



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: Significant Improvement

**Glyn Derw High School
Penally Road
Ely
Cardiff
CF5 5XP**

Date of visit: January 2013

by

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



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The monitoring team#

Ray Owen	Reporting Inspector
Sue Morgan	Team Inspector
Nigel Vaughan	Team Inspector
Stephen Davies	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring visit

Glyn Derw High School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2011.

The senior leadership team, supported by the executive headteacher and the governing body of the federation, is working effectively to address the recommendations from the inspection. The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations. The priority areas for improvement are clear to all staff, and middle leaders are responding appropriately to the relevant targets identified in the school improvement plan. A range of evidence, such as data analysis, lesson observations, scrutiny of documents, and listening to learners, confirms that the school is making good progress in raising standards.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from any further follow-up activity.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Raise standards in all subjects at key stage 4 and the attainment of boys and more able pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has made good progress since the inspection in improving standards at key stage 4. In 2012 performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, was well above modelled expectations and placed the school in the top half of similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals. Performance in the level 2 threshold and the core subject indicator also place the school in the top half of similar schools in terms of free school meals. Boys' performance in the level 2 threshold has improved and now there is a much narrower gap between their performance and that of the girls. The performance of pupils who are entitled to free school meals has increased significantly and is now above the national average. Although performance in English and mathematics improved, performance in science fell slightly in 2012. The capped points score across all subjects at key stage 4 is showing an improvement and the school is now performing in line with the family average score.

Performance at key stage 3 has shown less of an improvement. In 2012, 60% of pupils achieved the core subject indicator. This placed the performance above the average for the family of schools and in the lower half of performance levels for similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals. Performance in the core subjects individually has remained fairly static, with the exception of science which has shown a ten percentage point improvement.

Performance at level 6 or above and level 7 or above in each of the core subjects individually has remained similar to that of 2011 and is generally below the average for the family of schools.

The school now operates a much more rigorous process of tracking pupils to ensure that they all make suitable progress in relation to their individual targets. The new tracking system also enables teachers to monitor pupils' performance more carefully, including more able pupils across all subjects. However, it is too early to fully assess its impact on outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Improve attendance

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

In 2011-2012 attendance was still below modelled expectations and placed the school in the bottom half of similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals. However, unverified school data for the autumn term 2012 shows a significant improvement in attendance. Overall attendance for this period is 91.5% compared with 88.2% at the same point during the previous year. At key stage 3, attendance has also improved by around 3%, by 1.4% in Year 10, and by 6% in Year 11. Unauthorised absences have also declined from 5032 sessions in the autumn term of 2011-2012 to 3028 sessions during the same period for 2012-2013.

The school has worked well to improve communication with pupils and parents and give attendance a high profile. Recent initiatives, in particular the new tracking system, have raised expectations and helped parents and pupils understand better the link between attendance and achievement.

Two school based attendance officers, one of whom has a mentoring role, work well to address poor attendance. For example, attendance officers contact home on the first day of absence. Other communication with form tutors, parents and support agencies is now more robust. There is clear evidence that the school now has higher expectations with regard to pupil attendance.

Staff have clear roles and lines of responsibility and a commitment to improving attendance. However, there is a lack of consistency in the implementation of some aspects of policy and procedure.

The school displays detailed information on individual pupils' attendance on notice boards. Pupils are able to view their attendance figures and measure them against school targets. This knowledge is helping the pupils to be more aware of how attendance can impact on their performance.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen provision to develop pupils' skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Since the inspection in November 2011, the school has implemented a number of useful strategies to strengthen provision for the development of pupils' skills. The recent appointment of two senior leaders with responsibility for literacy and numeracy ensures that the development of skills across the curriculum has a high profile. They have both planned and delivered appropriate training to all staff and, as a result, there is a substantial momentum for skills improvement in the school. For example, a few departments work well with the numeracy co-ordinator to add more challenge and purpose to the numeracy skills developed in their subject areas.

