



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all*

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**

**Coedpenmaen County Primary School  
Coedpenmaen Close  
Pontypridd  
RCT  
CF37 4LE**

**Date of visit: May 2015**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Janet Rowlands	Reporting Inspector
Sarah Morgan	Team Inspector

## Outcome of monitoring

Coedpenmaen Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in May 2012.

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

### Recommendation 1: Raise standards in science and Welsh

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Standards in science have improved steadily since the core inspection in 2012. Over the past three years, there has been a trend of improvement in end of key stage 2 teacher assessment outcomes at the expected and higher levels. Standards and progress in pupils' workbooks reflect these improving outcomes well.

The school has a suitable enquiry and research-based approach to science that focuses well on developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils consolidate and apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively in a good range of scientific activities.

Most pupils in the Foundation Phase carry out simple investigations effectively. For example, Year 2 pupils choose resources and equipment carefully when investigating how much water different fabrics absorb. They make predictions, record observations and present outcomes using symbols, pictures and phrases effectively.

Many older pupils work independently, plan the method for their enquiries and use their scientific knowledge and understanding to explain their findings appropriately. For example, in Year 4, pupils plan an investigation systematically; predict outcomes, and measure height and capacity accurately to consider whether there is a link between people's height and their lung capacity. They use information and communication technology (ICT) skilfully to create tables and graphs to present their results. By the end of key stage 2, more able pupils challenge scientific ideas confidently. They form simple hypotheses, consider and select the variables in their experiments, and choose the most appropriate way to present their findings. As a result, many pupils speak confidently about their learning in science and older pupils develop their higher-level thinking skills well.

The Welsh language has a high profile throughout the school. All staff develop pupils' language patterns progressively and systematically. They use strategies such as 'Helpwr Heddiw', 'tocynnau iaith' and weekly award presentations to motivate pupils appropriately. As a result, many pupils use the language frequently and confidently in lessons and in other contexts outside the classroom.

The 'Criw Cymraeg' take responsibility for introducing the phrase of the week and encourage other pupils to use Welsh as often as they can. This has a strong, positive influence on the attitudes of other pupils towards learning and speaking

Welsh.

Most pupils enjoy learning Welsh and have positive attitudes towards the language. They make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills, pronouncing familiar words accurately and making good attempts at unfamiliar words. Many pupils listen well and respond successfully to instructions and questions in Welsh. In key stage 2, the majority extend their answers with more detail, using connectives such as 'achos' 'ond' and 'ac'.

Pupils have regular opportunities to read Welsh in guided reading groups and wholeclass sessions and participate in these activities enthusiastically. Many read simple texts clearly, using intonation and expression well to convey their understanding. Key stage 2 pupils' written work has improved significantly. Most use familiar sentence patterns and a good range of vocabulary to create stories, letters and descriptions relating to class topics and themes.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve pupils' ability to apply their skills across the curriculum**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Nearly all pupils apply their numeracy and literacy skills successfully across the curriculum.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils write well independently and use vocabulary that is appropriate to their age and ability. For example, pupils research and identify key facts to make posters to find a lost cat and make invitations for the 'Ugly Bugs' Ball'. Most key stage 2 pupils use a rich and extended vocabulary in a variety of forms in their writing. Most structure their written effectively and for different purposes and audiences. They write extended pieces in their English and topic work successfully. Pupils research Welsh artists and describe a flying toy or gadget they have created, and explain how it would appeal to the toy market successfully.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils show good progress in mathematics. Many pupils have developed skills in number, shape and in recording and interpreting simple data. By the end of key stage 2, a majority of pupils use effective strategies when undertaking investigations and apply their reasoning skills to mathematical problems successfully. Pupils use their numeracy skills across the curriculum well. In the Foundation Phase, many pupils interpret data correctly, for example when researching the number of animals in a zoo and when investigating the best materials for a bird's nest. In key stage 2, pupils collate and analyse market research information and investigate profit and loss effectively. In history, they prepare spreadsheets on the number of ration coupons needed to buy clothing during World War 2.

Most pupils develop and use their ICT skills well across the curriculum.

### **Recommendation 3: Match learning activities accurately to pupils' abilities**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Overall, teachers match learning activities to pupils' abilities accurately. All teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve and they adapt activities to meet pupils' needs well. Senior leaders and teachers identify pupils who require additional support quickly and effectively. They provide targeted help and intervention for pupils, which leads to improved standards.

