

**RE-INSPECTION**

**OF**

**Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron  
Stryd Y Fro  
Aberaeron  
Ceredigion  
SA46 0DT**

**SCHOOL NUMBER: 6674042**

**DATE OF INSPECTION: May 2011**

Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron was inspected in March 2010 and judged as requiring significant improvement. As part of the Welsh Government's requirements for schools requiring significant improvement, Estyn undertook a follow-up inspection in May 2011 focusing on the key issues identified in the Section 28 inspection.

**Outcome of the re-inspection**

Ysgol Gyfun Aberaeron is judged to have made good progress in relation to the recommendations for improvement identified in the Section 28 inspection in March 2010. As a result of this progress 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**

Progress against each recommendation is set out in four sections that cover:

- standards;
- the quality of teaching and curricular provision;
- improving quality; and
- management.

The recommendations in the Section 28 inspection report have been allocated to these four different sections and progress against each of them is described below.

### **Standards**

**R1 Raise pupils' academic standards in Welsh first language and physical education in KS3 and in media studies and art and design in KS4. Raise pupils' academic standards significantly in mathematics in KS3 and KS4.**

Standards in art and media studies in key stage 4 have improved and are now good. In art, pupils use a range of media well and are prepared to experiment in order to add variety to their designs. In media studies, pupils show good knowledge of technical terms and can judge their work effectively against appropriate success criteria. In physical education in key stage 3, the school has made good progress in improving provision with the result that standards are good. Pupils show good skills in teamwork, thinking skills and problem solving.

Although improved teaching is starting to raise standards in both mathematics and Welsh, standards are not yet good enough.

In Welsh, pupils concentrate well, enjoy lessons and make good progress. The most able pupils speak and write fluently, using an extensive vocabulary and a lively style. However, too many pupils, including some more able pupils, make elementary errors in their written work, for example in spelling, mutations, syntax and verb forms.

In mathematics, pupils' standards have improved. Pupils concentrate well and are keen to answer questions and participate in activities. Generally they make good progress in lessons, showing good recollection of previous work and a willingness to solve problems. Assessment tests already indicate higher standards in key stage 4 this year. However, a few pupils continue to make basic errors, and a minority still have a weak grasp of some basic rules. Occasionally the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

### **The quality of teaching and curricular provision**

**R6 Improve the quality of teaching significantly by increasing the level of pace and challenge in lessons, eliminating the shortcomings and sharing the**

**good and very good practice identified in the Section 28 report.**

**R11 Increase the opportunities available to all learners to develop their bilingual skills further.**

The school has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching. Teaching was good in almost every lesson observed and was adequate in a few. Almost all teachers plan lessons well and explain the success criteria to pupils at the beginning of the lesson. The varied activities challenge pupils appropriately and most teachers set useful time targets to improve the pace of the lesson. In a minority of lessons, teachers use information and communication technology imaginatively to stimulate effective learning.

In mathematics, teaching has improved and is good in a majority of lessons. In many lessons, teachers use open-ended questions to extend and check pupils' understanding. They use interactive white boards well to provide variety, pace and challenge. They correct misconceptions effectively and skilfully. However, there are still some shortcomings in a minority of lessons, such as when teachers do not always adapt work enough to meet the needs of the range of pupils, or provide enough variety in the activities. Sometimes marking is superficial and, although supportive, it is not diagnostic enough.

The school has begun to improve opportunities to develop bilingualism. The Welsh department plans well to develop the Welsh language. Some teachers have attended courses on bilingualism and the school is planning a course for teachers at the school. Next year, the curriculum also offers more opportunities to study some GCSE and A level subjects in both Welsh and English. Some teachers are skilled and effective in teaching bilingually, but at the moment skill in teaching bilingually does not extend enough across all the staff.

**Improving quality**

**R3 Establish quality assurance procedures which are comprehensive and systematic and draw on quality first-hand evidence.**

**R4 Ensure that senior and middle managers:**

- **undertake the whole-school initiative of assessment for learning;**
- **monitor rigorously and consistently the quality of teaching, marking and standards of pupils' work on a regular basis; and**
- **share best practice to promote good and very good features across the curriculum.**

**R5 Ensure that the following strategic areas of responsibility are co-ordinated and delivered effectively by appropriate personnel:**

- **data handling and evaluation;**
- **assessment and target-setting;**
- **key skills in key stage 3 and key stage 4; and**
- **teaching and learning.**

There are now comprehensive and rigorous systems to enable the senior leadership team and the newly established area leaders to monitor standards consistently throughout the school. Important strategic areas of responsibility are now co-ordinated and delivered effectively by appropriate personnel.

