



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

13 November 2019

Dear

I am writing in response to your request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to be provided with copies of all monitoring and follow-up visit reports on Newtown High School, produced by or for Estyn since the full inspection of May 2015.

Under FOIA, Estyn is required to:

- (i) confirm or deny whether it holds the information of the description specified in the request
- (ii) communicate the information requested to the applicant

In response to your queries, I attach copies of reports dated November 2018, March 2019 and June 2019, which are the reports generated and sent to the school since its full inspection in 2015. As requested, I have not included the report from February 2018.

I hope that this information is helpful to you.

If you are not satisfied with the response Estyn has made regarding your request for information, you are entitled to request that we review the matter. Your request for a review should be addressed to the Feedback and Complaints Manager, and receive no later than 20 working days after the date of this communication.

If you are still not satisfied, you also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745
Fax: 01624 524510
Email: enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk

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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Mae Estyn yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Bydd gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn y naill iaith neu'r llall yn cael yr un flaenoriaeth.

Estyn welcomes correspondence in both English and Welsh. Correspondence received in either language will be given equal priority.

Dilynwch @EstynAEM / Follow @EstynHMI

From:

Sent:

To: Robert Gairey

Cc: Enquiries

Subject: Re: Newtown High School, Dolfor Road, Newtown, Powys, SY16 1JE

Dear Mr Gairey,

I understand that interim visits do not result in published reports. However, I believe that they are available for access in accordance with Estyn's Freedom of Information procedures. I would therefore like to request, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, copies of all monitoring and follow-up visit reports on Newtown High School, produced by or for Estyn since the full inspection of May 2015, (excluding the report of February 2018, which has already been published).

Thank you.



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**

**Newtown High School
Dolfor Road
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1JE**

Date of visit: November 2018

by

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

Outcome of visit

Newtown High is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve performance at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and mathematics

During this first monitoring visit, the inspection team did not report on the standards seen in lessons and pupils' books. However, the inspection team reported on the school's most recent performance data.

Since the core inspection, the school's performance at key stage four has been variable. In 2018, performance improved in many key indicators. In the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics, performance improved by more than nine percentage points. The proportion of pupils achieving level 2 in English and level 2 in mathematics improved in 2018 and compares favourably with similar schools. The capped 8 points score, however, declined slightly. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* or A grades at GCSE in 2018 is similar to that at the time of the core inspection. In the majority of the main indicators, performance remains below that of similar schools.

In 2018, girls performed better than girls in similar schools in a majority of indicators at key stage 4. Boys' performance, however, was above that of boys in similar

schools in only a minority. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals generally improved in 2018, but it continues to compare poorly to the average for this group of pupils in similar schools.

R2. Improve attendance and reduce fixed term exclusions

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R3. Improve provision for developing pupils' numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has introduced a variety of appropriate strategies to enable pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, it has introduced a numeracy intervention programme for all pupils at key stage 3 to improve their mental calculation skills. Each department has a numeracy link teacher and all staff have received relevant training to enable them to identify opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills in their subjects.

In a few subjects, pupils have useful opportunities to develop their numeracy skills. In these subjects, many pupils undertake numerical calculations effectively. In history, for example, pupils calculate and compare the growth in population in England, Scotland and Wales across different centuries. In design and technology, pupils calculate the number of printed circuit boards needed to be cut up from a larger sheet and identify the cheapest supplier from a range of options. However, overall, many of the school's strategies are in the early stages of development and have not had sufficient impact on developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum.

The school provides a few appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their basic information and communication technology (ICT) skills. However, there is a lack of suitable opportunities for pupils to develop broader skills in ICT, for example in the use of databases and computational thinking. Overall, there has been insufficient strategic planning to develop pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum.

R4. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R5. Review and strengthen the school's arrangements for tackling bullying

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R6. Improve the quality and consistency of middle leadership to ensure that they secure sufficient improvements in standards and wellbeing within their areas of responsibility

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

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

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has strengthened suitably its arrangements for self-evaluation and improvement planning. This is beginning to have a positive impact, for example on key stage 4 outcomes.

