



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**

**Tonypandy Community College  
Llewellyn Street  
Rhondda  
Penygraig  
RCT  
CF40 1HQ**

**Date of visit: November 2016**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Mr Steven Pringle	Reporting Inspector
Mr Gareth Kiff	Team Inspector
Mr Farrukh Khan	Team Inspector
Mr Alan Lowndes	Team Inspector

## Outcome of monitoring

Tonypandy Community College is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in November 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from the list of schools/PRUs requiring special measures.

## Progress since the last inspection

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards at key stage 3 and key stage 4;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, there has been a clear improvement in pupils' performance at key stage 4. Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics has improved by over twenty-one percentage points and has been slightly above modelled outcomes for the last two years. Although performance in the capped points score has declined since 2014, it remains in line with modelled outcomes.

Performance in the level 1 and level 2 thresholds has declined over the last two years, as has the proportion of pupils gaining 5 grades at A\* or A. However, performance in English, in mathematics and in the core subject indicator has increased substantially since 2014. Performance in mathematics is over twenty-four percentage points higher than at the time of the core inspection and now places the school in the upper half of similar schools. Performance at key stage 3 has also improved well in all indicators since the core inspection.

At key stage 4, the performance of both boys and girls has shown substantial improvement in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, in the core subject indicator and in mathematics. Boys' performance in English has also improved significantly. However, boys' performance remains below the family average in a majority of indicators, and girls' performance in half of them. At key stage 3, the proportion of both boys and girls achieving the core subject indicator has improved and is now above the average for similar schools for both groups of pupils.

Since the core inspection, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved by more than twenty percentage points in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics. There has also been a strong improvement in these pupils' performance in English and mathematics over the same period. However, overall, their performance remains below national averages. At key stage three, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving the core subject indicator has improved since the core inspection, and has been above the national average for this group of pupils for the last three years.

In many lessons, nearly all pupils engage well with their learning and make strong progress. Most pupils maintain concentration successfully and listen well to their teachers and their peers. Most pupils demonstrate good recall of their prior learning and many apply this effectively to new contexts. Most pupils work well both

independently and in pair or group work. These pupils present and organise their work effectively. A very few pupils struggle to maintain focus throughout their lessons.

Most pupils write clearly and accurately. Many produce well-structured extended writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences. A few pupils write at length with fluency and sophistication and deploy a variety of effective techniques. However, a few pupils make too many basic errors in their writing.

Most pupils demonstrate sound reading skills and are able to select relevant text to answer questions. Around half use inference and deduction well when interrogating written texts, and a few summarise and synthesise information effectively. However, a few pupils lack confidence in deploying suitable reading strategies.

Many pupils make worthwhile contributions to class discussion, supported by an appropriate grasp of subject terminology. A few provide well-developed and articulate verbal responses. However, a minority of pupils make limited contributions to oral work and are content to remain passive during discussion activities.

Many pupils have sound number skills and apply these well across the curriculum, for example when interpreting nutritional data in science.

**Recommendation 2: Improve behaviour in the lessons where pupils' learning is disrupted too much;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, there has been a marked improvement in the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school. Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and most show a positive and enthusiastic attitude to learning.

The school has developed strong processes for promoting good behaviour and it provides beneficial support for all staff to help them manage behaviour effectively. Most staff implement the school's behaviour policy consistently and this contributes well to improving standards of pupil behaviour.

Senior and middle leaders monitor pupils' behaviour carefully. They provide effective support for those pupils with challenging behaviour. Where necessary, the school liaises closely with external agencies to support these pupils.

The rewards system has been refined successfully in light of pupil feedback, and it has a positive impact on pupils' engagement in their learning. The school's use of restorative approaches contributes well to reducing incidences of poor behaviour and to the continuing reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions.

### **Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has deployed a wide range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and assessment since the core inspection. This includes valuable whole-school training and effective individual support for teachers. There is a strong culture of sharing good practice. As a result, the school has been successful in improving the quality and impact of teaching and assessment.

Nearly all teachers have established strong working relationships and clear routines with their classes. Most use carefully-prepared resources that engage pupils well and they are successful in involving the majority of pupils in class discussion. In many cases, teachers have high expectations, set clear learning objectives that link clearly to prior learning and plan their lessons carefully so that they are matched closely to pupils' ability. These teachers provide a skilful balance of subject and skills development. This helps many pupils to make strong progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills.

In a minority of cases, teachers use skilful questioning techniques to explore and develop pupils' understanding. However, in a minority of instances, teachers' questioning does not challenge or extend pupils' thinking sufficiently.

In most instances, teachers' written feedback provides pupils with helpful targets for improvement. 'Close The Gap' activities have a positive impact on pupils' progress in most cases and a minority of pupils make substantial improvements to their work in light of teachers' comments. Most teachers' feedback focuses well on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The school monitors pupils' progress very closely and plans effective interventions to support improvement.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including a focus on further improving work with primary schools;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has given a suitably high priority to improving the standards of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It has identified clearly a wide range of opportunities across the curriculum for the development of these skills. As a result, pupils' ability to apply successfully their literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of subjects has improved substantially. This improvement is particularly notable in the quality of pupils' extended writing.

The school provides comprehensive guidance for teachers on how to incorporate the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills into their teaching. The literacy and numeracy coordinators provide beneficial training and individual support for teachers. As a result, many teachers plan activities that are effective in helping pupils

to consolidate and improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

The school monitors very closely pupils' progress in their literacy and numeracy development. It provides effective interventions to help those pupils with weaker skills.

The work of the transition teacher is effective in ensuring a coordinated approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across key stages 2 and 3. This has a positive impact on pupils' transition from partner primary schools into Year 7.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the quality of leadership and strengthen accountability across the school; and**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, strengthened leadership has contributed substantially to improved pupil outcomes.

Senior leadership roles have been refined suitably and are understood well by all staff. The school has been successful in establishing a strong culture of accountability, and senior leaders hold middle leaders to account robustly for performance in their area of responsibility. Strengthened line management arrangements ensure that action points are addressed appropriately and promptly. Regular meetings between senior and middle leaders focus well on improving teaching and pupil standards, and ensure that suitable support and challenge is provided to all staff.

Most middle leaders are effective in their roles. They analyse pupil performance rigorously, which enables them to identify and address underperformance promptly and effectively.

The school has strengthened suitably its performance management processes. Objectives focus clearly on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and they align closely with the school's improvement priorities.

Governors have a sound understanding of the school's performance. They provide regular and effective support and challenge to senior and middle leaders.

**Recommendation 6: Improve the focus and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes;**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has been successful in developing rigorous processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning. This has contributed well to improvements in pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching.

Most leaders use first hand evidence well to evaluate robustly all aspects of their work. They use a wide range of evidence, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and pupil feedback to identify clearly strengths and areas for

improvement. Their evaluations focus well on pupil progress and the impact of teaching and assessment practices. As a result, most leaders have a secure understanding of the school's performance. However, in a very few instances, middle leaders' self-evaluation reports are insufficiently evaluative or robust.

Quality assurance processes have been strengthened well to ensure the consistency and accuracy of self-evaluation activities. The school has been successful in establishing a strong culture of reflection regarding professional practice that has a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Identified improvement priorities at a whole-school and middle leadership level align clearly with self-evaluation evidence. Targets are suitably challenging and have clear timescales and measurable success criteria.

The governing body makes an effective contribution to the school's self-evaluation processes and plays an active role in setting its improvement priorities.

### **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.