



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**

**Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen  
Heol yr Ysgol  
Tondu  
CF32 9EL**

**Date of visit: June 2017**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Heledd Thomas	Reporting Inspector
Richard Tither	Team Inspector
John Thomas	Team Inspector
Bethan Whittall	Team Inspector

## Outcome of monitoring

Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2015.

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 standards, particularly in key stage 4 and improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, performance at key stage 4 has improved in all indicators. Performance in both the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and the capped points score, is now above modelled outcomes.

At key stage 4, in 2016, performance in many indicators places the school in the upper half of similar schools. Performance in the level 2 threshold increased by over 34 percentage points and places the school in the top 25% of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving five A\*/A grades increased slightly in 2016, but remains below the average for similar schools. Value added information for 2016 shows that pupils' progress from key stage 2 is above predicted outcomes in all key indicators.

At key stage 3, performance in the core subject indicator has improved by nearly six percentage points since the core inspection.

In 2016, the performance of girls in all key stage 4 indicators improved and is above the average for girls in similar schools. Boys' performance also improved in many indicators. However, their performance remains below the average for boys in similar schools in the majority of indicators.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in all key stage 4 indicators in 2016 and is now above the national average for this group of pupils. At key stage 3, the performance of this group of pupils also improved slightly and is now in line with the national average for these pupils.

Most pupils have a positive attitude to learning and maintain their focus and concentration very well. They listen attentively and with interest to teachers' explanations and the views of their peers. Many pupils apply their knowledge and skills suitably in new contexts and engage constructively in learning activities.

The majority of pupils participate enthusiastically in class or small group discussions. These pupils share their ideas and opinions clearly and provide thoughtful, extended responses. They use subject terminology correctly and confidently. However, a minority of pupils offer only brief and underdeveloped responses.

Many pupils read effectively to retrieve information from a range of texts. They use this information well to support their learning, for example when considering the significance of Owain Glyndwr in the history of Wales. The majority make appropriate inferences and deductions to evaluate sources and reach thoughtful conclusions.

The majority of pupils produce extended writing that is technically secure. They write well for a range of purposes and audiences and express their views clearly. The majority of pupils improve the quality of their work successfully in response to teachers' feedback. However, a minority of pupils make too many errors with spelling, punctuation and grammar. A few pupils have weak presentational and handwriting skills.

Many pupils have sound number skills. They measure and draw graphs correctly, and handle and interpret data effectively, for example when conducting experiments to record the speed of sound. Many pupils apply their numeracy skills well to solve real life problems, for example when using geographical bearings and measuring distance.

### **Recommendation 2: Ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has made helpful improvements to the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all learners.

The revised curriculum at key stage 3 and beneficial links with partner primary schools ensure that pupils are able to study subjects in suitable depth and to develop their skills appropriately. The 'Challenge Curriculum' in Year 7 has been planned carefully and implemented effectively. The robust monitoring arrangements ensure that this innovative provision is evaluated every half term and refinements made where relevant. Although this curriculum currently limits continuity in the development of pupils' Welsh and modern foreign language skills, it has been planned carefully to address these concerns for 2017-2018.

Since the core inspection, at key stage 4, the school has made suitable arrangements to ensure that Year 11 pupils have continuity in their learning experiences. Current Year 10 pupils follow an appropriate curriculum structure than at the time of the core inspection. Provision for mathematics, English, science and Welsh language has been increased. The school ensures appropriate curricular provision for delivering the Welsh Baccalaureate effectively in key stage 4 and in the sixth form. Opportunities for pupils to experience the Welsh dimension have improved suitably over the past two years.

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented the literacy and numeracy framework purposefully and effectively. Valuable strategies such as 'think on, write on' ensure that beneficial extended writing tasks are implemented across all curricular areas. These activities provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to improve a wide range of literacy and thinking skills.

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

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a range of useful initiatives that are helping to improve key aspects of teaching and assessment. The school has developed useful initiatives for sharing best practice in teaching and assessment.

A notable feature of most lessons is the respectful and productive working relationships between teachers and pupils. In many lessons, teachers communicate enthusiasm for their subject and create a supportive learning environment. In a few instances, teachers' probing questions encouraged pupils particularly well to think carefully and to extend their verbal responses.

In many lessons, learning activities are planned well and include a range of suitably challenging tasks and stimulating resources that engage pupils successfully. In many cases, teachers prepare interesting starter activities that set an appropriate context for the lesson and provide useful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy or numeracy skills. However, a few numeracy activities have limited value in a few subjects.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, teachers do not use questioning well enough to challenge pupils. In these lessons, pupils' learning does not proceed at a suitable pace. In a few instances, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.

