

Martin Craddock  
Chair of Governors  
Argoed High School  
Bryn Road  
Bryn Y Baal  
Nr Mold  
Flintshire  
CH7 6RY

17 June 2016

Dear Mr Craddock

### **Argoed High School**

#### **Secondary schools requiring Estyn monitoring following Section 28 inspection**

This letter is to inform you that secondary schools placed in Estyn monitoring are required to submit a progress report against recommendations from the core inspection by Friday, 14 October 2016.

I would be grateful if you would send the progress report to Rhiannon Bell at [Rhiannon.Bell@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:Rhiannon.Bell@estyn.gov.wales)

The report should be no more than four pages in length. Please structure the report as follows:

- an evaluation of school performance in 2016, paying particular attention to key stage 4 performance and trends since the core inspection; and
- an evaluation of progress against each of the recommendations from the core inspection.

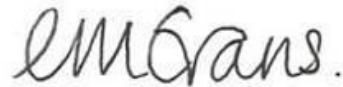
HMI will consider the report in the context of feedback from the local authority and scrutiny of the all Wales core data sets (provisional). The outcome of this review may result in:

- removal from Estyn monitoring;
- remaining in Estyn monitoring; or
- a monitoring visit during the academic year (the usual 20 day notice period will apply).

You should expect to receive a letter detailing the outcome of the review during the autumn term.

I am copying this letter to Dawn Spence, the head teacher, and to Ian Budd, Director of Lifelong Learning for Flintshire local authority.

Yours sincerely



**Mrs Catherine Evans**  
Acting Assistant Director

cc the head teacher  
cc Director of Lifelong Learning for Flintshire local authority

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*Prifathro* Mrs D Spence MA, NPQH *Headteacher*  
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Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Re: Estyn Report**

The school has been working very hard in response to the January 2016 report from Estyn. We were required to write an action plan in response to the five recommendations made and seeing as the overall judgement was that our strengths outweigh areas for improvement this was sent to Estyn, the Local Authority and the Regional Improvement Service GwE.

We have had our first feedback session with GwE and are now in a position to publish this plan. This was a very positive monitoring meeting and progress has already been shown within a number of the recommendations. We have also just been informed by Estyn of the next monitoring point, so can provide our school community with a much more detailed account of the next steps.

We will publish on our website the link to the Estyn report, the school's response in terms of the post-inspection action plan and the dates from Estyn of the monitoring point the week commencing the 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

I have, however, attached our post-inspection action plan and the letter from Estyn to this correspondence for your convenience.

It is important to recognise that 1.1 of the Estyn Common Inspection Framework carries the most weight, this is focused on Key Stage Four and Three outcomes. We have made progress in our Key Stage Three outcomes this year and they have been sent to the Welsh Government for validation. This summer's results will therefore play a very important role in Estyn's decision-making. Towards the end of August, I will ensure that a follow up letter and report is ready to be distributed to all parents/carers in early September 2016 summarising our Key Stage Four outcomes.

Yours sincerely

Mrs D Spence  
Headteacher

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# **Post Inspection Action Plan**

*March 2016*

## **Introduction**

Following the inspection of Argoed High School on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016, the inspection team recommended that, to improve further, Argoed High School needs to:

- R1. Reduce the variation in standards at key stage 4 and improve the standards of groups of pupils, particularly the more able and talented
- R2. Ensure that teaching meets the needs of all pupils and improve the quality of teachers' feedback
- R3. Improve systems for tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils
- R4. Improve the consistency and accountability of leaders at all levels
- R5. Improve the rigour and quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning

These recommendations were reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors. This action plan sets out the priority areas, strategic tasks, roles and responsibilities, success criteria and arrangements for monitoring and evaluation. The end section of the plan, reference is made to supporting plans/documentation which will carry more details than this strategic overview.

Progress against the detailed action plans for each recommendation will be monitored and evaluated through a quality and rigorous quality assurance process through the whole school. The first monitoring point will be June 2016 and the second will be October 2016. All staff are supported and monitored in the processes of implementation and review through external challenge and support. The Governing Body will also monitor and evaluate progress via meetings with the Headteacher and school staff with each Chair having an overview of one or more recommendations from the plan.

