pupils can double and halve numbers well and have a good understanding of the basic properties of three dimensional shapes. They are developing a suitable understanding of square and triangular numbers, and pupils that are more able have explored the Fibonacci sequence of numbers. Teachers assess pupils regularly and the outcomes inform their planning appropriately. The catch-up support that pupils receive is working well.

Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching especially in providing high levels of challenge to all pupils

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation.

The mixed-age classes in the Foundation Phase and in key stage 2 contain pupils with a wide range of abilities. All teachers adapt work carefully and appropriately to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers generally deploy teaching assistants appropriately, but some are more proactive in supporting a range of pupils than others. Overall, less able pupils receive appropriate support from teachers and

teaching assistants. The school has established a register of more able and talented pupils and tracks their progress alongside other categories of pupils effectively. The challenges set for more able pupils are good overall, and the proportion of pupils who attain above the expected level at the end of key stage 2 is high relative to other similar schools. However, on a very few occasions, more able pupils would benefit from more support to push their thinking and learning further.

Teachers introduce lessons well and make the learning objectives and success criteria clear to pupils. Most pupils respond well to the tasks and most engage with interest in their learning and show suitable levels of concentration and perseverance. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to work individually, in pairs and in groups. This promotes pupils' independent learning and thinking skills successfully. Teachers are using the tracking system regularly to monitor pupils' progress, but less so in planning activities that cater for their needs.

Recommendation 4: Provide pupils with more detailed and regular feedback so they know how to improve their work

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation.

Nearly all teachers mark pupils' work regularly and conscientiously. The marking links well to learning objectives and success criteria. Teachers provide written feedback to pupils, which sets out what they need to do to improve their work and which identifies any issues they need to address.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils assess their own work in a way that is appropriate to their age and ability. Most teachers give clear and constructive oral feedback to pupils. As a result, most pupils discuss their targets for improvement confidently. In key stage 2, most pupils can evaluate their own performance and that of other pupils against the success criteria established for the task well. Most pupils have good opportunities to reflect on and respond to teachers' comments. Marking in mathematics takes place during the work, rather than at the end, so that it can identify any emerging difficulties. The marking has a more positive impact on pupils' successful learning as a result.

Recommendation 5: Use data and tracking systems effectively to monitor the progress of all pupils especially those who need extra help with their learning.

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school uses a suitably wide range of assessments to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Leaders have established a good set of baselines against which to judge pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. The analysis of progress against a wide range of measures is well developed for literacy. However, the analysis of progress in numeracy is at an earlier stage of development. Nearly all teachers use the tracking system and analysis of data to inform future planning effectively.

The school is beginning to look at value added progress, but the analysis is not robust enough at this stage. Teachers use the electronic tracking system well and place information on pupils' level of achievement within it regularly. The headteacher monitors the use of the system well and extracts relevant information from it on the progress of individuals, particularly in relation to the more able. Nearly all subject co-ordinators use the system to review provision and to monitor outcomes in their subject areas, but this is at an early stage of development for numeracy.

The school has identified its cohort of pupils eligible for free school meals and tracks them as a group effectively. The school provides appropriate support for less able pupils. The interventions aimed at helping identified pupils to catch up with other pupils are generally effective. All staff have undertaken further training to improve the level of catch up support for numeracy.

Recommendation 6: Clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of all staff to ensure that they are accountable for the school's provision and the standards pupils achieve

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation.

All school staff have appropriate job descriptions, which identify their roles and responsibilities clearly. These ensure that teachers understand that they are accountable for monitoring standards and provision within their areas of responsibility and at a whole school level, when appropriate. All support staff understand their roles and responsibilities clearly and play a key part in informing teachers about the progress pupils in catch-up sessions make. As a result, all staff work together as an effective team to drive school improvement forward. They meet regularly, record actions, analyse pupil progress and follow up areas for development robustly. Most of these meetings and action plans focus appropriately on school improvement issues and on the standards that pupils achieve. The action points link closely to areas for development within the school improvement plan.

The school delegates responsibilities to members of the leadership team well. The appointment of a key stage 2 leader has resulted in an equal distribution of key areas of responsibility. The programme for developing the role of subject leaders is having a positive impact on improving provision and raising the standards that pupils achieve. For example, the literacy leader evaluates progress and plans further improvements effectively. This has helped to raise pupils' standards in reading and writing. This good practice is developing well across other areas, such as numeracy, and is providing a greater consistency of approach to the monitoring of pupil standards and provision.

Recommendation 7: Use a robust and rigorous system of self-evaluation to clearly identify and monitor the school's strengths and shortcomings

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school has an effective timetable for self-evaluation with a clear focus on the use of first-hand evidence to inform the process. Leaders and governors take good account of the views of staff, pupils and parents. There is a clear focus on improving

pupils' outcomes and raising the quality of provision for all learners. Evaluation activities identify what teachers and pupils need to do to improve outcomes more precisely. These include regular lesson observations, in-depth analysis of a range of data, book scrutiny reviews, and listening to learners and parents. It has also involved governors directly within the life of the school, via the use of regular learning walks. Subject leaders use this information well to prepare suitable improvement plans and to track the progress made by all learners, particularly those pupils that are more able and pupils receiving intervention support. This has resulted in improvements in the standards of nearly all pupils' writing and the application of their literacy skills across the curriculum.

The school summarises performance data for members of the governing body well. All governors work alongside subject leaders to strengthen their understanding of standards and provision within subject areas regularly. As such, they are better able to perform their role as critical friends to the school.

The school's most recent self-evaluation report addresses the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report and subsequent monitoring visit reports appropriately. Self-evaluation reports now include more comprehensive and regular input from governors, parents and pupils. Leaders and managers pay due regard to these suggestions. The school's new website is informative and enables parents to be better informed about the daily life and work of the school. The school follows up on suggestions made by pupils in a purposeful way. For example, it has developed better support for younger pupils, so they know where to go for help and support. It has also used the older key stage 2 pupils to contribute to the 'reading buddy' scheme, which encourages younger pupils to develop their love of reading, following a suggestion made by the School Council.

Recommendation 8: Use the outcomes of selfevaluation to prioritise effectively clear and measureable targets for school improvement linked accurately to pupil outcomes

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school uses the outcomes of self-evaluation to provide an accurate assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, and to prioritise clear and measureable priorities for school improvement. The findings of self-evaluation feed directly into the school's new improvement plan, which has a clear focus on improving pupils' outcomes.

Targets within the school improvement plan are appropriately challenging and have clear actions, timescales and success criteria against which to measure progress. The plan focuses appropriately on the areas identified for improvement in the school's self-evaluation report and contains a manageable number of priorities for action.

All staff share the responsibility for leading targets for improvement and monitoring their progress. Leaders analyse pupil performance data in core subjects and are using this information to inform improvement planning successfully.

Recommendation 9: Address the shortcomings in safeguarding

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation.

The school has appropriately reviewed its safeguarding policy and procedures during the autumn term 2013. The policy now contains all of the required statutory information, including the name of the designated governor responsible for safeguarding. All members of staff have received appropriate training and are aware of safeguarding procedures.

Very good progress has been made in securing the site. The school has responded fully to health and safety issues highlighted during the core inspection. Effective procedures are now in place to ensure the safety of pupils during the school day within and outside the school building.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work towards meeting the inspection recommendations that have not yet been fully addressed.