



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**

**Llandrindod Wells C.P. School  
Cefnlllys Lane  
Llandrindod Wells  
Powys  
Llandrindod Wells  
LD1 5WA**

**Date of visit: February 2018**

**by**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Llandrindod Wells Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2016.

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: Raise pupils' standards of achievement, particularly in writing in key stage 2**

Since the core inspection, pupils' standards of achievement across the school have improved considerably in most subjects and areas of learning. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and have developed great pride in their work and achievements. Foundation phase pupils concentrate well on their learning activities, particularly in focused and enhanced provision, and enjoy tackling literacy and numeracy challenges related to their topics. Key stage 2 pupils speak confidently about their approach to their work and their personal targets, and understand the importance of being challenged by their learning.

The schemes of work for literacy, numeracy and cross curricular topics that have been introduced support teachers in their planning and give them the confidence to be more creative in their approaches to teaching. The use of more consistent, whole-school strategies means that pupils' progress is steadier as they move from class to class. This is helping to improve pupils' standards and levels of achievement overall. Despite this, standards in a few classes remain below expectations. The school recognises this and is working diligently to address the issues.

Many pupils have become enthusiastic and competent writers. Teachers plan writing activities that link closely to class topics. As a result, pupils are engaged in their writing because they know that it has a clear purpose. Many pupils in the foundation phase use their writing skills spontaneously in their play and around the classroom. For example, while engrossed in the class topic, 'The Enchanted Woodland', one pupil composed a letter to a fairy, folded it up carefully and put it in her bag to take home to post into her fairy house. Year 2 pupils write with growing skill in focused language sessions and across the curriculum. They speak maturely about how they can improve their own writing, by adding time connectives, 'wow' words and 'bossy' verbs. They help their teacher to create realistic, but challenging success criteria that encourage them to enhance their work and make it more exciting for the reader. Many key stage 2 pupils now write extensively across a wide range of genres in English lessons and across the curriculum. They plan and structure their work well, using the features of various types of writing successfully. Their growing understanding of the different techniques of writing, such as the use of tense and voice, means that pupils' work is engaging and interesting. The quality of many pupils' writing across the curriculum is good. This is particularly notable in science, where in Year 6, for example, they use subject-specific terminology accurately in detailed explanations of investigations.

Whole-school, consistent approaches to improving pupils' reading, spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting are benefiting pupils considerably. For example, the quality of pupils' spelling in their writing across the curriculum has improved, and the outcomes of standardised tests confirm these improvements.

Since September, there has been renewed focus on improving standards in mathematics and numeracy. The school has introduced a new scheme of work that helps teachers to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities more closely. Alongside this scheme of work, a new approach to developing pupils' mental mathematics strategies has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. These daily, thirty minute sessions of focused, precision teaching in ability groups have resulted in significant gains in pupils' mathematical accuracy and response time. Well-planned opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum enable pupils of all ages to consolidate their learning effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils measure carefully to make a picture of a Gruffalo that is one metre tall, and compare the heights of pupils and adults in the class with that of their Gruffalo. In Year 6, pupils use their understanding of time and the four rules of number to plan and price a visit to Cardiff Castle, including preparing a timetable and calculating the cost of groups of items in the gift shop.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve attendance**

The school has implemented suitable procedures to improve attendance. All teachers mark the register correctly and office staff monitor this conscientiously. This helps the school to deal promptly with any absence issues. There are appropriate procedures to promote good attendance, for example, by issuing letters to parents about their children's attendance each half term.

The headteacher meets with the education welfare officer every fortnight to identify ways to improve the attendance of targeted pupils. The governor with responsibility for attendance meets with the headteacher every term and provides appropriate feedback to governors that ensure they understand the school's current position.

The percentage of attendance has improved slowly over the last four years, from 93.9% in 2013-2014 to 94.7% in 2016-2017. At the end of the summer term 2016, the school moved from the bottom 25% to the lower 50% when compared with similar schools. Persistent absence rates have decreased considerably over the same period. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the school day, and procedures for recording lateness are robust.

### **Recommendation 3: Ensure that teaching meets the needs of all groups of pupils**

Since September 2017, the quality of teaching in many classes has improved considerably and now better meets the needs of most groups of pupils, including the more able. The acting headteacher has rebuilt staff confidence through strong and focused leadership. This has improved staff motivation and enthusiasm to raise the standards that pupils achieve. All senior leaders have clear expectations of teachers and there are specific targets for improvement that arise from lesson observations, performance management and other self-evaluation processes. Teacher morale has improved and this has enabled them to work more effectively as a team and to share ideas and good practice.

