



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**

**Ogmore Vale Primary
Aber Road
Ogmore Vale
CF32 7AJ**

Date of visit: November 2021

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ogmore Vale Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

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

R1. Improve strategic planning systems and communication to involve all staff and enable the school to make and sustain improvements

Since being appointed, the headteacher and deputy head have worked with energy and determination to establish and implement strategic plans for improvement. Together, they provide clear lines of accountability and have high expectations. Members of the senior leadership team provide them with good support. They drive improvements in the areas of the school's work and recommendations for which they are responsible and, in most cases, understand the accountability that comes with those responsibilities. Clear communication from leaders ensures that all staff receive and understand important messages. This encourages everyone to play their part in school improvement and understand the importance of the contribution that they make to the school's developments.

Between March 2020 and April 2021, the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, several absences in the senior leadership team, and matters relating to the governing body understandably slowed the school's progress in some areas. However, since the start of the summer term 2021, the pace and consistency of improvement has returned. All school leaders are able to work together effectively once again to make improvements in provision, teaching and learning, and leadership. Members of the interim executive board (IEB), appointed in May 2021, offer the school skilful support, and provide relevant and appropriate levels of challenge that help maintain progress. There is a clear plan and proposed timescale in place for a shadow governing body to be formed and to work alongside the IEB in line with statutory requirements.

Members of the senior leadership team understand where the school is on its improvement journey. They are proud of the progress they have made, but have identified clearly the areas where improvement is still needed.

R2. Monitor the school's work rigorously so that leaders can evaluate strengths and weaknesses accurately, identify priorities precisely and challenge underperformance

The school now has a comprehensive programme to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's provision and the standards that pupils achieve. During the pandemic, some aspects of this programme, such as lesson observations, were disrupted. Despite this, leaders modified their plans appropriately to include activities relevant at the time, including evaluating the effectiveness of online learning. Now that the school is operating more normally, leaders have resumed their programme of monitoring and evaluating. They have developed a clear plan and timetable for

monitoring the most important aspects of its work. This involves all members of the senior leadership team, as well as other key members of staff. For example, the teacher responsible for information and communication technology and the digital competence framework is taking the lead on this aspect of teaching and learning.

Leaders ensure that all staff understand the purpose and relevance of the school's self-evaluation cycle. They also make sure that everyone knows how they are expected to contribute to the targets for improvement that they agree. They have a better appreciation of the benefits that effective self-evaluation can bring to pupils. This helps staff to respond positively to actions relating to improvement priorities. When leaders identify underperformance, they now provide appropriate support from a range of in-house and external sources and expect improvement within reasonable timescales.

The monitoring and evaluation cycle has already highlighted several areas for improvement over the past year, which leaders have included in the school's most recent self-evaluation report. Overall, leaders' evaluations of the school's strengths and the areas identified as requiring improvement are accurate. To address the areas of the school's work they have highlighted as needing improvement, leaders have created a practical school development plan that is working alongside the post inspection action plan. This will help the school to move smoothly into the next stage of its improvement journey.

R3. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment across the school

To help achieve consistency and to improve teaching, leaders have introduced the 'Ogmore Vale way'. This provides clear expectations and essential guidance to all staff and considers important aspects of school life, including teaching. Alongside these expectations, leaders have outlined classroom non-negotiables, such as the expectations for planning learning and classroom displays. These clear guidelines help teachers to understand the standards expected of them and of pupils across the school.

All teachers engage in a wide range of professional learning opportunities, including in-house mentoring. They continued with their professional learning through the periods of lockdown during the pandemic, for example by focusing on improving online learning. They use the outcomes of leaders' lesson monitoring to identify areas of their practice they need to improve and engage in independent research to support this improvement. Most teachers focus on pupil progress and standards as the measure of success for their improvement, such as the development of pupils' reading skills. As a result, the quality of teaching at the school has improved.

Across the school, all staff have strong working relationships with pupils. Most learning proceeds at a good pace and as a result, most pupils sustain interest in their work. Many teachers think carefully about how to engage pupils and plan learning based on topical issues and pupils' ideas, for example basing descriptive writing on a virtual firework display. Many teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils and plan tasks that challenge them effectively. This helps to ensure that many pupils make good progress during lessons.

Many teachers question pupils skilfully and provide them with helpful verbal feedback on their work. They scrutinise and evaluate pupils' written work regularly and this allows them to identify areas where pupils can improve, such as in correcting spelling errors. Teachers also use these opportunities to ask pupils questions about what they have learned and to challenge them to answer additional questions. However, staff do not always check whether pupils' responses are acceptable so they cannot be sure that pupils have consolidated their learning. Teachers' use of formative assessment is developing appropriately as part of high-quality teaching, but it is not yet embedded well enough in all classes to be sure that teachers can identify pupils' strengths and shortcomings, and then help them understand how to improve.

