



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**

**Ysgol Rhiwabon
Ruabon
Wrexham
LL14 6BT**

Date of visit: November 2017

by

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

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The monitoring team

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Outcome of monitoring

Ysgol Rhiwabon 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 special measures.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Raise standards in key stage 4 and particularly for boys

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2015, the school has introduced a wide range of strategies to raise standards at key stage 4. As a result, there has been an overall trend of improvement in the standard of pupils' work and their outcomes at key stage 4.

Provisional data for 2017 indicates that performance has improved in a majority of indicators at key stage 4. In general, performance in these indicators now compares favourably with that in other similar schools.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics has improved by almost five percentage points since the time of the core inspection. Performance in this indicator is now in line with that in similar schools. Performance in the capped points score has declined since the core inspection, but is in line with performance in similar schools.

At key stage 4, boys' performance has improved in half of indicators since the core inspection. Overall, the gap between their performance and that of boys in similar schools has narrowed over this period. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved since the core inspection in many indicators.

Most pupils are well behaved and display positive attitudes towards their learning. They listen well to their teachers and to other pupils. Many sustain their concentration well and work productively in pairs and in groups. A minority of pupils provide extended verbal responses to teachers' questioning, although a majority provide only brief, underdeveloped responses.

Many pupils organise their written work appropriately. For example, they write well-structured paragraphs to describe the character of Scrooge, referring to relevant evidence from the text. Many pupils show a sound understanding of the features of persuasive writing. They identify these features successfully and explain their impact, for example when examining the language of propaganda in world war one. A few pupils write maturely, using a variety of sentence structures and a rich vocabulary to enhance the effectiveness of their work. However, a few pupils write brief, poorly-constructed sentences and present their work poorly.

A majority of pupils read aloud well with confidence and suitable intonation. Many extract information confidently from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. For example, they scan texts to identify key features to summarise the advantages and disadvantages of sea walls, groynes and rock armour in geography.

The majority of pupils apply their basic numeracy skills successfully in a range of different contexts. For example, they use their measuring skills accurately to calculate the time and temperature of the boiling points of different liquids in science. In addition, pupils apply their numeracy skills appropriately to everyday contexts, for example when calculating the cost of a carpet and skirting board based on calculating a room's perimeter and area.

Many pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately in subjects other than ICT. For example, in engineering, they use design software well when undertaking the design and build elements of their project work.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the quality of teaching and marking to meet the needs of all pupils and provide clear guidance to help them improve

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a wide range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and assessment. Lesson observations, book scrutiny and department reviews now focus suitably on pupils' standards and progress in lessons. A comprehensive and well-considered programme of professional learning provides valuable opportunities for teachers to share good practice. These strategies have had a positive impact on key aspects of teaching and assessment and on the standards pupils achieve.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and provide pupils with valuable verbal feedback about their progress during lessons. Many establish productive relationships and classroom routines that support pupils' learning effectively. In the majority of cases, teachers set clear learning objectives and explain tasks well. These teachers plan a suitable variety of activities to engage pupils' interest and they ensure that resources are matched closely to pupils' abilities. In a minority of lessons, teachers have particularly high expectations of pupils. They plan stimulating lessons and use questioning skilfully to probe and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

In a minority of lessons, teachers do not plan consistently well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. In these lessons, activities are not always sufficiently challenging and there are only a few opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or develop their independent learning skills. In a few lessons, pupils' learning does not develop at a suitable pace and teachers' use of questioning does not always involve all pupils.

The majority of teachers provide useful guidance to pupils that shows them clearly how to improve their work. The majority of pupils respond appropriately to teachers' comments. However, a minority of pupils do not respond to feedback well enough.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that there is a systematic and progressive whole-school approach to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened the co-ordination of skills provision across the curriculum appropriately. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The school has provided worthwhile professional learning opportunities for all staff in order to reinforce whole-school planning and provision for skills development. For example, the weekly sharing of good practice on a Friday has given a high profile to literacy across the school. Since September 2017, numeracy has also been included and is now a strong feature of these sessions. This has helped to raise the profile of literacy and numeracy across the whole school.

The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators monitor the provision for improving pupils' skills suitably through regular scrutiny of their work. They also visit tutorial sessions to ensure resources are used consistently to enhance these skills. However, they do not focus well enough on exploring a few aspects such as the difference between the literacy and numeracy skills of boys and girls. Since 2016, a range of effective intervention strategies have started to influence pupils' standards positively. Additionally, the school has delivered a successful Year 7 skills programme, which focused relevantly on pupils' oracy, writing and numeracy skills. The recently appointed lead learner for Years 6 and 7 works suitably with partner primary schools on a weekly basis to ensure greater consistency in pupils' skills development. A majority of departments contribute effectively to the school's work in developing pupils' extended writing skills and this good practice is being shared further across the school. Generally, many teachers pay close attention to improving the technical accuracy of pupils' writing.

Recommendation 4: Ensure that middle leaders are held to account robustly for improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened appropriately its arrangements for ensuring that middle leaders are held to account robustly for improving outcomes in standards and wellbeing.

Staff roles and responsibilities have been refined suitably to ensure that there is an appropriate emphasis on raising standards, improving the quality of teaching and supporting pupils' wellbeing. In particular, pastoral leaders' roles and responsibilities are now more closely aligned to the needs of the school, focusing on, for example, transition arrangements and the monitoring of pupil progress.

The school has robust line management arrangements, including meetings between middle and senior leaders which focus rigorously on standards and teaching. During these meetings, discussions centre on important issues such as outcomes from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, and subject impact and

performance reviews. Senior and middle leaders review and record progress appropriately against targets and planned actions regularly to determine next steps. These arrangements link closely to performance management objectives and ensure that staff are held fully accountable for their work. Leaders use data well to identify areas which need improvement. They now use a wide range of assessment and performance data suitably to set challenging targets and to monitor progress. For example, they use the data from standardised assessments or examination boards to identify well specific topics and skills for improvement in teaching and learning.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen improvement planning and ensure that the actions to bring about improvement are sufficiently robust

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, senior and middle leaders have worked together successfully to strengthen the school's improvement planning and ensure that follow-up actions are sufficiently robust. This has had a positive impact on improving pupils' performance and attendance.

In most cases, senior and middle leaders fulfil their roles successfully. They have useful systems for undertaking regular lesson observations and for scrutinising pupils' work. They use this evidence well to identify specific aspects in need of improvement. Senior leaders respond appropriately to the areas identified for improvement by providing a comprehensive range of opportunities for professional learning. For example, staff work together purposefully during their weekly professional learning activity programme to discuss and share best practice identified through the school's lesson observation and 'open classroom' events. These activities are helping to drive improvements in teaching and learning across the school.

At whole-school and departmental level, leaders generally make suitable use of the wide range of evidence from the school's quality assurance activities to inform self-evaluation reports. This evidence includes analysis from lesson observations and performance reviews, with a clear link between self-evaluation and improvement plans. However, the performance and impact reviews of a very few subjects do not use the full range of evidence sources well enough to inform planning for improvements in teaching and learning.

Members of the governing body play an active role in the life of the school and are well informed about the school's performance. They provide the school with appropriate challenge and support.

Recommendation 6: Improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a range of effective strategies to improve attendance. As a result, whole-school attendance has improved well.

Overall attendance rates are now 1.4 percentage points higher than at the time of the core inspection and compare well with those in similar schools. Over this period, the attendance rates of boys, girls and pupils eligible for free school meals have all improved well.

The school tracks pupils' attendance very closely and analyses attendance data well to identify and take action for groups of learners causing concern. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent in 2017 compared with the time of the core inspection.

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.