



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**

**Abermorddu C.P. School  
Cymau Lane  
Abermorddu  
Flintshire  
LL12 9DH**

**Date of visit: February 2022**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Abermorddu Primary 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. Improve leadership at all levels and promote effective collaboration among all staff**

Leaders have worked strategically, with external partners, to improve staff relationships, promote a collaborative culture and develop a shared vision for the school's purpose. They have involved staff, pupils, parents and governors in the process to ensure that the values and aspirations identified in the vision represent the views of the whole school community. Improved collaboration and a shared sense of purpose are beginning to have a positive effect on the life and work of the school. For example, all staff contributed to a teaching charter that describes shared expectations for teaching and learning across the school.

The headteacher works positively with all school staff and external support partners to foster a team ethos, to increase the school's leadership capacity and to implement change. He has shared responsibility for each recommendation across the leadership team and this has led to an improved distribution of leadership responsibilities. Leaders facilitate or lead professional learning for colleagues to ensure that all are aware of new strategies and understand how they should be implemented. This work is beginning to change aspects of the school's work for the better, for example, foundation phase provision and a whole school, consistent approach to teaching mathematics. It also ensures that staff, at all levels, are becoming more confident in their practice and have a suitable understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Across the school, leaders are beginning to monitor their areas of responsibility to check whether intended changes happen. In a few instances, arrangements to monitor the difference that these changes make to pupils' progress and standards are developing appropriately. However, leaders and teachers do not focus sharply enough on evaluating the difference that new teaching strategies make to pupils' progress.

Governors are actively involved in the school's improvement work. For example, there is a link governor responsible for each inspection recommendation. They work purposefully with school staff, receive regular updates about progress against the core inspection recommendations and use this information to provide appropriate support and challenge. The chair and link governors, visit the school and undertake monitoring activities alongside school leaders. They are beginning to gain a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

## **R2. Improve the effectiveness of teaching across the school to challenge all pupils to perform consistently at their best**

Throughout the school, teachers create and maintain a purposeful working environment. Generally, pupils engage positively in the experiences on offer. All teachers have contributed to the development of a teaching charter. The charter establishes shared aspirations for teaching, such as developing independent, curious and confident learners. Teachers are beginning to implement this charter in their day- to- day practice.

Learning experiences for younger pupils match the principles and ethos of foundation phase education appropriately. Teachers provide a suitable balance between adult-led tasks and opportunities for pupils to work and play independently or in small groups. This includes a renewed focus on ensuring that the provision for pupils' independent play is stimulating both indoors and outdoors. The school's approach to foundation phase education is beginning to support and challenge most pupils successfully and leads to good levels of engagement.

In key stage 2, teachers and pupils have positive working relationships and this leads to a calm and generally productive learning environment. Teachers have developed consistent approaches to planning and delivering lessons and units of work. This includes the use of a common range of suitable strategies such as setting out the expectations for learning within each lesson. However, these expectations do not always ensure that teaching builds as effectively as it could on pupils' prior learning, and in a few instances teachers miss valuable spontaneous learning opportunities due to the constraints of pre-planned criteria.

Many pupils say that the verbal feedback they receive and the discussions they have with teachers about their work are beneficial in helping them to make progress. However, teachers' written feedback does not always have such a positive influence. Activities in response to teachers' feedback, such as copying out a piece of writing in best, do not, in many cases, lead to genuine improvements in the quality of pupils' work. Processes to involve pupils in influencing their learning, such as leading independent research on climate change, are at an early stage of development. Pupils enjoy these opportunities and respond well. However, teachers do not always draw well enough on the potential that pupils have to shape and influence learning, for example, older pupils are not routinely involved in identifying what they need to do or would like to do to be successful in their work.

Teachers have started to use the outcomes of personalised assessment tasks to influence curriculum provision, for example to prioritise topics to address pupils' misconceptions in mathematics in key stage two. They also hold regular pupil review meetings and record the outcomes in pupil profiles. These provide some insight to pupils' attitudes to learning but do not provide enough information about pupils' strengths or next steps in learning.

### **R3. Ensure that teachers plan effectively and progressively to develop and raise standards in pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in subject specific lessons and across the curriculum**

Overall, teachers plan a range of activities that provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their literacy, numeracy and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.

Staff in the foundation phase create environments that allow younger pupils to use their numeracy skills independently, providing a wide range of stimuli to develop their confidence. Teachers plan suitable opportunities for pupils to use skills in a variety of contexts. For example, pupils in Year 1 use vocabulary such as first and second to position themselves in a queue, identifying their position from the left and right. Year 2 pupils use ICT to record the time it took them to complete a task and then record their results. Older key stage 2 pupils are encouraged to use numeracy through topic work, such as when creating databases of the number of aircraft when studying World War 2.

In the foundation phase, teachers provide a good range of independent practical activities for pupils to transfer skills and develop their understanding, such as through stimulating roleplay activities. Younger pupils remain engaged throughout these activities and can talk about their work in detail. Teachers planning is thoughtful and supports pupils to develop and use their speaking and listening skills, for example, younger pupils confidently use mobile devices to retell stories using voice recordings and graphics. Older pupils write for a range of imaginative and real life purposes such as using a persuasive letter to ask for funding to develop their outdoor area. These developments have a positive impact on pupils' progress in literacy and they readily choose to use their speaking and listening, reading and writing to enhance their learning. Comment #1 Comment #2 Comment #3

In general, pupils and staff are more confident and proficient in using ICT to support learning. Teachers have benefited from professional learning about digital competence and, as a result, pupils use a variety of technological devices confidently. For example, pupils in Year 4 choose to create an anti-smoking campaign using film, music and animation techniques, refining their choices as the product emerges. Older pupils have benefitted from using a variety of ICT platforms to continue their learning, for example, when working from home during the pandemic. Teachers continue to use these platforms successfully to provide home learning activities. Through monitoring pupils' work, leaders have established suitable processes for evaluating the development of skills. These include refining the strategies implemented to allow older pupils more freedom to explore literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum. For example, when pupils undertake their own personal projects.

