



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 monitoring**

**Cwmbran High School
Ty Gwyn Way
Fairwater
Cwmbran
NP44 4YZ**

Date of visit: June 2017

by

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

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The monitoring team

Tony Sparks	Reporting Inspector
Sarah Lewis	Team Inspector
Farrukh Khan	Team Inspector
Hayley Davies-Edwards	Local authority representative

Outcome of monitoring

Cwmbran High School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2015.

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 this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will visit the school in approximately 3 months to evaluate the quality of the plan. Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 - 18 months' time to monitor progress against 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.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve the standard of pupils' skills, particularly their writing, and numeracy

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

A majority of pupils read with suitable understanding and are able to extract basic information from both literary and non-literary texts. A few pupils use inference and deduction well, for example to enhance their understanding of important historical events such as Pearl Harbour and the civil rights movement in America. However, around half of pupils do not have a sufficient range of reading strategies and this prevents them from making the progress they otherwise might.

Around half of pupils produce writing that is mostly technically secure, although a similar proportion continue to make frequent errors in basic spelling, punctuation and grammar. As a result, their writing lacks control and this prevents them from expressing themselves clearly.

Most pupils do not develop their numeracy skills well enough in subjects other than mathematics. Although many pupils produce a range of basic bar and line graphs, a majority do so untidily and inaccurately.

The shortcomings in pupils' skills are reflected in the school's poor performance in key performance indicators in 2016. At key stage 3 and key stage 4, it is weaker or much weaker than that in similar schools in all indicators. In addition, most pupils made significantly less progress than expected from previous key stages.

At key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics is significantly below modelled outcomes. This, and performance in English, are particularly weak.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, and in the capped points score, does not compare favourably with that in similar schools. Performance in the level 2 threshold is well below modelled outcomes. The proportion of pupils who achieve five GCSE passes at grades A* or A is below the average in similar schools.

At key stage 3, the proportion of pupils who achieve the core subject indicator is well below modelled outcomes. In all indicators, performance does not compare favourably with that in similar schools.

At key stage 3, the performance of boys is weaker than that of boys in similar schools in many indicators. The performance of girls and of pupils eligible for free school meals is weaker in every indicator than that of their counterparts in similar schools. At key stage 4, the performance of boys and of girls is below that of boys and girls in similar schools in many indicators, and mostly well below in indicators that include English and mathematics. This is also the case for those pupils eligible for free school meals.

Recommendation 2: Improve the behaviour and disrespectful attitudes of a few pupils in a minority of lessons

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a range of suitable strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes. However, this work has not had sufficient impact on improving pupil behaviour.

The school has introduced a stepped behaviour policy, which is understood clearly by most pupils. This has helped to reduce fixed term exclusions, although they remain high. The school's monitoring data suggests that the new approach is impacting positively upon poor and disrespectful behaviour. This includes reducing the number of 'call outs' for senior leaders to intervene in incidents of unacceptable behaviour by a half since the time of the core inspection. However, the number of 'call outs' is still high.

The school now collects and analyses relevant data on behaviour every two weeks. This is used appropriately to recognise patterns in pupil behaviour, to address inconsistencies in teachers' behaviour management and to identify any pupils who need additional support.

Since the core inspection the school has also implemented a suitable range of interventions to support those pupils with challenging behaviour. This includes helpful individualised support and modifications to the curriculum that has improved pupil access and engagement.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the literacy and numeracy framework is implemented fully

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has become more aware of the need to improve provision for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, progress towards full implementation of the literacy and numeracy framework has been far too slow. Current provision is underdeveloped and it is not coordinated well enough.

In a minority of lessons, pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to develop their skills. However, the school does not quality assure provision effectively or monitor its impact on the standard of pupils' skills across the curriculum. Lesson observations in particular, but also work scrutiny, do not focus well enough on pupils' skills' development or the proportion of pupils who demonstrate the respective skills. The school's marking policy is not specific enough or applied consistently. As a consequence, most teachers' written feedback is not improving the technical accuracy or the quality of pupils' writing.

The school's support for the development of pupils' verbal and reading skills in different subjects is particularly underdeveloped.

Recommendation 4: Address the shortcomings in teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress in all lessons

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a range of suitable strategies to improve the quality of teaching. However, this has not had enough impact on improving pupils' learning and the standards they achieve, particularly at key stage 4.

The school has undertaken a systematic programme of lesson observations. Many of these observations have been carried out together with heads of department, an external adviser and a link school to try and ensure accuracy and consistency in the evaluations.

The records of lesson observations offer useful summaries of individual teachers' strengths and areas for development. The school's analysis of these records suggest there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the core inspection. However, in most cases, the observations do not focus accurately enough upon the impact of the teaching, in particular upon the progress pupils make, and how well they use and develop their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, it is very difficult for the school to identify precisely the aspects of teaching that are most in need of improvement.

Recommendation 5: Improve the consistency in the work of middle managers, particularly in planning for improvement

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has increased support to improve the work of middle leaders. This has resulted in greater consistency in their approach to improvement planning, but has not had a positive enough impact on the standards pupils achieve.

Management meetings now have common agendas which include an increased focus on pupil outcomes. Senior leaders hold middle leaders securely to account through line management meetings, regular work scrutiny and lesson observations. These processes guide middle leaders well to take a consistent approach to their work. However, they do not focus well enough upon strategies that will provide lasting, rather than temporary, improvements in teaching and learning.

Middle leaders have benefited from valuable professional development opportunities to develop their leadership skills. These included useful guidance to develop their understanding of self-evaluation and planning for improvement. As a result, they have improved their understanding of whole school issues and are becoming more confident in carrying out their leadership responsibilities.

Self-evaluation reports and improvement plans now all conform to the same format, and middle leaders generally follow the guidance for completion of these documents. However, their self-evaluation reports do not draw well enough on first hand evidence to identify precisely the strengths and areas for development. Furthermore, departmental self-evaluation reports are too descriptive, and concentrate too heavily on processes. As a result, improvement plans do not prioritise specifically enough the most important areas for development.

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.