



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: special measures**

**Eastern High School  
Quarry Hill  
Newport Road  
Rumney  
Cardiff  
CF3 3XG**

**Date of visit: November 2017**

**by**

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

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## **Outcome of monitoring**

Eastern High School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

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: Ensure that all pupils are safe in school**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has undertaken successfully a number of actions to make sure that pupils are safe in school.

Leaders have established a team within the school that focuses specifically on coordinating support for pupils' welfare and wellbeing. They have developed effective systems to support pupils with poor attendance and behavioural, emotional and social issues. This includes appropriate staff training and a process for them to refer pupils giving cause for concern. The school has set up a beneficial range of partnerships with external agencies to provide additional support for pupils facing the most challenging issues. The work of the team is also having a positive impact on pupils' attendance and attitudes to school.

The school has addressed all of the health and safety concerns identified at the time of the core inspection. Senior leaders ensure that staff understand and use revised policies and procedures consistently throughout the school. The school has strengthened well its policies and procedures for child protection appropriately. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

The school's anti-bullying policy takes appropriate account of pupils' views. This defines clearly what bullying is, how it can be prevented and how it will be addressed. In addition, the school has introduced valuable strategies that help pupils to resolve conflicts effectively. These approaches enable pupils to develop their social skills and have contributed well to the development of a positive school ethos.

### **Recommendation 2: Raise standards and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

At key stage 4, there has been an overall trend of improvement in performance since the core inspection. Provisional data indicates that, in many indicators, this improvement has continued in 2017.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics increased by 15 percentage points in 2016. Provisional data indicates that performance in this

indicator has continued to improve in 2017 and that it now compares favourably with that in other similar schools. Performance in the capped points score has shown slight improvement since the core inspection, and also compares well with similar schools.

In 2016, performance in mathematics improved significantly. Provisional data indicates that it has declined slightly in 2017 but it still compares favourably with performance in similar schools. This data also indicates that performance in English has improved considerably, and performance in this indicator now compares very well with similar schools.

At key stage 4, provisional data for 2017 indicates that the performance of girls has, overall improved considerably since the core inspection. Boys' performance has also improved in the majority of indicators over this period. The performance of both boys and girls remains below that of boys and girls in similar schools. However, the gap between the performance of both groups and that of pupils in similar schools has narrowed substantially since the time of the core inspection. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved significantly since the core inspection in many key stage 4 indicators.

Overall, the quality of pupils' work is now significantly better than at the time of the core inspection. A majority of pupils demonstrate appropriate levels of resilience and independence in their learning and maintain their concentration well in lessons. These pupils make effective use of the recently-introduced 'prep' time to revise and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. A few pupils demonstrate well-developed problem-solving skills, for example, when they investigate the properties of right-angled triangles in mathematics. However, a minority of pupils remain too passive in their lessons. A few pupils do not listen well enough to their teachers or their peers, and a very few demonstrate immature behaviour which limits their progress and disrupts the learning of others.

Most pupils present and organise their work well. Many write with suitable technical accuracy and structure their extended writing effectively. They demonstrate a secure grasp of purpose and audience when writing in a variety of styles, for example when they produce well-balanced arguments regarding the importance of reading, or how far the lives of black Americans improved in the 1920s. A few pupils write fluently at length, using sophisticated vocabulary and a range of techniques to enhance the quality of their writing. However, a few pupils make frequent basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar and do not structure their extended writing well enough.

Many pupils have sound reading skills. They are able to select relevant information from a range of sources and have effective reading strategies to interpret unfamiliar words. A few pupils demonstrate well-developed higher-order reading skills. For example, in history, they analyse a wide range of written sources so that they can summarise and categorise thoughtfully the causes of Hitler's rise to power.

The majority of pupils participate appropriately in discussion work, and are able to express their thinking with suitable clarity. A few pupils make highly articulate and thoughtful contributions to class discussion. However, a minority of pupils are either reluctant to contribute to class discussion or are not able to express their ideas

coherently enough.

The majority of pupils have satisfactory number skills. When given the opportunity, they apply these skills appropriately across the curriculum, for example when they calculate electricity bills in science.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection the school has established a coherent and systematic approach to improving pupils' wellbeing. This has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning.

