



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**

**King Henry VIII Comprehensive School
Old Hereford Road
Abergavenny
Monmouthshire
NP7 6EP**

Date of visit: June 2016

by

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

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The monitoring team

Mr Tony Sparks	Reporting Inspector
Mr Andrew Hurley	Team Inspector
Mr Alan Lowndes	Team Inspector
Mr Steve Bell	Team Inspector
Mrs Karen Newby-Jones	Team Inspector

Outcome of monitoring

King Henry VIII School is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in December 2014.

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

Recommendation 1: Raise standards at key stage 3 and key stage 4

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

In 2015, following the core inspection, pupils' performance improved in most key indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4. Over a three year period, the extent of the improvement at key stage 4 is considerably greater than the average improvement in the family of schools, and in schools nationally, in every key performance indicator.

In 2015, at key stage 4, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics improved slightly after the significant improvement achieved in 2014. This performance continues to place the school in the lower 50% of similar schools but is above modelled outcomes for the second year running. In 2015, performance in the level 2 threshold, in the capped points score and in science all improved but continues to place the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools. Performance in the level 1 threshold and in the core subject indicator improved very slightly in 2015. This continues to place the school in the lower half of similar schools for the former but drops the school into the bottom 25% of similar schools for the latter. Performance in mathematics improved substantially in 2015 and places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. Although performance in English dipped slightly, it continues to place the school in the upper 50% of similar schools.

At key stage 3, in 2015, performance improved in all key indicators and now compares favourably with that in similar schools. Performance in the core subject indicator and in mathematics places the school in the lower 50% of similar schools. However, performance in science places the school in the upper 50% and in English in the top 25% of similar schools.

In 2015, at key stage 4, the performance of girls improved in all indicators apart from a very slight dip in English. The performance of boys also improved in many indicators but not in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics or in English.

In 2015, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in many key stage 4 indicators. This was significantly so in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, in the level 2 threshold, in mathematics and in science. The performance of this group of pupils remains lower than the average performance of the same group in similar schools in the majority of indicators. However, relative performance is higher in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics and in mathematics, and equal in English. At key stage 3, in 2015, the performance of

this group of pupils improved in the core subject indicator and in English. In both indicators, this performance is higher than the average performance of the same group in similar schools. In mathematics and science, performance changed little and remains above the average performance of the same group in similar schools in science, but below in mathematics.

In a majority of lessons, pupils make sound progress. Most pupils behave well and many display positive attitudes to learning. They are engaged and enthusiastic, working well independently and with others.

Many pupils have good listening skills, speak confidently and read with secure understanding. A minority of pupils use inference and deduction well to enhance their understanding of a range of texts. A few synthesise information effectively from different sources, particularly in humanities based subjects. Many pupils write well for a suitable range of purposes and a minority produce well-crafted and engaging work. However, a minority do not develop their writing well enough and a few continue to make basic, common errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Many pupils make appropriate use of a suitable range of number skills, including mental and written calculation, in subjects other than mathematics. More able pupils complete more sophisticated calculations including those based on chemical equations. A majority of pupils interpret data accurately from charts and graphs on a range of topics such as the comparative insulation properties of different materials.

Recommendation 2: Develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has improved opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This is having a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve.

The strategic appointment of literacy and numeracy champions has increased the school's capacity to develop provision and to monitor pupils' progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, systematic reviews also inform planning for further developments and well-targeted initiatives such as the whole-school approach to extended writing.

Schemes of work across the curriculum now cover all strands of the literacy and numeracy framework appropriately. This has helped to guide teachers well in supporting the progressive development of pupils' skills. This has led to improvements in numeracy. For example, many pupils now have greater confidence, in using an appropriate range of data handling skills and in using inference to improve their understanding of different texts. However, a few pupils, especially boys, do not write with sufficient accuracy.

The school has extended the range and improved the effectiveness of its support for pupils with weaker skills. The work of learning coaches has been particularly helpful in improving the outcomes these pupils achieve.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen leadership, particularly middle leadership, to provide more rigour and challenge to secure sustained improvements in pupils' standards

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has made strong progress in developing its line management systems. Leaders at all levels are now challenged and held to account with greater rigour.

The school has implemented a comprehensive range of strategies to support the development of leaders. This includes targeted coaching and mentoring for individual leaders, and planned involvement in the school's professional learning communities. These strategies have been effective in ensuring much greater consistency in the work of senior and middle leaders. Governors have received useful training that has helped them to be more effectively involved in school self-evaluation and to challenge the school about its performance more rigorously.

Frequent line management meetings now focus suitably on improving pupils' performance and strengthening their learning. Minutes of these meetings include clear and useful action points to be addressed before the next meeting.

Senior and middle leaders now use data more robustly to evaluate pupils' performance, to agree challenging targets and to identify areas for improvement. Senior leaders challenge and support middle leaders appropriately to improve the quality of provision and the standards achieved by pupils. Most middle leaders fulfil their roles well.

The improvements in the quality of leadership and management have contributed to suitable progress in most performance indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4, and in improving provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

Since the core inspection, the school has made strong progress in improving the rigour and effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning at both school and departmental level. These strengthened processes have supported improvements in pupil progress in most key indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4, and in provision and leadership.

The whole-school self-evaluation report contains a comprehensive evaluation of performance data and identifies accurately areas for further development. Leaders gather relevant evidence from a wide range of sources. This includes the regular and systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and assessment through focused book scrutiny and lesson observations.

There is a clear link between the school's self-evaluation report and improvement plan. The plan includes relevant priorities that have suitably ambitious and measurable targets. It outlines appropriate timescales against which to evaluate progress, along with details of who is responsible and the resources required to support the priorities.

Departmental self-evaluation processes mirror effectively those at whole school level. In addition to routine monitoring activities, the recently introduced peer reviews have supported the development of middle leaders well. Most departments identify suitable actions to bring about necessary improvement. Senior leaders challenge and support middle leaders successfully to improve the quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Recommendation 5: Improve attendance

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

In 2015, following the core inspection, the rate of attendance improved slightly but remained below modelled outcomes for the third consecutive year. However, the clear focus the school has placed on improving pupils' attendance is beginning to have a positive impact. Unverified data for the current academic year suggests a strong improvement in attendance of 1.4 percentage points and a fall of over three percentage points in persistent absence from last academic year.

The school has introduced useful attendance protocols that are understood clearly by most pupils and applied consistently by staff. The attendance of all pupils, including groups of pupils, is monitored closely. All pupils receive monthly attendance reports. High attendance is encouraged and rewarded with poor attendance challenged and supported suitably. This is increasing all pupils' understanding of the importance of regular attendance. For example, unverified attendance figures for pupils eligible for free school meals suggests an improvement of over one percentage point from last academic year.

The school's range of successful strategies to improve pupils' attendance includes working closely with partner primary schools to establish common attendance protocols and going out into the community to meet parents and encourage their support.

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.