



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: Significant Improvement**

**Magor V.A. Primary School
Sycamore Terrace
Magor
Newport
Monmouthshire
NP6 3EG**

Date of visit: December 2018

by

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

Outcome of visit

Magor V.A. 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 significant improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

R1. Improve the standards that more able pupils achieve in key stage 2

Across key stage 2, most pupils that are more able achieve standards at least in line with their age and ability. In many classes, they achieve particularly high standards in literacy. By Year 6, more able pupils show a powerful awareness of audience in their writing. Most use mature and imaginative language to add sparkle, and to engage the reader effectively.

Since the core inspection, the school has reviewed its policy and procedures for supporting and challenging more able and talented pupils. Teachers have worked closely with other local schools to improve teaching and learning for these pupils. As a result, most staff now have a clear understanding of how to challenge more able pupils effectively.

Teachers in parallel classes work together to plan learning that challenges this group of pupils. Most teachers provide more able pupils with suitable enrichment activities to enhance their learning. However, there is still some variation between classes in how well teaching meets these pupils' needs, particularly in mathematics and topic lessons.

R2. Raise standards of Welsh and information and communication technology (ICT)

As they move through the school, most pupils improve their Welsh skills well. By the end of the foundation phase, most pupils speak accurately about themselves and the weather. In key stage 2, many pupils talk confidently about their holidays and hobbies. Older pupils extend their sentences appropriately using a range of connectives and use the past tense correctly. Most pupils read familiar and unfamiliar texts with accurate pronunciation and have a suitable understanding of what they have read. Across the school, pupils write regularly in Welsh, for example to retell stories and to create dialogues between friends.

The school has improved the capacity of staff to teach Welsh effectively through bespoke training and sharing good practice. Throughout the school, staff promote the Welsh language successfully through daily Welsh lessons, displays, and in collective worship. In addition, members of the 'Cryw Cymraeg' help and encourage staff and pupils to speak Welsh. For example, they lead assemblies and play games in Welsh with younger pupils at playtime.

Through training and working with other schools, nearly all teachers now have the skills that enable them to teach information and communication technology (ICT) effectively. As a result, the school's provision for the teaching of ICT has improved significantly.

As they move through the school, most pupils develop a wide range of ICT skills which they apply well in different areas of the curriculum. For instance, in reception, pupils use drawing packages to create pictures of their faces, and in Year 1 use a simple database to record the use of different buildings in the village.

Across key stage 2, most pupils make good progress in improving their ICT skills. By Year 6, many pupils develop a wide range of ICT skills which they use confidently to support their learning in other subjects. However, many pupils do not have a secure understanding of more advanced features of spreadsheets, such as using formulae to manipulate data.

R3. Provide pupils with worthwhile opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills at the correct level in other curriculum areas

Leaders have made notable improvements to the school's approach to planning. As a result, most teachers provide worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills systematically and progressively in other curriculum areas.

Most pupils have suitable opportunities to practice their numeracy skills beyond mathematics lessons, for example in science and topic work. For instance, in Year 4, pupils accurately convert the currency 'dojo-dollars' into pounds, which provides a real life context for practising skills. Year 6 pupils construct accurate line graphs to show how the length of shadows change during the day. However, leaders rightly recognise that the opportunities for pupils to practise their problem solving and reasoning skills systematically are not yet consistent across the school.

In literacy, teachers and teaching assistants provide a structured phonics programme so that pupils in the foundation phase develop their early reading and writing skills well. Across the school, in addition to the formal teaching of reading, teachers encourage pupils to read widely. For example, in Years 5 and 6, teachers encourage pupils to read classic children's fiction about their topic, the Second World War. There are purposeful opportunities for pupils to use their higher-order reading skills, for instance pupils skim and scan web pages to find relevant and pertinent information related to their class topics.

Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their oracy skills. For example, foundation phase pupils memorise the words and songs for their Christmas performances, which they perform confidently to parents.

There are worthwhile opportunities for pupils to write at length, both in English lessons and in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 write letters to persuade Captain Morgan that they would make a perfect pirate, and pupils in Year 1 write a diary entry to record their recent visit to Llanhaiach Fawr. By Years 5 and 6, pupils have regular opportunities to write extensively, and to a good standard, in English and in other areas of the curriculum.

R4. Improve assessment procedures

Leaders, the regional consortia and partner schools have worked to support staff to develop an increasingly robust approach to assessing pupils' work. Teachers have a

growing confidence and accurate understanding of what pupils need to do in order to achieve each level. As a result, they are better able to identify the next steps that pupils need in their learning.

