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

Bryn C.P. School
Gelli Road
Bryn
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA14 9TT

Date of visit: October 2021

by

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

Outcome of visit

Bryn C. P. 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. Establish an effective leadership structure on all levels

After a period of leadership turbulence, the school appointed the acting headteacher as substantive headteacher in April 2019. A new substantive deputy headteacher took up her position in November 2019. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, two phase leaders and the additional learning needs co-ordinator. This structure provides the school with balanced leadership.

The headteacher provides the school with clear strategic direction. He has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that they need to improve. He challenges and addresses underperformance appropriately. He has led the school community successfully in revisiting the school's values, vision and aims. He continues to provide the school with sensitive leadership during the ongoing pandemic, communicating effectively with all stakeholders. A positive impact of his work are the strong working relationships that he has built with school community.

All members of the leadership team have received beneficial professional learning, relevant to their position, to help them fulfil their roles successfully. For example, phase leaders have a significantly improved understanding of their leadership roles and responsibilities and have greater confidence in implementing them. Weekly leadership meetings focus appropriately on addressing areas to improve and reviewing self-evaluation activities. Other members of staff appreciate leaders' willingness to listen to the views of others.

Leaders use regular staff meetings well to communicate messages from leadership meetings and to develop aspects of their improvement plan. They use performance management systems appropriately to help address recommendations in the post-inspection action plan. Objectives link well to addressing whole school priorities as well as individual areas for improvement. Leaders ensure that staff have regular opportunities to receive targeted professional development, for example about the school's new assessment arrangements and approach to teaching writing and oracy.

The senior leadership team undertake a range of appropriate monitoring activities including lesson observations and scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Initially, these activities focused mainly on areas of compliance. Leaders have developed these procedures well to support accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. This work has had a significant impact on improving standards of teaching and learning at the school.

R2. Develop the governing body's ability to support the school strategically and to fulfil its statutory requirements

The governing body provides the school with strong strategic leadership. Governors have a range of skills and experiences, which they use to support the school beneficially. They have established a structure of effective committees to support school leaders in driving school improvements. This includes a committee to track the progress that the school is making in meeting the inspection recommendations. The governing body now fulfils its statutory requirements.

The new chair of governors supports other governors with purposeful leadership. An experienced vice chairperson supports him beneficially. Governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities and attendance at both virtual and physical meetings is high.

Prior to the pandemic, members of the governing body made regular focused visits to the school to work alongside members of staff with responsibility for specific inspection recommendations. For example, governors have worked with leaders to undertake the scrutiny of pupils' work and to learn about the school's pupil tracking system. This has allowed them to gather first-hand evidence about the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors shared the findings from their visits with the rest of the governing body.

Communication between governors and school leaders is effective and transparent. Governors provide purposeful challenge to school leaders, including questioning provision for pupils with additional learning needs.

The school now has effective procedures to ensure that they record the business of the governing body accurately. Governors have been successful in reducing the school's large financial deficit.

R3. Ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate and derive from a robust evaluation of pupils' standards

Leaders have implemented a wide range of professional learning opportunities and support mechanisms to develop teachers' confidence and accuracy in assessing pupils' standards. They have introduced a beneficial electronic database to track pupils' progress over time. This comprehensive system draws together a wide range of information about individual and groups of pupils, such as key information about pupils' attendance, wellbeing and ongoing assessments of pupils' progress. The assessment and additional learning needs co-ordinators have refined this system effectively to help them to monitor intervention strategies and track the progress of specific groups of pupils.

To support teachers in assessing pupils' standards, leaders have introduced a suite of summative assessments to measure pupils' progress and to develop staff ability to assess accurately. These have helped staff in measuring progress and identifying the next steps in pupils' learning, especially during the lockdown periods. Currently, there is an over reliance on the use of summative assessments to measure pupils' progress. However, leaders are beginning to refine the use of these assessments and to encourage greater formative assessment.

There are regular meetings to moderate teachers' assessments and to ensure that all staff share a common understanding of what constitutes independent work at different stages. The assessment co-ordinator makes beneficial use of assessment information to create data summaries that identify strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' work. Leaders use this information well to inform their self-evaluation processes.

Teachers have devised a valuable system for providing feedback to pupils about how to improve their work. This helps pupils to understand what they have done well, and what they need to improve. In most classes, teachers make appropriate use of assessment for learning strategies to assess what pupils know and what they need to practise next. Teachers make good use of success criteria, which pupils check regularly throughout lessons, to ensure that they know what they need to do to succeed in their learning.

R4. Establish a robust system to support those pupils with additional learning needs

The school has effective procedures to support pupils with additional learning needs. The experienced additional learning needs co-ordinator works beneficially with all staff to evaluate provision regularly and to adapt support appropriately. She tracks and analyses data rigorously and provides staff with worthwhile training and support. For example, following an evaluation of provision, staff have recently established a nurture support group for pupils identified with social and emotional needs. Staff provide a warm, engaging environment in a designated class where these pupils receive daily support for their wellbeing and learning. Although this work is at an early stage of development, it is beginning to have a positive impact on supporting vulnerable pupils.