Staff have good working relationships with pupils. The school's strategies for improving behaviour and nurturing pupils' wellbeing have been successful. There is a clear behaviour management policy that all staff and pupils understand. It sets out appropriate rewards for good behaviour and effort and clear sanctions for poor behaviour. Nearly all staff implement the behaviour policy consistently, using rewards and sanctions effectively, and pupils respond well to this consistent and fair approach. This has generated a positive, happy atmosphere around the school. Poor behaviour has declined considerably and most pupils work productively in classrooms that are now well-managed, calm learning environments.

The schemes of work for literacy, numeracy and topic work introduced since the core inspection support teachers in their planning and give them the confidence to be more creative in their approaches. Teachers choose exciting topics that appeal to pupils. Most plan interesting and relevant learning activities that provide increasing levels of challenge for nearly all pupils. A majority are beginning to involve pupils in the planning process, by establishing what pupils already know about new topics and asking them what they would like to find out. This means that most pupils are engaged in their learning from the outset. However, teachers do not always adapt their planning well enough in response to pupils' suggestions. They tend to follow their own plans so pupils do not always feel that their contribution is useful.

In most classes, teachers structure the learning well. They ensure that lessons have clear objectives and move at a good pace. This helps pupils to remain motivated and on task. In many classes, teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at providing pupils with options that develop their ability to work independently. These include challenges or investigations that link well to topics and require pupils to apply their thinking skills as well as consolidating recent learning. In a very few classes, however, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are still sometimes too low. In these cases, learning activities do not always challenge pupils well enough. Many learning support assistants provide good levels of support to pupils in tasks and group work.

#### **Recommendation 4: Put in place effective systems to inform pupils how to improve their work**

There is a greater level of consistency in the marking of pupils' work across the curriculum in both key stages. Nearly all teachers provide good quality, regular feedback to pupils on their progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In most cases, teachers provide pupils with useful formative comments that help pupils to understand what they have done well and to suggest how they can improve next time. Pupils are beginning to respond purposefully to these comments and to use them effectively, for example, to improve the quality of their writing.

During lessons, most staff provide pupils with appropriate verbal feedback about their work. In many cases, this involves questioning pupils effectively to prompt them to evaluate their own progress. Teachers often share examples of good work with pupils and model their expectations about the standards that pupils need to achieve. Nearly all learning support assistants understand what pupils need to do next. This helps them to provide appropriate support for individuals and groups, so that they can make good progress and achieve their targets.

Most pupils know their personal improvement targets for literacy and numeracy and older pupils explain clearly what they have to do to achieve these. This system of target setting, although still developing, is helping many pupils to improve the quality of their work effectively and independently.

Most pupils have suitable opportunities to use self and peer assessment regularly and this encourages them to think carefully about the quality of their own work and that of the peers. Most understand how to use a traffic light system to indicate to their teachers whether they have found the work too hard, sufficiently challenging or too easy. However, teachers do not always question pupils' reasoning for their decision, to make sure that their judgements of their own learning are accurate. Many pupils are developing useful skills to provide constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement to their peers. They share and develop their ideas well through the use of talking partners.

Regular book scrutiny by all teachers in staff meetings is helping to increase consistency in marking. This collaborative work develops teachers' marking skills and ensures a shared understanding of how a consistent approach to marking benefits pupils' engagement and learning. Each teacher receives written feedback on the pupils' work they submit for scrutiny, including targets to meet by the next book scrutiny. This provides teachers with a clear way forward and reinforces their understanding of their accountability for raising pupils' standards.

#### **Recommendation 5: Develop the role of the governing body as a critical friend**

Although the governing body is beginning to increase its capacity to support the school more effectively, the development of its role as a critical friend remains at an early stage.

Governors are beginning to develop a better understanding of the school's priorities and their role in holding leaders to account in achieving these. The acting headteacher communicates well with governors to keep them informed of progress towards the targets in the school's post-inspection action plan and other strategies that support this. For example, she reports clearly on the success of the whole school strategy for managing pupils' behaviour. The acting headteacher encourages governors to play a fuller role in the life of the school. In response to this, a minority of governors now take a more active and visible interest in the school's work. For example, a few join with staff to scrutinise pupils' work and take part in learning walks. These activities help governors to develop a better first-hand understanding of aspects of the school's work, including a better appreciation of how staff are improving the provision for and teaching of mathematics and numeracy.