In many lessons, teachers provide supportive verbal feedback to pupils that helps them to gain a more secure understanding of specific aspects of their work. In their written feedback, many teachers provide pupils with helpful advice to improve their subject-specific and literacy skills. In the majority of cases, pupils refine their work well in response to these comments.

The school tracks the progress of pupils at key stage 3 and key stage 4 particularly effectively. Leaders use this information well to identify those pupils who are not performing in line with their abilities and to plan suitable interventions.

### **Recommendation 4: Strengthen arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils and meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection the school has implemented a wide range of effective strategies to strengthen arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils.

In most lessons, and around the school, pupils behave well. The school has developed strong processes to promote good behaviour and it provides beneficial support to pupils to help them manage their behaviour where this is required.

Strategies to prevent bullying are robust and include a particular emphasis on antibullying education. The school's five annual 'wellbeing days' focus on a wide range of relevant issues that promote pupils' personal development successfully.

The school has reduced exclusion rates significantly since the core inspection. Pupils' attendance is monitored closely and has a suitable range of early interventions to help pupils with poor attendance to improve. For example, the 'Phoenix Centre' provides valuable personalised support for pupils to overcome physical and emotional barriers to learning.

The school has developed a wide range of worthwhile opportunities that are highly effective in promoting pupils' social and cultural development. These include academic and cultural enrichment opportunities, as well as numerous sporting activities. The school provides pupils with valuable advice and experiences to help them make informed choices about their future careers and learning opportunities.

The school monitors the progress of pupils with additional learning needs carefully. Teachers know the particular needs of these pupils in their classes well and procedures to evaluate the progress of pupils on intervention programmes are robust.

The school complies with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction, high expectations and accountability in all areas of the school's work**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has made worthwhile progress in improving the effectiveness of leadership at all levels. This has contributed well to enhancing the quality of provision and to raising standards.

The executive headteacher provides astute and effective, strategic leadership. He gives firm direction and promotes high expectations for all aspects of the school's work. The roles and responsibilities of staff are set out clearly in well-defined job descriptions. These help ensure appropriate levels of accountability. The responsibilities of the extended leadership team are well-balanced and relate appropriately to key priorities. The addition of the associate assistant headteachers to the leadership team is contributing well to the effectiveness of this group.

Together with the senior leadership team, the executive headteacher has ensured effective lines of communication and established a successful collaborative culture and commitment to addressing the school's priorities. As a result, the school is developing a strong capacity for self-improvement.

Senior leaders provide effective support and challenge to middle leaders, for example through fortnightly line-management meetings. These meetings focus appropriately on pupils' progress as well as the quality of teaching and learning.

Together with the rigorous quality assurance arrangements, this approach is helping to develop greater consistency and effectiveness in the work of middle leaders. Many middle leaders undertake their responsibilities well. Although a few middle-leaders do not monitor the work of their teams rigorously enough, senior leaders have implemented appropriate actions to improve the effectiveness of these staff.

There are suitable performance management arrangements that help identify relevant professional development priorities. Personal objectives relate directly to the school's priorities, in particular to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Nearly all targets are clear, challenging and measurable. However, the school has not introduced appropriate performance management procedures for non-teaching staff.

The governing body has been reorganised and now operates effectively as a 'critical friend'.

### **Recommendation 6: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented robust procedures to evaluate and improve the quality of its work. These have contributed successfully to improvements in pupil outcomes, the quality of teaching, and arrangements to support the wellbeing of pupils.

The school has developed a well-planned cycle of quality assurance activities that includes lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, and regular feedback from pupils and parents. These activities focus suitably on pupils' progress and the impact of teaching on learning. They provide leaders with a wide range of first-hand evidence to evaluate all aspects of the school's work. The school makes effective use of a comprehensive range of data to inform its evaluation of pupil performance. As a result, most leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Middle leaders are supported well to improve the consistency and rigour of their quality assurance and self-evaluation. However, in a few cases, middle leaders' self-evaluation reports are not sufficiently evaluative.

Whole-school and departmental improvement plans identify clear and relevant initiatives that take suitable account of national priorities. A broad range of detailed complementary action plans specify purposeful strategies to strengthen key areas of the school's work. These plans include challenging targets, clear timescales and measurable success criteria.

The governing body contributes effectively to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Governors know the school well and have a secure understanding of the progress the school has made and the challenges it faces.

## **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.