The school's aim is to be removed from Estyn monitoring at the next visit and to have at least good progress identified in each of the recommendations outlined above.

Sections shown in **green** refer to the sections already in the School Improvement Plan from 2015/16.

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<p><b>Recommendation R1. Reduce the variation in standards at key stage 4 and improve the standards of groups of pupils, particularly the more able and talented</b></p>	<p>SLT link <b>Dawn Spence</b></p>	<p>Governors committee <b>Martin Craddock (Chair of Governors)</b></p>
<p>Priority overview Increase the percentage of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold including English and maths. Increase the percentage of boys achieving L2 in science. Increase the percentage of girls achieving L2 in maths. Increase the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*/A grades at GCSE. Increase the percentage of pupils achieving L5 in maths and science. Increase the percentage of pupils achieving at L6 and L7 in core subjects.</p>	<p>Why was this chosen as a priority? Key stage four performance in L2 including English and maths and capped points score were below modelled outcomes in 2015. The proportion of pupils who achieve A*/A at GCSE has been consistently below the average for the family and below average for 2013 and 2015. L5 performance in maths and science in 2015 placed the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools. Apart from L7 in maths, performance at L6 and L7 and above in the core subjects has been lower than the average for similar schools in the last 3 years and has place the school in the bottom quarter in 2015.</p>	<p>How will this impact on standards?  An improvement in key performance indicators including – L2+, capped points score and A*/A, to increase the quartile position of the school to the top 50% of schools in the benchmark group.</p>

	Key action tasks	Success criteria – reduce variations in standards and address more able outcomes
1.1	<p>Ensure all interventions are well matched to pupil needs and accelerate progress for identified pupils. Groups – FSM, ALN, children who are looked after, mid-term transfer, boys in KS3. To include ‘magic’ (c/d) groups from Years 11 and 10, with a particular focus on girls’ resilience and aspirations.</p>	<p>Monitoring of progress checks show on target or above performance for identified pupils.</p>
1.2	<p>Production of individual learning plans outlining waves of intervention, based on analysis of need. Wave 1 – quality first teaching; Wave 2 – internal support plus; Wave 3 – complex (external).</p>	<p>Interventions are positively impacting on behaviour, attendance and progress for identified groups of learners.</p>
1.3	<p>Assertive mentoring to include building resilience in girls, especially in maths.</p>	<p>All girls targeted attain their targeted grade.</p>

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1.4	Improve staff understanding of memory, processing and ability models.	All lesson plans show understanding of challenge in the classroom and progress is appropriate to age, ability and learning goals, shown by lesson observation feedback.
1.5	Wave 1 intervention – quality teaching first. Greater challenge in lessons and homework to meet L7/8 and A*/A (magic ++) assessment criteria.	All lesson observations show challenge and pace at an appropriate level to age, ability and learning goals of pupils.
1.6	Raise aspirations through assertive mentoring of targeted group (magic ++). Focus on self confidence, esteem and resilience needs, in particular boys.	Boys performance in key performance indicators improves and is in line or above family, LA and national averages.
1.7	Effective tracking and monitoring of all groups of learners identified.	Monitoring of progress is in line with learning goals and targets.
1.8	Greater communication to staff regarding pupil progress against key performance indicators, by year group and identified groups.	Staff feedback shows awareness of key performance indicators and progress towards targets for individual pupils and whole school headline targets.

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<p><b>Recommendation R2. Ensure that teaching meets the needs of all pupils and improve the quality of teachers' feedback</b></p>	<p>SLT link <b>Adele Slinn</b></p>	<p>Governors committee <b>Nikki Pearce (Chair of Resource Committee)</b></p>
<p>Priority overview</p> <p>All lessons to be judged at good or better.</p> <p>Lesson planning and delivery shows greater challenge in the classroom and therefore does not limit the progress pupils make.</p>	<p>Why was this chosen as a priority?</p> <p>Not all lessons good or better. In a minority of lessons, teaching does not exploit fully the potential of all pupils. In a minority of instances, teachers' written feedback does not provide pupils with a clear enough indication of what they need to do to improve their subject specific skills and how to make these improvements.</p>	<p>How will this impact on standards?</p> <p>The progress made in lessons will increase for more able pupils, evidenced in their key stage outcomes. Key stage outcomes at level 6 and level 7, and A*/A will result in an increase to the top 50% of schools in the benchmark group.</p>

