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a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Hartridge High School  
Hartridge Farm Road  
Newport  
NP18 2YE**

**Date of inspection: November 2010**

**by**

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



**INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR  
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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## Context

Hartridge High School is an 11 to 18 comprehensive school situated on the eastern side of Newport. There are currently 938 pupils on roll, including 233 in the sixth form. Pupils come predominantly from areas where there is a high level of social and economic deprivation.

The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 34.6%, which is significantly higher than the Welsh average of 17.1% for secondary schools. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is 26%, which is well above the national figure. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is 6%, compared with 2.7% for Wales as a whole. The local authority's emotional and behavioural difficulties resource base is located within the school. This caters for up to 21 key stage 3 pupils.

Around 2% of the school's pupils are from a minority ethnic or mixed race background. Less than 1% of pupils are from Welsh-speaking homes, or speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.

At post-16, the school operates in a collaborative arrangement with three secondary schools, Duffryn, Lliswerry and Newport High school, together with Coleg Gwent.

The school is undergoing a period of significant change. A new headteacher took up post in January 2010, shortly after the appointment of the school's deputy headteacher in September 2009. The new leadership team includes three assistant headteachers, one of whom commenced his duties at the start of the school year. This year, as part of a strategy to reduce a projected budget deficit, there has been a reduction of 23 staffing posts across the school.

Newport local authority recently confirmed that Hartridge will receive a new school building. Work has recently begun on the school site with an anticipated completion date of April 2012.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Hartridge High School is £4,251, which compares with a maximum of £4,263 and a minimum of £3,713 for secondary schools in Newport. The school has the third highest budget per pupil out of the eight secondary schools in Newport.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

There are good features of the school's work. These include:

- steady progress in raising standards over the last three years with significant improvement in performance in both key stage 3 and key stage 4 in 2010;
- very few pupils leaving school with no qualifications;
- the good progress pupils make in the majority of lessons in developing their knowledge and understanding;
- a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum, which in most aspects meets the needs of pupils and the local community well; and
- the excellent support for vulnerable pupils.

However, current performance is judged as adequate overall because:

- at both key stage 3 and key stage 4, over the last three years, performance has generally been below the average for the family of schools;
- the differences between the performances of boys and girls are considerably wider than Wales and family averages;
- attendance is poor and a few pupils occasionally disrupt lessons;
- the statutory requirement for teaching Welsh is not being met for half of Year 11 pupils; and
- accommodation is unsatisfactory.

## Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are judged as adequate because:

- the headteacher provides strong strategic leadership;
- the self-evaluation report is detailed and realistic, taking good account of performance data and identifying clear areas for improvement priorities;
- clear and appropriate improvement objectives are supported by detailed plans and well-defined areas of responsibility;
- the school is developing well as a learning community with the implementation of a number of useful initiatives that are having a positive influence on teaching and learning;
- shortcomings in the accommodation are being addressed through the construction of new purpose-built premises;
- self-evaluation arrangements do not include enough use of first-hand evidence based on direct observation of classroom practice and scrutiny of pupils' work; and
- the school has not addressed all of the recommendations of the previous Section 28 report.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and governors of Hartridge High School need to:

- R1 continue to implement actions to raise standards, particularly to tackle the underperformance of boys;
- R2 improve the quality of teaching and assessment to increase the level of challenge for pupils of all abilities;
- R3 meet statutory requirements for teaching Welsh at key stage 4;
- R4 continue to implement strategies to improve attendance and behaviour;
- R5 strengthen provision to develop pupils' skills;
- R6 further develop self-evaluation procedures through greater use of first-hand evidence from lesson observations; and
- R7 formalise performance management arrangements.

### What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by Estyn.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

In both key stage 3 and key stage 4, results are generally below family averages. In 2010, results improved significantly in both key stages.

In key stage 3, over the last four years, there has been a significant improvement of 32 percentage points in the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum). Performance in 2010 was above the family average. Results over the last three years have generally been above the family average in English, but below the family average in mathematics and science. In 2010, when compared with similar schools in terms of the free-school-meal benchmarks, the school was in the first quarter for English, science and the core subject indicator and at the average for mathematics.

The percentage of pupils attaining level 6 and above in English has been broadly in line with the family average in each of the last three years. However, it has generally been below family averages in mathematics and science.

In 2010, the proportion of key stage 4 pupils attaining the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics showed a significant improvement of about 13 percentage points and was slightly better than the family average. The wider points score (comprising all externally approved qualifications at age 16), the core subject indicator and the proportion of pupils attaining the level 1 threshold were broadly in line with family averages. When compared with similar schools, in terms of the free-school-meal benchmarks, the school was above average for the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, level 2 threshold and the wider points score. However, in the previous two years, performance on all key indicators was below the average for the family of schools.

