



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**

**Twynyrodyn Community School
Gilfach Cynon
Twynyrodyn
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 0LW**

Date of visit: March 2016

by

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

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The monitoring team

Jane McCarthy	Reporting Inspector
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Outcome of monitoring

Twynyrodyn Community School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2015.

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: Improve outcomes for pupils in end-of-key-stage assessments at both the expected and higher-than-expected levels

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

Teacher assessments at the end of both key stages indicate that there are strong improvements in pupils' outcomes in nearly all subjects and areas of learning since the core inspection. Teachers' assessments of what pupils can do are accurate.

Targets for the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils indicate that nearly all will attain the expected outcome and that about half of pupils will achieve the higher than expected outcome. The work in pupils' books supports these targets well. For example, in Year 2, most pupils find halves and quarters of shapes and numbers correctly. They apply this knowledge well in real life situations, for example when buying cinema tickets or sharing pocket money. Most pupils write effectively for a range of purposes, for example writing biographies of Saint Dwynwen. They structure their writing well, for example using sub-headings to separate paragraphs when writing information texts about the history of the circus. In Year 6, most pupils' reading skills are good. They scan texts to locate specific information, for example to find descriptive phrase about characters. They understand that authors choose words and phrases intentionally and explain the effect of these on themselves as readers. In their mathematics work, most pupils solve problems using weight and money effectively, for example calculating profit on items sold.

In the Foundation Phase, pupils' performance at the expected outcome 5 in literacy and mathematical development in 2015 places the school in the top 25% when compared with similar schools. Performance of pupils at the higher outcome 6 in 2015 places it in the top 25% of similar schools for literacy and the higher 50% for mathematical development.

In key stage 2, pupils' performance at the expected level 4 in 2015 places the school in the top 25% for English and mathematics when compared with similar schools and in the higher 50% for science. At the higher level 5, pupils' performance in 2015 places the school in the top 25% for English, mathematics and science when compared with similar schools.

Recommendation 2: Improve writing skills in key stage 2, particularly those of boys

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Across key stage 2, most pupils write at length often and for a good range of purposes. For example, most pupils in Year 4 use persuasive language well when producing guidebooks for visitors to a tourist attraction. They use punctuation appropriately to ensure their writing makes sense, for example using commas to separate words in lists within sentences. In Year 6, most pupils make good progress in writing. They respond well to teachers' feedback, and re-draft and edit their written work to improve it. They write effectively in a range of styles, for example when providing a balanced argument about whether citizens should close the gates to their village to prevent the spread of the Black Death. They structure their writing well and many pupils make adventurous vocabulary choices.

More able pupils in Year 6 write using a joined, fluent script. However, across the key stage, a minority of pupils' handwriting skills remain inconsistent. A few pupils in lower key stage 2 form letters incorrectly and, in all year groups, there are instances where pupils have difficulty with the size of letters, writing small and tall letters of the same height. A few pupils make errors when spelling familiar words. Although they learn to spell words for their spelling tests, they do not always transfer this learning to their independent writing well enough. The school has introduced a good range of interventions to help pupils improve their basic writing skills and these are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Scrutiny of key stage 2 pupils' work shows little difference between the writing skills of boys and girls. However, the minority of pupils who have weaker handwriting skills tend to be boys. Teacher assessment for 2015 indicates that nearly all pupils achieved the expected level in writing at the end of Year 6. Boys' performance, in particular, is better than in previous years. Most boys achieved the expected level for their age, with a minority of boys attaining the higher-than-expected level.

Recommendation 3: Raise pupils' standards in oracy in Welsh

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Throughout the school, many pupils have strong Welsh language skills and use them confidently. In the Foundation Phase, many younger pupils ask and respond to a useful range of questions, giving positive and negative answers confidently in Welsh. For example, they talk about the colours they like and dislike. By the end of Year 2, many pupils answer a broad range of questions, extending their answers by adding extra detail or using 'but' and 'and' effectively. For example, they explain where they live and extend this by saying who lives with them.

By the end of key stage 2, many pupils have positive attitudes to learning Welsh and use the language happily in a wide range of contexts. They use the past tense well, for example to tell others where they have been and what they saw. They talk about a broad range of subjects, such as school attendance and magazine articles, applying the sentence structures they know accurately, to new situations. However, in a few classes, the development of pupils' Welsh language skills is not so thorough. In these classes, most pupils use only basic sentences and do not apply their Welsh language skills confidently in a wide enough range of contexts.

The school has developed an active Welsh club called the 'Cryw Cymraeg' and has set up close links with the national Urdd organisation. As a result, it has raised the profile of the Welsh language in the school effectively. The 'criw' meets weekly and provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to develop their Welsh language skills in practical ways, outside the classroom. For example, the 'criw' visited a local Welsh café, where they used their Welsh language skills to order food and drink.

