



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**

**Park Primary School Bargoed
Park Crescent
Bargoed
CF81 8PN**

Date of visit: July 2016

by

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

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The monitoring team

Mrs Rosemary Lait	Reporting Inspector
Mr Mike Maguire	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring

Park Primary School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in April 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, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Raise pupils' standards in reading and writing and in Welsh second language, particularly in key stage 2

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Overall, since the core inspection, pupils' standards in reading and writing have generally declined. In the Foundation Phase in 2015, pupils' performance in language, literacy and communication at the expected outcome 5, was lower than in the previous year. This placed the school in the bottom 25% when compared with similar schools. Only half the number of pupils achieved the higher outcome 6 compared to the previous year. In key stage 2 in 2015, although there was a slight improvement in the number of pupils attaining the expected level 4 in English, there was no improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5. The performance of pupils at the higher levels did not compare well with the performance of pupils in other similar schools and placed the school in the bottom 25%.

Teachers' most recent assessments and the work in books indicate that, overall, there has been little improvement this year. In Years 2 and 6, fewer pupils than last year are working at the expected outcomes and levels.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, many pupils enjoy reading and discuss their books with a good level of understanding. However, their reading is not always accurate and they often fail to recognise sentence breaks. Many read with limited expression and fluency.

By the end of key stage 2, more able pupils read with increasing confidence, talk enthusiastically about their book choices and discuss the plots and characters appropriately. However, their reading lacks fluency, expression and intonation.

Pupils across the school are beginning to write in a suitable range of genres for a variety of different purposes and audiences. For instance, upper key stage 2 pupils write fictional stories, book reports, letters and persuasive accounts. These pupils are developing their report writing skills well as a result of visits they make, for example to the local Mayor's parlour. However, in many areas of the curriculum, there are still too few opportunities for pupils to write at length.

In the Foundation Phase, many pupils make sound progress with their writing. A few more able pupils produce extended pieces of work and use an appropriate range of vocabulary.

In key stage 2, although the content of many pupils' writing is appropriate for their age, much of the work contains too many basic spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. In addition, the presentation of pupils' work is not always of a high enough standard.

Over the last year, the Welsh language advisory team has provided the school with intensive support. This includes a well-structured language curriculum that sets out clear progressive steps for pupils as they move through the school. Teachers have begun to implement this appropriately. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' standards in oracy and reading are generally satisfactory. Pupils respond well to familiar questions and initiate conversations. More able pupils in Year 6 converse freely with each other in Welsh and offer extended answers to many questions. Many pupils use Welsh greetings with confidence in classes and around the school. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that it is appropriate to pupils' abilities, but work is often incomplete. The school has a strong Welsh identity. Year 6 pupils say that they enjoy learning Welsh and feel that it will help them in the future.

Recommendation 2: Develop more consistency in curriculum planning, teaching and assessment and make sure that these aspects take particular account of pupils' different needs and abilities

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

In January 2016, the school introduced a two-year topic-based planning cycle that is structured around a published scheme. Long-term plans for the summer term are considerably more detailed than for previous terms. However, it is not always clear how teachers use these plans to inform their medium and short-term plans as these are limited and lack detail. Not all planning takes account of pupils' different needs or the wide range of pupils' abilities in mixed-age classes. In nearly all planning, expectations of the standard and quantity of work that pupils can achieve in a lesson are low. Teachers plan independently and there is no evidence of collaborative planning in the school. There is too little focus on consistency and progression. Planning makes reference to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills although, in practice, there are few examples of pupils using these skills in subjects across the curriculum.

The school has been slow to improve the quality of teaching. Although leaders carry out regular book monitoring and lesson observations, these activities have not had enough impact on raising pupils' standards. Generally across the school, teachers do not challenge pupils enough to achieve high standards and do not always make their expectations clear to pupils. As a result, the quality of pupils' recorded work is too variable. Although there are a few examples of well-presented, good quality work, overall, pupils do not make enough progress. For example, currently, 55% of pupils in Year 5 and 31% of pupils in Year 6 have not reached their expected targets in English in 2016. Only around half of pupils are expected to attain level 4+ in English at the end of key stage 2 in 2017.

During the autumn term 2015, the school reassessed all pupils using a published reading test. However, the school did not use the information it collected well, or quickly enough, to plan and implement strategies to raise pupils' standards in reading. In January 2016, leaders reviewed the school's approach to teaching reading and reorganised the teaching groups. However, although this is beginning to improve standards of reading in the Foundation Phase, there is no clear strategy to support the many pupils in key stage 2 who are unlikely to reach the expected levels.

The school now has a clear marking policy. However, teachers do not all follow it well enough. Most teachers mark pupils' work but do not always help pupils know what they need to do to improve. Their comments are often too generous and do not focus enough on basic errors. Pupils are beginning to use self and peer assessment to evaluate their own and each other's work, but this is at an early stage.

Teachers are beginning to raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve through the regular moderation of literacy work. However, these developments are relatively new and are not yet having a sufficient impact on pupils' standards.

Recommendation 3: As a matter of urgency, address the premises issue that affects pupils' wellbeing unfavourably

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has taken steps to address the premises issue. However, the arrangements are not practical and create difficulties for the smooth running of the school. The school should work with the local authority to find a more suitable solution.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work towards meeting the inspection recommendations that have not yet been fully addressed. In addition, the school should:

- Strengthen the role of leaders and governors, especially in the relation to self-evaluation and school improvement
- Involve pupils more in decision-making about their life in school
- Improve attendance and punctuality and reduce persistence absenteeism