

## **Re-inspection**

**of**

**Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan  
Faenol Avenue  
Abergele  
LL227HE**

**School number: 6625400**

**Date of inspection: 22/10/07**

Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan was inspected in October 2007 and judged as requiring significant improvement. As part of the Welsh Assembly Government's requirement for schools in need of significant improvement, Estyn undertook a follow-up inspection on 9 to 11 December, focusing on the recommendations identified in the Section 28 inspection.

### **Outcome of the re-inspection**

Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan is judged to have made good progress in relation to the recommendations for improvement identified in the Section 28 inspection in October 2007. 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**

The school is making good progress in all the recommendations of the Section 28 report, though there is further room for improvement. Progress in each recommendation is described below.

**Recommendation 1: satisfy statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement to be taught religious education. Also, comply with the requirement to teach Welsh to all pupils until they reach statutory school-leaving age and not only in Y10, as is the current practice.**

The school has addressed this recommendation.

There are suitable arrangements for a daily act of collective worship. The school has devised good quality materials to support the act of worship in tutor groups. In general, there is good use of the school's system for 'theme for the week' and 'thought for the day'. In year assemblies and in most tutor groups there is an effective act of worship. However, in a few tutor groups, the quality of the act of worship is not good enough.

The school has made suitable adjustments to the curriculum to ensure that statutory requirements for teaching religious education and Welsh are met.

**Recommendation 2: continue to raise standards in all subjects, and especially in history, Welsh and religious education, where important shortcomings have been highlighted**

The school has made good progress in this recommendation, though there is further room for improvement.

Analysis of 2008 data shows improvements against most of the key performance indicators.

In key stage 3 in 2008, the core subject indicator increased by over 10 percentage points, which places the school above the median when compared to similar schools for the first time in recent years.

In key stage 4 in 2008, the percentage of pupils achieving the Level 2 threshold (the new headline indicator replacing five or more GCSE grades A\*-C or equivalent) has increased by three percentage points, which is slightly above the increase nationally. The core subject indicator has increased by seven percentage points, largely due to a significant improvement in GCSE results in science. However, performance in mathematics has not improved in recent years. The CSI is still well below local and national averages and is likely to be below the median when compared to similar schools. The school remains in the bottom 25% of similar schools for the percentage of

pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A\*-G and the percentage of pupils leaving full time education without a qualification is well above local and national averages.

During the monitoring visit, the inspection team observed 25 lessons. The standards achieved in these lessons are as follows:

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Number	0	14	10	1	0
%	0	56	40	4	0

Standards were grade 2 or better in 56% of lessons and grade 3 or better in 96% of lessons. This profile shows an improvement from the Section 28 inspection, where 53% of lessons were grade 2 or better and 90% were grade 3 or better. This improvement is more significant if we take into account that the inspection team mainly observed lessons in subjects judged to have important shortcomings in the inspection report.

The school has worked quickly and effectively to address shortcomings in these subjects. Recent curriculum and staffing changes along with good support provided by the school and the local authority are beginning to have a positive impact on standards in religious education and Welsh. New staffing arrangements have the potential to improve standards in history.

Good procedures are in place to ensure that these subjects are continually monitored and supported.

### **Recommendation 3: raise standards of teaching and learning**

The school has addressed this recommendation well. Effective actions for those subjects given grade 4 in the last inspection have included:

- monitoring and support from the local authority and other sources;
- visits to other schools;
- additional in-service training for teachers; and
- recruitment of new staff.

For all subjects, improvement measures have included;

- in-service training for all staff on training days and other staff sessions;
- an emphasis on setting and meeting clear objectives in lessons;
- a whole-school and departmental focus on developing challenging activities in different subjects and on involving pupils more in lessons;

- sharing of good practice;
- a programme of lesson observation focussing on specific aspects of teaching;
- improving schemes of work; and
- renewed emphasis on good assessment practices and intervention with pupils who are under-achieving.

The grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the 25 lessons observed by the inspection team are as follows:

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Number	3	13	9	0	0
%	12	52	36	0	0

The quality of teaching was grade 2 or better in 64% of lessons and grade 3 or better in 100% of lessons. This is a considerable improvement since the Section 28 inspection, where the quality of teaching was grade 2 or better in 51% of lessons and grade 3 in 89% of lessons.