The school has developed close links with a local charity that works to promote the development of children's literacy skills. Through this, it has secured valuable resources, including plenty of Welsh books and magazines. These links raise the profile of the Welsh language and contribute well to the pupils' willingness to use their Welsh language skills outside of Welsh lessons.

Recommendation 4: Increase pupils' attendance levels, particularly those eligible for free school meals

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a wider range of approaches to tackle low pupil attendance. In particular, leaders scrutinise absenteeism more regularly and have improved the rigour with which the school monitors attendance. As a result, the school responds promptly each morning to unauthorised absences and works well with parents to improve their children's attendance.

School leaders, in conjunction with the school council, have implemented a worthwhile range of initiatives to help encourage good attendance. For example, they have introduced a range of rewards, including weekly prize draws and an end of year trip for pupils with high attendance. The weekly awarding of certificates ensures that school attendance maintains a high profile. As a result, most pupils understand the importance of attending regularly.

The school has updated its attendance policy and has a more robust approach to monitoring and authorising absences for medical appointments. However, the school does not target the improvement of attendance of vulnerable pupils well enough, particularly those who are eligible for free school meals. As a result, the gap between their attendance and their peers has widened over the last year.

Although overall attendance has improved, the school remains in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools.

Recommendation 5: Address the health and safety and safeguarding issues raised during the inspection

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Leaders have addressed the health and safety, and safeguarding issues noted during the school's core inspection. However, during the monitoring visit, a very few parents did not comply fully with the school's policy when dropping children to the breakfast club.

Recommendation 6: Improve procedures and processes for identifying and supporting pupils with additional learning needs

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has improved its provision for pupils with additional learning needs, including those in the learning resource base, well. Teachers have had good opportunities for training and development, including working with teachers from other schools. As a result, leadership of this aspect of the school's work is much stronger than it was at the time of the school's core inspection. Leaders use a wide range of assessment data successfully to identify pupils who need additional support with their learning. The school offers a good range of intervention programmes to help develop pupils' speaking, reading, writing and number skills. Teaching assistants deliver these interventions effectively. The co-ordinator for additional learning needs tracks the progress of pupils on these programmes carefully and, as a result, teachers know which interventions are the most useful for their learners.

All pupils with additional learning needs have individual plans. These plans include targets that are specific to the pupils' needs. Pupils work towards meeting these targets during intervention programmes and when working with their class teachers. Teachers review progress against these targets regularly and share this information with parents appropriately. As a result, most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their targets and many reach the expected outcomes for their age.

Recommendation 7: Comply fully with the statutory requirements for the daily act of worship

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has a suitable calendar of activities that helps pupils to develop moral and spiritual awareness appropriately. Visitors from the local church provide enriching opportunities that teach pupils about important religious festivals well. For example, they teach key stage 2 pupils about the gospel story of Easter and link this well to modern Christian traditions. In daily assemblies, staff promote positive values, such as consideration for others, effectively. This helps pupils to develop an understanding of the importance of care and concern for others well. However, on a few occasions, these activities do not take place or the school does not ensure that the gathering constitutes an act of collective worship.

Recommendation 8: Introduce rigorous systems that enable senior leaders to quality assure the work of the school effectively

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

School leaders use a broad range of first-hand evidence to judge how well the school is performing. They carry out a careful analysis of a relevant range of data and hold beneficial discussions with pupils about their experiences. As a result, they are able to identify appropriately groups of learners that need extra support. When scrutinising pupils' books, leaders identify strengths in their work and in the quality of

provision. They also point to areas in which staff can make general improvements. However, in a majority of these cases, they do not identify precisely enough what needs to improve and in which classes.

The monitoring of teaching is efficient. It focuses suitably on the quality of teaching and the standards that pupils achieve in lessons. However, in a few cases, leaders do not identify areas for improvements well enough and shortcomings are not always followed-up robustly enough. Leaders have embedded arrangements for the performance management of teachers into the school's practices appropriately. Targets for improvement link well to whole school priorities and leaders ensure that they provide a suitable range of training to support this process. These practices are beginning to have a positive impact on standards at the school, for example in improving pupils' Welsh skills.

School leaders engage well with the local authority and regional consortium to help them quality assure the work of the school. They take note of, and act upon, their suggestions effectively. As a result, these processes help to improve standards for pupils, such as in the quality of support and provision for pupils with additional learning needs.

The school undertakes useful moderation of pupils work with the local cluster of schools. This supports the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' outcomes and contributes well to quality assurance processes within the school.

The governing body contribute to the evaluation of standards, provision and leadership in the school robustly. For example, they undertake learning walks and scrutinise pupils' work regularly. As a result, they have a strong, first-hand understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They meet with a broad range of leaders and managers, consider the school's data and scrutinise reports regularly. This helps them to evaluate how well the school is performing and to quality assure the work of leaders effectively.

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.