



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb - Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**Report of visit  
Level of follow-up: Estyn monitoring**

**Chepstow Comprehensive School  
Welsh Street  
Chepstow  
Monmouthshire  
Monmouthshire  
NP16 5LR**

**Date of visit: October 2013**

**by**

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

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**The monitoring team**

Robert Davies	Reporting Inspector
Gill Simms	Team Inspector
Sharon Randall-Smith	Local authority representative

## **Outcome of monitoring visit**

Chepstow school is judged to have made sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the core inspection in January 2012.

As a result, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from any further follow-up activity.

## **Progress since the last inspection**

### **Recommendation 1: Raise standards in English and mathematics**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has implemented all the actions outlined in its post-inspection action plan to raise outcomes. These actions are clearly having a positive impact on provision, which has improved well since the time of the core inspection. In particular, the school uses data much more effectively to set challenging targets and monitor the progress of its pupils. To date, these actions have mainly influenced performance at key stage 4, and in particular in mathematics.

At key stage 3, there has been a steady improvement in attainment in English and mathematics at level 5 and above. However, attainment at the higher levels in these subjects is not strong enough and is below that of other similar schools. Girls continue to outperform boys in English and the gap is larger than that in the family of schools and that seen nationally.

At key stage 4, there has been a solid improvement in the headline indicator that includes English and mathematics. Since the time of the core inspection, performance in this measure has increased by seven percentage points and for 2013 it is above modelled expectations. In particular, improvements in mathematics have been strong and performance for 2013 is well into the upper 50% of schools with similar levels of free school meals. Attainment in English has remained flat and in 2013 performance just falls into the bottom 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals. However, the department has experienced significant staffing issues over the last year and, despite this, provision has improved recently and standards have remained commendably steady. In both English and mathematics, achievement at the higher grades remains weak.

### **Recommendation 2: Improve the achievement and progress of more able pupils**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Since the time of the core inspection, the school's strategy and provision for more able pupils has markedly improved. The school now has a coherent approach to evaluating its provision for these pupils and it has strong plans to improve their outcomes. Senior leaders work closely with teachers, including primary colleagues, to identify more able pupils accurately. A useful record of more able pupils is kept centrally and this enables teachers to plan more effectively for the needs of these

pupils. Furthermore, middle leaders now take greater account of the needs of more able pupils in their self-evaluation and planning work. Importantly, leaders closely monitor the progress made by pupils against challenging targets. Pupils identified as underachieving receive suitable support and leaders contact parents when appropriate. The school's tracking system indicates that more able pupils moving from Year 7 to Year 8 have made good progress in most subjects. However, the improved provision to date has yet to significantly improve outcomes for more able pupils at the end of key stage 3 and key stage 4.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that there is a consistent and systematic whole-school approach to the improvement of standards in literacy**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school has implemented a wide range of effective strategies and collaborated well with primary schools and regional consortium partners to improve standards of literacy across the school. The literacy policy clearly outlines the role that staff, parents and governors should undertake to improve pupils' literacy skills. A senior teacher coordinates literacy across the school effectively and in each subject area literacy champions that are used to promote and develop literacy skills in departments. As a result, teachers are now using more effective strategies to raise levels of literacy across the school. However, teachers do not always consistently implement these strategies and there remains too much variation in the quality of work produced by pupils in different subject areas.

Most pupils are aware of their own literacy targets and what they need to do to make improvements. Leaders use a suitable range of data well to inform planning and intervention. Professional development for staff in this area has improved and the school now makes better use of staff outside the English department to model good practice in teaching literacy. The school has established good working relationships with schools in its cluster. It is now working much more effectively with these schools to develop a more consistent approach to improving pupils' literacy skills.