The school has recently developed a detailed tracking system, to record teachers' ongoing assessments. Leaders use this tracking to identify the attainment of groups of pupils, and to trigger support for small groups of pupils at risk of underachievement. However, the system is at an early stage of development, and it does not yet give a complete picture of pupils' progress over time from their starting points.

All teachers provide pupils with regular brief, positive feedback about their work. When appropriate, teachers make good use of carefully structured success criteria grids. These focus teachers' comments well, and support pupils to assess their own and their peers' work. Pupils find this feedback helpful. However, across the school, the quality of teachers' written feedback is variable. Although there are examples of comprehensive, helpful feedback, for instance in English, often teachers' written comments do not identify clearly enough what pupils need to do better, in order to improve.

R5. Improve strategic leadership

The school has experienced a significant change in leadership over the last year. In recent weeks, the governing body has appointed the current executive headteacher as the school's permanent headteacher. She will continue in her role as executive headteacher until she takes up her substantive post in April 2019.

The school has expanded its senior leadership team to include the head teacher, two assistant head teachers and two other leaders. Each member of the team has clear roles and responsibilities. They provide the school with strong leadership focused appropriately on addressing the priorities in the post-inspection action plan. Leaders ensure that they take every opportunity to reinforce the school's vision with stakeholders through signage, in staff meetings, collective worship and in messages to parents. Through this work, they communicate high expectations of staff and pupils.

The executive headteacher has organised a termly calendar of staff, leadership and phase meetings to address priorities in the post-inspection action plan. Each meeting has a clear focus on improvement areas. Communication between senior leaders and other members of staff is strong. For example, leaders ensure that they inform staff of dates and times of meetings in advance, and share other important school messages successfully through face-to-face communication, emails and texts. This ensures that all members of staff are aware of school events and any changes to timetables.

Members of the governing body now provide the school with stronger strategic leadership. The chair of governors has taken a proactive approach to reorganising the work of committees to meet the needs of the school more carefully. As a result, governors focus their meetings on school priorities and have a more accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas to improve. Governors are starting to challenge leaders more effectively. However, they do not routinely visit the school to gain first

hand evidence on the progress that the school is making towards meeting its priorities. Members of the governing body now have a more secure understanding of the school's finances, for example in addressing the school's deficit budget.

R6. Ensure that performance management systems support school improvement more effectively

Leaders have revised and updated the performance management policy and procedures, which now meet requirements.

There is a well-understood annual cycle for performance management, for teachers and for teaching assistants. There are clear, precise objectives which match closely with school improvement priorities, in addition to appropriate personal targets. The appointment of a senior leader to oversee staff professional learning has helped to provide staff with access to a range of opportunities to develop their classroom practice and leadership skills effectively.

Members of the governing body have received suitable training to enable them to understand the process for head teacher performance management. With the very recent appointment of the new headteacher, governors are now well placed to carry out their statutory duties effectively.

R7. Establish a rigorous system of self-evaluation

Leaders have made good use of the post-inspection action plan in order to inform their school improvement activities over the past year. Staff and leadership team meetings, training, monitoring activities and evaluations link cohesively with the plan. The action points arising from meetings are sharp and pertinent. As a result, the school's improvement journey over recent time has been particularly well focused, and has brought about most of the required improvements.

With support, leaders have developed the skills to monitor astutely. They make good use of a range of evidence, including an evaluation of pupils' work, listening to learners, classroom observations and assessments of pupils' achievements. Monitoring has rightly focused on establishing progression and consistency in the provision across the different classes. Leaders identify accurately where further work is required in order to address any inconsistencies or to embed the improvements. They have suitable systems to address any underperformance.

The self-evaluation cycle is systematic and leads to an accurate evaluation of the school's work and areas for future development. For instance, leaders have emerging plans to develop the school's curriculum, in line with national priorities.

R8. Improve communication with parents

Since the core inspection, the school has strengthened its communication with parents. Leaders have introduced a new communication policy which ensures that all staff are clear on how and when to engage with parents. As a result, communication with parents is relevant, timely and consistent.

Leaders use their half termly 'Magor Messenger' newsletter to keep parents up-to-date with school news. In addition, the school uses social media to enable parents to

receive regular information on their child's achievements. The executive headteacher and chair of governors also communicate important messages to parents through formal letters, for example regarding changes to the school's leadership and progress on the post-inspection action plan.

The school shares useful year group topic planners with parents each term. These booklets include an outline of what skills pupils will learn, alongside specific class information. Staff regularly invite parents into the school for collective worship, concerts and other school events. Leaders use questionnaires regularly to take account of parents' views on many aspects of the school's work, including communication.

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