



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: Estyn Review**

**Croesyceiliog School
Woodland Road
Croesyceiliog
Cwmbran
Torfaen
NP44 2YB**

Date of visit: February 2020

by

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

Outcome of visit

Croesyceiliog School is judged to have made insufficient 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 increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school following receipt of the action plan, to ensure that it is suitable and likely to bring about the required improvements. Inspectors will visit the school again, in a further four - six months' time, to monitor progress in addressing a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Raise standards at key stage 4, improve pupils' skills and develop their independence and resilience in learning

In around half of lessons, pupils make suitable progress in the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills. In these lessons, pupils show sound recall of their previous learning. For example, pupils use their knowledge of the nutritional value of various foods to evaluate a food diary. In around half of lessons, pupils do not make consistent enough progress. Overall, there has been insufficient improvement since the core inspection in the standards that pupils achieve.

The majority of pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and their peers, although a minority do not listen well enough. In a few cases, pupils talk over their teachers, missing important information and disrupting the learning of others. A minority, when

given the opportunity, participate appropriately in class discussion and express their ideas clearly. A few pupils extend and develop their responses well, such as when they analyse the language used in 'Macbeth'. However, pupils often struggle to express themselves clearly and do not use a sufficiently wide vocabulary. The majority of pupils are too often passive in lessons. When given the opportunity, a minority work well independently. However, overall pupils are too easily distracted from the tasks set and lack resilience when undertaking challenging activities. A minority show a high level of pride in their work. However, a minority of pupils' books contain incomplete or poorly presented work.

Many pupils have sound basic reading skills, which they use to retrieve information from a variety of sources. A minority use inference and deduction suitably, such as when discussing the relationships between characters in 'Of Mice and Men'. A few pupils analyse sources thoughtfully, for example when examining the reasons why Jack the Ripper was never caught.

Around half of pupils produce writing that is technically secure, but a similar proportion continue to make too many basic errors. A very few pupils produce well-structured and compelling writing on topics such as forgiveness. A minority of pupils often provide only brief, underdeveloped responses and frequently rely on copying from source material rather than providing their own explanations.

The majority of pupils have sound basic number skills. When given the opportunity, they use these skills appropriately across the curriculum. A minority of pupils do not construct graphs carefully enough and do not interpret them.

Since the core inspection, the school's performance at key stage 4 has been weak. In both 2018 and 2019, it was well below expectations. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals compares poorly with that of the same group of pupils in similar schools.

R2. Improve the quality of teaching

Recently, the school has taken some suitable steps to improve the quality of teaching. However, since the core inspection, its strategies have had insufficient impact. As a result, teaching overall is not effective enough in developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

In a minority of instances, teachers plan lessons carefully based on their understanding of pupils' prior learning. They provide sequences of activities that build well on each other and promote a good pace of learning. These activities are successful in developing pupils' skills alongside their subject knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, teachers monitor progress carefully and intervene swiftly to address any misconceptions or underachievement. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and develop their thinking. These teachers have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve.

In the majority of lessons, however, there are shortcomings in teaching that restrict the level of progress that pupils make. In these lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils. Their planning focuses on what they want them to do, rather than what they wish them to learn. This results in low-level activities that keep pupils busy without extending their learning, and consequently the pace of learning is too slow. Expectations regarding pupils' behaviour, work rate and level of participation are not sufficiently high. In these lessons, teachers do not monitor pupils' progress carefully enough or use questioning sufficiently well. Too many activities designed to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are insufficiently challenging and do not develop these skills within a meaningful context.

The majority of teachers provide pupils with suitable written feedback and ensure that they respond to their advice. In a minority of cases, pupils make useful improvements to their work as a result. However, overall there is too much variation in how well feedback is used to support progress. In particular, when redrafting work, pupils often make only minor amendments and spent too much time simply copying out as a result.

