



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**

**Hirwaun Primary School
Glannant Street
Hirwaun
Aberdare
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF44 9NF**

Date of visit: July 2019

by

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

Outcome of visit

Hirwaun Primary 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 significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve the quality of teaching and feedback to pupils

All staff have received beneficial training on how to improve their teaching. Teachers have started to work with colleagues in triads to share good practice and to appraise each other's work in an open and supportive manner. In addition, they have visited other schools to view good practice in teaching and learning. As a result of this work, there is a more consistent approach to teaching and across the school the quality and effectiveness of teaching has improved.

Nearly all teachers plan exciting activities that engage pupils well in their work. Most have high expectations of the standards that pupils can achieve and present work that challenges all groups of pupils. Nearly all teachers provide pupils with clear learning objectives and relevant success criteria. As a result, pupils are clear about what they need to do to succeed in their work. Many teachers use a range of high quality questions to check pupils' understanding and, in the best practice, to move pupils learning forward.

Leaders have introduced a whole school approach to providing pupils with feedback on their work. They have provided specific training for teachers and support staff on giving meaningful comments. As a result, nearly all staff now provide pupils with verbal feedback that helps them understand what they have done well and gives them useful advice on how they can improve their work. Most teachers also use valuable written feedback that has a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, staff highlight specific aspects of pupils' writing for them to redraft and expand. All teachers provide pupils with weekly dedicated time to address feedback or to work with staff to revisit areas of their learning. Most teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and use this information to help plan next steps in their learning effectively.

R2. Improve standards of pupils' reading, writing and presentation of work

The school's consistent approach to teaching reading has had a positive impact on improving pupils' reading skills. Across the school, carefully planned guided group reading sessions successfully support pupils that need additional help and challenge

more able readers effectively. In the foundation phase, pupils build upon their understanding of phonics to read simple books with increasing accuracy. As they progress through the school, many pupils' comprehension skills develop well. Many pupils apply their reading skills to research topics independently, for example when creating a presentation on Christianity. Most pupils respond well to teachers' questions during guided reading sessions. For example, pupils in Year 4 apply higher order reading skills such as skimming and scanning to identify fact and opinion from texts. By the end of key stage 2, many pupils are confident, fluent readers who enjoy reading a wide range of texts.

The school has implemented a structured approach to teaching writing skills. Staff have mapped out when they will teach different writing genres. This ensures that as they move through the school, pupils have the opportunity to write for a rich variety of purposes. In the foundation phase, most pupils develop emergent writing skills well. In reception, many pupils begin to write short sentences independently. As they progress through the foundation phase, many pupils write short paragraphs, for example to describe their favourite fairy tale character. In key stage 2, teachers plan a series of lessons to teach pupils the skills necessary to write for different audiences. As a result, many pupils write for a range of purposes using correct language, style and layout. For example, Year 4 pupils write sensitively when describing the feelings of flood victims. By Year 6, more able pupils in particular use a wide range of imaginative language to add interest to their work. Across the school, many pupils spell accurately and use an appropriate range of punctuation for their age and ability.

The implementation of a new handwriting scheme and teachers' high expectations of how pupils present their work has significantly improved standards of presentation across the school. By Year 6, most pupils write using a clear and legible cursive style. Nearly all pupils are proud of their books and the progress that have made in improving their handwriting.

R3. Improve pupils' standards in information and communication technology (ICT)

The school has made strong progress in improving its provision for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT). Leaders and teachers have mapped the requirements of the current ICT curriculum and the digital competence framework for every year group. As a result, there is a clear structure in how they teach pupils a wide range of ICT skills progressively. Leaders have initiated a training programme to develop staff confidence and competency in teaching ICT.

As they move through the school, most pupils' develop their ICT skills well. They use an appropriate range of software to enhance their learning across the curriculum. In nursery and reception, pupils use tablet computers to practise their letter and number

formation and follow instructions correctly to programme movable toys to travel within a grid. In Year 2, many pupils log onto learning platforms independently and use basic animation to create a story. In key stage 2, many pupils apply their ICT skills confidently in a range of subjects. For example, many older pupils insert relevant audio and video clips correctly to add interest and detail to a Second World War presentation. There is clear progression in how well pupils improve and use their ICT skills, for example in data handling. Year 2 pupils collect data and create a graph to show their favourite superheroes, while Year 6 pupils create databases on planets independently to make a game for younger pupils. However, despite this progress, a majority of older pupils do not have ICT skills at the expected level for their age, for example in the use of formulae in spreadsheets.

