



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: significant improvement**

**Fairwater Primary School
Wellwright Road
Fairwater
Cardiff
CF5 3ED**

Date of visit: November 2015

by

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

© Crown Copyright 2015: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the report specified.

The monitoring team

Jane McCarthy	Reporting Inspector
Richard Lloyd	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring

Fairwater Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in July 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 significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Raise standards in the Foundation Phase outcomes and in English, Welsh, mathematics and science by the end of key stage 2, with particular attention to the performance of boys

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Overall, the work in pupils' books and the standards in lessons indicate that many pupils make good progress and achieve the outcomes expected for their age.

In Year 2 and Year 6, most pupils' ability to write extended pieces in literacy sessions and in their work across the curriculum has improved. Many pupils spell accurately at a level appropriate to their age and ability and nearly all pupils in the Foundation Phase use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell unfamiliar words. Pupils' use of punctuation is developing well. Many pupils in Year 2 use capital letters, full stops and question marks accurately and pupils use an increasing range of punctuation as they move through key stage 2. The handwriting and presentation of many pupils have improved, with younger pupils forming their letters in a way that prepares them to develop a cursive handwriting style. However, pupils' attainment in writing remains weaker than their attainment in reading and oracy.

In mathematics lessons, tasks are generally well adapted to meet the needs of most pupils. As a result, standards in mathematics are good overall. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their problem solving and investigational skills are at an early stage of development. This means that more able pupils do not always work independently enough in mathematics and science.

Most pupils achieve appropriate standards in Welsh. Many pupils in the Foundation Phase display positive attitudes to learning Welsh and make good progress in their use and understanding of the Welsh language. They follow basic instructions in Welsh very well. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils speak about themselves and a range of familiar topics confidently, using suitable vocabulary. Many pupils write appropriately in Welsh. By the end of key stage 2, for example, they write extended diary entries using the present and future tense within a defined structure.

Teacher assessments at the end of both key stages indicate that there are improvements in pupils' outcomes across most subjects and areas of learning since the core inspection.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils' performance at the expected outcome 5 in literacy numeracy and personal and social development has improved over time. In 2015,

performance places the school in the higher 50% for literacy and personal and social development and the top 25% for numeracy when compared with similar schools. Performance of pupils at the higher-than-expected outcome 6 has also improved. In 2015, performance in literacy and numeracy places the school in the higher 50% while performance for personal and social development places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools.

In key stage 2, at the expected level 4, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science places the school in the lower 50% or bottom 25% when compared with similar schools. At the higher-than-expected level, 2015 performance places the school in the higher 50% for English and science and the top 25% for mathematics. These outcomes relate to the performance of pupils in mainstream classes and the learning resource base at key stage 2. This affects the overall performance of pupils when compared with that of pupils in other similar schools.

The school has made good progress in narrowing the performance gap between boys and girls. As a result, the most recent teacher assessments indicate that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

Recommendation 2: Improve levels of attendance

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

In 2014, attendance improved to 94.2%, moving the school from the lower 50% to the higher 50% of similar schools. This is a notable improvement. Unverified data indicates a similar attendance rate for 2015.

The school has introduced procedures that have reduced the numbers of pupils with attendance of 90% or less and punctuality has improved considerably. The weekly class and whole school 'Attendance Race' have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to regular attendance. Attendance figures published on the school website weekly and in the half-termly newsletter are effective in raising parental awareness of the importance of their children attending school regularly and being punctual in the mornings. The school has worked well with the school attendance officer this year and two members of the governing body are actively involved in monitoring attendance. However, maintaining improved attendance and reducing lateness in the mornings remain priorities for the school.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the recent improvements in assessment procedures are used consistently across the school to meet the individual needs of all pupils

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has good processes to assess, record and track pupils' progress in mathematics and literacy. Teachers set appropriate end of year targets for all pupils. Leaders have developed useful cohort profiles that help to ensure that teachers have high expectations of pupils. Senior leaders hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make against their targets. These strategies are raising the standard of pupils' achievement.

Nearly all staff mark pupils' work regularly. Teachers' comments generally give a clear indication of what pupils have achieved and indicate what they need to do next to improve their work. This is particularly evident in the marking of pupils' writing. Pupils assess their own writing against set criteria and these always include their personal targets for improvement. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to improve and redraft their writing. This is helping to improve standards in writing. However, in other subjects, including mathematics and science, comments often just refer to whether the pupil has achieved the learning objective set for the lesson and do not provide guidance on how to improve.

Teachers have improved the process for setting individual targets to help pupils improve their work in literacy and numeracy. Nearly all pupils are aware of their personal targets and know how these help them to improve their work. Teachers ensure that they focus closely on pupils' targets during specific target time sessions in mathematics lessons. This helps pupils to focus clearly on the next steps in their learning in these sessions.

The school has worked well with other schools and external consultants to ensure the accuracy and reliability of end of key stage teacher assessment in English and mathematics.

Recommendation 4: Focus the school's evaluations of its performance on first hand evidence

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's systems for evaluating its own performance are effective overall. There are beneficial opportunities for pupils, parents, staff and governors to contribute to this process and the school listens to and acts upon their views appropriately. For example, the school gathered the opinions of all stakeholders to create its vision for the strategic direction of the school. This has ensured that the whole school community understands the school's aims. Staff in leadership positions are fully involved in self-evaluation activity. This ensures that the skills of leaders at all levels are improving and this supports the school to evaluate most aspects of its work successfully. Leaders base their evaluations on a suitable range of first-hand evidence, including lesson observations, analysis of performance data, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. They use this information well to challenge under-performance in teaching and to identify opportunities to coach staff to improve their practice. However, leaders do not always focus sharply enough on the standards that pupils achieve when gathering first-hand evidence. For example, lesson observations concentrate more on teaching skills than on the progress and attainment of pupils.

Leaders summarise the findings of self-evaluation in detailed reports. The school uses this information well to identify improvement priorities in the school improvement plan. This plan contains a suitable range of actions to secure improvements, appropriate timescales for the achievement of targets, and the persons responsible for their delivery. As a result, the school is beginning to make good progress against its strategic priorities, for example improving the accuracy of teacher assessment. Improvements in the school's arrangements for gathering and using first-hand evidence are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards overall at the school.

Recommendation 5: Extend the roles of all subject co-ordinators so that they impact more effectively on standards

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has a clear staffing structure that meets its needs successfully. Within this structure, the senior leadership team has an appropriate range of responsibilities. Most leaders have more than one leadership role. This means that they lead departments in the school as well as having responsibility for subjects or areas of learning, such as literacy. All leaders understand that they are accountable for securing high standards and good progress for pupils. Overall, they perform these roles well, for example by identifying worthwhile areas for improvement through self-evaluation activity. An example of this is the recent improvement in the standard of pupils' handwriting in the Foundation Phase as a result of a more consistent approach to teaching this skill. Each leader has an up-to-date view of the strengths and areas for improvement in their areas of responsibility. They understand performance data, including that of specific groups of pupils, well. However, leaders' evaluations of lessons and the work in pupils' books focus mainly on the quality of provision. They do not always evaluate the standards of pupils' work rigorously enough to identify what pupils need to do to improve. There are good systems for senior leaders to monitor the work of subject leaders, for example through performance management. Overall, these developments are positive, but are relatively new and in the early stages of raising standards of teaching and improving outcomes for pupils.

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.