	Key action tasks	Success criteria – teaching and feedback
2.1	<p><b>Appointment of Assistant Headteacher – teaching and learning</b></p>	<p>New Assistant Headteacher will provide effective strategic leadership of teaching and learning and increase the number of excellent lessons.</p>
2.2	<p>INSET on challenge in the classroom for all teachers to reflect on current practice and delivery. To include section on Pivotal approach to behaviour management.</p>	<p>All teachers include appropriate challenge in the classroom for more able pupils in lesson observation 3 of QA programme. Learning walks show use of identified Pivotal approaches.</p>
2.3	<p>Agree a common set of criteria for effective lesson planning and challenge in the classroom. Continue to support lead practitioners (iNet) to focus on specific projects, including enquiry-based learning and literacy in the classroom.</p>	<p>All staff using the Challenge toolkit in lesson planning and delivery as observed in lessons.</p>



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		X2 members of staff successfully complete iNet Lead Practitioner course.
2.4	Fully embed new lesson planning approach that focuses on barriers to learning. Lesson planning (triad and lesson study models) linked to addressing barriers to learning.	All lesson plans show barriers to learning section appropriate to age, ability and needs of pupils.
2.5	Triad model adopted by all teaching staff. Triads to focus on challenge in the classroom for summer term.	Triad feedback shows greater progress for the more able in lessons.
2.6	Update Marking and Feedback Policy	All marking is in line with the updated policy.
2.7	QA programme is completed and an additional subject specific skills book review is conducted, supported by GWE, focusing on diagnostic marking.	Greater consistency of marking and quality, diagnostic marking evident in all books on subject specific skill development.
2.8	Improve the quality of written feedback through the sharing of good practice, ensuring that all staff make consistent use of the updated Marking and Feedback policy and that feedback gives clear guidance on how to improve and is responded to.	Evidence of good-excellent use of marking policy and written feedback that is diagnostic and responded to is evident in all assessment work scrutinised.

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<p><b>Recommendation R3. Improve systems for tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils</b></p>	<p>SLT link <b>Howard Goodson</b></p>	<p>Governors committee <b>Martin Craddock (Chair of Governros)</b></p>
<p>Priority overview</p> <p>Tracking and monitoring processes are directed towards improving standards in all key performance indicators.</p> <p>Fully embed SISRA to support whole school tracking and monitoring of progress.</p>	<p>Why was this chosen as a priority? There is no clear system to enable senior staff to track the performance across each year group. The written reports for key stage 3 pupils do not provide parents with a clear enough indication of their child's progress against end of key stage targets.</p>	<p>How will this impact on standards? Sub-groups of learners identified will be tracked and monitored consistently at department and whole school level to ensure targeted interventions.</p>

	Key action tasks	Success criteria –tracking and monitoring
3.1	<p>Introduce flight path target setting for all end of key stage targets. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Training session with Curriculum Leaders</li> <li>○ Production of data booklets for all staff, personalised to their teaching groups</li> <li>○ Provision map for all pupils is updated</li> </ul>	<p>Staff feedback shows understanding and knowledge of end of key stage targets and highlights appropriate intervention strategies.</p> <p>Targets and the flight path set show the expected learning defined within the curriculum for all pupils (updated SOW).</p>
3.2	<p>Further develop data collection and tracking systems to provide more efficient analysis of data. Fully embed SISRA to support.</p>	<p>Improvement in key stage outcomes of learners appropriate to age, ability and learning goals.</p>

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3.3	Build on SIMS monitoring of progress and SISRA so tracking points highlight area for interventions for groups of learners.	Interventions show positive impact on progress appropriate to age, ability and learning goals.
3.4	All reports to parents/carers at key stage three include progress against end of key stage targets.	Parents/carers can track and monitor progress to support pupil progress. Effective communication to parents/carers a evidenced by positive parents feedback.
3.5	Attendance letters to be RAG rated and sent home termly.	Attendance improves to position school in top half of benchmarking for similar schools.

