



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Newport High School
Bettws Lane
Newport
Newport
NP20 7YB**

Date of visit: March 2023

by

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

Outcome of visit

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

As a result, His 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. Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4 and in the sixth form

In lessons, the majority of pupils generally make sound progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. These pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to their learning and participate well in a range of activities. In a few instances, pupils are enthusiastic and inquisitive, and ensure that they complete their work to the highest standard. A minority of pupils are reluctant to participate fully in lessons and do not always engage well enough in class discussions.

When given the opportunity, many pupils express their ideas and justify their opinions clearly, using subject specific terms suitably. However, a minority do not express themselves clearly enough, often because they do not have a sufficiently wide vocabulary or enough confidence to do so.

In general, pupils read to extract meaning and identify relevant information appropriately. When given worthwhile opportunities, they can summarise and analyse texts well, for example when they examine authors' choice of language in English lessons. An increasing number of pupils are able to use more advanced reading skills independently, to identify authorial intent in literary texts for example.

Overall, the quality of pupils' writing has improved since the core inspection. The majority of pupils write with suitable accuracy and structure extended pieces appropriately. They demonstrate a sound understanding of purpose. However, in a few subject areas, pupils do not get a wide enough range of meaningful opportunities to develop their independent writing skills. In addition, a minority of pupils' writing lacks technical accuracy and these pupils do not express their ideas clearly enough or proofread their work.

Many pupils have sound number skills. In mathematics, they perform mental calculations confidently, and apply their understanding well to real-life situations. In a few instances, pupils use these skills in subjects other than mathematics. Overall, pupils do not get sufficient appropriate opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

R2. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced and used a range of appropriate strategies to improve the effectiveness of teaching and assessment. This includes a

worthwhile focus on strengthening the use of assessment during lessons in order to identify and address pupils' misconceptions promptly. Although shortcomings remain in a minority of lessons, overall, the school has secured appropriate improvements in this aspect of its work.

In many lessons, teachers develop good working relationships with their classes, which helps to promote a positive learning environment. In the majority of cases, they carefully plan sequences of activities that build well on each other and develop pupils' literacy skills alongside their subject understanding. These teachers provide clear explanations and model learning well. They use suitable questioning to check pupils' understanding and provide them with helpful verbal feedback. Around half of teachers give pupils useful written feedback on carefully chosen pieces of work and ensure that they make appropriate improvements. In a few cases, teachers do this particularly well, enabling pupils to develop their work successfully.

Where teaching is not effective enough, it is because teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high. This results in them planning undemanding activities that do not challenge pupils well enough to improve their subject understanding and skills. In these lessons, teachers often do not use questioning effectively to develop pupils' thinking either. In a few cases, particularly at Key Stage 3, teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour sufficiently well. This has a negative impact on the progress of the whole class.

Staff take part in a suitable range of professional learning activities, including beneficial opportunities for them to share good practice within and across subject areas, and to visit other schools. Leaders provide staff with helpful individual support to develop their practice when required and, where necessary, challenge underperformance robustly.

R3. Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils

Most staff now understand well their role in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful contexts. Consequently, pupils now benefit from a wider range of worthwhile opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. Progress in developing pupils' numeracy skills has been slower and opportunities for pupils to develop these skills are notably fewer. The literacy and numeracy coordinators continue to work closely with middle leaders to support the further development of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills within the areas of learning.

The school has introduced 'reading habits' to support the development of pupils' reading, and additional resources to encourage them to read for pleasure. Staff recognise the importance of reading and plan suitably challenging opportunities for pupils to develop more advanced reading skills. For example, pupils are required to successfully and independently use inference to enhance their understanding of poetry by McAuley and Rossetti, and the impact of gothic conventions in the writing of Bronte and Poe. Currently though, a minority of pupils still struggle to move beyond the literal interpretation of written texts without specific guidance from the

teacher and overall do not use a sufficient range of reading strategies to support their learning.