Pupils' punctuality has improved significantly since the core inspection. Most pupils arrive for lessons promptly and ready to learn. The school has strengthened substantially its approaches to promoting good attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved considerably.

The 'Culture for Learning' policy is understood well by most staff and pupils. There are clear procedures for behaviour management that are applied consistently by most staff. These strategies have had a positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils, and are helping to establish a positive learning ethos across the school.

Since the core inspection the school has placed a strong focus on improving teaching and learning. Leaders have supported teachers particularly well to increase the range of strategies to engage pupils in their learning. This has helped to develop beneficial working relationships between staff and pupils that foster learning and pupil progress.

In lessons, the majority of pupils work with enthusiasm and interest. They contribute productively to pair and group work, and are keen to make good progress.

Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour carefully to identify those pupils in need of support. There are effective systems to help pupils to develop their social skills. As a result of the range of well-coordinated approaches, most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and there has been a considerable reduction in fixed-term exclusions.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of assessment across the school**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, there has been a notable improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment. This has had a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve and their attitudes to learning. Senior leaders have developed a successful programme of professional learning to improve teaching at a whole-school and an individual level. In addition, middle leaders and staff have benefited from

opportunities to share effective practice in teaching and learning. These strategies have made a valuable contribution to establishing useful classroom routines and raising expectations amongst staff and pupils.

Many teachers have developed strong working relationships with their classes, which has had a positive impact on pupils' engagement with their learning. A few highly effective teachers use deft questioning techniques, and demanding and innovative activities to challenge pupils' thinking, develop their problem-solving skills and deepen their understanding. In a few cases, however, teachers do not plan activities that are matched closely enough to the needs of all pupils, or that develop progressively their skills, knowledge and understanding.

In many lessons, teachers plan carefully-sequenced activities that are matched well to pupils' ability, and use a variety of resources that engage and challenge pupils successfully. In these lessons, teachers use questioning appropriately to engage the majority of pupils in discussion activities and to monitor pupils' progress.

Since the core inspection, the school has improved markedly the effectiveness of teachers' feedback to pupils. In many cases, teachers give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work, and ensure that pupils make valuable improvements to extend their skills and understanding. In a minority of instances, however, teachers do not ensure that pupils respond to teachers' comments well enough.

### **Recommendation 5: Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has undertaken valuable work to strengthen leadership and to develop self-evaluation and planning for improvement. This has had a substantial impact on improving the quality of teaching, and on pupils' standards of reading and writing. These actions, together with approaches to improve pupils' wellbeing, have had a notably positive effect on the culture and ethos of the school.

Senior leaders have taken well-considered and timely strategic actions to improve key aspects of the school's work. The use of coaching to develop teachers' individual practice is a particularly strong aspect of the school's improvement journey, and has had a marked impact on the quality of teaching.

Processes to hold leaders at all levels to account more securely are helping to drive improvement. The school has recently refined its line management arrangements so that senior leaders use their expertise to challenge and support middle leaders more effectively. This has introduced greater consistency in accountability arrangements, and means that middle leaders have a sound understanding of important areas of their work such as assessment and the effective use of data.

Line management meetings have a clear focus on pupils' progress and on evidence-based accountability. This is enabling middle leaders to improve the work in their areas of responsibility. Performance management arrangements are suitably robust,

and improvement targets for teachers identify useful areas for improvement.

Senior leaders tackle underperformance robustly. They offer well-structured support for teachers in need of improvement. In addition, they provide valuable support to develop the leadership skills of middle leaders. This has had a positive impact on the effectiveness of middle leadership.

Whole-school self-evaluation processes are now robust. The school's self-evaluation report is evaluative and provides an honest appraisal of the school's progress. The school's improvement plan generally identifies clear priorities, actions and intended outcomes.

Middle leaders now use data appropriately to track the progress of individual pupils. This has helped departments to identify those pupils who are in need of support. Departmental self-evaluation reviews now include a suitable account of performance data. However, heads of department do not analyse the evidence from work scrutiny and teaching consistently well enough to identify specific areas for improvement in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in their respective subjects. This means that in a few instances it is difficult for them to plan for improvement precisely enough.

Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance. They provide effective scrutiny of all aspects of the school's work, and continue to support the school well to make progress.

## **Recommendations**

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.