The significant good features seen were:

- lessons that were well planned and structured, with good pace and variety;
- clarity about objectives among teachers and pupils;
- pupils showing enthusiasm for learning and remaining on task;
- tasks that met pupils' abilities;
- good teacher control and intervention to help when pupils did not understand;
- good demonstrations and presentations by teachers;
- constructive and careful marking that showed pupils how to improve their work; and
- the system for tracking pupils' performance.

There were shortcomings in about one-third of lessons. The main shortcomings were:

- low expectations by teachers about the standards of work to be expected, with tasks that lacked challenge and interest;
- low-level disruption and inattentiveness by a minority of pupils that slowed the progress of the whole class and was tolerated for too long by teachers; and

- weak timing, so that there was not enough time to complete a task, or in some cases the last few minutes were not used constructively.

**Recommendation 4: review the structure and delivery of the curriculum, and the associated staffing issues to address the shortcomings highlighted in the report. Also pay particular attention to developing learners' key skills across the curriculum within a co-ordinated framework.**

The school has made good progress in addressing this recommendation.

The school has made significant progress in reviewing and enhancing the curriculum. Introducing the Welsh Baccalaureate has also helped to extend the curriculum opportunities for the sixth form.

The introduction of the two-week time table has enabled the school to offer more courses, as well as providing the necessary time to deliver the personal and social education framework.

Significant work has taken place to extend teachers' understanding of how pupils' key skills can be developed through all subjects. A detailed guidance document clearly sets out the age related expectations appropriately linked to the Skills Framework. Up to now, the focus has been on the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. There are plans to extend this so that the wider key skills can be addressed from January 2009.

Departments are making the relevant key skills more explicit within schemes of work and lesson plans. However, teachers do not always exploit opportunities to develop pupils' key skills in lessons.

There has been good practice where a number of departments have worked together, for example religious education and English, mathematics and science, and English and Art, to design subject related numeracy and literacy materials. This process has also involved teachers meeting with teachers from other schools to share information.

Projects that are contributing well to the co-ordinated development of key skills are the Year 8 booster programme for literacy and numeracy, and the Year 7 and 8 breakfast club for numeracy. The booster programme sets pupil targets and these are reported to parents/guardians.

**Recommendation 5: eradicate the shortcomings in faculty and departmental leadership, management and self-evaluation to ensure that more rigorous, ever consistent approaches are prevalent throughout the school and that 'Learning for Improvement' produces its intended outcomes for success**

The school has made good progress in acting on this recommendation. There is now greater consistency in departmental leadership and management, and more rigour in self-evaluation procedures.

The school has focused on eliminating the most significant shortcomings in middle management. It has shown determination to address these and has made substantial progress in developing a clearer concept of the role of middle managers. As a result, middle managers are now clear about what they are expected to do, particularly in carrying out their roles in monitoring and evaluation. Throughout the school, there is more frequent and regular monitoring, and there are suitable procedures to tackle underperformance.

There are clear criteria for evaluating pupils' work and lessons. Staff training has helped to ensure that these criteria are well understood and applied consistently. The criteria used for lesson observations are detailed and concentrate well on teaching and learning, but they do not pay enough attention to the standards pupils achieve.

The system for self-evaluation has been adjusted so that it includes an analysis of performance data. Self-evaluation reports now have a clear emphasis on shortcomings. These reports, together with the detailed analysis of examination results, are used appropriately as the basis for departmental development plans. These plans focus well on standards, teaching and learning. They set out suitable actions, responsibilities, timescales and responsibilities. However, the intended outcomes in many plans are not specific and precise enough.

## **Recommendations**

In order to improve further, the school should:

- ensure that all acts of collective worship are of high quality;
- continue to improve standards of attainment (particularly the proportion of pupils achieving level 1 and level 2 thresholds including English and mathematics) and reducing the proportion of pupils leaving school without a qualification;
- continue to improve standards in religious education, Welsh and history;
- continue to improve teaching and learning and increase the proportion of grade 1 and grade 2 lessons;
- eliminate low-level disruption and inattentiveness;
- increase the level of challenge in lessons;
- exploit opportunities to develop pupils' key skills in lessons;
- ensure that development plans identify clear and specific intended outcomes; and
- continue to develop the procedures for self-evaluation so that they maintain the emphasis on rigour and consistency.