There have been steady improvements over the last three years in the percentages of pupils attaining level 2 in each of the core subjects, but these improvements have been from a low base, particularly in science.

The percentage of post-16 students gaining the level 3 threshold was significantly lower in 2010 than in the previous two years and well below national averages. Attainment on the wider points score is well below national averages. It has improved over the last three years but at a slower rate than national averages.

In both key stage 3 and key stage 4, girls attain higher standards than boys. Over the last three years, the difference in the performance of boys and girls has been considerably wider than Wales and family averages. In key stage 3, boys' results have improved at a faster rate than girls', which has led to a narrowing of the gap. At key stage 4, girls' results have improved at a faster rate than boys'.

Key stage 3 pupils in the emotional and behavioural difficulties resource base make good progress in their learning. Specific groups of pupils, including those entitled to free school meals, looked-after children and those with additional learning needs make sound progress relative to their ability.

The percentage of pupils leaving school with no qualifications has been better than Wales and family averages for the last three years. At the end of Year 11, about two-thirds of pupils continued in full-time education. This is well below both local and national averages. Of those Year 11 pupils who left the school in summer 2009, almost 15% are not in education, training or employment. This figure is much higher than local and national averages. Only 40% go on to higher education after the sixth form.

In the majority of lessons, pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. In a few classes, particularly where learning activities are not challenging, pupils do not make enough progress. Most pupils listen well. The majority speak clearly and express their views and opinions confidently. A few pupils lack confidence and are hesitant when speaking in whole-class and group situations. Many pupils read with understanding. This enables them to carry out set tasks effectively. Less able pupils who have difficulty in reading do not always make appropriate progress. In a few classes, many pupils produce good extended written pieces, but these skills are not developing consistently across the curriculum. Many pupils of all abilities make basic grammatical errors. Pupils do not develop their numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) skills well enough across the curriculum.

In Welsh, most pupils listen well and read aloud with a good accent. With appropriate support they produce good extended sentences in writing and speech. In 2010, the percentage of Year 9 pupils attaining level 5 in Welsh second language improved to 50%. This was above the family average for the first time in four years. Very few key stage 4 pupils followed the full GCSE course. In the short course, nearly three-quarters of entries gained level 2 or better, but around a third of the year group did not sit the examination.

### **Wellbeing: Adequate**

Most pupils understand how they can be healthy. Many engage in a variety of physical activities, although girls participate less regularly than boys. Most pupils feel safe in school and indicate that they receive good personal support. However, a minority of pupils feel that the school does not always deal effectively with bullying.

Many pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. In the majority of lessons, pupils show an interest and enthusiasm in their work. They concentrate well, engage purposefully in tasks, collaborate well in pair and group activities, and show respect for others. However, a few pupils occasionally disrupt lessons especially when there is a lack of pace and challenge or where tasks are not adapted well enough to suit the needs of pupils of all abilities.

Attendance is poor. It has improved slightly since 2009 but remains in the lowest quarter when compared with similar schools.

Many pupils enjoy participating in a good range of sport, music and drama activities in school and the local community. Pupils show respect and concern for others through their enthusiastic support for many charity events. They also show strong interest in other societies, for example through the developing links with a school in Kenya.

Pupils are beginning to offer opinions and make decisions about what they learn in a few curriculum areas, including the key stage 3 skills programme called 'Xcite'. However, the School Council does not have enough opportunities to influence the school's work.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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**Learning experiences: Adequate**

The curriculum is balanced, broad and flexible and, in most aspects, meets the needs of pupils and the local community.

The key stage 3 'Xcite' programme and the essential skills project are well-designed initiatives to improve and lead to the accreditation of pupils' skills. Many teachers plan well to improve pupils' speaking skills, but opportunities across the curriculum to develop writing, numeracy and ICT are limited.

The school has made very good progress in implementing Learning Pathways 14-19. The curriculum exceeds the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure for 2012. Pupils aged 14 to 19 choose general and vocational courses from a wide range of options.

The Combined Cadet Force is a particularly strong feature of the pre-16 curriculum. Together with the Business Enterprise initiative, it has been very successful in developing many pupils' self-confidence, problem-solving and social skills, as well as providing qualifications.