Strategies to strengthen provision include the introduction of a new integrated curriculum in Year 7. Teachers of English and mathematics work collaboratively with teachers in other areas to deliver a series of lessons that focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in context. There is now more purposeful planning, particularly for the development of pupils' writing skills, and pupils are more aware of how to improve their written work. However, these developments are still at an early stage and it is too early to assess the impact of this new curriculum on standards.

There is a good range of appropriate intervention programmes to support pupils with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills across the school. The school works well with primary partners to identify pupils with reading ages below functional literacy and implements effective intervention programmes for these pupils at the start of Year 7.

In key stage 4 there are well-planned opportunities for all pupils to gain Essential Skills Wales qualifications in communication and application of number, as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification.

Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and focus particularly on increasing the progress pupils make during lessons

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Since the inspection, the school has introduced effective strategies for improving the quality of teaching. As a result of a concerted and systematic approach, the school has made a lot of progress in addressing this recommendation over the last 12 months. The overall quality of teaching in the school has improved with more lessons now judged to be good and fewer judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching is now good or better in many lessons and unsatisfactory in very few. Pupils now make more progress during lessons. However, there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school and there are still important areas in teaching that need to improve.

The strengths identified in the section 28 inspection remain, for example the positive relationships between pupils and teachers, the management of behaviour and teachers' subject knowledge. In most lessons there is now a more consistent approach to the planning, structure and teaching of lessons. In many lessons, teachers now provide specific activities for pupils to develop their literacy skills and a majority question skilfully. In a few lessons, teachers have very high expectations of pupils and set challenging tasks.

Although expectations of pupils have increased, low expectations still exist in a few lessons. In these lessons, work is still not adapted well enough to meet the needs of pupils, especially those of higher ability, and pupils do not make enough progress. On occasion, the purpose of planned activities is unclear, and there is not enough reinforcement and consolidation of pupils' learning.

Over the last 12 months, improving teaching has been a well-communicated and carefully planned strategic priority. There are clear expectations about the features of effective lessons, and there has been a focused and extensive professional development programme aimed at improving teaching. Lesson monitoring is

systematic and the school has a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the curriculum areas. Weaknesses in teaching have been tackled in an appropriate way that balances targeted support with robust action. However, the process of improving teaching is still at an early stage and there are shortcomings that need to be addressed.

Recommendation 5: Develop the role of the governing body so that they meet all statutory requirements

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The governing body has completed its transitional phase and now has full membership. There is also a new committee structure that ensures that meetings are well structured to provide effective governance, support and challenge to the school. Committees focus appropriately on the curriculum, finance, staffing, and wellbeing. These committees provide relevant challenge to the school and the chairs of the committees meet and communicate effectively, and regularly, with the school's leadership team. Governors are now much more confident in their use of data to support and act as a critical friend to the school. All departments have link governors and governors are also linked to key cross-curricular themes such as literacy and numeracy. The governing body now includes associated pupil governors. Pupils attend relevant committee meetings to share their views about school life.

The school has drawn up a detailed Strategic Equality Plan for 2012-2016 in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The governing body now fulfils all of its statutory requirements.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen the role and voice of the school council and elect associate pupil governors

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The work of the school council is progressing well. Elected pupils represent the school council on the school's governing body and curriculum and wellbeing committees. Newly elected members are actively raising the profile and purpose of the council, for example, by placing photographs of members on the school notice board and planning charity events. The school council, led by senior staff, meets on a weekly basis. Records of meetings contain minutes and action points. Key members of staff attend student council meetings to discuss issues raised by pupils. However, as yet, not all pupils are aware of who represents them on the school council.

The school uses a good range of methods to obtain and publicise the views of pupils. These include surveys, questionnaires, regular updates in assemblies, school notice boards and contributions to weekly and termly newsletters.

The views of pupils have informed management decisions about some aspects of the school's arrangements and facilities. These include improved access to lunchtime activities, the revised tutor group system and school uniform. However, the school council is not yet actively involved in influencing how and what they learn.