



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**

**Sir Thomas Picton School
Queensway
Haverfordwest
Pembrokeshire
SA61 2NX**

Date of visit: March 2018

by

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

© Crown Copyright 2018: 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.

Outcome of monitoring

Sir Thomas Picton School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the Sir Thomas Picton School from the list of schools requiring special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Raise standards and improve performance across key stage 3 and key stage 4, particularly that of boys

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has implemented successfully a comprehensive range of strategies that have had a positive impact on standards in key stage 3, key stage 4 and on the performance of boys in particular.

In 2016, when the school was placed in special measures, performance had declined in all indicators following the core inspection. Since then, performance has improved in the majority of indicators and compares favourably with that of similar schools in around half of them.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has improved steadily since 2016. In 2017, performance in this indicator compares well with levels in similar schools and is above expectations for the first time in four years. However, performance in the capped points score has declined since 2016 and does not compare favourably with levels in similar schools.

Since 2016, the performance of boys has improved in many indicators. Their performance in the indicators including English and mathematics has improved steadily and now compares well with the average for boys in similar schools.

Since the core inspection, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has been variable but has improved in around half of indicators. In 2017, the performance of these pupils improved in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, although it remains lower than the average for this group of pupils in similar schools.

At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator has improved steadily over the last four years. This performance compares very favourably with the average for similar schools.

Most pupils make suitable progress in lessons. Many have positive attitudes to learning, apply themselves industriously to a range of tasks and recall prior learning effectively. Many pupils apply their knowledge and skills to new situations well. For instance, in art, pupils experiment with their understanding of how they can use colour, texture and shape when completing portraits in the style of Picasso. The

majority show resilience when presented with challenging tasks. However, a few pupils lack persistence and find it difficult to remain on task. In these cases, pupils make insufficient progress in lessons.

Most pupils listen carefully and ask for clarification if they do not understand what is required of them. They use a suitable range of vocabulary when answering questions. For instance, in Welsh they use and pronounce unfamiliar words such as 'archfarchnad' with assurance. Many pupils make worthwhile contributions to discussions and confidently share their work with each other. For example, in information and communication technology (ICT), pupils explain clearly how and why they have used hyperlinks and hot spots in their web sites. However, a few pupils do not listen to, or engage with, discussion well enough.

Most pupils retrieve information from a range of texts suitably and many read purposefully to extract information from sources to inform their own ideas. For example, in design technology, pupils extract carefully the important requirements from design briefs and use this to develop their own specifications. The majority of pupils interpret meaning in texts confidently and produce accurate summaries of important information. For example, following the viewing of a film about the London riots, they summarise effectively the consequences of this event on local people and businesses.

Many pupils produce accurate, well-structured writing and present their work well. They write at length using an appropriate range of language and subject specific terminology. For example, in music, pupils write a critique of 'Tubular Bells' showing a sound awareness of the tempo, pitch and texture of the music. The majority of pupils write skilfully for a range of purposes. In doing so, they use a varied and mature vocabulary and communicate their messages clearly. These pupils use a range of literary features, such as rhetorical questions and hyperbole, to create effective tone and meaning in their writing. For example, pupils present compelling arguments about why teenagers are misunderstood and include powerful examples of the pressures placed on young people by society. A few pupils do not take enough care with their writing and make too many basic spelling and grammatical errors. Furthermore, a few pupils have work missing from their books.

Many pupils complete basic numeracy tasks accurately. For example, in Welsh, pupils analyse population data on counties in Wales and represent this in appropriate graphs. However, a few pupils do not take enough care with their numeracy work and present unclear calculations or fail to label graphs accurately.

When provided with suitable opportunities, many pupils use their ICT skills suitably. For example, they use spreadsheets appropriately to collect and analyse data on surveys.

Recommendation 2: Improve the leadership skills of middle leaders

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the appointment of the acting headteacher in 2016, senior leaders have developed an inclusive and trusting culture within the school. This approach has had a positive impact on the leadership skills and effectiveness of middle leaders. As a

result, the work of middle leaders has contributed significantly to improvements in pupils' standards, particularly boys' performance, the quality of teaching and improvements to pupils' wellbeing and behaviour.