Monitoring arrangements include scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' lesson plans as well as lesson observations. All teachers have received a large number of lesson observations and they are now familiar with frequent visits. Following observations by managers, teachers receive a constructive report that helps them to develop their teaching skills. There are also frequent opportunities for teachers to visit other teachers' lessons, as well as helpful reports on good practice from the senior leadership team.

Overall, monitoring systems give the senior team a clear picture of areas that need to improve. The high level of monitoring this year is a good feature, and along with the emphasis on disseminating good practice has contributed significantly towards improving the quality of teaching.

Senior and middle leaders have used performance data much more effectively this year. As a result they can see clearly which areas need to be improved, and have prioritised these appropriately. However, there is still some inconsistency in the way that subject leaders use data. Governors are also more confident in analysing data to challenge the school as 'critical friends'.

The school has started to make progress in improving assessment. After appropriate training for teachers earlier this year, many teachers use formative assessment well, but practice is not yet consistent enough. A majority of teachers write constructive comments on pupils' work, but a minority do not always draw enough attention to obvious errors or explain to pupils in enough detail how to improve the quality of their work.

The school has fallen far behind other schools in its key skills provision. Until recently departments had not planned in enough detail to include key skills in their schemes of work, and as yet no courses or qualifications in key skills are available to any pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4. The school has now begun to address this situation. Subjects have been audited to identify where each one should contribute to skills development and there is an appropriate whole-school skills development plan. Pupils have received a useful leaflet which explains skills across the curriculum. An increasing

reference to skills can be seen in many lesson plans, and some teachers develop skills well. Literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have recently been appointed to develop the work further.

The school has also planned curriculum changes which will contribute to improving key skills. Next year additional lessons will be included in the timetable for Welsh, English and mathematics in order to help raise standards in these subjects and therefore also improve literacy and numeracy.

## **Management**

- R2 Improve the effectiveness of senior and middle managers by refining the roles of the senior management and the middle management teams. Ensure that all personnel are fully accountable to the headteacher and the governing body for their responsibilities and actions.**
- R7 Enhance the capacity of the governing body to act as critical friends of the school by improving their monitoring procedures and holding managers to account more effectively.**
- R8 At whole-school and departmental level, prepare development plans which have a clear focus, challenging targets, a sharper focussed link between budgetary decisions and the school's priorities for development and success criteria which are reviewed regularly at all levels of management.**
- R9 Instigate effective procedures to monitor the use of school resources to ensure greater value for money.**
- R10 Ensure that all non-teaching members of staff are fully involved in the annual performance management cycle.**

The school has made good progress in addressing these recommendations.

The workforce and management structure have been successfully re-modelled in order to use staff more effectively and efficiently. Senior and middle managers understand their roles in the revised management structure well and lines of communication and accountability are clear at each level. Many senior and middle managers carry out their duties effectively and contribute well towards improving provision and standards. However, a few are not having enough of an impact.

Governors have detailed and appropriate information about the school's performance and progress, and are much more confident in analysing data to challenge the school. Individual governors have set up beneficial links with separate subjects and have a firm understanding of these subjects' strengths and areas for improvement. Governors operate better as 'critical friends' and monitor the effect of strategies to improve standards and provision.

All staff are involved in self-evaluation. Whole-school and subject self-evaluation reports lead to detailed and appropriate improvement plans that have begun to successfully address a number of weaknesses. Governors and senior managers thoroughly monitor progress with these plans.

The school has worked diligently to monitor the use of resources. Closer collaboration with other secondary schools has resulted in better and more cost-effective sixth-form provision.

All non-teaching members of staff are now accountable to managers and participate fully in the performance management cycle.

### **Recommendations**

In order to improve further, the school should:

- R1 improve standards in mathematics, Welsh, bilingualism and key skills;
- R2 improve the consistency of teaching and learning;
- R3 ensure that all managers use data effectively; and
- R4 refine the management structure so that all senior managers are effective in improving standards and provision.