



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**

**Pentyrch Primary School  
Bronllwyn  
Pentyrch  
CF15 9QL**

**Date of visit: October 2018**

**by**

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

## **Outcome of visit**

Pentyrch 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 pupils' writing skills and their ability to apply them consistently**

The school now has a framework that provides suitable opportunities for pupils to write for a wide range of purposes and audiences in literacy lessons and across the curriculum.

In foundation phase classes, many pupils learn to write independently using the features of a suitable range of genres. They use basic punctuation with increasing accuracy. For example, pupils in Year 1 use time connectives effectively to write a recipe for a magical potion. By Year 2, many pupils write confidently and accurately with generally good spelling and a secure use of a suitable range of punctuation. However, the very structured approach to developing pupils' writing in literacy lessons does not always encourage creativity.

Most key stage 2 pupils are developing as confident and expressive writers. Many write to a high standard and at length in English lessons. They use the features of specific genres and a mature vocabulary skilfully. The use of description, dialogue and emotive language is particularly notable in the work of more able pupils. For example, pupils create a vivid visual picture of a character by using powerful imagery, such as 'a pair of lime green leggings cuddled his legs like an inquisitive koala on a tree.' Spelling, punctuation and handwriting are generally of a good standard. Most pupils now use their writing skills purposefully across the curriculum. For example, they learn about the features of biographical writing in their English lessons and apply these skills well when studying Benjamin Franklin's life in science.

### **R2. Improve pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum**

Leaders have developed useful plans that identify appropriate opportunities for staff to develop pupils' numeracy skills in their work across the curriculum. In a majority of cases, these provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to practise these important skills. However, a minority of teachers do not take enough account of pupils' differing abilities when planning these learning activities.

Many foundation phase pupils use mathematical language and their numeracy skills effectively in their play and planned learning experiences. For example, reception pupils count objects to 10 while on a treasure hunt in the school grounds and pupils in Year 2 use their understanding of weight to measure out ingredients and read scales accurately when making a Victoria sponge. However, a minority of pupils do not always apply their number skills to real-life situations well enough. For example, when working out how much change they receive from buying items for less than

20p. By Year 6, many pupils apply a relevant range of numeracy skills well. For example, many measure and record the time it takes for liquids to cool in differently insulated containers in science and analyse this data competently to draw useful conclusions.

Teachers plan weekly activities for pupils to improve their problem-solving skills. These exercises allow many pupils to develop and apply a useful range of strategies for solving mathematical problems. Towards the end of the foundation phase, many pupils demonstrate their understanding of how to apply this learning to simple problem-solving well. For example, in Year 2, they use these skills efficiently to work out different ways that children can share a bag of sweets. Towards the end of key stage 2, many pupils find answers to problems systematically, for example when finding answers to questions where they need to consider a variety of different solutions. However, throughout the school, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to solve problems that are relevant to their lives or that link purposefully to their curriculum work.

### **R3. Improve behaviour and ensure that all pupils show respect for adults and their peers**

Since the core inspection, leaders and staff have implemented a range of effective strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and enhance the quality of the learning environment. As a result, most teachers promote high quality working relationships with pupils, based on mutual respect. Nearly all pupils understand and value the school's reward systems to promote positive behaviour. For example, the half-termly activity afternoons where pupils take part in events such as construction and clay modelling.

Most pupils are interested in their work. They are motivated and concentrate well in whole class sessions and in their tasks. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Most understand the need to be tolerant of different points of view.

Behaviour on the playground at break and lunchtimes is good. Leaders have developed the outdoor areas well to ensure that pupils have an effective range of equipment to engage their attention. As a result, pupils play together happily.

### **R4. Ensure that all teachers have a high expectations of pupils, assess them accurately and plan learning that challenges them at an appropriate level**

Teachers enrich their skills by working with staff from other schools and, increasingly, by collaborating with colleagues within the school to plan interesting topics and learning experiences. This is helping them to reflect on their own practice and evaluate the experiences they offer their pupils. For example, foundation phase teachers are gradually developing a better understanding of good foundation phase practice and beginning to recognise the benefit of encouraging more purposeful, child-led activities. However, teachers do not always know when and how to intervene beneficially when pupils are engaged in independent work, or when to encourage them to work things out for themselves. In key stage 2, teachers acknowledge the importance of developing pupils' independent learning skills. They share learning objectives to help pupils understand the focus of the lesson, and build on their prior knowledge well when introducing new skills and concepts.

Nearly all teachers use a suitable range of teaching strategies to motivate pupils and encourage them to participate well in lessons. Most teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and small groups, as well as with the whole class. Many question pupils increasingly skilfully to extend or challenge their thinking. Despite these clear improvements, teachers sometimes rely too heavily on very structured approaches to teaching and learning, and lack the confidence to take a more creative approach to the curriculum. This means that too many lessons do not truly excite or challenge all pupils and ensure their engagement and interest.

