



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

6 January 2020

Dear

Thank you again for your Freedom of Information request to Estyn. I attach the July and December 2019 monitoring reports for Denbigh High School as requested.

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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From:

Sent: 03 January 2020 15:26

To: Robert Gairey

Subject: 22 19 01 Report Denbigh High School 02 July 2019

Dear Mr Gairey

I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please send me:

1: The monitoring report for Denbigh High School produced after the follow up visit on 02 July 2019

2: The monitoring report for Denbigh High School produced after the follow up visit on 09 December 2019

I would like the above information to be provided to me as electronic copies.

If this request is too wide or unclear, I would be grateful if you could contact me as I understand that under the Act, you are required to advise and assist requesters. If any of this information is already in the public domain, please can you direct me to it, with page references and URLs if necessary.

If the release of any of this information is prohibited on the grounds of breach of confidence, I ask that you supply me with copies of the confidentiality agreement and remind you that information should not be treated as confidential if such an agreement has not been signed.

I understand that you are required to respond to my request within the 20 working days after you receive this letter. I would be grateful if you could confirm in writing that you have received this request.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



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**

**Denbigh High School
Ruthin Road
Denbigh
LL16 3EX**

Date of visit: July 2019

by

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

Outcome of visit

Denbigh 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. Raise standards at keys stage 4, in particular for girls

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R2. Improve behaviour and attendance

Since the appointment of the attendance officer in January 2018, the school has strengthened arrangements for monitoring pupil absence and introduced a range of beneficial approaches to improve pupils' attendance. These include regular reviews of the effectiveness of interventions and a purposeful whole-school approach to raising pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance. In addition, the school has built useful partnerships with parents and outside agencies.

Overall, internal school data suggests that these strategies have led to notable improvements in pupils' attendance, in particular the attendance of boys and pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Levels of attendance for these groups now compare favourably with the levels of attendance at the time of the core inspection. However, in 2019, the rate of attendance of girls is still lower than at the time of the core inspection.

Since the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher, the school has introduced a new behaviour policy, which is having a beneficial effect on behaviour in lessons and around the school. The expectations of this policy have been communicated clearly to both staff and pupils, and are understood well by all parties. However, a very few pupils continue to disrupt lessons. A few teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently and supply teachers are not supported well enough to manage pupil behaviour. The rate of fixed term exclusions has decreased to a level that is lower than at the time of the core inspection but remains too high.

Many pupils involve themselves successfully in their learning. However, a minority are passive and do not engage well in learning activities. Often this is because the level of challenge provided by their teachers is either too high or too low.

R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and the provision for skills

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit.

R4. Strengthen leadership across the school, with a particular focus on the systems and arrangements to support pupil wellbeing

Since 2018, there have been notable changes in senior leadership. The appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher together with the creation of an

extended senior leadership team has strengthened the school's capacity to make improvements. The actions of the new senior leadership team are beginning to have a positive impact on improving pupil behaviour and attendance in particular. However, these changes have not led to sufficient improvements in other important areas of the school's work, such as improving the quality of teaching and assessment.

Although roles and responsibilities are now understood well, there continue to be a few areas of overlap within the senior leadership team, for example regarding the responsibility for improving pupil behaviour. Lines of accountability between senior and middle leaders are clear and there are regular link meetings that focus appropriately on standards and behaviour. Middle leaders now have a suitable understanding of how to manage their departments. However, in general, senior leaders do not support middle leaders well enough to carry out their roles. They do not hold them to account consistently or rigorously enough, particularly for the quality of teaching and assessment. This does not help these middle leaders to hold their own departments to account well enough for these aspects. In addition, the management of progress leaders is not sufficiently strategic. For example, best use is not always made of leaders' time, which restricts their capacity to carry out their role effectively.

The senior team has a strong focus on developing a culture where all staff reflect honestly on their areas of responsibility. Leaders at all levels are now involved in a suitable range of self-evaluation and improvement activities and are beginning to develop an understanding of the main strengths and areas for improvement in their areas of responsibility. However, leaders at all levels do not draw effectively enough on the full range of data and first hand evidence when self-evaluating their work to plan for improvement. In quality assurance, leaders do not evaluate the impact of provision on standards well enough. Consequently, they do not identify strengths and areas for improvement precisely, particularly with regards to the quality of teaching. This hinders their ability to plan for whole-school and individual training needs accurately. Departmental improvement planning follows the school's priorities too closely and does not always focus closely enough on departmental priorities.

The school has taken appropriate steps to strengthen performance management arrangements for all teaching staff. However, in many instances, performance management targets are not sufficiently robust.

The school continues to run a large deficit budget. The recovery plan for this deficit is in the process of being finalised. The governing body, through its effective chair of governors, holds senior and core subject leaders to account robustly.



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**

**Denbigh High School
Ruthin Road
Denbigh
LL16 3EX**

Date of visit: December 2019

by

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

Outcome of visit

Denbigh 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.