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<p><b>Recommendation R4. Improve the consistency and accountability of leaders at all levels</b></p>	<p>SLT link  <b>Dawn Spence</b></p>	<p>Governors committee  <b>Ian Jones (Chair of Finance Committee)</b></p>
<p>Priority overview</p> <p>To introduce more formal individual accountability processes.</p> <p>To fully embed the new QA programme.</p>	<p>Why was this chosen as a priority? Link meetings do not focus enough on matters such as the outcomes of tracking activities and feedback from quality assurance processes. Middle leaders' role in holding members of their department to account continues to develop appropriately. Greater consistency of quality performance management objectives that focus on school improvement. Improve Governors understanding of performance data.</p>	<p>How will this impact on standards?</p> <p>Greater consistency in quality assurance and improvement planning will address key areas for improvement. A greater understanding of accountability will ensure staff are clear on their role and responsibilities in improvement planning.</p>

	Key action tasks	Success criteria – consistency and accountability
4.1	Share expectations in relation to accountability to all staff, using a Theory of Change model. An agreed plan is formulated to highlight the assumptions behind accountability.	The assumptions behind accountability are addressed and efficiency of systems improves (measured by feedback from all staff)
4.2	Clarify leadership team roles and responsibilities and line management responsibilities.	All staff are clear on their roles and responsibilities.
4.3	Effective accountability through SLT and CL link meetings.	Minutes of meetings highlight actions taken that focus on improving standards.

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4.4	Introduce a formal process of reporting quality assurance and actions required from department links.	Minutes of SLT meetings show actions taken that address the outcomes of quality assurance processes.
4.5	Governance training planned around effective governance and accountability, improving the Governing Body's effectiveness to challenge school performance.	Governors have a greater understanding of performance data. Minutes of meetings show greater challenge of school performance data.
4.6	Ensure all performance management objectives support whole school and department priorities and are SMART.	Review of performance management objectives show direct, positive impact on standards.

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<p>Recommendation <b>R5. Improve the rigour and quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning</b></p>	<p>SLT link <b>Paul Smith</b></p>	<p>Governors committee <b>Nikki Pearce (Chair of Resource Committee)</b></p>
<p>Priority overview  To ensure that all quality assurance processes are focused on improving standards. Fully embed new QA programme. Targets and success criteria in improvement planning is more precise.</p>	<p>Why was this chosen as a priority? Processes for evaluating pupils' work and lesson observations are not sufficiently robust. Senior leaders do not rigorously quality assure processes. The targets and success criteria in the school and department improvement plans are insufficiently precise. The school undertakes satisfactory evaluations of most of its partnerships but not does not link them sufficiently well to pupil outcomes.</p>	<p>How will this impact on standards? School outcomes improve and are sustained due to all QA processes being focused on improving standards.</p>

	Key action tasks	Success criteria – quality assurance and improvement planning
5.1	Fully embed new QA programme effectively, all activities to focus on improving standards that pupils achieve.	Greater impact of quality assurance processes and self evaluation on standards.
5.2	SLT strategic meetings to formally agenda QA feedback in line with QA calendar and CL meetings.	Quality assurance activities will be more consistent at addressing standards and positively impact on improvement towards targeted outcomes.
5.3	Support and challenge meetings focus on the outcomes of QA activities. Actions are built into operational and strategic department and whole school plans.	Plans are updated in direct response to self evaluation and quality assurance activities.
5.4	All levels of leadership support is focused on robust judgements of monitoring and quality. To include lesson observation feedback training for all middle leaders, addressing under-performance and conducting book scrutinies.	An improvement in the quality of written feedback by teachers, showing diagnostic marking in all assessed pieces of work. Greater number of good and excellent lessons.

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	A booklet is to produced to support the new QA programme.	
5.5	Improve the precision of targets set and success criteria in the school improvement plan and department improvement plans.	Plans can be clearly monitored and evaluated against explicit targets set.
5.6	Ensure all partnership activities are fully evaluated against impact on pupil outcomes.	Evaluations show positive impact of activities on behaviour, attendance and progress towards targets.