Overall, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do have risen notably. In mathematics and literacy lessons, teachers adapt tasks and activities appropriately, set success criteria that vary according to pupils' skill level, or provide varying levels of support. However, in other areas of the curriculum, pupils often complete the same activities and these do not always challenge pupils at the right level. Occasional opportunities for pupils to contribute to planning what and how they learn is helping teachers to be more flexible in their approach to planning, but this is a relatively new development and teachers do not yet make the most of the wealth of ideas many pupils have.

Teachers generally provide useful feedback that helps pupils to identify what they are doing well and how they can improve their work. Many pupils use this feedback effectively, for example, they answer a question, correct an error or add additional detail to a piece of writing. Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress and achievements is now more accurate and this enables teachers to plan more effectively for the next steps in learning.

#### **R5. Ensure that all leaders and staff undertake their roles effectively in order to contribute to the school's strategic priorities**

Since the core inspection, the deputy headteacher has acted as head of school. A leader from another school, in the role of executive headteacher, supports her ably. Together they work purposefully and diligently, supporting and challenging each other professionally. This partnership has helped the school to move forward with its recommendations for improvement well. For example, their focus on developing consistent expectations of pupil behaviour means that all pupils now learn in a calm and purposeful environment. However, there are a notable number of temporary appointments in the school's current leadership and staffing structure, which slows the progress of a few priorities.

Staff and senior leaders have clear job descriptions, and these help them to fulfil their roles competently. Leaders ensure that all staff benefit from suitable arrangements for performance management. They set useful targets that contribute effectively to improvement initiatives. In many cases, they plan staff training carefully to meet these targets and the school's needs well.

Leaders are beginning to share responsibilities more widely with other staff at the school, for example the leadership of specific recommendations and of curriculum development. Teachers take on these roles diligently. For example, their work in developing support assistants' skills to assess and record pupil progress enables teachers to monitor more closely the impact of support initiatives and intervention strategies. These leadership roles are beginning to have a beneficial impact on the school's provision and the progress pupils make.

Members of the governing body support the school conscientiously. They are beginning to contribute well to the strategic direction of the school. Many liaise suitably with school leaders to gain a first-hand understanding of the progress of improvement priorities. This furthers their understanding of the quality of the school's provision and helps them to challenge school leaders more effectively about the actions they take. However, their evidence gathering and sharing does not always focus well enough on the standards that pupils reach.

## **R6. Develop robust systems to evaluate the work of the school accurately and address identified shortcomings robustly**

Senior leaders have developed a comprehensive timetable of monitoring and evaluation activities that allows them to monitor the work of the school competently. These include a broad range of useful activities, such as observations of teaching and learning, and scrutiny of pupils' work. These activities help them to understand where their actions improve pupils' learning and where shortcomings remain.

Teachers with leadership responsibility monitor their areas competently. Their evaluations identify appropriately the quality of the provision or the standards that pupils reach. Leaders hold regular pupil progress meetings with all teachers. They consider a broad range of assessment information and the progress and learning in pupils' books. From these meetings they identify well where pupils are not making expected progress and put in place useful support initiatives where needed.

Senior leaders evaluate progress against targets in the school's post inspection action plan carefully. Where actions are not having enough impact, they intervene competently. For example, they identified shortcomings in their provision for numeracy and implemented more effective teaching strategies. This improves the quality of provision in the school well.

The school is beginning to include parents and pupils in the evaluation of its work.

For example, the recently formed pupil curriculum committee undertakes scrutiny of the learning environment with leaders and makes valuable suggestions for improvements. Leaders take these views seriously and act upon findings. However, this committee is still at an early stage of development.

## **R7. Improve partnerships with parents**

Leaders have developed a useful range of strategies to improve the school's partnership with parents and communicate important information more efficiently. For example, they have developed their use of social media messaging effectively. As a result, many parents now receive useful updates on the day-to-day activities taking place within the school.

Leaders use the school's website to help improve communication successfully. To supplement this, parents receive an informative weekly newsletter. This shares a useful range of information and celebrates the work of the school well. These measures ensure that most parents understand what is happening in the school.

Leaders survey parents' views regularly to help them understand how they can improve partnerships further. They organise a beneficial range of opportunities for

parents to take part in school events, meet staff and members of the governing body, and provide the school with informative feedback on its activities. For example, a parent information session on the uses of information technology and internet safety helps share information between school and home. Leaders ensure that after each event they ask for feedback from parents to help them understand how they can improve their events and relationships further.

Governors takes appropriate steps to ensure that they support the improvement in partnerships with parents. The governing body provides a useful profile outlining who its members are. They attend many events to ensure that parents can engage with them and understand their roles.

Most parents are supportive of the school and its drive for improvement. They take an interest in its daily life and work on a regular basis. For example, many parents gave up weekends to help develop the school garden. They support curriculum events well, for example helping to organise and cook for a garden party.