The school's processes for self-evaluation provide more rigour, accuracy and consistency than at the time of the last visit. They are systematic, understood by all and provide leaders with worthwhile first-hand evidence. However, these improvements are very recent and have not had enough impact on the quality of teaching or the development of pupils' skills.

The school draws upon an appropriate range of evidence to inform its self-evaluation. This includes a thorough analysis of data that provides the school with useful comparisons with similar schools and an evaluation of performance within departments and across the school. Leaders have strengthened appropriately how closely activities such as lesson observations and work scrutiny focus on pupil progress. This gives them a more realistic picture regarding standards and the quality of teaching.

Recently, the school has developed a useful evaluation tool for evaluating the work of subject areas. This 'department on a page' approach provides leaders with a suitable overview of pupils' standards, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership. It draws on data analysis, lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupils' views and helps the school to identify specific strengths and areas for improvement.

Middle leaders use self-evaluation evidence appropriately to plan for improvement. Generally, they identify suitable actions and success criteria. However, in a few instances, there is insufficient clarity regarding how progress toward identified objectives will be monitored and evaluated.



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: Estyn Review

**Newtown High School
Dolfor Road
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1JE**

Date of visit: March 2019

by

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

Outcome of visit

Newtown High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

The Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that an induction period may **not** be served in a school requiring special measures i.e. as described in grounds 6 or 8 in section 2 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (1). The presumption is that schools requiring special measures are not suitable for providing induction for newly qualified teachers, other than in exceptional circumstances. Therefore, schools requiring special measures should not normally appoint a newly qualified teacher (NQT) to their staff.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve performance at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and mathematics

Many pupils make suitable progress in lessons. They are attentive and show respect to teachers and peers. A few pupils make strong progress. They deepen their subject knowledge and understanding in lessons and use this well to develop their ideas. Many pupils recall prior learning suitably. A few do this very well and apply their understanding effectively to help them tackle challenging tasks. For example, in English pupils use their knowledge of language features and poetic techniques to compare the way in which two poems deal with the theme of home.

Many pupils are interested and engaged in their learning. They make suitable contributions to lessons and work well collaboratively. A minority of pupils show curiosity when exploring new concepts and ideas. For example, pupils are keen to find out about why motte and bailey castles were built during the reign of William I. However, a minority of pupils lack independence as learners. They do not settle to

work sufficiently quickly and are over-reliant on teachers. A few pupils lack concentration and are too easily distracted from their work. These pupils do not complete tasks or make sufficient progress in lessons.

Many pupils listen attentively and with interest but a minority do not listen well enough to each other or to teachers. As a result, they do not have a secure understanding of the tasks they are required to complete or respond enough in discussions with peers. A minority of pupils engage well in discussion activities and communicate their ideas clearly. A few pupils provide thoughtful, extended responses to questions and draw on a range of vocabulary to explain their ideas. For example, pupils describe the concept of eco-tourism using illustrations of how a country might promote sustainability. A few pupils communicate personal views effectively such as in drama when they speak sensitively about how characters in 'A Day in the Death of Joe Egg' respond to disability. However, the majority of pupils lack confidence in their verbal skills. They do not have sufficient command of subject specific vocabulary to explain their ideas clearly.

Many pupils produce extended writing that is well structured. A minority of pupils write fluently and show an understanding of the purpose of their writing. They communicate their ideas clearly in writing using a wide range of vocabulary. For example, in English pupils write well about the way in which Harper Lee uses symbolism to communicate key themes in 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. A minority of pupils produce lively and engaging writing but too often, these pupils do not use spelling and grammar accurately. A minority of pupils do not develop their writing sufficiently. Their writing lacks a sense of audience. Overall, pupils do not draft and redraft their work sufficiently well. In these instances, pupils copy their text neatly rather than redraft their work following reflection and refinement.

