



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**

**Brynlllywarch Hall School  
Kerry  
Nr Newtown  
Powys  
SY16 4PB**

**Date of visit: July 2019**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Brynllwarch Hall School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

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

### **R1. Improve the quality of strategic leadership and procedures for school improvement planning**

The school has made significant progress in addressing this recommendation.

Since the core inspection, the school has taken highly effective steps to improve the quality of strategic leadership. The headteacher has developed a clear vision for the school, based on the principle of 'high expectations through challenge for all and by all'. Led by the headteacher and senior leaders, the vision is shared very effectively and understood by staff, who revisit it regularly. To support this vision, the school has reviewed leaders' roles and responsibilities to ensure that they focus clearly on the school's strategic priorities. Job descriptions provide extremely clear guidance to staff about their individual areas of responsibility, and most are fulfilling this well. The school has strengthened performance management processes notably to ensure targets link directly to the school's areas for improvement and increase accountability. These combined improvements ensure that staff at all levels have a clear understanding of their roles and how they contribute, individually and within their teams, to the school's improvement. This has had a significant positive impact on the progress the school is making in important areas such as improving pupil behaviour and provision.

Leaders now work more strategically with representatives from the local authority to support the needs of pupils with significant behaviour challenges. For example, the headteacher is a member of the local authority's placement panel and contributes to placement decisions along with colleagues from other special schools. Senior representatives from the local authority attend governors meetings on a regular basis. They provide valuable support that enables governors to review the school's progress and give effective challenge to the headteacher.

The school has strengthened its self-evaluation processes considerably to inform its improvement planning in a more robust way. For example, the regular monitoring reports that senior leaders produce on their individual areas of responsibility are closely linked to strategic improvements across the school. These sharply focused reports provide particularly useful information on pupils' engagement in learning, the school's provision and the standards and progress pupils achieve over time. The

school has rigorous processes and systems in place to monitor, track and evaluate progress on priorities across the school. This strategic approach enables leaders to plan accurately for further improvement and to take swift action where progress is limited.

**R2. Improve the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4, to ensure that it matches more closely the needs, interests and aspirations of the pupils**

The school has made strong progress in addressing this recommendation.

The curriculum at all key stages meets the needs of individual pupils well. Staff work hard to provide a curriculum that is exciting and relevant. This has contributed to pupils' increased attendance and engagement and improved behaviour across the school.

Visits to both special and mainstream schools have enabled staff to observe effective practice. This approach has helped upskill staff and has had a positive impact on shaping curriculum development. For example, since the core inspection, the school has made significant improvements to provision at key stages 3 and 4. Teaching staff now remain with the pupils throughout most of the day, and pupils no longer have to move from one classroom to another. In addition, at key stage 3, the school has adopted a topic based approach. These changes have had an extremely positive impact on learning and behaviour where, in lessons observed during the follow-up visits, nearly all pupils engaged well, listened carefully and answered and asked questions confidently.

Curriculum co-ordinators have become more confident in their planning, monitoring and evaluation. They provide sound advice to colleagues about methodology and how best to provide for the needs of individual pupils. A teacher has recently taken on responsibility for personal and social education, and is developing a structured approach towards delivery of the subject across the school.

The school has made appropriate progress in preparing for A curriculum for Wales. This includes the appointment of co-ordinators for each of the six areas of learning. All staff have received training on the areas of learning and the four purposes of the new curriculum. They talk positively about the new curriculum, which they feel will suit their school and pupils well. The school is also working with the Welsh Rugby Union and nine other special schools on a project to support the new curriculum.

Pupils in key stage 4 benefit from the wider range of accredited learning opportunities offered. This includes vocational qualifications in the care of small animals, equine studies, land based studies and childcare. All pupils are following courses that are matched to their needs and interests. A further significant improvement has been the introduction of work experience, linked to pupils' interests, ambitions and, where possible, the vocational courses they are following. Individual learning pathways set

out clearly the accredited courses pupils will be following and the work experience they are going to undertake. Successful work experience has already led to employment for a few pupils and the learning pathways help ensure that pupils' experiences prepare them well for their future aspirations. In 2018, nearly all pupils who left the school went on to full-time employment or further education. The school has made strong progress in relation to the development of skills across the curriculum. Co-ordinators have mapped areas of the curriculum against the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, identified gaps and worked with staff to incorporate these into their schemes of work. As a result, pupils have regular opportunities to develop skills in literacy and numeracy and nearly all make good progress in meeting their individual education plan targets for these skills.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching**

The school has made extremely strong progress in addressing this recommendation.

Since the core inspection, following valuable professional learning activities, the quality of teaching across the school has improved significantly. This improvement has impacted positively on pupils' learning and behaviour. For example, a strength of the school is teachers' planning and the way that they listen to pupils who are growing in confidence about how they can influence their own learning. Nearly all teachers plan highly motivating lessons that focus on pupils' interests and promote their engagement in learning. As a result, most pupils engage well throughout lessons, listen carefully and contribute confidently when answering and asking questions of staff and each other.

