



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

Report following monitoring

Level of follow-up: Special measures

**Brynmawr Foundation School
Rhydwr
Intermediate Road
Brynmawr
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 4XT**

Date of visit: December 2022

by

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

Outcome of visit

Brynmawr Foundation School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection. As a result, His 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 pupils' standards across the school, including their literacy and numeracy skills

Since the last monitoring visit, senior leaders are beginning to identify the aspects of pupils' skills most in need of improvement. However, this work has not led to sufficient improvements in pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills.

In the lessons observed during this visit, around half of pupils recall prior learning suitably. In a few instances they apply this learning well to a range of new and more challenging contexts, for example when applying Pythagoras' Theorem to three-dimensional shapes.

In around half of lessons, pupils' build suitably on their prior knowledge and go on to make appropriate progress in their learning. In a few cases, pupils make good progress, such as when they use a variety of tenses when writing in Spanish. However, around half of pupils make limited progress overall. This is often because they do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their learning or skills independently in a range of contexts.

Many pupils listen well to their teachers. The majority express their ideas suitably when responding to questions or sharing their views. A few provide extended and well-considered verbal responses, using subject-specific terms and justifying their opinions confidently. However, a minority of pupils' verbal responses are too brief, or they do not explain their ideas clearly, often due to their limited vocabulary.

Many pupils locate relevant facts from texts suitably. In a few subject areas, pupils annotate texts appropriately to highlight facts or features of writing. Although a majority of pupils are developing basic inference skills appropriately, they often do not analyse language accurately enough. A minority of pupils use their knowledge to explore themes in a novel, and a few draw links to the social and historical context competently. Overall, however, pupils' use of reading strategies across the curriculum is limited.

In a few subjects, pupils write at suitable length and structure extended pieces of writing appropriately. In these areas, a minority of pupils write confidently for their audience with sound technical accuracy and use a suitably range of vocabulary. However, across the curriculum, only a minority of pupils write independently and at length. Here, many pupils rely too heavily on support or copy work from their teachers, verbatim. Overall, the technical accuracy of pupils' writing remains too variable. For example, there are too many errors in the use of capital letters and punctuation. The handwriting of many pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3, is often ill-formed and difficult to read. This is partly a legacy of school closures owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many pupils use the four number operations suitably and the majority recall basic multiplication facts well. These pupils work suitably with basic fractions, decimals and percentages and solve simple equations successfully. The majority of pupils produce a range of suitably accurate graphs. However, they rarely have sufficient opportunities to analyse these graphs.

R2. Improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

R3. Improve the effectiveness of teaching to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress in lessons

Senior leaders have continued to promote suitably the helpful teaching guidelines exemplified in the 'Brynmawr Way'. Working with their external partners, leaders have enabled staff to access beneficial professional learning focused particularly on planning, questioning and feedback. Most teachers are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to strengthen their classroom practice. Around half of them have begun to implement suitably a range of the strategies they have been trained to

deliver, including approaches to plan more effective lessons. As yet, however, the impact of this work on improving pupils' learning and progress remains too variable.

In around half of lessons, teaching enables pupils to make suitable progress. In these cases, teachers build on pupils' prior learning appropriately and provide engaging resources. These teachers provide clear explanations using subject specific vocabulary and question pupils appropriately to assess their basic understanding and progress.

In a few cases, where teaching is more effective, teachers plan challenging work that is matched well to pupils' prior attainment. They model their high expectations and enable pupils to work independently at a suitable pace. As a result, pupils in these classes make secure progress.

In around half of lessons, there are shortcomings in classroom practice that prevent pupils from making suitable progress. Teachers in these lessons do not employ well enough the strategies they discuss in their professional learning sessions. They continue to plan undemanding activities that do not provide pupils with sufficient challenge or help to develop their independence. In general, these teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and this makes the pace of learning too slow.

There are now more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing and speaking skills across the curriculum. However, the impact of this on improving pupils' skills is too variable. This is often because teachers do not help pupils to develop or improve their responses. Opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills, other than through graph work, are underdeveloped.

In the main, teachers offer appropriate verbal feedback. In a few instances, teachers' feedback helps pupils to make improvements to their work. However, staff frequently reward modest pupil responses with overly generous praise. In addition, many teachers do not provide pupils with sufficiently specific guidance as to how they can improve their work or ensure that pupils respond robustly to any feedback. Overall, teachers' feedback has too limited an impact on pupils' progress.

R4. Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders' ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement

Inspectors did not evaluate this recommendation during this visit

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