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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: Estyn monitoring**

**Barry Comprehensive School
Port Road West
Barry
Vale of Glamorgan
CF62 8ZJ**

Date of visit: July 2015

by

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

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The monitoring team

Mamta Arnott	Reporting Inspector
Ceri Jones	Team Inspector
Paul Wolstenholme	Local authority representative

Outcome of monitoring

Barry Comprehensive School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in March 2013.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is increasing the level of follow-up activity.

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school is in need of significant improvement. The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations.

Estyn inspectors will re-visit the school in about 12 months' time to inspect progress against the recommendations.

Progress since the last inspection

Recommendation 1: Improve standards in Welsh second language and at key stage 3

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection in 2012, performance in Welsh second language in key stage 3 has improved each year from a very low base. However, despite this, performance continues to place the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools based on eligibility for free schools meals. In 2014, performance remains well below the average for the family of schools and below the average for boys nationally. However, at key stage 3, provisional unverified data for 2015 indicates a strong improvement at level 5 and above. At key stage 4, the number of pupils entered for a level 2 qualification in Welsh second language declined sharply in 2014, after increasing in 2013. Although short course entries have increased since the core inspection in 2012, performance in Welsh second language GCSE has declined significantly. In 2014, only 19% of pupils entered achieved the GCSE Welsh second language qualification, compared with 34% of pupils at the time of the core inspection. Since 2012, very few pupils achieve GCSE Welsh second language full course and in 2014, there were no pupils taking this qualification.

In key stage 3, the school has made consistent improvement since the time of the core inspection in mathematics and science at both level 5 and above and level 6 and above. In 2014, performance in these subjects places the school above that of boys in the family of schools. Performance in English at level 6 and above has improved significantly and is just below that of boys in the family of schools. However, performance in the core subject indicator and in English at level 5 and above in 2014 remains below that of boys in the family of schools and boys nationally. In key stage 3, provisional unverified data for 2015 generally indicates solid improvements across all indicators.

Improvements in a majority of assessment outcomes at key stage 3 have been accompanied by a significant deterioration in standards in key stage 4 in 2013.

In 2014, performance in all key stage 4 indicators improved after falling sharply in 2013. Despite recent improvements, performance in key stage 4 in many indicators, including those that include English and mathematics, is below that at the time of the core inspection and has been below the average for boys in the family of schools for each of the last two years. Performance in many indicators places the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools according to eligibility for free school meals for the past two years.

In key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics fell sharply in 2013. Although performance improved in 2014, this is seven percentage points lower than at the time of the core inspection and is well below modelled expectations. This places the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools and well below the average for boys in the family for each of the last two years. In 2014, pupils' progress from the previous key stages in this indicator is significantly lower than expected. In 2014, performance in the level 2 threshold is higher than at the time of the core inspection, despite declining by nearly 20 percentage points in 2013. Improvement in this indicator now places the school in the bottom half of similar schools, and boys perform eight percentage points better than boys in the family.

In 2014, performance in English is 14 percentage points lower than at the time of the core inspection. English performance is below the average for boys in the family and has placed the school in the bottom quarter of schools according to eligibility for free school meals for the past two years.

Since the core inspection in 2012, performance in mathematics has fluctuated. In 2013 this placed the school in the bottom benchmark quarter of schools. In 2014, mathematics performance improved back to the same figure as at the core inspection and now places the school in the bottom half of similar schools according to free-school-meal eligibility. While performance in 2013 was seven percentage points below the average for boys in the family, in 2014, performance is just below the boys' average.

In all key stage 3 indicators pupils make good progress from the previous key stage and this is better than at the time of the core inspection. However, in many indicators in key stage 4, pupils make less progress than expected from key stage 3 and significantly less progress than expected from key stage 2.

Overall, the school has made limited progress in improving standards in important areas. Standards at key stage 4, especially in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics and in Welsh second language are a cause for concern.

Recommendation 2: Improve attendance and punctuality

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has given a high priority to improving attendance and this has increased year on year. Attendance is now closer to that of boys in the family of schools but is still 0.7 percentage points lower in 2014. However, the proportion of persistent absence remains too high and is 14 percentage points higher than the averages for the local authority and nationally.

The school has strengthened its communication with parents to inform them about the importance of good attendance. In addition, a consistent focus on attendance by pastoral leaders and form tutors has raised effectively the importance of good attendance among pupils. Nearly all pupils know their levels of attendance and are clear about the school's expectations and procedures. School leaders work well with form tutors, pastoral leaders, the attendance and the education welfare officers to improve attendance. Parents and pupils are now challenged appropriately when attendance starts to decline. Good attendance is rewarded and this contributes towards improvements. Unverified data from the school shows attendance for 2014-2015 to be 93.7%. This is a 1.7 percentage point increase on the previous year's attendance.

School leaders analyse patterns of attendance appropriately and have taken suitable strategic actions to make improvements. These actions include the introduction of a tailored curriculum for a few key stage 4 pupils at risk of disaffection and the calendaring of rewards' events on days where pupils' absence has been historically high. However, the school does not include an analysis of persistent absence in its self-evaluation report and leaders do not monitor closely enough pupils who are persistently absent. As a result, there has been little improvement in reducing the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent since 2012.