However, most governors do not yet have the skills to challenge the school well enough about the standards that pupils achieve, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership. Only a very few governors attended bespoke training on asking the right questions about school improvement. These governors are developing a fuller understanding of their roles and responsibilities and show an increased commitment to school improvement. Minutes of meetings indicate that discussions in meetings now focus more specifically on important and relevant issues, including progress towards achieving targets in the post inspection action plan.

**Recommendation 6: Ensure that senior leaders have effective roles that reflect clearly the needs of the school**

The acting headteacher has reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the staff and senior leadership team. These are set out in new job descriptions, which staff have agreed and signed. The roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team link appropriately to the post inspection action plan and this helps to move the school forward at a pace.

Members of the senior leadership team work together effectively. They are developing their skills well in leading staff in regularly timetabled activities, such as gathering a wide range of evidence to inform self-evaluation. This includes half-termly book scrutiny, listening to learner focus groups, reviewing teachers' planning, carrying out learning walks with governors and reviewing provision for additional learning needs. Meetings of the senior leadership team now take place regularly. They have a clear focus and identify who should take responsibility and completion dates for the agreed actions

The acting headteacher manages the performance of all senior leaders effectively to help clarify their roles. She and other senior leaders carry out performance management for all other members of staff. This includes setting agreed, relevant targets for staff that relate appropriately to the post inspection action plan and include a personal professional learning objective. The process is helping all staff to develop a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in working as a team to implement the necessary improvements. The system identifies staff training needs effectively and enables the acting headteacher to provide a range of appropriate opportunities for staff to improve their skills, for example, in teaching mathematics. However, targets do not have precise success criteria and this makes it difficult for senior leaders to evaluate staff's progress accurately against agreed objectives.

The acting headteacher is seconded on a termly basis. The uncertainty of whether she will be in place to embed the systems being introduced over the last six months concerns both governors and staff who wish to continue the good progress made since September.

**Recommendation 7: Implement a whole school approach to improvement that includes the contribution of all staff and governors**

Since her secondment at the beginning of September 2017, the acting headteacher, supported by the whole staff, has worked conscientiously to implement the agreed post inspection action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection of October 2016 and drive the school forward. She has also undertaken her own beneficial analysis of the most immediate issues to be addressed. The acting headteacher and senior leaders evaluate progress suitably every half-term, drawing on an appropriate range of evidence, including lesson observations and book scrutiny.

All staff understand the school's priorities and their role in achieving these. Regular staff meetings have a clear focus and ensure that all teaching staff play a role in the school's improvement journey. Senior leaders understand their responsibilities and support the acting headteacher well in implementing a range of suitable initiatives to

ensure that the school moves forward. For example, all staff implement agreed plans to improve writing, numeracy and behaviour conscientiously. As a result, there have been marked improvements in these areas across the school.

The acting headteacher leads by example and ensures good levels of support and challenge from staff to ensure that the school meets agreed milestones. Senior leaders and most co-ordinators have non-contact time to monitor and evaluate progress in their areas of responsibility or subjects. This is having a positive effect on improving provision and raising standards, for example in mental mathematics and writing. The performance management objectives of staff link well to the recommendations in the post inspection action plan, and this ensures that everyone maintains a clear focus on the school's priorities.

The acting headteacher communicates well with governors and updates them termly on the school's progress towards the recommendations in the post inspection action plan. A minority of governors are gradually becoming involved in monitoring the work of the school through learning walks and book scrutiny. This is beginning to develop their understanding of standards and provision appropriately and helps them to make valuable contributions to discussions.

**Recommendation 8: Act upon agreed plans for school improvement and evaluate their impact on raising pupil outcomes**

The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and strategic direction to the school and has introduced an appropriate range of good quality systems to underpin self-evaluation and school improvement. These improvements are having a positive impact on improving provision, teaching and outcomes for pupils, particularly in writing in most year groups.

There is a consistent approach to marking and feedback throughout the school and pupils respond well to this. Nearly all teachers differentiate work effectively, especially in mathematics, and share learning objectives and success criteria with pupils. As a result, many pupils know what to do to improve their work. For example, older pupils explain clearly how this helps them to improve their descriptions of characters in their writing. There is an effective system to track pupils' progress, which nearly all staff use effectively to assess their pupils accurately on a regular basis.

The introduction of new mathematics schemes, supported by professional development provided by the headteacher, is leading to improvements in the consistency of teaching and the progression of pupils in mathematics. Across the school, the quality of pupils' writing has improved and pupils of all abilities are developing the confidence to write extended pieces independently across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 apply their writing skills effectively to produce work of a particularly high standard in science.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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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.