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Yours sincerely

Robert Gairey

Swyddog Arweiniol Cyhoeddiadau / Lead Officer: Publications

Estyn

**Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate For Education and Training in Wales**

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Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**Report following monitoring
Level of follow-up: Estyn monitoring**

**Hengoed Primary School
Chapel Terrace
Hengoed
CF82 7JU**

Date of visit: November 2016

by

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

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The monitoring team

Ms Penny Lewis	Reporting Inspector
Mr Owen Morgan	Team Inspector
Mr Rob Lewis	Local authority representative

Outcome of monitoring

Hengoed Primary School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 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: Raise standards to ensure that the school's performance compares more favourably with that of similar schools

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in October 2014, pupils' standards have improved overall.

As a result of whole school initiatives and teachers' higher expectations about the presentation of work, nearly all pupils take greater pride in the presentation of their written work. Most pupils write in a clear script and they take good care to apply grammatical, punctuation and spelling rules consistently in their work across the curriculum.

Most pupils work hard in lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and their peers. They generally have good recall of facts in the subject they are studying. Many pupils are beginning to develop good reasoning and critical skills. Most pupils show increasing confidence in answering teachers' questions and providing extended explanations about their thinking. Many pupils have good word processing skills which they use well in different subjects across the curriculum. More able pupils are beginning to use ICT effectively to research independently material related to the topics they study.

Most pupils respond well to teachers' correction of their work, for example, by correcting spellings, developing further their ideas or, in numeracy, improving their understanding of numerical processes. The development of these wider skills supports the improvement of pupils' standards across the curriculum effectively

By the end of key stage 2, the school's performance in relation to other similar schools as judged by teacher assessments has improved overall since the core inspection.

At the end of key stage 2 in 2015 – 2016, outcomes at the expected level place the school in the higher 50% for English and the top 25% for mathematics. This is an improvement on the expected level outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2014 – 2015 when the school was placed in the lower 50% for English and the higher 50% for mathematics. In 2015 – 2016 at the end of Year 6, the school maintained its performance at the higher level in top 50% for English and the lower 50% for mathematics.

Outcomes at the expected and higher levels in the Foundation Phase show more variable levels of improvement. In 2015 – 2016, pupils' performance in literacy at the expected outcome place the school in the bottom 50% with the school only narrowly missing being in the top 50%. However, in mathematical development, pupils' performance at the expected outcome placed the school in the top 50%. In 2015 – 2016 at the higher outcome at the end of the Foundation Phase, pupils' performance place the school the bottom 25% for literacy, but the top 25% for mathematical development.

Standardised assessments of pupils' skills, for example in relation to phonic knowledge or spelling, indicate continued improving standards but from a low base.

Recommendation 2: Improve pupils' literacy skills, including spelling, punctuation and the presentation of their work

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Many pupils start school with literacy skills below those expected for their age. However, as a result of the wide range of well-planned strategies implemented by the school over the past two years, pupils make good progress overall in developing their literacy skills.

Staff monitor and track pupils' progress carefully. They have developed a comprehensive understanding of pupils' achievements and learning needs. Intensive support sessions help pupils with specific needs to improve their skills in speaking, reading and writing well.

Pupils in the Foundation Phase have a good understanding of phonics and most use this knowledge well to help them sound out new or complex words when reading. Most pupils read simple texts with good pronunciation and intonation, taking good account of punctuation. However, a few struggle to explain ideas clearly, such as their use of a story map or what progress they are making towards their targets. This is because staff do not always present ideas in language that pupils understand, and targets are too broad and too general.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, most pupils write simple sentences clearly, using correct grammar and spelling words accurately. In many cases, where words are spelled wrongly, many pupils can spell the word phonetically. Many more able pupils use a good range of vocabulary appropriate to their age. Overall, pupils in the Foundation Phase form letters and space words correctly and they write consistently on the line. A few pupils who are anxious about writing can choose to write in pencil. This has helped make them become more confident and creative in their writing because they can correct their mistakes more easily. As a result, the quality and quantity of their writing has improved.

By the end of key stage 2, most pupils read fluently with good pronunciation and intonation. They predict the story line sensibly and they express reasoned opinions for their views or preferences. They concentrate and listen to each other's views well.

