



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special Measures

**Malpas Church in Wales Primary School
Yewberry Close
Malpas
Newport
NP20 6WJ**

Date of visit: November 2022

by

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

Outcome of visit

Malpas Church in Wales Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection.

As a result, His 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. Develop communication systems and a clear strategic direction for the school to enable all staff to work together collaboratively in order to improve the school

Since the core inspection in 2019, there has been a period of inconsistency in key leadership roles. From September 2020, an acting executive headteacher led the school, and the substantive headteacher took up post in September 2021. Over the past year, the pace of improvement has gathered momentum and staff have worked collaboratively to address the improvement priorities.

The school has developed a clear sense of community and identity, rightly focused on improving the provision and outcomes for pupils. There are strong channels of communication with parents, for example through the weekly 'Thursday News', a text messaging service and an app that shares pupils' work. Staff send regular home-school certificates that celebrate pupils' successes. In addition, now that the pandemic restrictions are easing, parents visit the school and share their children's learning. These engagements help to strengthen communications, and the professional relationships between the school and their community.

Staff are well informed through a shared online calendar, that keeps everyone abreast of events in school. In addition to electronic communications, there are regular professional learning events and weekly staff and senior leadership meetings. A shared on-line drive allows staff to access all the information that they need electronically, at a time or place to suit them.

Most staff understand their roles and responsibilities, and their part in bringing about whole school improvements. Most share their planning and distribute the workload appropriately. The cohort trackers provide useful shared records of pupils' progress, and the termly pupil progress meetings ensure that everyone shares relevant information, for example about pupils' assessments and needs, including the next steps in their learning. Leaders provide valuable coaching and professional dialogue to staff, to help them to improve their work. The headteacher is not afraid to take difficult decisions to support the school community's relentless drive for improvement.

Staff have continued to work together to improve the learning environment for pupils, both inside and within the school grounds, and the quality of the provision. These improvements have created a shared sense of purpose and ownership, and a

developing pride following improvements to classrooms, provision and pupil outcomes.

R2. Devise robust systems to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the school

Leaders have embedded a robust and rigorous monitoring, evaluation and review programme. They share the programme in advance so that all staff understand the focus of monitoring activity. There is a worthwhile breadth of activity, including for example lesson observations, listening to learners talking about their work and evaluations of progress, planning and data. Leaders share the broad outcomes of monitoring activities with staff during the regular staff meetings. In addition, they address specific development points with individual staff members, as appropriate.

Leaders have devised a series of essential guides that spell out the expectations for staff. These are useful reminders of what all staff have agreed and are helpful to new staff joining the school. This straightforward, concise guidance supports everyone working in the school to understand leaders' expectations. For example, the recent 'principles of effective practice' makes explicit the expected approach to classroom provision.

As a result of the professional development opportunities, most staff are developing as reflective practitioners who care deeply about the quality of their work and its impact on pupils' learning. Most staff embrace the opportunities to develop their own practice, and welcome constructive feedback on their work. Leaders and staff share their expertise with their colleagues and are beginning to reflect together on effective practices and make changes to their approach to better match pupils' needs. As a consequence of this improvement work, most teaching is now of a high quality, and the instances of weaker practice are few and far between.

Leaders link the findings of their monitoring and review activity to professional learning opportunities. Initially, monitoring and subsequent professional learning focused on compliance and consistency but, over time, leaders have rightly shifted their focus to pupils' learning and progress. As a result, the quality of classroom practice has improved, and leaders are acutely aware of where practice is strongest and areas that still require improvement. They hold staff to account robustly in the few instances where their work falls short of expectations.

R3. Develop tracking systems to monitor and evaluate pupil progress and attendance robustly

The school continues to refine and develop the useful tracking system it has created to record pupils' assessment information and to track their progress. Staff also use this system to record a range of useful contextual information about each pupil, for example their attendance and any intervention programmes they are part of. Leaders analyse the data by pupil groups, for example comparing the achievements of pupils eligible for free school meals with their peers. Leaders compare the attainment and progress of each cohort in reading, writing and mathematics, and identify where progress and attainment are best. However, as the system has only been running for a year, it is still too new for leaders to have a full overview of pupils' progress over their time at the school.

There are regular, worthwhile pupil progress meetings where teachers meet with leaders to discuss the progress of pupils in their class. They consider any further support or challenge for those who are performing above or below expectations. These meetings also serve to check the validity of teachers' assessments, for example in evaluating pupils' development in writing. In addition, teachers moderate assessments with their colleagues in parallel classes. These measures help to ensure the consistency and accuracy of assessment information.

Leaders have introduced effective systems to track pupils' attendance. The school contacts parents quickly if a pupil is not in school to establish the reason for their absence. In addition, leaders send regular letters to inform parents of their child's attendance level. They monitor each pupil whose attendance is a cause for concern and work closely with the educational welfare service to support pupils and their families to make improvements. Leaders also track the attendance of groups of pupils, for example comparing the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals with their peers, to identify any trends. They correlate attendance with pupils' progress and attainment. This helps them to pinpoint whenever slow progress is attributable to poor attendance, and take rapid action to help to rectify the situation.