### **R4. Improve pupils' extended writing skills**

The school has a suitable plan for improving the quality of pupils' extended writing skills. All staff now have a shared understanding of how to guide their pupils through a writing process that includes pre-writing activities to identify the key characteristics of a genre.

Generally, pupils respond well to this provision and are beginning to produce work of an appropriate standard regularly. For example, they identify the features of recounts and apply these well to write a newspaper report on a local flooding incident. However, planning is not always appropriately matched to a pupil's individual stage of development as a writer. Although success criteria provides a useful guide, it is often the same for all pupils regardless of need.

By the end of the foundation phase, many pupils write short pieces to develop their early extended writing successfully. More able pupils show a good understanding of the purpose of their writing, structure sentences appropriately and spell common words with increasing accuracy. They confidently and coherently retell a story using a picture plan and record their work independently with a mobile device.

In key stage 2, pupils' work generally engages the interest of the reader and is organised well. Many pupils make suitable vocabulary choices, use an appropriate range of punctuation and spell common words accurately. Teachers provide useful feedback to pupils about their written work using the school's agreed marking criteria and taking account of the learning objective for a piece of work. However, they do not always take full advantage of opportunities to support and challenge pupils to improve their writing through the editorial process. As a result, editing often means that pupils spend too much time copying out their work 'in best' without improving its accuracy, content or style, and this reduces the pace of progress. Older pupils do not always understand the purpose of their writing activities and how they might link to real-life situations. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their progress is at an early stage of development.

## **R5. Improve pupils' standards in mathematics**

Teachers across the school have engaged positively with professional learning opportunities to support them to apply the school's recently agreed approach to teaching mathematics. They now implement this approach with increasing confidence and consistency and this is beginning to support pupils' progress appropriately.

In the foundation phase, mathematical learning is structured into whole class sessions, small focus group activities and additional activities using a variety of resources to support pupils' learning. When involved in these opportunities many pupils engage positively, explain their learning well and make good progress. Teachers make good use of opportunities to make learning active and relevant to real life contexts, for instance to develop pupils' understanding of using money whilst buying and selling items in a shop. Comment #2Where appropriate teachers provide a good level of challenge to extend learning. Many pupils develop basic number skills successfully, for example they order numbers accurately and calculate the cost of multiple items of shopping. They apply their mathematical skills and knowledge appropriately during their play, for example when describing items that are heavier or lighter. Pupils in Year 2 use standard and non-standard measures successfully to measure distance.

In key stage 2, teachers are beginning to use assessment information appropriately to plan pupils' work. For example, personalised assessment information indicated that pupils' data handling skills and understanding of area and perimeter were insecure. Teachers made reinforcing these skills a priority at the beginning of the

school year. Many pupils make good progress in response to this focus, for example many Year 5 pupils now calculate the area and perimeter of compound shapes competently. Many pupils respond well to problem solving tasks. However, in a few instances, pupils are over reliant on prompts, such as class displays to solve basic number problems. Many pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 apply learning from mathematics lessons well across the curriculum, for example they convert pounds, shillings and pence to the equivalent in decimal currency. Many pupils in key stage 2 use apps and programmes confidently to develop basic skills such as learning times tables facts.

## **R6. Improve pupils' independent learning skills**

The school's work to set out its vision and to establish a teaching charter has supported a shared understanding of the characteristics of successful pedagogy. These principles place a suitable emphasis on nurturing pupil voice and developing independent and confident learners. Overall,, this is becoming evident across the school. For example, staff promote values such as determination and collaboration when identifying pupils for praise. Teachers have established consistent routines for pupils and set out the learning environment and resources appropriately. This ensures that pupils are familiar with the way things work at school and that they know where to find the resources they need to complete tasks. Teachers provide a broad range of engaging learning experiences for pupils both indoors and outside. They offer a suitable balance between teacher-led activities and tasks that support pupils to learn independently and use their skills at an appropriately challenging level.

In the foundation phase, pupils engage in a range of activities in the outdoor area, often working collaboratively with or alongside their peers without an adult leading the learning. Most demonstrate independence when accessing a variety of resources, for example, when designing a car, pupils decide which materials they need to create it. Most pupils make use of the school's rainbow challenge system to take responsibility for their own learning by choosing a suitably challenging task and recording their success by using a tablet device to photograph their work and add it to their own online profile.

In key stage 2, many pupils engage in tasks with enthusiasm. Many teachers have developed interesting classroom environments that provide opportunities for pupils to practise and embed their skills independently. During lessons, many pupils make suitable use of resources and information displayed around the classroom to seek guidance for themselves before asking an adult. For example, by using word wheels and a thesaurus. By responding to teachers' comments in their books, many pupils are beginning to develop an increased understanding of how to improve their work, for example, to make adaptations to spellings and mistakes in their writing. However, teachers comments do not always support greater levels of independence for pupils and allow them to edit, refine and make notable improvements to their work.