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Progress since the last inspection

R1. Raise standards at keys stage 4, in particular for girls

Around half of pupils make sound progress in their learning. They recall prior learning suitably and apply this competently in familiar contexts to improve their understanding and skills. However, a minority of pupils do not recall prior learning well enough and do not make enough progress over time

Most pupils behave well in lessons and the majority display positive attitudes to learning. However, a minority are too passive in lessons, lack concentration and are easily distracted. As a result, they do not complete enough work during lessons and do not make enough progress.

Most pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and each other. The majority pay suitable attention to the contributions of others and a few listen actively and pose

insightful questions about what they are learning. However, a minority of pupils do not listen well enough to teachers' explanations or instructions.

When given the opportunity, a minority of pupils develop their thinking skills well and are able to explain their views effectively, for example when discussing the causes and impact of knife crime in England and Wales. Many pupils offer brief verbal responses to teachers' questions. When given the opportunity, the majority of pupils engage actively in discussions with each other about their work. A few speak confidently and use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and opinions. However, a minority have difficulty articulating their thoughts or expressing their views clearly. In most cases, this is because teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas or extend their responses.

Many pupils locate and extract key information from texts efficiently. The majority can deduce basic meaning from a suitable range of texts. For example, in biology lessons, pupils locate and use key information from a report about a problematic drug trial.

Since the last monitoring visit, the majority of pupils have improved the quality of their writing suitably and take more pride in the presentation of their work. They use paragraphs appropriately, punctuate accurately and use subject specific vocabulary competently. A majority of pupils have a suitable understanding of audience, purpose and tone when writing. However, many make frequent errors in their spelling and a minority have difficulty even when spelling basic everyday words.

The majority of pupils use the four rules of number suitably to perform basic calculations. When given the opportunity, these pupils apply their number skills appropriately to work out simple percentages and convert fractions. Many have a suitable understanding of measure and use this to calculate the area of shapes accurately. However, the majority of pupils have difficulty applying their mathematical knowledge to solve problems in challenging contexts. In addition, they do not transfer these skills to other subjects across the curriculum well enough. A minority of pupils make errors when plotting and labelling graphs and a few have difficulty with basic multiplication.

Performance at key stage 4 has been weak since the core inspection, and has shown little improvement. In 2019, outcomes for pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, remain well below expectations. The performance of girls has been variable and in 2019 is well below that of girls in similar schools.

Leaders evaluate suitably standards based on performance data. However, their evaluation of outcomes does not focus well enough on the school's performance when compared to expectations relative to similar schools. In addition, leaders do not draw well enough on a suitable range of first hand evidence to evaluate the standard of pupils' work in lessons and books.

R2. Improve behaviour and attendance

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R3. Strengthen the quality of teaching and the provision for skills

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has focused suitably on strengthening the quality of teaching by developing a whole-school approach to teaching, 'The Denbigh High School Way'. Leaders have recently introduced a cycle of lesson observations to begin to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. However, these observations focus too heavily on compliance with school policies rather than the quality and impact of provision. This is limiting the school's ability to identify strengths and areas for improvement in teaching.

Most teachers develop purposeful working relationships with pupils, creating a positive learning environment. These teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning suitably to confirm pupils' understanding. Around half plan lessons suitably, use interesting resources and provide clear explanations and instructions. They monitor progress closely during lessons and provide swift verbal feedback.

Around half of teachers do not ensure that activities are well matched to the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able. In these lessons, teachers do not respond effectively to address off-task conversations or the passive approach to learning of a minority of pupils. As a result, not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Around half of teachers do not have high enough aspirations for the standards that pupils can achieve and a minority intervene too quickly when pupils find tasks difficult, preventing them from developing as resilient and independent learners. Many teachers do not use questioning well enough to probe and extend understanding.

Many subject areas are beginning to make suitable use of assessment feedback to support pupils' learning. Many teachers identify and correct pupils' spelling errors appropriately, although pupils do not take enough responsibility for correcting their own work. A majority of teachers provide suitable written feedback that tells pupils how to improve their work. Overall, teachers do not ensure pupils respond effectively to feedback and the quality and impact of written feedback is too variable.

The school has adopted a suitable focus on improving the provision for developing pupils' oracy skills across the curriculum, for example by increasing the use of class discussions in lessons. This is beginning to improve the verbal skills of a minority of pupils. The school has recently introduced small group sessions to support the reading and numeracy of those pupils with weaker skills. In key stage 3, pupils are beginning to engage positively with an online literacy package to improve their reading and writing skills. This provision ensures pupils receive support and challenge which meet their specific individual needs. However, it is too early to

measure the impact of this work on improving pupils' skills. Overall, the provision to develop pupils' skills across the curriculum remains underdeveloped.

R4. Strengthen leadership across the school, with a particular focus on the systems and arrangements to support pupil wellbeing

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit