



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**

**St Aidans V.A.P. School  
Wiston  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA62 4PS**

**Date of visit: November 2015**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Maldwyn Pryse	Reporting Inspector
Rosemary Lait	Team Inspector

## **Outcome of monitoring**

St Aidan's VA Primary School is judged to have made insufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in October 2014.

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

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

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Raise the attainment of more able pupils**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

At the end of the Foundation Phase, more able pupils' performance places the school above the average for similar schools for three of the last four years. More able pupils in the Foundation Phase read well and develop good writing skills. They form letters correctly, use a legible cursive script and use appropriate spelling strategies, for example, to retell a familiar story. These pupils write interesting stories and express themselves well. In the Foundation Phase, more able pupils generally make good progress over time in their mathematical development.

At the end of key stage 2, more able pupils' performance in English places the school in the top 25% for three of the last four years when compared with similar schools. However, more able pupils do not write at length or produce creative pieces often enough to develop high level skills in the use of grammar and vocabulary. As a result, these pupils do not produce work of a consistently high standard.

Teachers do not challenge more able pupils consistently enough to attain high levels in science and mathematics. The performance of more able pupils at the end of key stage 2 places the school in the lower 50% in mathematics and science when compared with similar schools for the last two years. Since the core inspection, many more able older pupils are developing high-level computing, problem solving and reasoning skills in their programming lunchtime club and this activity is challenging them well. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this on the attainment over time.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve standards of Welsh in key stage 2**

Limited progress in addressing the recommendation

At the time of the inspection, pupils' standards in Welsh were very low. Despite the school holding very high Welsh language aspirations for their pupils most pupils in key stage 2 still only have a very basic knowledge of simple Welsh vocabulary. The work in pupils' books shows that teachers do not plan well enough to ensure progression in learning. Written tasks often do not relate to previous work so they do

not build up their vocabulary and understanding of grammar.

At the end of key stage 2, most pupils understand a few phrases that teachers use, for example, when taking the register. Most pupils use the present tense correctly when describing the weather. They describe their favourite hobbies appropriately and are beginning to extend their sentences by giving a reason for their choice. However, most pupils are very uncertain when asked other basic questions, for example, about their names and ages. They do not understand simple oral questions in the past tense, although work in their books indicates that they have learned the grammar, for example, when they write about what they did yesterday. Pupils have good opportunities to sing in Welsh and they enjoy these activities. However, the school does not use its Welsh speaking staff well enough to increase opportunities for everyone in the school to improve their Welsh language skills.

**Recommendation 3: Provide more opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Phase to use literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, and for pupils throughout the school to develop greater independence**

Strong progress in addressing the recommendation

The school has identified a member of staff to take responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. This has enabled the school to form a strategic overview of developments and a cohesive approach to developing literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Since the inspection, staff have revised planning documentation well to incorporate the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. As a result, the school now provides valuable opportunities for pupils across the school to use these skills in all areas of learning.

Many pupils in the Foundation Phase now write to the same standard in topic work as they do in language lessons. They discuss their work enthusiastically with each other and with adults and read books related to their topic work at the expected level. Pupils now use their numeracy skills regularly and at a suitable level across the areas of learning. However, an overdependence on a published scheme means that there are very few opportunities for key stage 2 pupils to write at length across the curriculum.

Teachers direct less of the learning across the school and pupils now have appropriate opportunities to make choices about what they would like to learn and to develop independent learning skills. There are useful opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their life in school. For example, the school council has been influential in developing the school's new mission statement and members of the 'Criw Cymraeg' team review and evaluate the school's Welsh language activities. More able pupils develop very good independent skills in the lunchtime programming club. Here they are encouraged to persevere on their own to tackle challenges and choices while creating their own games or composing music. Most do this successfully and can explain their choices well.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that teachers provide pupils of all abilities with an appropriate level of challenge, and improve the quality of teachers' feedback so that pupils know how to improve**

### Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Professional development has improved the understanding of the staff about providing and matching the level of challenge to each pupil. Each teacher now prepares weekly plans based on a half-termly topic from a published scheme. Planning is effective in nearly all classes and these teachers set work at an appropriate level. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of the weekly plans as there is not always enough information about how work is adapted to meet the learning needs of individual pupils.

Soon after the inspection, the school adopted a new feedback and marking policy and has continued to refine its practice during the year. The policy provides clear and helpful information, and the strategies are embedded in nearly all classes. Many pupils respond purposefully to feedback and most are pleased to have the opportunity to improve their work following feedback, for example using 'tricky word cards' in Foundation Phase. However, not all staff are consistent in how they mark work and provide feedback. As a result, a few pupils have limited opportunities to redraft and improve their work. In a minority of cases, staff are over-generous in their marking comments.

### **Recommendation 5: Establish a clear strategic direction that focuses on improving standards for pupils of all abilities**

#### Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The acting headteacher has successfully involved pupils, parents, governors and staff in creating a clear vision for the school, based on 'Believe and Achieve'. The governors accepted the vision very recently to help provide a clear strategic direction for the school. However, it is too soon for this to have had an impact on raising standards over time or improving provision and leadership.

The school has now shared leadership responsibilities appropriately between members of staff. As a result, staff are appropriately involved in the running of the school and in working together to improve the school. Performance management targets now relate appropriately to the school's action plan. Staff meetings focus better on improving standards and provision, and all teachers are involved in analysing pupil data. Teachers are developing a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they do not always use this information effectively enough. Leaders monitor the provision and share reports in staff meetings, they are currently working on refining and improving the quality of the reports to ensure that they are consistently evaluative.

The school is making good progress towards implementing national and local priorities. In the Foundation Phase, adults give pupils more freedom to explore their environment independently. The implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework has developed well since the inspection.

School leaders respond well to support they receive from the local authority and a mentor headteacher. The local authority and the church authority are in the process

of agreeing on a period of consultation on the formation of a formal federation between this school and the mentor headteacher's school.

**Recommendation 6: Develop the role of the governing body in providing greater challenge to the school and ensuring that the school meets all statutory requirements**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

Governors are beginning to be involved in the self-evaluation process and ensure that spending decisions arise directly from the school action plan. The majority now visit the school in order to gather first hand evidence of standards and provision. This helps them to start providing a greater challenge to school leaders. The acting headteacher's termly reports inform them appropriately of progress against the targets of the action plan. However, governors depend too heavily on the information they receive and do not challenge robustly enough to ensure that the school makes swift enough progress. They have recently received training on their role as a critical friend, and are continuing to develop this skill.

The governing body ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements. As a result, every teacher has time for planning, preparation and assessment as is legally required.

**Recommendation 7: Improve the effectiveness of procedures for self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

Satisfactory progress in addressing the recommendation

The school's self-evaluation processes now draws on a wider range of evidence to inform judgements about standards and provision. The process includes data analysis, scrutiny of pupils' work and monitoring of the quality of teaching. Leaders also seek the views of parents and pupils and they are beginning to use this information appropriately to bring about improvements. An example of this is using feedback from pupils to create the school vision statement and to improve the provision for Welsh reading books across the school.

Self-evaluation processes now give better attention to measuring how the school's actions improve standards and provision for all pupils. However, leaders do not make good enough use of information from lesson observations and book scrutiny to inform the recently developed self-evaluation report. For example, the section on pupil skills depends on national test data only and makes no reference to teacher assessments or listening to learners. Generally, subject leaders' reports are too descriptive and are not evaluative enough. As a result, this first attempt at preparing a self-evaluation report does not show that leaders know the standards in their school well enough.

The school has involved all staff, governors, pupils and parents in the process of creating the post inspection action plan. This included the structuring of formal opportunities for all to engage in the monitoring and evaluation processes.

## **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.