Senior and middle leaders work together well and have established supportive, yet robust, working relationships. Subsequently, the quality of middle leadership has improved considerably since the core inspection. Most departmental and pastoral middle leaders have developed their leadership skills well and take full responsibility for improving the areas that they manage. They understand their roles and responsibilities fully and place a strong emphasis on raising the standards of pupils' work, improving wellbeing and the quality of teaching and learning.

Many departmental middle leaders continually review and improve classroom practice. For instance, they share effective teaching and learning strategies through useful departmental and whole school review and development sessions. This work has made an important contribution to improving teaching and the standards achieved by pupils in lessons. Pastoral leaders work together well and have established effective systems to monitor and improve pupils' behaviour and attendance. However, there remains variability in the quality and effectiveness in the work of a few middle leaders. As a result, standards in a few subjects have not improved enough.

The school has strengthened beneficially lines of accountability through effective line management arrangements. They focus appropriately on raising standards and improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Recommendation 3: Improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning by middle leaders

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection, the acting headteacher and senior leaders have supported subject and pastoral middle leaders successfully to develop strong and responsive self-evaluation and improvement planning practices. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, wellbeing and standards achieved by pupils.

Many subject leaders conduct robust and valuable self-evaluation based upon a suitable range of evidence. They analyse data effectively, compare the performance of pupils to those in similar schools accurately and use this information to identify appropriate areas for improvement. Many subject leaders have a sound understanding of the standard of pupil work within their areas. However, a few do not evaluate the progress that pupils make in lessons well enough.

Many subject leaders evaluate the quality of teaching within their areas appropriately. They use work scrutiny exercises well to evaluate the impact of teachers' feedback on the progress made by pupils. Many have responded well to the recently strengthened emphasis on teaching and learning. They have consulted effectively with their teams to identify which aspects of teaching and learning require improvement in their areas and are using this understanding to further improve their lesson observation and work scrutiny exercises. However, in a few instances, subject leaders do not identify specific areas for improvement in teaching well enough.

Most pastoral leaders have worked effectively with senior leaders to develop valuable self-evaluation processes that assess the development and progress of pupils over time. These include detailed tracking of the performance of groups of pupils and identification and implementation of suitable interventions to support learning. This work has made an important contribution to improving performance, particularly that of boys.

Since the core inspection, the quality and rigour of improvement planning has improved significantly. Nearly all middle leaders set realistic yet ambitious targets. They identify clear actions for improvement that address departmental, pastoral and whole-school priorities well and monitor progress against these priorities suitably. Robust line management arrangements ensure that senior leaders hold middle leaders to account effectively in relation to the progress made against priorities for improvement.

The school has established a responsive culture of evaluation and improvement. Most middle leaders, working closely with the senior leadership team, are particularly responsive when addressing areas for improvement as a result of internal or external evaluations of the work of the school. They ensure that appropriate actions to secure improvements are swiftly identified, shared with staff and implemented effectively. This rigorous approach has had a positive impact on important areas of the work of the school.

Recommendation 4: Improve pupils' attendance

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, attendance, including that of pupils eligible for free school meals, has increased. However, despite these improvements, rates of attendance remain below those in similar schools.

The school has developed beneficial strategies for improving attendance that are beginning to have a positive impact. Systems for rewarding high levels of attendance have instilled positive attitudes to attendance across the school. Most pupils are aware of their current attendance and realise why good attendance helps them make progress in school. The school has developed valuable provision to engage and support vulnerable pupils to improve their attendance. This includes a nurture centre for pupils who might find attendance at school a challenge.

Pastoral middle leaders make an important contribution to improving attendance. Working with a team of learning coaches, they analyse data well to identify individual pupils at risk of falling below their attendance target and refer these pupils to a wide range of worthwhile interventions.

Recommendation 5: Address the health and safety concerns raised during the inspection

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has addressed the health and safety issues identified during the core inspection, and suitable procedures are in place to identify and manage health and safety concerns.

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.