Many pupils have sound basic reading skills. They extract relevant information appropriately from sources to answer questions. A minority summarise information competently, for example, when they identify the main features of life in Merthyr Tydfil during the industrial revolution. A few pupils demonstrate well-developed higher-order reading skills. For example, they analyse thoughtfully the key features of humanist beliefs or interpret perceptively demographical information in geography.

A minority of pupils can recognise and describe differing interpretations in written texts. However, many make only very simplistic comments when evaluating sources. Furthermore, a minority of pupils, when asked to look for key information in texts, often rely on just copying rather than summarising the points.

The majority of pupils have sound basic number skills. When given the opportunity, they use these skills appropriately across the curriculum, such as when they calculate the cost of materials in design technology, or estimate the number of tree and flower types in the rainforest. However, their progress in developing these skills is often hampered by the use of numeracy tasks that are insufficiently challenging.

Around half of pupils complete graphs accurately and use them appropriately to interpret data. However, a similar proportion do not take sufficient care when plotting graphs, which leads to them being inaccurate and poorly presented. A few pupils lack confidence when carrying out basic mental calculations.

In general, pupils develop their thinking skills suitably across the curriculum. For example, they deduce the meaning of geographical terminology and use conversion and distance-time graphs to solve problems in mathematics. When given the opportunity, pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills appropriately in subjects other than ICT. For instance, they use spreadsheets to calculate probability or to investigate the impact colour has on how quickly ice melts. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use anything other than very basic ICT skills.

A few pupils experiment creatively with a range of ideas and concepts to produce original work. They demonstrate imagination, originality and insight, for instance when interpreting the motivation of characters in plays. In doing so, they capture the inner thoughts of these characters and represent them effectively through physical actions and emotive language.

R2. Improve attendance and reduce fixed term exclusions

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R3. Improve provision for developing pupils' numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R4. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Since the core inspection, the school has developed a more strategic approach to developing teaching and assessment. This includes the use of first hand evidence to identify aspects of teaching that need to improve across the school and in specific departments. Furthermore, the school has introduced a comprehensive range of beneficial initiatives to support improvements in the areas identified.

All staff have received valuable professional learning in developing effective teaching strategies. This includes access to a coaching programme to address specific areas for improvement, including developing meaningful questioning to consolidate pupils' learning. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and assessment. However, there remains too much inconsistency in how effectively staff implement these strategies. As a result, teaching has not had sufficient impact on pupils' progress, their skills or the standards they achieve.

In many cases, teachers develop productive and supportive working relationships with pupils. In the majority of instances, teachers provide clear explanations and use a range of suitable resources that interest pupils. In addition, the majority of teachers use suitable questioning to engage pupils and support the development of their skills. These teachers are good language models, who focus on developing effective use of subject terminology. For example, in art teachers challenge pupils to identify and use subject specific vocabulary to analyse critically the visual elements in the work of Welsh artist Nicholas Evans within the context of the coal mining industry.

In a few cases where teaching is highly effective, teachers use questioning skilfully to check and consolidate pupils' understanding. These teachers have high expectations and encourage aspiration and ambition in their pupils. In these cases, pupils have valuable opportunities to work independently and reflect on their learning. Teachers plan creatively and tailor activities carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, in history, teachers provide an effective balance of extra support and opportunities to work independently.

In a minority of instances, teachers do not plan well enough to ensure that activities match the ability of all pupils. In these cases, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge or have high expectations for all learners. They do not ensure that activities enable pupils to build progressively on their knowledge and skills.

The school has refined suitably its marking and assessment policy. In addition, teachers have received valuable professional learning to help them provide clear and effective feedback that identifies how pupils can improve their work. Many teachers provide helpful and timely verbal advice. This supports, clarifies and also probes pupils' understanding. The majority of teachers provide basic written feedback that helps pupils improve the accuracy of their work and improve specific features. In these cases, teachers ask pupils to provide more detail when responding to questions. A few teachers give pupils valuable written feedback. In doing so, they ensure that pupils have clear guidelines on how they can improve the standard of their work, tailored to the needs and ability of individual pupils. These teachers ensure that pupils follow up on their advice and refine their work, including addressing literacy errors. In religious education, for example, pupils reflect well on advice from teachers and deepen their responses to the theme of religious and humanist attitudes to marriage.