The majority of pupils now produce writing that is mostly technically secure though others continue to make basic errors and do not proofread their work. There are increased opportunities, and expectations, for pupils to write for different purposes and audiences, and to redraft their writing. More able pupils do this well when, for example, considering the likelihood of a troubled youth leading to a life of crime in or when they imitate the gothic style to create atmosphere in English lessons.

The school has raised the profile of developing pupils' oracy in different subjects and pupils enjoy and benefit from discussing topical issues including the unacceptability of misogyny and whether sport teaches us good values. There is a developing culture and practice of class discussions supporting pupils to structure their written responses suitably. Currently, a minority of pupils use an appropriately broad vocabulary and provide interesting and informed views, though a similar proportion use only a limited vocabulary which, on occasions, makes it difficult for them to express themselves clearly.

In general, pupils develop their numeracy skills well in mathematics, including through real-life problem-solving activities. The school is beginning to develop a more coherent approach to developing numeracy skills across the curriculum and a few relevant subjects provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to practise their numeracy skills. However, there is still too much variation in the relevance and level of challenge of these activities.

The concerns surrounding the curriculum provision for pupils as they progress from Key Stage 2 into Key Stage 3 identified during the core inspection were addressed some time ago.

R4. Strengthen the co-ordination of provision for pupils with additional learning needs

Senior leaders' vision of how to improve the support for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) continues to impact positively on current practice. Lines of accountability and roles and responsibilities within the ALN team are clear and well understood. Line management meetings provide suitable challenge and support. The school has effective systems in place to gather, share and track information about pupils with ALN. Leaders are now making more effective use of this information to inform their planning.

Following a review of provision in the summer term of 2022, senior leaders have adapted the provision and intervention programme to ensure it is beneficial, organised and matched suitably to the needs of individual pupils. They have begun implementing their area development plan effectively and have a sensible roadmap with key milestones for review.

The school continues to make steady progress towards fulfilling the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act requirements. This includes developing suitable one-page profiles for pupils with ALN which are shared appropriately with teachers to support their lesson planning. Teachers have

benefitted from suitable professional learning opportunities to help them apply appropriate strategies in their classrooms to support pupils with ALN.

Senior leaders have prioritised valuable professional learning opportunities for teaching assistants and learning coaches which link well to professional growth (performance management) targets. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in the development of pupils' one-page profiles and in setting individualised targets.

R5. Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning

The headteacher and her senior leadership team communicate their vision, based on equality, commitment, and integrity, clearly within the school. This is fundamental to the school's ethos and underpins all its work. It has helped leaders to secure suitable improvements in some important aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and assessment.

The school successfully implemented a new teaching and support staff structure in September 2022. Middle leaders are developing appropriately in their new roles and are generally clear about the expectations placed upon them. This is starting to have a positive impact on, for example, how well subjects across the curriculum support the development of pupils' writing skills.

All leaders are held to account suitably. Line management arrangements concentrate appropriately on standards and quality assurance. Leaders benefit from opportunities to review performance and plan for improvement in regular 'Learning Exchange' meetings. Senior leaders deal with staff underperformance robustly. In a few cases, staff performance has improved appropriately following targeted support.

The governing body has aligned its sub-committees to the school's own six purposes and holds leaders to account appropriately. Governors are informed suitably by senior and middle leaders, are supportive of the school and have a realistic view of what the school needs to improve.

Since the core inspection the headteacher and her senior team have developed the school's quality assurance processes well. This activity now focuses more sharply upon the impact of provision on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. This is helping leaders to identify precisely where the school is succeeding and crucially, the key areas of its work that are most in need of improvement, for example specific aspects of teaching and written feedback to pupils. Leaders' evaluation of the progress being made is increasingly well-informed, accurate and realistic. Middle leaders now adapt their provision appropriately in light of their evaluations and this is starting to have a positive impact on pupil progress and engagement.

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