**Recommendation 4: Improve standards in numeracy through a co-ordinated whole-school approach**

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

The school is improving its provision to support the development of pupils' numeracy skills across the school. Policies outline clear expectations that staff, parents and governors should undertake to improve these skills. Helpful assessment techniques are used well to identify weaknesses in pupils' numeracy skills and potential gaps in provision. These are shared appropriately with teachers across the school. The mathematics department has a clear focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills and they are beginning to support other departments in this area. The school works well with local primary schools and partners through the regional consortium to improve planning and the professional development of staff. The school plans intervention strategies well and pupils involved in these make suitable progress. However, it is too early to see a consistent impact on the standards of pupils' numeracy skills from the initiatives introduced to date.

**Recommendation 5: Increase accountability for improving standards and quality, especially through rigorous line management arrangements**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has made good progress in addressing this recommendation and increasing the accountability of staff for raising standards and improving quality is now a clear priority in the school. Clear lines of accountability are evident after the school carried out a comprehensive restructure of staff roles and responsibilities. Underperformance across the school is tackled robustly and the quality of work undertaken by leaders is monitored well.

Curriculum and pastoral departments have been reorganised well and the new house system is having a positive impact on learning outcomes and wellbeing, since it has strengthened the links between curriculum and pastoral support. House leaders are linked to specific curriculum areas and this has brought about a consistent approach to accountability and challenge across the school. The school provides governors with regular updates on progress and they use this information well to challenge and support leaders in their work.

The school has a strong ethos of support that allows all leaders the opportunity to develop their skills. The school holds regular and useful training events to ensure leaders are able to analyse and use data effectively. School leaders compare course, department and school data well against a wide range of benchmarks. They review pupil performance data every six weeks and departments are effectively challenged on the progress that pupils make. This has had a clear impact on outcomes in areas such as mathematics, and to a lesser extent, the performance of more able pupils. The improved use of data in the school now means that targets set by leaders are suitably challenging.

There is a robust process for reviewing the quality of teaching. Leaders work well together to carry out many observations in pairs with a leader from one department observing a teacher from another. This has improved accountability for standards in lessons. Many leadership team meetings focus appropriately on how to manage staff performance effectively. However, outcomes from reviewing the quality of teaching are not used consistently enough to set challenging performance management targets for individual staff.

**Recommendation 6: Improve the consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning at middle management level**

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The school has made good progress in improving the consistency and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning across the school. Middle leaders' self-evaluation reports follow a helpful structure that is used consistently. The quality of their reports has improved since the time of the core inspection. These reports demonstrate a strong focus on departmental strengths and areas for improvement,

and match well to action plan targets that are measurable and purposeful.

Nearly all self-evaluation plans have a comprehensive analysis of data. There is a strong focus on how well departments meet the school targets and how well departments compare to one another. Departments identify and analyse performance data soundly for specific groups of pupils such as those entitled to free school meals and the more able and talented pupils. However, departmental plans do not focus strongly enough on how well literacy and numeracy skills are developed in lessons or on the overall quality of teaching.

Senior leaders support middle leaders effectively in carrying out self-evaluation activities. This has helped middle leaders to develop their leadership skills and improved their understanding of the self-evaluation process. There is a very high level of trust between middle leaders and they support each other well. Middle leaders are increasingly confident in their ability to assess the quality of work carried out in their departments.

**Recommendation 7: Meet statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship and for associate pupils governors**

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

The school has a robust and effective process to ensure all pupils have appropriate time to reflect on their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. The weekly school assembly has a useful focus on current issues and provides pupils with good opportunities to join together for reflection.

The 'thought for the day' is a consistent and established part of registration time. The format includes using meaningful video clips and relevant cultural prompts such as a poems or pictures. These provide pupils with helpful opportunities to reflect on their own feelings and enable them to share their thoughts with others. Each department takes responsibility for developing the 'thought for the day' for one month. This provides sufficient variety for pupils to remain motivated and engaged in the process. The school meets the statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship.

Pupils have had the opportunity to nominate two representatives to act as pupil associate governors. Pupils now attend governor body meetings as associate pupil governors.

<b>Recommendations</b>
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In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should continue to work towards meeting the inspection recommendations that have not yet been fully addressed.