



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: Special Measures**

**Llandrindod High School  
Dyffryn Road  
Llandrindod Wells  
Powys  
LD1 6AW**

**Date of visit: June 2018**

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

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## Outcome of monitoring

Llandrindod High School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2014.

As a result, Her 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

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards at key stage 4, particularly in mathematics and science**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

At key stage 4, performance in the majority of indicators has improved since the core inspection. Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics declined in 2017, but remains higher than at the time of the core inspection. The capped points score in 2017 is slightly lower than at the time of the core inspection, but is now in line with expectations. The proportion of pupils achieving a level 2 qualification in mathematics and science has improved over the last four years in both instances. In many indicators, however, performance does not compare well to that in similar schools.

The standard of work that pupils produce in lessons has improved substantially since the core inspection. In particular, the improvements noted in recent monitoring visits have been sustained and developed. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and a majority make strong progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills. Most listen carefully to their teachers and their peers. Many pupils engage enthusiastically in lessons and support each other's learning well in group and pair activities.

Many pupils make appropriate contributions to class discussion, using a sound understanding of subject terminology. A minority make thoughtful, perceptive and articulate responses, for example when discussing the layers of meaning and effect of language choices in Gillian Clarke's poem, 'My Box'.

Since the core inspection, there has been a substantial improvement in the standard of pupils' written work. In particular, improvements in the quality of pupils' extended writing noted in the previous visit have been maintained. Many pupils write with appropriate technical accuracy and structure extended pieces well, such as when they explain the various problems facing Henry VII. In a minority of cases, pupils write with perception and sophistication, for example when they produce balanced discussions and reach reasoned conclusions regarding the arguments for and against euthanasia. A few pupils make regular basic errors in their writing and do not always make appropriate language choices for the purpose and audience of their writing.

Many pupils have sound reading skills and have a range of well-developed strategies to support their reading. They skim and scan texts confidently to locate relevant information. A minority analyse texts effectively. For example, they examine sources

about the reign of Mary I and identify Catholic and Protestant viewpoints, and synthesise the views presented in a range of texts regarding the portrayal of teenagers in the media.

Many pupils have sound basic number skills, which they use appropriately across the curriculum, for example when working out the budget for a meal or costing materials in design technology.

**Recommendation 2: Address underperformance of specific groups of pupils, particularly of boys at key stage 4**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, at key stage 4, the performance of boys has improved in many indicators and now compares well to that of boys in similar schools. The performance of girls, however, has declined in all indicators over the last four years, and is generally below the average for girls in similar schools. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has fluctuated over the last four years. It is below the average for this group of pupils in similar schools in the majority of indicators.

**Recommendation 3: Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has continued to build on the strong progress noted in the last monitoring visit. It has refined successfully its approach to providing pupils with appropriate opportunities to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Most subject areas provide pupils with an appropriate variety of activities that help them consolidate their skills through their subject work. These strategies continue to have a positive impact on the standard of pupils' work, in particular the quality of their extended writing.

The school has provided staff with useful opportunities to share good practice in this aspect of its work. It has formed beneficial partnerships with other schools to support the development of its literacy and numeracy provision.

The school continues to monitor closely the progress that pupils make in developing their skills. It provides useful interventions for those pupils who require extra support.

**Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching and assessment**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened successfully its approach to developing effective teaching. It has provided staff with a range of useful opportunities to share good practice and has undertaken beneficial whole-school and individual training and support. These strategies have had a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work.

Senior leaders, and many middle leaders now focus clearly on pupil standards and progress when evaluating teaching. This has enabled them to identify more precisely the specific aspects of teaching that require improvement and to put in place appropriate training and support to address these areas.

In most instances, teachers develop strong working relationships with their classes and establish classroom routines that support learning well. Many plan sequences of activities that build suitably on pupils' prior learning. These activities are supported by carefully prepared and engaging resources. In these lessons, teachers use questioning appropriately to monitor pupils' understanding. In a minority of cases, teachers use effective questioning techniques to challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. In a few lessons, however, teachers do not develop pupils' independent learning skills well enough. In these lessons, teachers direct the learning too much, which limits the pace of learning and pupil engagement.

Most teachers provide pupils with useful advice and guidance regarding how to improve their work and monitor closely how well pupils respond to their feedback. As a result, their feedback has a positive impact on the standards that pupils achieve. The school monitors pupil progress closely in order to identify any underperformance and plan suitable interventions.

**Recommendation 5: Improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels to ensure clear direction and high expectations in all areas of the school's work**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has taken appropriate steps to improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels. During the current academic year, there have been substantial changes in leadership, and the school has used this opportunity to reorganise and refine suitably roles and responsibilities. This has been successful in helping senior leaders to communicate clearly the school's strategic vision of placing pupil progress and wellbeing at the heart of its work. Strengthened leadership has had a positive impact on pupil standards and the quality of teaching.

The acting headteacher has, in a relatively short time, fostered a strong ethos of trust and teamwork amongst staff. This has strengthened working relationships between staff and pupils and has been successful in raising expectations amongst staff, pupils and parents.

The school has provided middle leaders with beneficial training to develop their leadership skills. It has provided a few of them with valuable opportunities to contribute to the work of the senior team by taking responsibility for specific aspects of the school's work. This has led to greater rigour in the work of many middle leaders and consistency in their effectiveness. Meetings between senior and middle leaders focus closely on pupil progress and the quality of teaching and assessment.

**Recommendation 6: Increase accountability at all levels for improving standards and quality of provision, especially through rigorous line management**

### Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has continued to strengthen its line management arrangements, and has developed a high level of consistency in this aspect of its work. Senior and middle leaders work well together and focus closely on raising standards, improving teaching and seeking and acting upon the views of pupils.

Quality assurance processes focus clearly on pupil progress and the quality of teaching. Leaders use a range of first-hand evidence to identify clearly the strengths and shortcomings in their areas of responsibility. They set themselves clear and ambitious targets and identify time scales and success criteria appropriately.

Strengthened line management arrangements have had a positive impact on many important aspects of the school's work, including more effective lesson planning and improvements to pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. They have contributed well to the overall effectiveness of middle leadership, although, in a few instances, middle leaders are not consistently effective enough in their role.

### **Recommendation 7: Strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements**

#### Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has refined and strengthened its arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning. This has had a positive impact on many aspects of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work.

The acting headteacher and extended leadership team use a wide range of activities to gather and evaluate first-hand evidence. They are frank in their appraisal of the school's work, and have a sound understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. In particular, many leaders now focus closely on the impact of teaching on pupil progress, and this enables them to identify clearly specific areas for development and put in place appropriate strategies for improvement.

Senior and middle leaders now carry out many self-evaluation activities together. This has been successful in developing a common understanding of the school's improvement priorities.

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| <b>Recommendations</b> |
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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.