

Inspection

of

**Llanedeyrn High School
Roundwood
Cardiff
CF23 9US**

School number: 6814047

Date of inspection: 23 to 25 January 2008

Llanedeyrn High School was inspected in April 2006, and judged to be in need of special measures. As part of the Welsh Assembly Government's requirements for schools in need of special measures, Estyn has undertaken regular monitoring inspections, which have focused on the key issues and recommendations identified in the inspection in April 2006.

Outcome of the inspection on 23 to 25 January 2008

Llanedeyrn High School is judged to have made sound progress in respect of the recommendations following the inspection of April 2006. As a result of this progress, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is removing the school from special measures.

Introduction

Estyn inspectors visited Llanedeyrn High School in January 2008 to monitor the progress that the school has made since the inspection of April 2006 that placed the school in special measures. This was the fifth inspection visit since April 2006. Estyn inspectors observed lessons, looked at a representative selection of pupils' work and observed standards of behaviour around the school. They also interviewed senior managers and heads of department. At the end of the visit, they reported their findings to representatives of the governing body and the LEA, the headteacher and other senior managers. The key findings are set out below.

Outcome

In view of the good progress made since the school was placed in special measures, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales is of the opinion that special measures are no longer required in relation to the school.

Standards

Over the last two years there has been an upward trend in examination results. In 2007, the percentage of five passes at GCSE grades A* to C is 36% which, although below the national average, is as expected when compared with pupils' prior attainment. The percentage of five passes at grades A* to G, at 83%, is just below the national average and better than expected when compared with pupils' prior attainment. Performance in most subjects is as expected at GCSE level, but in history and IT pupils perform well below expectations.

The inspection team observed 24 lessons. The standards achieved in these lessons are shown in the table below:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
4%	42%	54%	0%	0%

All lessons are at grade 3 (good features outweigh shortcomings) or above. This is well above the figure of 78% in the inspection of 2006 and shows a clear improvement from previous Estyn monitoring visits. The proportion of lessons at grade 2 (good features and no important shortcomings) or better is also above the percentage in the inspection of 2006. The overall improvement in standards is the result mainly of the school's self-evaluation procedures, including lesson observations, and the setting of clearer expectations for both pupils and teachers.

Compared with the inspection of 2006, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. The number of pupils that have been excluded during the first five months in the school year of 2007-2008 has fallen by nearly one third compared with the same period in 2006-2007. The total number of days lost to exclusion has also fallen by nearly two-thirds. The key factors that have contributed to these improvements are:

- more effective approaches to managing behaviour; and
- better teaching.

In about half of lessons, pupils behave well, are attentive and remain on-task. They are well motivated, show interest in their work and are clear about how they are progressing. In the best cases, pupils have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and make good progress. However, there are still shortcomings in the remaining half of lessons. These include pupils who are not engaged enough in the lesson or do not provide well-considered or thoughtful oral contributions. In a few instances, there is still some low-level disruption.

Standards in speaking and listening are improving. Many pupils write well, but a minority make errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils read satisfactorily. There are more opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills, and, as a result, pupils' skills in numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident in the use of ICT, though there is restricted access to ICT suites for work in subjects other than IT.

The attendance rate for all pupils for 2006-2007 was 88.9%; this was close to the rate for similar schools in Wales. The overall attendance rate for the first five months of the school year 2007-2008 is 91.5% compared with 89.1% for the same period in 2006-2007. The school uses a wide range of effective and well-managed strategies that are steadily improving attendance. It monitors attendance very closely and uses data effectively to target pupils for intervention and support. Most pupils are punctual at the start of the day and very few pupils are late to lessons.

Quality of education

The quality of teaching in the 24 lessons observed was as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
8%	38%	50%	4%	0%

Teaching and assessment were grade 3 or above in 96% of lessons. This is well above the figure of 85% in the previous inspection and shows a clear improvement from previous Estyn inspection visits. The percentage of lessons where teaching is grade 2 or above is slightly below that in the inspection of 2006.

The most common good features of teaching are:

- well-planned lessons with clearly-stated learning objectives;
- an appropriate variety of effective learning activities that successfully engage pupils; and

- a systematic approach to developing pupils' key skills.

In most cases, there is mutual respect between teachers and pupils based on effective classroom management. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils' learning.

In lessons graded 3 or below, the common shortcomings include:

- learning activities that do not engage or challenge pupils enough;
- failure to make sure that all pupils have a clear understanding of the topics and concepts introduced;
- in a very few cases, failure to use the school's pupil behaviour management procedures effectively; and
- failure to use homework well enough to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.

Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and offer supportive comments. In the best cases, marking is very informative and provides pupils with clear information about how well they are doing, the levels they are achieving and helpful advice about what they need to do to improve. In a few classes, there are good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. This helps them to reflect on the quality of their work and acquire a better understanding of the concepts and principles involved. Where assessment is less effective, teachers do not provide a clear indication of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve. Too often, teachers do not correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The school has made good progress in developing an appropriate curriculum in key stage 4. Senior managers are committed to working in partnership with other schools and the local college to expand the range of vocational options. Plans to further extend vocational provision at level 2 are progressing well.

Leadership and management

The school currently has an acting headteacher and the senior leadership team is supported by two experienced consultants. The school has also received additional support from the local authority. There is strong momentum to the improvement process in the school and there are suitable plans to ensure that this momentum is maintained.

Senior managers have addressed successfully the shortcomings identified in the inspection report of 2006. In particular they have increased consistency in management procedures, improved systems for self-evaluation, raised and clarified expectations, and ensured a sharp focus on raising standards.

The school has carried out effectively all the actions planned in response to the recommendations made following the last Estyn inspection visit. The senior leadership team continues to provide firm and consistent leadership and has maintained a sharp focus on improving standards. A number of appropriate systems and processes for management and self-evaluation have been set up. There is a consistent approach to the way that senior managers oversee their designated departments. Regular and focused meetings between senior staff and middle managers result in agreed targets for improvement. Senior managers have established clear and specific expectations for middle managers and other staff.

The school has developed a comprehensive and manageable system for analysing the performance of individual pupils and departments. The system tracks closely the performance of pupils over a key stage and identifies any underachievement. Heads of department and heads of year then act appropriately on this information.

The school has set up a programme of lesson observations that involve suitable criteria and procedures for feeding back findings. Senior managers have a secure knowledge of the standards of teaching across the school. Teachers in departments also observe each other in a systematic and purposeful way in order to promote good practice in teaching and learning. More recently, the school has standardised the way that evidence in pupils' books is examined. All departments have undertaken this activity in a systematic way.

The school is taking appropriate steps to manage its resources more effectively and improve the quality of its accommodation. Senior managers are carefully monitoring and reviewing all current expenditure. The school has prepared a medium-term financial plan over the next four years that is intended to ensure a balanced budget and has been approved by the local authority. The plan takes appropriate account of proposed curricular developments and future staffing and teaching levels. However, this year's budget deficit is forecast to be approximately £430,000 by the end of the financial year.

Recommendations for improvement

In order to maintain and improve on this progress, the school should:

- improve standards in lessons and examination results, particularly by:
 - improving the quality of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar; and
 - developing pupils' speaking and listening skills;
- increase the proportion of lessons with a good or very good quality of teaching and provide more incisive marking of pupils' work; and
- sustain the improvements already in place and further embed current developments, with the help of the local authority.