The positive working relationships between staff and pupils result in highly beneficial levels of mutual trust. Further, the impact of a class based model across the school significantly contributes to the increased understanding of pupil needs and planning of effective lessons on a daily basis. Nearly all teachers know their pupils extremely well. They understand their strengths and the areas that they need to improve in their learning. They use this information particularly effectively to plan stimulating activities to build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding.

Nearly all teachers establish a successful pace in lessons with high expectations of pupil learning and behaviour. They identify particularly suitable lesson objectives, which are shared consistently with pupils. Most teachers set effective success criteria with pupils and encourage them to use these to evaluate their own work. As a result, many pupils are beginning to self-evaluate their own progress successfully. This important development is raising pupils' confidence in themselves as successful learners.

Nearly all teachers have started to track and analyse information from pupil intervention support very effectively. This impacts positively on teachers' planning

and delivery of relevant learning experiences. For example, the greatly improved process for teachers to plan and deliver meaningful individual educational targets within lessons contributes to very positive pupil outcomes. These targets are robustly tracked and challenged by senior leaders at pupil progress meetings. This approach strengthens the quality assurance processes at the school to help ensure pupils' learning and progress is on track.

The programme of beneficial activities that staff have undertaken to improve the quality of teaching includes for example a self-reflection personal skills audit, peer lesson observations within the school and with similar providers and courses in outstanding practice. These activities, together with the structured calendar of monitoring activities such as lesson walks, observations and work scrutiny carried out by senior leaders, supports the continued improvement in the quality of teaching. Outcomes of these activities are shared formally with teachers and this contribute successfully to them becoming more reflective practitioners.

#### **R4. Improve pupil behaviour**

The school has made significant progress in addressing this recommendation.

Since the core inspection, the school has successfully implemented high quality, consistent and relevant interventions and processes to support and improve pupil behaviour. This includes beneficial individual behaviour support plan targets based on thorough and robust data analysis. The whole-school modifications to curriculum provision and improved approaches to teaching by nearly all staff provide particularly effective learning experiences where nearly all pupils engage and apply themselves well to their learning.

Following a renewed focused on the school's behaviour policy, nearly all teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour and apply the policy consistently. Most pupils understand the expectations around behaviour and are developing effective strategies to help manage their own emotions and reactions. As a result, they are respectful of one another and staff, and enjoy opportunities for wider learning. For example, older pupils benefit from taking on additional responsibilities, such as preparing and selling healthy wraps. Through these tasks, they engage confidently and politely with visitors and other stakeholders.

Senior leaders have introduced an effective range of particularly useful strategies to improve pupils' attitudes towards their own learning. These strategies include a system of staff issuing colour code report cards providing pupils with worthwhile opportunities for reflection on their behaviour and how to make positive changes. This graduated response to behaviour incidents has contributed to fewer pupils being referred for pastoral support, as well as a significant decrease in the number of fixed-term and internal exclusions.

The school has introduced a more systematic approach for monitoring and recording all incidences of negative behaviours extremely carefully to identify particular patterns and trends. Leaders use this data confidently to recognise triggers in pupils' behaviour, address inconsistencies in teachers' behaviour management strategies and identify any pupils who need additional support. Leaders also provide valuable training sessions for staff to ensure that they use the information more effectively and in a consistent manner to inform their planning.

Almost all staff have a particularly secure understanding of pupils' needs and focus strongly on meeting them through detailed personal development plans. The professional learning programme for improving the quality of teaching has ensured that nearly all teachers place a strong focus on providing effective challenge and matching tasks to pupils' abilities to secure better behaviour in lessons. This focus provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop and improve important life skills.

Staff have a secure understanding that effective teaching leads to improved pupil behaviour. Through well-organised planning and management, they ensure that pupils take an active interest in their work, and encourage them to make decisions and choices about what and how they learn. Nearly all teaching staff have increased confidence in their ability to maintain discipline and address emerging problems appropriately and quickly. The school is a calm, orderly and nurturing environment where learning is the core activity.

#### **R5. Address the shortcomings in the management of health and safety procedures identified during the inspection**

The school has made strong progress in addressing this recommendation.

Following the core inspection, senior leaders and governors have worked closely with the local authority and took prompt actions to address the health and safety issues identified. They reviewed and revised health and safety policies, protocols and risk assessments, and carried out important work to improve the site. A metal security fence now surrounds the main part of the school.

There are now robust processes in place to ensure that all areas of the school are safe. These processes include regular health and safety checks to ensure that any important and urgent areas for improvement are addressed quickly and efficiently. Health and safety is a standing item on governing body meeting agendas.

There are robust processes in place for reviewing and reducing risks. In addition, all members of staff and governors have become more aware of health and safety

issues and they liaise effectively with the caretaker in identifying health and safety risks around the school. These risk are logged carefully and remedied promptly. This approach is having a positive impact on creating a clean and clutter-free environment where potential hazards are controlled successfully to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors.

Staff and pupils now feel a sense of pride towards the school building and the grounds. For example, pupils help the caretaker to collect leaves and debris from the yard and footpaths. Older pupils also undertake basic maintenance such as painting and gardening activities as part of their land-based studies and construction courses.