R3. Improve attendance

Since the core inspection, the school has adopted a range of effective strategies to improve pupils' attendance. The roles of pastoral leaders and related support staff have been refined appropriately to enable them to take a more strategic and coherent approach. Leaders monitor attendance carefully. Regular meetings focus closely on individual and groups of pupils at risk of poor attendance, and the school works well with external agencies, parents and the local community to support vulnerable pupils. Pastoral leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in their areas of responsibility, and set clear improvement priorities based on their evaluations. Strengthened line management arrangements ensure that these middle leaders are held to account robustly. These improvements have had a positive impact on pupils' attendance over the last two years.

Rates of attendance have improved well since the core inspection and are above expectations in 2019. In particular, the attendance of girls and pupils eligible for free school meals now compare much more favourably to that of their counterparts in similar schools. The rate of persistent absence, however, has risen over the last two years, and remains above the average for similar schools.

R4. Strengthen leadership at all levels

Since the core inspection, the school has worked to improve leadership through, for example, creating an additional post to allow a more equitable distribution of senior leaders' responsibilities. In addition, it has very recently refined its line management arrangements. Although leadership has helped to secure improvements in pupils' attendance, it has not led to sufficient improvements in key aspects of the school's work, in particular the quality of teaching and the standards pupils achieve.

Very recently, the school introduced a new leadership structure linked closely to the Curriculum for Wales. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this strategy and, currently, there remains considerable variability in the effectiveness of middle leaders.

In 2018, senior leaders attempted to hold under-performing departments to account by holding challenge meetings focusing upon key stage 4 outcomes. However, this strategy was not followed up effectively and did not lead to the improvements required. Although line management meetings have recently started to focus more appropriately upon pupil progress, they do not consider well enough specific aspects of teaching and their impact on pupil progress. Generally, senior leaders do not hold curriculum leaders to account robustly enough for the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility or identify how they can improve the rigour and accuracy of their evaluation of it.

Systems to monitor the performance of staff are appropriate. However, the review of performance is not always sufficiently robust and it is unclear how this informs professional learning. The school has implemented a useful programme of professional learning opportunities for staff particularly regarding the quality of feedback to pupils. However, this has had limited impact to date, as have strategies to improve the quality of teaching which have taken too long to be implemented and do not always involve all staff.

The governors are committed to the school and offer helpful support, for example with the new school buildings. However, they have not been successful in holding the school to account for a sufficient pace of improvement.

R5. Strengthen arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning, in particular the role played by middle leaders in this aspect of the school's work

Since the core inspection, the school has increased suitably the range of first hand evidence it gathers to evaluate its work. The involvement of middle leaders in activities such as data analysis, work scrutiny and lesson observations has been increased appropriately. However, this has not led to sufficient or sustained improvements in important aspects of the school's work, such as the quality of teaching, the outcomes that pupils achieve and the development of their skills.

Generally, leaders use a range of data appropriately to analyse and compare trends in the school's own performance. They are beginning to use this to identify the aspects most in need of improvement. However, the majority of leaders do not consider their performance in comparison to similar schools. In addition, they do not focus well enough on the progress that pupils make in lessons. This limits leaders' ability to identify the aspects of pupil progress that require most improvement.

The school has recently introduced a calendar of appropriate self-evaluation activities to gather a suitable range of first hand evidence to evaluate pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. This is beginning to enable a few leaders to identify broad strengths and aspects for improvement in their areas of responsibility. However,

these activities focus too heavily on compliance with agreed routines rather than the impact that teaching has on pupil progress. In addition, many leaders do not have a secure enough understanding of the features of effective teaching and this limits the impact that they have.

Leaders are beginning to use first-hand evidence appropriately to plan for improvement. This has had a positive impact on a few areas of the school's work, in particular improving attendance. However, overall, improvement strategies have lacked rigour and have not been sufficiently timely or focused. In particular, leaders at all levels have been too slow to identify and address specific areas for improvement in the quality of teaching. As a result, the initiatives the school have implemented have had limited impact on improving the effectiveness of teaching or the standards that pupils achieve. Middle leaders are beginning to review progress against their improvement plans regularly. However, evaluations do not focus closely enough on the impact actions have had on standards and provision. In addition, success criteria and milestones are not consistently clear enough to enable leaders to measure impact or to hold staff to account for progress. This hampers their capacity to secure improvement.

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