The school has introduced an appropriate strategy to tackle lateness to lessons. This includes close monitoring of this aspect by pastoral leaders and form tutors to identify pupils who are persistently late. Through frequent communication with parents, mentoring by pastoral leaders and close monitoring by subject teachers the school has successfully improved the punctuality of a few identified individuals.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that all pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has implemented several appropriate strategies to improve pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning.

The steps taken to tackle this problem include appointing a member of staff to deal with instances of bullying through restorative practices, implementing a useful personal and social education programme to develop pupils' empathy skills, ensuring an appropriate curriculum for pupils at risk of disaffection in key stage 4 and close monitoring of pupils' conduct aligned with a useful reward system. In addition, the

school has given more responsibility to subject leaders for maintaining good discipline and introduced a suitable staged response to any incidents of poor behaviour.

As a result of these developments, a recent survey carried out by the school shows that many pupils now consider that the school deals well with bullying and most feel safe in school. The school's analysis of behaviour indicates a reduction in the number of reported incidents of poor behaviour. However, many pupils spoken to during the visit noted that their learning is frequently disrupted by the poor behaviour of others in lessons and a few do not feel safe when moving around corridors.

Following the core inspection in 2012, the number of fixed-term exclusions rose significantly. In 2013, the number of days lost due to fixed-term exclusions was 712. Since this time, the school has introduced a number of strategies to reduce exclusion rates effectively. These include staff training on behaviour management and restorative practices, an alternative curriculum for disaffected pupils and a student manifesto created by the school parliament. Unverified school data shows that the number of days lost to fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly in 2014-2015 to 135. This figure remains higher than at the time of the core inspection.

Recommendation 4: Address the shortcomings in teaching

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's quality assurance procedures include suitable activities such as regular department reviews and lesson observations for leaders to evaluate progress in teaching. While the subject reviews offer summative judgements on the work of individual departments, they do not identify clearly the strengths and areas for development in teaching based on an evaluation of the impact of teaching on progress and standards. This limits their usefulness in planning for improvement.

Senior leaders have organised and planned useful whole-school training on aspects of teaching such as lesson planning, matching work to meet the needs of all pupils and demonstrating how to achieve higher-level skills. The school has a professional working group that focusses appropriately on developing and sharing good practice in teaching and assessment. The group has contributed to the development of an appropriate whole-school approach to planning lessons. In addition, the school has recently introduced a video reflection tool to assist in improving practice in the classroom. However, many of these actions are very recent or have not had a sufficient impact on sustaining good outcomes in important indicators in key stage 4.

The school provides beneficial support to many teachers whose lessons are judged to have important shortcomings. The outcomes of lesson observations are used appropriately to identify individual professional development needs. However, senior leaders have not used the evidence of lesson observations well enough to inform self-evaluation and subsequent improvement planning.

In a few lessons, teachers do not manage the behaviour of pupils well enough. This hinders the learning of others and restricts the range of activities that teachers can confidently deploy in lessons. Similar shortcomings were identified during the core inspection.

Recommendation 5: Increase the consistency of the marking of pupils' work and fully implement the system for tracking and supporting all pupils' progress

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has made modest improvements in the consistency and quality of marking. Over the same period, the school has strengthened its system for tracking and supporting pupils' progress. However, these improvements have not had enough impact on improving standards in important indicators in key stage 4.

The school has made very few changes to its assessment policy since 2012. The policy sets out general expectations regarding teachers' marking and feedback to pupils. However, it is a brief document and it does not define important aspects such as exemplifying clearly enough high expectations about assessing pupils' work.

At the beginning of September 2014, the headteacher led an appropriate whole-school training day to discuss and evaluate marking strategies. All departments discussed the quality of their marking and set themselves a few suitable goals to improve this aspect of their work. However, a minority of departments set themselves only generic aims which did not include subject-specific issues. In about half of the evaluations arising from these discussions, departments identified the need to give pupils time to act on advice given. This shortcoming was identified in the core inspection report.

In a majority of books, marking suitably identifies strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' work and includes useful targets for improvement. However, in a minority of cases, feedback from teachers does not identify specific areas for improvement or give useful targets to tackle these issues. In a few books, there is missing work. In the sample of books seen during this visit, there are only a few examples of pupils redrafting or improving their work in light of teachers' comments. There are regular activities to monitor the quality of marking. However, actions taken by leaders have not brought about necessary improvements to the quality and consistency of written feedback to pupils quickly enough.

The school has expanded the scope of its tracking system appropriately so that it now includes all year groups rather than just focussing on Year 9 and Year 11. In addition, it has recently refined its approach to identifying target groups for specific interventions. However, this recent change has not had an impact on improving outcomes in important indicators in key stage 4.

Recommendation 6: Provide a daily act of collective worship

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the time of the core inspection, the school has provided form tutors with an appropriate range of resources to support the daily act of collective worship.

School leaders regularly remind form tutors about the expectations for this aspect of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development. However, school

leaders do not monitor compliance with this requirement rigorously enough. During this visit, around a half of pupils stated that an act of collective worship did not take place regularly.

Recommendations

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to sustain the level of progress it has already made, and continue to address those inspection recommendations where further progress is required.