



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**

**Ysgol Emrys Ap Iwan  
Faenol Avenue  
Abergele  
Conwy  
LL22 7HE**

**Date of visit: September 2018**

**by**

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

## Outcome of visit

Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan 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 standards in key stage 4

We reported on performance at key stage 4 up to 2016 during the last monitoring visit. Since then, performance has improved in many indicators and is now similar to that at the time of the core inspection.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics declined in 2017 but compared more favourably with levels in similar schools. Performance in the capped points score improved in 2017. Unverified data provided by the school for 2018 indicates further significant improvement in many indicators. In 2017, pupils made sound progress from key stage 2 in most indicators.

The proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE or equivalent grades at A\*-A improved slightly in 2017. Unverified outcomes for 2018 show a more pronounced improvement to place performance in this indicator only slightly below that at the time of the core inspection.

At key stage 4, since the core inspection, girls' performance has fluctuated in comparison to that of girls in similar schools in most indicators. Similarly, boys' performance varies compared to that of boys in similar schools. Unverified school data for 2018 shows improvement by both boys and girls in many indicators.

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in the level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics was strong in 2016. After a dip in 2017, unverified data for 2018 indicates a significant improvement.

In lessons, the majority of pupils make suitable progress and demonstrate appropriate recall of prior learning. Many listen attentively and, when given the opportunity, engage in purposeful discussion with each other or the teacher. A few pupils provide well-supported verbal responses to the teachers' questions. The majority of pupils make suitable use of information retrieval strategies, for example when studying the main causes of volcanoes or the principles of crude oil distillation. Many pupils who read aloud do so with suitable fluency and accuracy.

The majority of pupils write with suitable technical accuracy and use well-structured sentences, for example when explaining how burning fuels produces electricity or chronicling the life of Martin Luther. They have a sound grasp of grammar and use

appropriate language to explain their opinions. A minority produce engaging narrative pieces. The majority of pupils continue to make too many basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Many pupils display sound number skills when carrying out mental calculations such as their times tables and squaring numbers. A majority use their algebraic skills well to rearrange and solve equations. However, overall, pupils do not use their numeracy skills widely enough across a range of subjects in meaningful situations.

In lessons and around the school, many pupils are courteous and polite. They engage well in their learning and work suitably in groups and pairs. A few pupils take insufficient care and pride in their work and lack focus, which results in them making less progress than expected.

## **R2. Improve literacy and numeracy skills, particularly writing**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a variety of useful approaches to improve the standard of pupils' literacy skills. This has led to improvements in those skills and contributed to better pupil outcomes at key stage 4, in 2018 in particular. Although the school has recently appointed a new numeracy co-ordinator, currently the support for the development of pupils' numeracy skills is not sufficiently effective or coordinated well enough.

The school has introduced worthwhile and engaging opportunities for pupils to undertake extended writing tasks across the curriculum. This helps pupils of all abilities to improve the content and technical accuracy of their writing in different situations. However, the effectiveness of teachers' feedback to support the development of pupils' literacy skills remains too variable and in general it rarely extends beyond the correction of basic grammar and punctuation. The school now has a suitable programme to develop pupils' reading skills and to encourage their enjoyment in reading. Recently, the school has focused suitably upon opportunities for pupils to develop their calculation skills in worthwhile situations and pupils are generally positive about the support they receive.

Pupils with weaker literacy and numeracy skills are supported appropriately through the intervention programmes the school offers. This helps these pupils to make suitable progress.

The school monitors the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills suitably through the analysis of test scores and evaluation of literacy and numeracy tasks completed in lessons. However, lesson observations and work scrutiny activities do not identify precisely enough the different skills that pupils use and the proportion of pupils who use them well. This makes it very difficult for the school to identify precisely enough the skills that are most in need of improvement and to evaluate accurately the opportunities pupils receive and the quality of support teachers provide.

### **R3. Improve the quality of teaching**

Since the last monitoring visit, the school has continued its professional learning programme to improve the quality of teaching. The programme includes useful regular sessions on specific aspects of teaching, such as planning, behaviour management, tracking and assessment. It provides worthwhile opportunities to share good practice within and between departments. The school has strengthened its tracking arrangements so that it provides valuable information for departments and individual teachers to identify pupils in need of support or intervention. This enables them to plan their teaching to address specific gaps in knowledge. These strategies have improved the quality of teaching and started to have a positive impact on outcomes at the end of key stage 4.

Most teachers have a positive working relationship with pupils and demonstrate secure subject knowledge. The majority set clear objectives and provide a suitable level of challenge. They offer clear explanations and instructions that help pupils to make suitable progress. The majority of teachers provide appropriate resources that complement the learning well for example, on topics such as charity campaigns and Henry VIII.

The majority of teachers ensure a sound pace to learning and provide a variety of tasks to maintain pupils' interest. However, a minority of lessons lack pace when teachers spend too long on introductions, simple tasks and repetitive exercises. A few teachers ask probing questions that determine pupils' understanding and challenge them to develop their verbal responses.

The majority of teachers generally provide useful feedback that identifies clearly how pupils can improve their work. However, they do not monitor closely enough how well pupils have improved their work in response to the feedback. In many cases, teachers' assessment does not give enough guidance for pupils on how to improve their literacy skills other than correct their spelling.

### **R4. Improve the quality of middle leadership**

Since the core inspection, the school has appointed several new curriculum leaders and an associate assistant headteacher. In addition, it has continued to provide useful training opportunities and has combined certain departments to support the development of middle leaders. Overall, middle leadership is more effective than at the time of the core inspection. This improvement has contributed suitably to important aspects of the school's work including raising attendance for all pupils.

The school now has a more robust and consistent approach to line management meetings with common agenda that focus clearly upon the standards pupils achieve. This makes middle leaders more accountable, though occasionally actions from these meetings are not precise enough or focus too much on operational matters. This limits the impact of these improvements.

Many middle leaders now have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They analyse pupil performance data thoroughly, particularly when reviewing examination outcomes. However, a minority of middle and senior leaders are too focused upon processes and do not evaluate the impact of teaching on standards and skills development well enough. This makes the precise identification of specific shortcomings in teaching more difficult and limits leaders' ability to plan effectively for improvement.

Since the core inspection, the school has revised its performance management systems and generally dealt with any underperformance appropriately. Performance management targets now link suitably with pupil outcomes and the school's improvement priorities.

#### **R5. Improve the use of the outcomes of self-evaluation in departmental planning for improvement**

Since the core inspection, the school has introduced a more systematic approach to self-evaluation and improvement planning. This has contributed suitably to raising pupil outcomes in many indicators at key stage 4, particularly in 2018.

Self-evaluation processes include an annual departmental review of examination performance, the seeking of pupils' views and a comprehensive schedule of lesson observations and work scrutiny. Generally, this provides a solid basis for improvement planning at departmental level. However, the majority of lesson observations and work scrutiny activities do not focus well enough on pupils' progress or the development of their skills. In addition, the feedback that teachers receive from leaders does not identify specific strengths and areas for development clearly enough.

Departmental improvement planning reflects whole-school priorities well and is generally linked suitably to self-evaluation evidence. Senior and middle leaders make effective use of data analysis to identify key areas which need improving. However, a minority of leaders do not always focus well enough on refining and improving teaching and feedback when planning for improvement.