R4. Raise standards of reading and spelling

Leaders have introduced a range of useful strategies to improve standards in reading across the school. They have established a systematic approach to developing reading, with clear expectations, for all staff. Staff have received valuable professional development on how to structure guided reading sessions and now use these sessions effectively to develop pupils' skills and understanding. Teachers plan purposeful reading activities regularly during English and other lessons, such as reading about and summing-up characters' moral dilemmas. These activities further pupils' reading skills effectively.

Throughout the school, there is a clear emphasis on fostering pupils' love of reading for enjoyment, and nearly all pupils are developing positive attitudes towards reading. Teachers dedicate time to reading stories to pupils and, in the best cases, take advantage of opportunities to enrich pupils' vocabulary and comprehension during these sessions.

Despite the interruptions in learning caused by the pandemic, many pupils read well, and a minority have strong reading skills. As they progress through the foundation phase, many pupils read a range of suitable texts with increasing accuracy and fluency. They recall and retell stories with increasing detail. By the end of the phase, a majority use phonic strategies well, and they read high-frequency words accurately. A majority of pupils spell many simple words accurately. However, a minority of Year 2 pupils still do not always use common spelling patterns correctly, for example using 'ing' and 'ed' correctly at the end of words.

Throughout key stage 2, many pupils read texts independently with increasing concentration. They understand that authors use punctuation to help give text meaning, such as using exclamation marks to emphasise a word or phrase. Most pupils identify the main points of texts accurately. By the end of the key stage, many develop skills such as inference well. This helps them to consider ideas that are not stated explicitly in texts. Despite this, a minority of pupils do not always have a wide enough range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. Many pupils spell an increasing range of irregular words correctly, but a few still do not use more basic rules reliably, such as doubling consonants before certain word endings.

R5. Analyse the progress of specific groups of pupils to target and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The school has a broad range of screening programmes and processes to help teachers identify when pupils need extra help and support. Leaders have provided staff with valuable professional learning to help them to assess and evaluate pupils' achievements more accurately. They have clear systems to record the progress of all pupils. This means that the school has a better understanding of the needs of individual pupils than at the time of the core inspection, including those with additional learning needs. As a result, the school provides pupils with a beneficial range of interventions to support their learning, and staff are deployed effectively to address the needs of these pupils.

Leaders have a sharper focus on monitoring the provision for specific groups of pupils. They engage in joint lesson observations and learning walks with the school's improvement partner and work closely with teachers during pupil progress meetings. Using the outcomes of monitoring, assessments and of teachers' and support staff's evaluations, leaders have set up appropriate processes for analysing the effectiveness of interventions. This provides them with the information they need to analyse the progress of specific groups of pupils and helps them to identify where interventions have been beneficial and where pupils need further support. It has also led to the identification of the need for further provision in the school. For example, it highlighted the need for the school to establish its own nurture class for pupils with social and emotional needs. However, although there are processes in place to monitor interventions and pupil progress, it is not always easy enough to establish an overview of the information relating to the support that each pupil receives.

R6. Increase opportunities for pupils to contribute purposefully to the life and work of the school

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced several learner voice groups, including a school council, a healthy schools group and a digital leaders' group. Members of these groups understand their role in improving the work of the school for the benefit of pupils. They appreciate opportunities to work alongside members of staff and influence changes within the school, for example when they accompany the school's improvement partner on learning walks around the school to identify strengths and areas for improvement in classrooms.

The groups highlight priorities for the year ahead, which pupils have identified. They share the work they have planned and the actions they have taken through posters in classrooms and on a designated noticeboard in the hall. Their contributions to school newsletters ensure that parents and members of the community understand and can support their plans and actions.

The school council has focused particularly strongly on developing the school's commitment to placing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of its work. The articles of the convention are highly visible around the school and members of the school council take their responsibility in helping other pupils to understand these seriously. The healthy schools group encourages pupils to take more exercise through activities such as walking or cycling to school. Members have had particular success in persuading kitchen staff to make changes to the way

pupils make their lunch choices, resulting in less food waste and happier pupils. Digital leaders are developing their responsibilities in relation to supporting pupils and staff to improve their digital skills, which is a priority on the new school development plan.

Overall, the contribution that pupils make to the life and work of the school has grown considerably since the core inspection in 2017. They are, quite rightly, proud of the work that they do, and are now ready to take more direct responsibility for leading and directing the work of these groups.

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