



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: Estyn monitoring**

**Goetre Primary School
Rowan Way
Gurnos Estate
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 9PB**

Date of visit: December 2015

by

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

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The monitoring team

Andrew Thorne	Reporting Inspector
Jonathan Wright	Team Inspector
Susan O'Halloran	Local authority representative

Outcome of monitoring

Goetre Primary School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2013.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve standards in the core areas of learning in the Foundation Phase and the core subjects at key stage 2

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils talk with enthusiasm about their interests and school work. They read from a range of suitable texts and use their phonic skills to read unfamiliar words appropriately. In their writing, many pupils spell simple words correctly and write basic sentences containing capital letters and full stops. However, too few pupils write at length to a high enough standard for their age. Their letter formation is often inaccurate. Many pupils are not able to apply their literacy skills well enough when writing across the curriculum.

Many pupils have a basic understanding of number, shape and measure. For example, many pupils in Year 2 understand number facts to 10, measure objects accurately in centimetres and create simple block graphs. However, they do not apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum at an appropriate level.

At the end of key stage 2, many pupils have appropriate speaking skills. They speak confidently to adults and their peers. A majority of pupils produce writing to a satisfactory standard, for example when writing arguments for, and against, the wearing of a school uniform. Many pupils spell familiar words correctly and use basic range of punctuation accurately. However, the handwriting of a minority of pupils is untidy and only a very few pupils use more advanced punctuation to organise their work and add meaning. A majority of pupils do not extend their ideas in interesting ways or use a broad enough vocabulary when writing. Many pupils have a sound understanding of sentence structure, although few pupils use paragraphs to organise their work well enough. Many pupils have appropriate basic numeracy skills; for example, most pupils can use formal methods to add and subtract 2 and 3 digit numbers. A few can add decimals to two places. However, many pupils do not apply their number skills well enough in other areas of the curriculum.

At the end of the Foundation Phase and at the end of key stage 2, pupils' performance has generally placed the school in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools over the last four years.

The published data for the school includes the performance of pupils attending specialist learning resource bases. This has an impact on the school's overall performance. Most pupils in the specialist learning resource bases make good progress in relation to their individual targets in both the Foundation Phase and key stage 2.

Recommendation 2: Improve standards in Welsh as a second language

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has begun to make appropriate use of a suitable scheme of work for Welsh that provides staff with a clear progression of sentence structures that they can implement throughout the school. Timetables show that teachers allocate a suitable amount of time to the teaching of Welsh in formal lessons and through daily 'helpwr heddiw' session. However, these sessions do not take place consistently.

At the end of the Foundation Phase, a minority of pupils understand and can reply to a limited range of simple questions and instructions in Welsh. Only a very few can recognise and read a small range of simple words. A very few can use the Welsh language in their writing. By the end of key stage 2, a majority of pupils have not made sufficient progress in their understanding of the Welsh language. Many pupils are still only confident when using a basic range of sentences, for example to discuss the weather or ask how their friends are feeling. A few pupils are able to read at an appropriate level for their age. Many pupils recognise a small range of familiar words in texts and can pronounce these suitably. However, their overall understanding of age-appropriate texts is weak. A majority of pupils need considerable support when writing and are able to write only a short series of sentences in Welsh independently. Overall standards remain low in comparison to those in other similar schools.

Recommendation 3: Improve attendance

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has a range of effective strategies and procedures to improve attendance that are beginning to have a positive impact on overall attendance rates. For example, attendance has improved steadily from around 91% at the time of the original inspection to at 93.3% at the end of the last academic year. However, for the last year where comparison data is available, attendance remained in the bottom 25% when compared with levels of attendance in similar schools.

The school's family engagement officer works as an 'attendance champion'. Within this role, she analyses data and tracks the attendance of all pupils to identify those with high rates of absenteeism or patterns of non-attendance. As a result, she is able to employ a broad range of strategies to support and challenge families efficiently, for example through visiting homes to discuss attendance issues and providing support for pupils and their families. As a result, attendance rates are

improving steadily. The school has begun to track the impact of improved attendance on outcomes for learners, but this is at an early stage of development.