As a result of the school's improved tracking and monitoring work, the attendance of many pupils has improved over time. In addition, considerably fewer pupils are persistently absent this year compared with last year.

R4. Develop the governing body's capacity to support and challenge the school and to fulfil its statutory duties

The governing body has established a clear committee structure and membership of committees draw upon the skills, knowledge and experience each governor brings to the role. These committees meet regularly and discuss important aspects of the school's work, for example they review the need for the school to play a greater role in its community and to strengthen links with the church.

Governors provide effective strategic leadership to the school. They understand the need to give both support and challenge to leaders through their role as critical friends. Governors recognise they need a comprehensive range of information in order to do this. They carefully scrutinise the information they receive from the headteacher, senior leaders and other sources. In addition to this, they know the importance of gathering their own first-hand evidence of the school's progress. They visit the school and meet with staff as year group link governors and meet with leaders to discuss key documents and progress data. This helps governors to ask well-informed questions and hold the school to account appropriately. For example, they ask challenging questions about the school's finances, its staffing structure and the rationale behind the organisation of classes across the school.

As a result of their deeper knowledge of the school's position, the governing body was able to independently write their statutory annual report to parents. In addition, from their visits to school to gather their evidence and the scrutiny of updates from leaders, governors are able to identify further improvements the school needs to continue to make.

R5. Improve classroom practice to support and challenge all pupils to become more independent learners

Across the school, most teachers have worked effectively to improve the quality of their teaching. In nearly all lessons, teachers now engage pupils quickly with a starter discussion or activity, for example sharing ideas with a partner or observing something unusual. Generally, lessons continue at a suitable pace, although on occasions, teachers do not always sustain this.

Most teachers explain tasks clearly and provide helpful success criteria that pupils use to inform and reflect on their learning. Many teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to assess pupils as they work, to ensure understanding and identify the next steps in learning. Following a visit to another school, many staff use the question prompts on their lanyards to remind them to ask more challenging or open-ended questions.

Teachers now plan more appropriate and better focused activities to help pupils develop as independent learners. For example, in Year 2, teachers plan for pupils to work imaginatively in the community café area. The pupils decide on the jobs they should do, prepare pretend food and drink, and take contributions depending on what the visitor can afford. They write applications for jobs, citing their skills for example in fixing the oven.

Teachers have worked hard to foster a culture of independent reading and the enjoyment of high-quality children's literature across the school. For example, in Year 3, pupils explore the book *Flotsam* and discuss it enthusiastically, exploring its intriguing images using viewfinders. Many pupils make more rapid progress than previously in developing their reading skills. They enjoy reading for pleasure and getting 'lost in a book'.

Teachers assess pupils' progress with growing accuracy and across the school they work together to ensure there is a consistent approach. They use their informal assessments of pupil progress to inform the next steps in their learning. For example, where teachers identify gaps in pupils' understanding they modify lesson plans to ensure they immediately address these.

In many classes, teachers' written feedback is effective in supporting pupils to improve their work and, consequently, many pupils are becoming more adept at improving their own work independently. However, in a few instances, teachers miss opportunities to provide specific enough written or verbal feedback that supports pupils to improve their learning.

R6. Strengthen the provision to support pupils with special educational needs

Leaders have strengthened processes to identify and support pupils with additional learning needs across the school. Using the pupil progress and attendance tracking systems, combined with adults' observations, they use data over time to identify an individual pupils' needs. The school's additional learning needs coordinator (ALNCo) confidently assists teachers and other adults to support these pupils. Leaders use an electronic management system effectively to assist in mapping the school's provision

to the needs of individual pupils. This is particularly useful in supporting teachers who are new to the school to understand the needs of the individuals they teach.

Teachers are now more confident in providing effective support and provision for pupils with additional needs. They use the individual plans and one-page profiles to prepare support in their classrooms for those pupils who require universal support or other reasonable adjustments to support their learning. A team of suitably trained teaching assistants deliver more targeted support to individuals. A skilled teaching assistant leads colleagues by modelling good practice. Leaders monitor these sessions and analyse closely the progress pupils make.

The ALNCo monitors intervention programmes and evaluates their impact to ensure their use is effective in ensuring pupils make progress. For example, the ALNCo identifies that there is good progress in sessions outside of the classroom, particularly when developing social skills, but this was not transferring back into class. As a result, intervention strategies are now part of classroom practice and pupils are more able to apply the skills that they learn in intervention sessions to real-life situations within the classroom.

The ALNCo leads worthwhile professional development activities for staff. Governors and the senior leadership team receive regular updates on the progress the school is making in terms of its provision for ALN and the progress against reform.

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