Most teachers expect pupils to think carefully about how to achieve success in their work. Short term planning identifies three levels of success criteria that provide pupils with varying levels of challenge. These criteria often focus on the development and application of literacy and numeracy skills in the contexts of other subjects. As a result, many pupils have an appropriate understanding of what they are trying to achieve in an activity and they know how to challenge themselves. Teachers are beginning to broaden their focus to include success criteria that relate to specific subject skills.

Teachers give regular feedback to pupils in the form of comments, questions and suggestions. These help pupils to think about what they need to do to improve their work effectively. The school's new tracking system enables senior leaders to analyse the progress of specific groups of pupils, including vulnerable learners, accurately. Training and involvement in moderation activities help all teachers to gain a good understanding of pupil outcomes and enable them to set realistic and challenging targets that take good account of pupils' prior achievement. Teachers use this information well to group pupils for activities and support, but are only beginning to use it to influence their curriculum planning.

#### **Recommendation 4: Develop governors' understanding of their responsibilities and their role as a critical friend**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The governing body makes effective use of the wide range of skills and experience of individual governors. Governors are supportive and most attend school events, meetings and relevant training regularly. Governors are involved fully in monitoring the work of the school and around half take part in learning walks and discussions with curriculum and area leaders regarding specific school priorities. Many governors now have a sound understanding of the work of the school. As a result, they are beginning to be able to ask meaningful questions about the school's provision and the standards pupils achieve. They are developing a thorough understanding of their responsibilities and their role as a critical friend.

Reports to governors, provided by the headteacher, are comprehensive. They ensure that the governors are well informed and have the information they need to ask specific and relevant questions about school priorities. Minutes of meetings are clear and informative and identify the outcomes and future actions effectively. Documents are available in the virtual learning environment, ensuring that all governors can access relevant information easily.

Regular and focused governors' meetings and meetings with staff and the local authority ensure that there is a strong focus on monitoring and evaluating the

success of the post-inspection action plan and on developing a thorough understanding of the school's performance.

**Recommendation 5: Strengthen communication and partnerships with parents and carers**

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Communication with parents is strong. The school provides parents with regular relevant information using social media, the virtual learning environment and regular newsletters on a range of subjects such as attendance, class topics and school events.

The school's communication and open door policy ensures a consistent approach to communicating with parents and dealing promptly with issues that may arise. There are regular, planned opportunities for parents to meet with senior leaders to share concerns or issues. This ensures a close working relationship between the school and parents.

The school seeks and acts on the views of parents appropriately. As a result, the outcomes of a recent survey, which was fed back to parents in the newsletter, indicates that most parents are happy with all aspects of the school and feel that the school communicates with them well.

There are many worthwhile opportunities for parents to visit the school and be involved in their child's education. These events include celebrating tasks, where parents are encouraged to share the work produced during a particular topic and attending class assemblies. The 'sharing writing project' provides parents and pupils with opportunities to share and evaluate pupils' stories effectively. As a result, parents have a greater understanding of the standards that their children achieve and how they can help them to improve. The school encourages parents to evaluate these events and uses the feedback well to inform the planning of future events.

**Recommendation 6: Sustain recent improvements in attendance**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school follows local authority guidelines for addressing issues of attendance and punctuality. Governors take attendance and punctuality seriously and the school's attendance policy reflects this. For example, since January 2015, the school has taken a zero tolerance approach to requests for pupil holidays during term time.

The headteacher and administrator monitor and analyse attendance levels carefully and work closely with parents to eradicate any patterns of absence and lateness. Nearly all pupils arrive at school punctually.

There are effective systems in place to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality that are prominent in the school's virtual learning environment and newsletters. A recent initiative is the 100% attendance challenge days, when the headteacher challenges classes to achieve 100% attendance and rewards the classes that

succeed. The headteacher uses these days to help parents and pupils understand why good attendance is important. This initiative was originally a school council suggestion. As a result, pupils take these challenges very seriously and respond well.

Generally, over the last three years, there has been a slight upward trend in attendance. After four years in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools, in terms of its attendance rate the school has moved to the lower 50% for two out of the last three years. The current rate of attendance for this academic year is 95.2%, compared to just over 92% at the time of the inspection. The number of persistent absentees is low and the gap between the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals and others has closed over the past three years. The school is aware that it will need to continue with these improvements to compare more favourably with similar schools.

### **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.