By the end of the key stage, most pupils write effectively in a number of genres. For example, Year 6 pupils write well thought-out personal reflections on 'The human body workshop' presented by university medical students who visited the school. They write good factual accounts about what they have learned about legal and illegal drugs; they draw valid conclusions from statistical analyses about which football players provide best value for money and they write well-argued formal letters from a standpoint different to their own. Most pupils present their arguments well in a logical sequence and appropriate paragraphs. Most pupils write effectively in complex sentences and employ a good range of vocabulary, particularly in creative writing, to engage the reader.

Recommendation 3: Improve attendance

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has implemented effective measures for monitoring the attendance of pupils.

It has increased its focus on persistent absentees, resulting in very few cases of persistent absenteeism. In particular, the regular scrutiny of attendance by the deputy headteacher and school secretary has improved the rigour with which the school monitors pupil attendance. The school works productively with parents whose children have poor attendance to bring about positive outcomes. The school keeps governors fully informed about attendance rates and the success of different strategies to raise attendance.

School leaders have implemented a wide range of successful initiatives to encourage and promote pupils' attendance. For example, they have introduced enriched curricular activities on Mondays and Fridays, days identified as having lower attendance rates with the result that attendance levels have improved on these days.

The school has updated its attendance policy to ensure it has a more robust and consistent approach to the monitoring and authorising of absences, in particular those for medical appointments. As a result, unauthorised absences have reduced considerably.

Pupils' attendance has been on an upward trend for three years and the verified 2015-2016 attendance figure of 94.1%, a 1.6 percentage point increase on the 2014-2015 attendance, exceeded the school target. The school has the third most improved attendance for primary schools across Caerphilly County Borough and it has been invited to provide a case study of evidence of good practice. The school has set challenging attendance targets for the next three years to maintain and improve its performance.

Recommendation 4: Provide more effective opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

School leaders have developed long-term and mid-term, age appropriate, differentiated planning that identifies a relevant range of opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their numeracy skills progressively and most make good progress. In many cases, these opportunities consolidate and reinforce skills taught in mathematics lessons, providing pupils with appropriate experiences to use recently-learned skills in a practical and relevant context. However, planning and provision in the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 does not always provide opportunities to extend and enrich the learning opportunities for more able pupils.

In the Foundation Phase, most pupils have a wide range of suitable opportunities to apply their numeracy skills. For example, in Year 2, pupils create tally charts to gather data about pupils' favourite animals. They interpret the information and transfer the data accurately onto bar graphs. In key stage 2, most pupils have suitable opportunities to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, in Year 3 and 4, pupils use measuring and doubling skills efficiently to calculate the perimeter of the base of a square based prism as part of their work studying the Egyptians.

School leaders monitor the planning of numeracy opportunities across the curriculum effectively. They monitor the teaching and learning of numeracy through regular book scrutiny and observations of lessons. As a result, they identify strengths and areas for development accurately which they share with staff to improve standards of teaching and learning.

Recommendation 5: Increase pupils' involvement in their own learning so they know how to improve their work

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

School leaders have introduced appropriate procedures to ensure that pupils have suitable individual targets. In a majority of cases, pupils contribute to these targets and develop a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. Targets are displayed on the classroom wall so that teachers and pupils review them regularly. As a result, most pupils identify their targets and know what they need to do to improve their learning. However the target setting process for younger pupils is at an early stage of development. Currently, targets are often too broad for pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

All staff now apply agreed procedures for monitoring progress towards pupils' targets consistently.

All teachers mark pupils' work following the school's marking policy. They recognise when pupils have achieved learning objectives and praise success. Teachers' written comments focus appropriately on what pupils need to do to improve their work. Nearly all pupils respond to teachers' comments about their targets, for

example when improving written work based on the story of Gelert. Teachers in all classes provide pupils with regular opportunities to assess their own work and that of their peers.

Nearly all pupils in key stage 2 use success criteria against which to assess their work, and identify shortcomings accurately. Many pupils use a developing understanding of enquiry and research to pose interesting questions for themselves and their peers about their topics and they use a range of resources to access the relevant information, for example when studying the pyramids of Egypt.

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.