Recommendation 4: Review the school timetable in order to ensure an appropriate balance in teaching time for all areas of the curriculum

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has an appropriate timetable that ensures that all pupils have access to a suitably balanced curriculum, particularly in the Foundation Phase. Many teachers use teaching time productively to ensure that they deliver the curriculum appropriately. However, in a few classes, teachers do not always follow set timetables consistently.

All areas of learning receive appropriate attention and coverage guided by sound long, medium and short-term planning. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop as independent learners within the Foundation Phase. As part of this, teachers set specific daily challenges for pupils in different activity areas. These provide pupils with enhanced opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in specific contexts. There is an appropriate focus on developing subject specific skills in key stage 2

Teachers' planning develops pupils' literacy skills in English lessons and numeracy skills in mathematics lessons appropriately, for example through the sound use of skills ladders and curriculum maps. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop these skills across all curriculum areas.

Recommendation 5: Refine assessment procedures in order to ensure that they are effective and manageable

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's arrangements to track pupils' progress are systematic and manageable. They ensure that staff have a suitable understanding of the current performance of all pupils. However, teachers' use of this information is too variable. Many teachers are beginning to use this information to plan appropriate learning activities for pupils and to identify those in need of additional support. However, a minority do not do this consistently and do not use this tracking data well enough to provide learning that challenges all pupils at a suitable level, particularly those that are more able. Overall, these procedures are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' performance, particularly in key stage 2.

A system of moderation involving all teachers ensures that assessments are broadly accurate. Nearly all teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Many teachers provide pupils with appropriate oral and written feedback on their work. However, this feedback often refers to what pupils have achieved and in many cases lacks detail on how pupils can make further progress. Where teachers do provide questions and prompts for pupils, in most cases they are not encouraged to respond sufficiently well.

Teachers provide pupils with suitable opportunities to evaluate and improve their own work. However, these focus mainly on identifying spelling and grammar errors. Procedures to enable pupils to set and review their own targets in literacy and numeracy are in place in a few classes. However, few pupils are aware of their targets and these procedures are yet to have a significant impact on improving standards.

Recommendation 6: Develop the role of the governors in challenging the school

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

There have been considerable changes to the governing body over the last 18 months. A new chair of governors took up the role in November 2014. He is very supportive of the school and has joined the headteacher in a drive to place standards at the heart of the school's vision.

The governing body meets regularly and has an appropriate awareness of its responsibilities. However, a notable number of governors are absent from many full governing body meetings. Nearly all governors have taken the opportunity to develop their skills through recent training in understanding schools' data. As a result, they have a greater understanding of how the school performs in comparison with other schools and of its areas for development. However, a majority of governors have yet to undertake much other, relevant training. The school's finance sub-committee meets regularly and monitors the school's income and expenditure suitably. However, it has not challenged the school strongly enough in this important area. In recent years, the school has ended the financial year in deficit and is overly reliant on grant income.

Regular meetings of the full governing body, and the school's standards committee, ensure that the school's progress against its targets is under continuous review. At these meetings, the governing body is beginning to use its knowledge to question the school about areas of provision and pupil standards. However, this challenge is still irregular and does not provide a strong enough drive to improve the quality of teaching and standards.

Recommendation 7: Ensure that the priorities in the improvement plan focus appropriately on raising standards across all areas of the curriculum

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the beginning of this academic year, the school has been following a new school improvement plan. Many of the priorities in this plan link well with the recommendations from the school's core inspection and target the shortcomings on which the previous post inspection action plan had an insufficient impact. The current improvement plan is a practical document that focuses suitably on improving provision and raising pupils' standards. Many of its priorities have clear, measurable objectives for pupil outcomes. However, a few priorities do not have wide enough scope for success. For example, they focus only on standards at the end of key stage 2. In a few other cases, actions within the plan are unclear and too broad. A

minority of success criteria for these actions do not have measurable outcomes against which leaders can evaluate success rigorously and hold teachers to account for the standards that pupils achieve. The improvement plan focuses broadly on improving many pupils' reading and writing skills and all pupils' mathematical skills. However, plans to develop other areas of learning or to improve pupils' ability to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are not strong.

Recommendations

In order to improve on this progress, the school should continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.