



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: Significant Improvement**

**Ysgol Penglais
Waunfawr
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3AW**

Date of visit: March 2019

by

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

Outcome of visit

Ysgol Penglais 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 significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve the achievement of boys and pupils entitled to free school meals

Since the core inspection and particularly since the appointment of the new headteacher the school has worked well to address shortcomings in teaching and the impact on pupils' standards.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They settle to work quickly and are eager to learn. Many pupils make suitable progress in building on prior knowledge. A few make rapid progress in their lessons. When given the opportunity, most pupils contribute effectively to class discussions and work well in pairs and groups, for example when discussing the experiences of veterans of wars in their English lessons. Most pupils listen with respect to the teacher and their peers. A minority explain their reasoning clearly and articulately, especially when responding to the teacher's questioning. In general, a majority of pupils read from a range of texts purposefully to locate information and use inference and deduction well. In history lessons, for example, they evaluate what life was like in Nazi Germany effectively and they analyse the writing techniques of authors well in their Welsh lessons.

Most pupils across the ability range write suitably for a range of purposes. Many write at length well, for example in evaluating their science investigations or in geography lessons when describing the effect of earthquakes. They write accurately, structure their writing well and use subject specific terminology competently. A few more able pupils produce very high quality extended written pieces that are well organised and technically correct, for instance when writing a report on their findings following research on artists.

Many pupils have sound number skills. They perform calculations confidently and apply their understanding of number concepts effectively in problems that are set in everyday life. They handle data confidently, draw relevant graphs and analyse them correctly across a range of subjects.

Overall, performance at the end of key stage 4 compares more favourably with similar schools than at the time of the core inspection, particularly in indicators that include wider qualifications. Since the last monitoring visit, performance in key stage 4 has improved in the majority of indicators.

Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics in 2018 is below that in similar schools. Performance in the capped points score improved in 2018 and it is close to that of similar schools.

Boys' performance at key stage 4 in 2018 improved in all indicators. Their performance in a majority of indicators remains below that of boys in similar schools. Girls' performance has fluctuated in comparison to that of girls in similar schools since the core inspection. In 2018, girls' performance declined in nearly all indicators.

The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A*-A has improved gradually over the last four years. It now compares well with that in similar schools and is almost equivalent to the school's performance at the time of the core inspection.

Since the last monitoring visit, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals at key stage 4 has improved significantly in nearly all indicators. This performance places the school above similar schools and is better than at the time of the core inspection.

R2. Improve attendance rates

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a range of beneficial strategies that have led to considerable improvements in the attendance of all groups of pupils. These include rewarding good attendance and involving parents when pupils' attendance falls below target levels. In four of the last five years, the school's attendance has been broadly in line with that of similar schools.

The school has robust systems to monitor pupils' attendance including that of groups of pupils, and it challenges absenteeism appropriately. School data for the current academic year so far indicates that the school is maintaining the improvement in attendance rates.

R3. Improve the co-ordination and implementation of the plan to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills to ensure they make suitable progress in all subjects

Since the core inspection, the school has implemented a range of worthwhile strategies to improve its provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This includes the sharing of good practice and valuable training for staff on how to develop pupils' skills.

The provision for the development of pupils' literacy skills is well co-ordinated. Leaders have identified the development of oracy and extended writing as priorities and have introduced a range of beneficial whole-school strategies. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum, for example when writing diaries in history or discussing advantages of

renewable energy to the environment. These initiatives are having a positive impact on the standards of pupils' literacy skills.

In relevant subjects, teachers provide a suitable range of meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills. These offer an appropriate level of challenge, such as when pupils analyse data gathered from scientific investigations or evaluate population numbers in different countries.

The school is starting to make suitable use of data to identify pupils who require support with their basic numeracy skills. There are effective arrangements in place to support the pupils identified with weak literacy and numeracy skills.

R4. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, the school has developed a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and assessment. It has developed comprehensive guidance and provided sound support for teachers. Through valuable training, research and quality assurance, the school has secured improvements in specific aspects such as behaviour management and effective lesson planning to develop pupils' skills.

Most teachers have good working relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour effectively. They plan lessons that engage pupils well in their learning. In a few instances, teachers use their subject knowledge very skilfully to build pupils' understanding. Most teachers plan for the development of pupils' oracy skills appropriately.

Many teachers give clear explanations of new concepts. They ensure an appropriate level of challenge and expectations. A minority of teachers make effective use of model answers to reinforce pupils' learning and develop subject specific skills. In a few cases, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Many teachers ask questions that determine pupils' understanding well. A minority use a series of probing questions effectively to develop pupils' understanding, reasoning and oracy skills.

The majority of teachers provide useful written feedback on pupils' work that identifies areas for improvement and sets worthwhile targets. These teachers ensure that pupils respond appropriately to the feedback. In a few cases, teachers' feedback does not identify clearly enough how pupils can improve their work.

R5. Address the health and safety concerns raised during the inspection

The school has continued to address suitably the health and safety issues identified during the core inspection.

Clearly visible signs direct visitors from all entry points to the reception. The school makes appropriate use of CCTV to monitor the site. This ensures a suitable view of the access doors around the school.

Barriers restrict successfully traffic flow during the day and pupils have a clearly designated footpath to avoid crossing a car park. The school has comprehensive risk assessments in place that they share with the appropriate staff.

The school has introduced appropriate arrangements to enable sixth form pupils to leave and return to the school site.

R6. Ensure that the senior leaders hold middle leaders to account for raising standards

The headteacher is continuing to implement successfully her vision of a supportive culture and collegiate ethos within the school. To support her vision, she has worked with leaders and staff to refine the school's systems and structures, which has led to improved consistency in many aspects of its work.

There are clear lines of accountability for all leaders. Senior leaders have appropriate job descriptions and now have a suitable understanding of their roles. The headteacher holds them to account successfully through a range of valuable calendared meetings, in which clear action points are identified. This is contributing positively towards securing improvements in teaching and learning.

Senior leaders now hold faculty and year leaders to account robustly through beneficial line management meetings. In turn, middle leaders conduct useful meetings with their respective teams, all of which focus appropriately on improving teaching and learning. Performance management targets for leaders are robust and link suitably to specific aspects of leadership.

Valuable professional learning opportunities have had a positive impact on the effectiveness of middle leaders. Most are confident in their analysis of pupil progress, and they use this information well to develop appropriate strategies for improving teaching and to plan suitable support for individual staff. Most use first-hand evidence appropriately to evaluate pupil progress and the impact of teaching.

R7. Improve the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning at all levels

Senior leaders have developed robust processes for evaluating important aspects of the school's work. Leaders across the school now analyse effectively a broad range of first hand evidence to understand what is or is not working well in the school. This rigorous analysis has made a positive contribution to recent improvements in the school's work such as outcomes in the majority of key performance indicators, standards of behaviour and rates of attendance.

Senior leaders focus strongly on improving teaching and learning in all subject areas as well as developing effectively the ability of middle leaders to lead quality assurance processes within their own faculties. Overall, these leaders make beneficial use of evidence available to them and summarise this effectively to identify priorities for improvement. Faculty improvement planning focusses well on improving the quality of teaching, developing pupils' skills and improving their achievement. In a few instances, leaders do not focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on pupil progress and as a result have not been effective enough in improving the quality of teaching and assessment and raising standards within their departments.

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