



Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all

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: monitoring by Estyn**

**Rhayader CIW School
Rhayader Primary School
Bryntirion
Rhayader
Powys
LD6 5LT**

Date of visit: January 2015

by

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

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The monitoring team

Maldwyn Pryse	Reporting Inspector
Eifion Watkins	Team Inspector
Yan James	Local authority representative

Outcome of monitoring visit

Rhayader Church in Wales primary school is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2014.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from any further follow-up activity.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Develop pupils' ability to apply their extended writing skills across the curriculum in English and Welsh first language

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has thoroughly reviewed its curriculum planning. As a result there is a more defined focus on providing opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum in both the English and Welsh streams. Teachers in both streams now jointly plan the curriculum each term along with a member of the leadership team. The planning clearly identifies opportunities for extended writing and is in line with the Literacy Framework.

In nearly all classes, pupils apply their writing skills consistently across the curriculum. Pupils write in a range of non-fiction genres, for example, recounts in history and reflections on scientific investigations. The writing from different viewpoints based on the nativity story in Religious Education is particularly effective and of a high standard in upper key stage 2 in the English stream. However, at key stage 2 pupils in the Welsh stream do not apply their writing skills with the same consistency or to the same level as pupils in the English stream as they have less opportunities.

The new spelling and handwriting policies have secured good improvements in standards of spelling and handwriting. The school uses spelling data more effectively to identify individual pupils for intervention. A range of recognised short term interventions impact positively on pupil progress in English spelling. School data evidences that nearly all pupils who have received intervention have made good progress. However, presentation and handwriting for a minority of pupils is in need of improvement.

Recommendation 2: Improve pupils' oral, reading and writing skills in Welsh second language

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has revised its Welsh second language policy and its schemes of work effectively. All staff have received purposeful training and appropriate support, with many teachers benefiting from a sabbatical scheme by the Welsh government to develop their Welsh language skills. Suitable materials have been provided to ensure a greater number of opportunities to promote the use of Welsh. Successful working partnerships have been established with organisations to further promote the

use of the language. ‘Welsh afternoons’ are now a regular occurrence, which promote whole school Welsh speaking through fun activities effectively.

There are regular guided reading sessions in key stage 2 and pupil progress in oracy, reading and writing is assessed and tracked appropriately. ‘Athrawon Bro’ are used effectively to target pupils who are underachieving and to extend more able pupils. The headteacher and senior leadership team regularly monitor and scrutinise books to ensure continuity and progress in pupils’ learning. Teachers plan opportunities for cross-curriculum writing activities, and they share good practice across the school. The school has introduced a reward system to encourage pupils to use Welsh and promote the Welsh ethos across the school.

As a result, all pupils are given greater opportunities to develop their oral, reading and writing skills in Welsh as a second language. Nearly all pupils across the school respond appropriately to questions using familiar sentence patterns. Most are able to discuss their reading books competently whilst a minority of older pupils are able to discuss past and present tense confidently. Independent writing skills are suitably developed in pupils’ books. Learners develop a range of patterns and write for different audiences in a wide range of genres.

The outcomes at the end of key stage 2 for Welsh as a second language shows a notable improvement in 2014 with 88.2% achieving the expected level. This was above the national average for the first time in 4 years.

Recommendation 3: Increase the level of challenge for more able pupils

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has taken effective steps to identify and ensure a greater level of challenge for more able pupils. Staff receive purposeful training in order to improve the provision for more able pupils and to secure consistency of approach across the school. Teachers have reviewed their planning appropriately so that additional strategies are in place to support more able pupils. Leaders are making good use of performance and assessment data to identify more able to make sure that they reach their full potential. This is particularly successful in key stage 2, where there is a notable improvement in the end of year teacher assessments. The leaders have successfully engaged parents in supporting and challenging their children.

In nearly all instances, the work in pupils’ books reflect the curriculum planning well, and there are consistent examples of challenging work. Teachers and leaders now monitor the progress of more able pupils with greater consistency. However, the implementation of the planning and its monitoring is not as rigorous in the Welsh stream. As a result, the current work in pupils’ books in one class does not reflect the increased level of challenge across the school.

In the Foundation phase in 2014, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher outcomes in language development in both English and Welsh along with personal and social development places the school in the top 25% when compared with similar schools. However standards in mathematical development has declined from 42.1% to 31.8% which places the school in the lower 50% when compared with

similar schools. The school has clearly identified this in their data analysis and are already actively addressing the issue. At the end of key stage 2, the percentage attaining the higher levels have increased in all subjects, particularly in English, Welsh and mathematics. This performance places the school in the top 25% of similar schools in these subjects.

Recommendation 4: Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better across the school

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Nearly all lessons observed by the leaders are now judged as good. With very few exceptions, teachers share learning objectives with pupils and build on prior learning effectively. In these lessons pupils are provided with interesting and engaging tasks and many of these challenge pupils' thinking and provide appropriate challenge, including for more able pupils.

Leaders have continued to observe teaching and learning on a termly basis since the core inspection. Overall, where issues in variations of quality are observed, leaders arrange appropriate support to address these quickly. Teachers have visited other schools to observe good practice and all staff have a firm knowledge of the characteristics of a good lesson. The school's agreed expectations for teaching and learning enable leaders to consistently and robustly monitor lessons and provide evaluative reports. These reports clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement. All staff are aware of these expectations and nearly all use them well when evaluating their own practice. However, the quality of provision in the Welsh stream at key stage 2 is not consistently as good as opportunities for other pupils across the school as the tasks given to pupils do not always match the planning.

Teachers mark books regularly and provide written feedback. Marking is mostly linked to learning objectives but written feedback does not always clearly tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

Recommendation 5: Improve attendance rates

Very good progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has developed effective strategies to improve and monitor attendance. By taking a number of positive steps to involve parents, pupils, governors and the community the school has successfully raised awareness of the importance of attending school every day. These measures include regular monitoring, giving pupils responsibility to share information together about specific levels of school attendance, celebrating the best class and individual pupil attendance.

The school sends letters to parents to raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and to specifically target persistent non-attendeers. The school works very well with the education welfare service to identify and target families that need further support to ensure that their children attend school regularly. The school has innovative steps to include the community in its strategy to raise attendance. For example, as a church school, they share their monthly newsletter with the church

authorities who includes information on attendance in its own monthly newsletter.

These initiatives have had a positive impact, and the attendance levels have risen from 90.9% in 2011 to 95.4 in 2014. This now places the school in the higher 50% when compared with similar schools. This is a notable improvement on the previous four years where the school has been in the bottom 25%.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work towards meeting the inspection recommendations that have not yet been fully addressed.