In a few lessons, teachers do not monitor the progress of pupils closely enough and do not plan timely activities to assess understanding and deepen learning. They do not address mistakes and misconceptions sufficiently well. A minority of teachers do not provide pupils with clear enough guidance on how to improve. As a result, there remains too much inconsistency in how well teachers' feedback supports pupils' progress.

R5. Review and strengthen the school’s arrangements for tackling bullying

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R6. Improve the quality and consistency of middle leadership to ensure that they secure sufficient improvements in standards and wellbeing within their areas of responsibility

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

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

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.



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**

**Newtown High School
Dolfor Road
Newtown
Powys
SY16 1JE**

Date of visit: June 2019

by

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

Outcome of visit

Newtown High School is judged to have made insufficient 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 maintaining the level of follow-up activity.

Estyn will re-visit the school in around four - six months' time to monitor progress against a sample of the recommendations.

Under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing the action plan.

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Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve performance at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and mathematics

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R2. Improve attendance and reduce fixed term exclusions

The rate of pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the time of the core inspection and now compares very favourably with that of similar schools. Persistent absence is also lower than at the time of that inspection.

The school has made effective use of a range of helpful strategies, such as informative posters, assemblies and the rewards system to encourage strong pupil attendance. Absenteeism is monitored robustly and Heads of Year provide helpful, targeted support for those pupils who have weak attendance. This includes effective

communication with parents to raise their awareness of the importance of their children attending school.

The number of fixed term exclusions has reduced considerably since the core inspection and is very low. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last two years and incidents of serious misbehaviour have decreased significantly. The school has implemented suitable strategies to support pupils in danger of disengagement and works appropriately with a range of outside agencies to support vulnerable learners.

The number of pupils being sent to the internal exclusion room remains high and has not declined in the last year. The school gathers valuable information about these pupils but does not use it well enough to identify patterns and possible causes of misbehaviour, or to address such problems effectively.

A majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. However, low-level disruption occurs in a minority of lessons and interferes with pupils' learning. This is often because teachers do not plan well enough to capture pupils' interest and ensure an appropriate level of challenge. In addition, they do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently or robustly enough.

R3. Improve provision for developing pupils' numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R4. Improve the quality of teaching and assessment

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R5. Review and strengthen the school's arrangements for tackling bullying

The school has used assemblies and anti-bullying workshops effectively to help pupils develop a clear understanding of bullying and how to react if it occurs. All staff are clear about how they should deal with any incidents they become aware of. Most pupils have no concerns about bullying and many believe the school deals well with the significantly reduced number of incidents that are reported. The school monitors these incidents suitably and provides appropriate support for those involved.

R6. Improve the quality and consistency of middle leadership to ensure that they secure sufficient improvements in standards and wellbeing within their areas of responsibility

Since the core inspection, the headteacher has implemented a range of useful systems intended to improve the capacity of leadership and the effectiveness of line management. However, there remains too much variation in the quality and impact of leadership at all levels.

Subject and faculty leaders meet regularly with their line managers to follow common agendas that focus suitably on assessment information. Reviews of key stage 4 outcomes help the majority of middle leaders to hold their departments to account appropriately by identifying underperformance and the measures required to address it. However, the line management of pastoral leaders is underdeveloped. This has contributed to limited progress being made in improving a minority of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour outside of lessons.

The school has provided suitable professional learning opportunities for leaders at all levels, including bespoke support where required. Middle leaders conduct work scrutiny and lesson observations but around half do not focus well enough on the quality of teaching or the impact it has on pupil progress. The focus on compliance with school policies limits the ability of leaders to identify accurately the aspects of teaching, including the development of pupils' skills that are most in need of improvement.

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

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.