The school uses a wide range of beneficial interventions to support identified groups of pupils with their literacy and numeracy skills. This provision ensures that the school meets the needs of all pupils effectively. For example, teaching assistants use these interventions well to provide daily support and small group targeted activities for pupils. This support helps to ensure that many pupils make good progress in their learning. Staff record accurate entry and exit data for each intervention. They use this information, as well as data from the school's pupil tracker, to monitor pupils' progress and to identify appropriate individual pupil support.

Well-considered individual education plans include relevant targets that help to support pupils' progress. Staff monitor the progress of pupils against their individual education plan targets regularly. They involve parents, pupils, and outside agencies appropriately in these reviews.

The school's plans for implementing additional learning needs reform are progressing well. For example, staff have started to introduce person centred planning and trained staff to write appropriate individual development plans for targeted pupils.

R5. Improve attendance at school

The school has established beneficial procedures to monitor pupils' attendance. These include the regular analysis of attendance patterns and identifying and supporting pupils with poor attendance, for example by holding meetings with parents. The school has also introduced a new system of 'first day response', which involves contacting parents if a child is not in school and no reason has been provided.

Prior to the pandemic, leaders introduced worthwhile rewards and incentives for pupils with high or improved attendance. Pupils responded well to these rewards and incentives. This had a positive effect on improving pupils' attendance at this time.

During the pandemic, leaders have adapted their procedures appropriately to meet changing patterns of attendance. This includes recognising the need for a more flexible approach to attendance to help address COVID-19 related anxieties and medical vulnerability. The headteacher has made beneficial use of the local authority's engagement plan guidance to monitor attendance and to identify pupils' engagement with online learning. Leaders review their plans regularly and provide additional support for targeted pupils and their families.

Leaders work well with the local authority's educational welfare service to support families of pupils with poor attendance, including pupils who did not engage regularly with online learning. This work has had a positive impact on improving pupils' attendance and engagement in learning. School interventions, supported by the education welfare service, have succeeded in assisting identified pupils to return to school. The headteacher has also ensured clear communication with parents to help alleviate concerns about COVID-19 related cases in school.

R6. Implement the principles of the foundation phase in full

Following the core inspection, staff received extensive training and support from the local authority to develop their foundation phase practice. This included opportunities to observe good practice in other schools. Staff have used this knowledge well to develop stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments that engage pupils successfully. There has been a strong focus on developing exciting and engaging provision in the outdoor environment. Teachers are beginning to use these areas successfully to plan active and experiential activities that develop pupils' skills well. For example, pupils choose resources carefully to build a castle in the outdoor construction area, naming the parts of the castle successfully.

Leaders have created useful long and medium-term plans that map pupils' skill development progressively. Overall, teachers use these plans well to provide an interesting range of activities across all areas of learning with an appropriate balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for pupils to work independently. For example, in nursery and reception, staff question pupils skilfully to challenge them to think how to create a safe route across the 'river'. Generally, teachers match most learning activities to address pupils' needs well. However, they do not always make best use of other adults to make large group introductions and activities more manageable and to support pupils who lose concentration in tasks.

Teachers provide beneficial opportunities for pupils to make choices in relation to their learning, such as when listening to pupils' ideas through 'planning our play' time. They take account of these views when they plan activities and tasks.

The school has developed worthwhile opportunities to observe pupils in their play and learning. Useful prompts on observation forms provide valuable support to staff to help identify pupils' skills. They use the information from these observations well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

R7. Improve the quality of classroom practice so that teaching and learning supports the development of pupils as independent learners and ensures that all pupils achieve as well as they can

Leaders have provided useful professional learning opportunities and support for teachers to enable them to improve their classroom practice. Nearly all staff have visited other local schools to learn from their effective practice. In addition, there are regular opportunities for teachers to share practice across the school during staff meetings and work standardisation sessions. At these meetings, staff challenge each other purposefully to improve standards. This work has helped teachers reflect on their own classroom practice successfully and to implement new teaching strategies consistently.

In the most effective classes, teachers work energetically to engage pupils in their learning. They give clear instructions and their lessons progress at a suitable pace. Most teachers ask purposeful, well-chosen questions that they target carefully at individual pupils to support and challenge their learning. This provides pupils with an exciting range of real-life learning experiences that challenge them appropriately. Most staff use a wide range of resources to support their teaching effectively. Overall, teaching assistants support specific groups of pupils well.

In the few classes where teaching is less effective, the pace of lessons is too slow, and teachers' instructions are not always clear. At times, tasks are too difficult for less able pupils or do not challenge more able pupils well enough.

Staff have worked successfully to improve classroom learning environments. They have reorganised classrooms to increase the opportunities for pupils to access resources independently. For example, during 'Amser Chili' in key stage 2, generally, teachers devise exciting tasks with different levels of challenge, taking good account of pupils' suggestions. Pupils have worthwhile opportunities to make choices about which task to complete and at what level. This supports their engagement in their class topic well, and promotes their skills in working independently, within and beyond the classroom. Through the introduction of a new literacy scheme of work and cross curricular tasks, teachers now provide pupils with more frequent opportunities to write independently and at length.