Most pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

R4. Ensure that the curriculum meets requirements and develops pupils' skills progressively

Leaders and staff have planned a skills based curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Staff have created an overview of how and when to teach subject specific skills. They have ensured that they plan to teach these skills progressively across the school and that they cover all areas of the curriculum and subjects. Teachers use these plans to create interesting cross curricular topics. They give pupils opportunities to contribute to what they would like to learn within these topics. In addition, they allow pupils to suggest ideas for independent challenges and in the design of classroom areas, for example enhancing reading corners. As a result, most pupils are motivated and engaged in their learning effectively.

There is a comprehensive long-term plan that identifies which literacy, numeracy and ICT skills teachers will cover in each year group. Staff have planned this carefully to build successfully on pupils' prior learning and to move their learning forward.

The school makes effective use of the local area and visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, pupils have the opportunity to visit the local library regularly and Year 3 pupils visited the Roman museum in Caerleon to learn about life in Roman times.

In the foundation phase, staff have made significant progress in improving provision. Teachers and support staff apply foundation phase principles successfully. All classrooms include a range of appropriate and inviting areas in which pupils play with excitement and purpose. Staff have made exceptional improvements to their outdoor provision and have created a wide range of stimulating, attractive learning areas. For example, reception pupils have the opportunity to find and sort vegetables into groups and act as mini beast detectives in the appealing garden area.

R5. Improve pupils' independent learning skills

Across the school, nearly all teachers plan a range of beneficial opportunities to help pupils to become independent, confident learners.

In all classes, teachers have reorganised their resources to ensure that pupils can access them easily. In the foundation phase, teachers have created defined learning areas within their indoor and outdoor classrooms and allow pupils regular opportunities to access this provision independently. Teachers encourage pupils to undertake a range of challenges when accessing these areas, with older pupils reading instructions independently.

In key stage 2, all teachers have introduced 'missions' for pupils to complete. In most classes these challenges provide opportunities for pupils to apply their skills independently in meaningful contexts. Pupils have the choice of what activities to complete and staff expect them to work without adult support. Each 'mission' has three levels of challenge and, in most classes, pupils can choose which level to attempt. Pupils are beginning to contribute to the planning of this work by sharing their ideas for challenges with their teachers. However, this work is still at a relatively early stage of development and there is inconsistency in the quality of work completed by pupils.

In every class, pupils contribute to the planning of the content of their topics. Younger pupils create mind maps at the start of their themes on areas they wish to study. In every classroom there are planning displays where pupils have the chance to add ideas for areas of interest that they wish to study.

As a result of this work, most pupils are developing as confident independent learners who take increasing responsibility for their work. Pupils of all ages have a range of appropriate skills to use if they find their work difficult and most persevere well when their work is challenging. Many older pupils discuss maturely how they choose and present their learning.

Elected pupils participate enthusiastically in activities as part of pupil representation groups. However, activities and group meetings are predominantly led by adults and pupils do not have opportunities to take a lead role in organising events and leading meetings independently.

R6. Correctly identify and address important areas of teaching and learning that need to improve and hold all members of staff to account robustly

Over the past 18 months, the school has concentrated correctly on addressing the inspection recommendations. Leaders plan a suitable termly programme of activities to monitor their work. This includes lesson observations, learning walks, listening to learners and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Through these activities, leaders judge the

progress towards identified priorities and aspects that they need to strengthen further. They ensure that they focus their work appropriately on judging pupils' standards as well as provision. Leaders have become more skilled at making precise judgements based on first-hand evidence. Following monitoring activities, leaders discuss strengths and areas that need to improve with individuals and groups of staff. They work with teachers to agree actions for improvement and arrange suitable support or training to address these areas, when needed. For example, senior members of staff and regional consortium staff have worked with individual teachers to improve their teaching of writing.

Leaders are beginning to hold staff to account more robustly for the standards that pupils achieve. There are termly pupil progress meetings at which leaders and class teachers discuss individual pupils' progress. Leaders challenge teachers if groups of pupils are not making at least expected progress, and agree actions to improve pupils' performance. In addition, leaders meet regularly with teachers to look at pupils' work to check that their assessment of pupils' progress is accurate. Leaders use performance management suitably for teachers and support staff to help address whole school priorities as well as individual areas for improvement. However, objectives are not generally measurable, which makes it difficult for leaders to hold staff to account for their work.

Members of the governing body make regular visits to the school to gain first-hand evidence on aspects of the school's work. For example, governors undertake regular focused learning walks to see improvements to provision and meet with pupils to discuss their work. They challenge leaders regularly, for example by asking questions about how they identify and address shortcomings in teaching and learning.

© Crown Copyright 2019: 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