Vocational courses at the further education college and through the Combined Cadet Force are timetabled flexibly so they do not reduce other options open to pupils. Post-16 pupils benefit from a comprehensive range of courses due to successful collaboration with partners including the successful football and cricket academies.

There is a well-structured careers and personal and social education programme for all pupils. Valuable links with local employers provide good access to work-focused experiences

The statutory requirement for the teaching of Welsh is not being met for half of Year 11 pupils. This important shortcoming has been put right in the current Year 10 programme. The school increasingly promotes the use of incidental Welsh around the school and celebrates Welsh culture.

A few subjects promote education for sustainable development and global citizenship well. However, this is not developed enough across the curriculum.

A very good range of extra-curricular experiences are available to pupils.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

The quality of relationships between pupils and teachers is generally good. Most teachers apply the recently-revised behaviour policy and deal appropriately with occasional instances of low-level disruption.

In the majority of lessons, teachers plan a good range of suitable learning activities that develop pupils' knowledge and understanding well. In the few very good lessons, well-structured group work develops thinking skills effectively. However, in a small minority of lessons, there is not enough challenge to ensure that pupils think deeply, develop extended responses and remain fully engaged.

The school makes good use of assessment information to track the progress of pupils. Effective systems identify underperformance and individual pupils or groups of pupils receive relevant and often very well-designed additional support. A minority of teachers do not use this information well enough in their planning. As a result, learning activities do not always meet the needs of all pupils. In particular, tasks do not challenge more able pupils sufficiently.

In a minority of lessons, teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own progress as well as that of others. However, in a few cases, pupils do not always understand fully the criteria they should use to assess their work.

The quality of assessment varies considerably. In the few best cases, good oral and written feedback shows pupils clearly how well they are doing and provides good advice for improvement. A minority of teachers do not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve.

Parents receive a suitable annual report on the progress of their children. Teachers and pupils identify strengths and indicate targets for improvement.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

Well-designed personal and social education arrangements, including careers education, contribute effectively to pupils' wellbeing. The school provides good impartial advice and guidance. Pupils feel well-supported in making informed choices about the courses they follow at key stage 4 and post-16.

There are very good support structures to promote pupils' health, behaviour and wellbeing. Pupils receive a wide and well co-ordinated range of professional support, both in the school and from specialist external services. School staff work well with the resident youth worker and learning coaches to provide effective support for vulnerable pupils. This has contributed towards a reduction in exclusion rates and in the number of pupils leaving without a qualification. It is a particular strength of the school.

Procedures for promoting good behaviour have recently been strengthened. There is greater clarity and consistency in the application of sanctions and more focused

support for pupils who misbehave. These arrangements have contributed to a significant reduction in the number of referrals for poor behaviour.

Learning experiences throughout the school, including regular assemblies on topical themes, promote pupils' social, moral and cultural development well. Assemblies provide appropriate opportunities for reflection, although pupils' spiritual development is not promoted as successfully as other aspects.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding pupils.

The school has appropriate systems for identifying pupils' additional learning needs and provides good learning experiences and support for those pupils who are taught in discrete small classes. However, pupils with additional learning needs who are taught in mixed-ability classes are not as well supported.

The emotional and behavioural difficulties resource base provides effective education for key stage 3 pupils from across the local authority. These pupils make good progress and learn to modify their behaviour.

### **Learning environment: Unsatisfactory**

The school is an inclusive community where diversity is valued and respected. Racial and social equality issues are explored and discussed through the personal and social education programme, in several subjects and in assemblies.

The school places particular emphasis on social inclusion. Many outside agencies and speakers provide very valuable support for this aspect of the school's work.

The school actively promotes equal opportunities and pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision.

Resources for learning are sufficient overall. There are limited ICT resources.

The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. There are attractive and well-constructed displays in some classrooms, but corridors are often very bare. The buildings are in a poor state of repair. Toilet facilities are poor in all teaching blocks. There has been limited investment in the fabric of the school in recent years. However, this situation is being addressed with the construction of the new purpose-built premises.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher communicates his vision for the school effectively and provides strong strategic leadership. In demonstrating a clear commitment to improving standards, he has gained the firm backing of staff and pupils. Members of the senior management team have clearly-defined roles and provide good support to the headteacher. The senior management team and most middle managers carry out their responsibilities effectively, though a few department leaders do not oversee and

monitor the work of their teams well enough. Staff are increasingly accountable for improving standards and provision. They feel valued and well-supported in their work.

With firm endorsement from the governing body and senior managers, the headteacher has effectively implemented necessary changes and improvements. These include an urgent reorganisation of the school's staffing arrangements to address a significant inherited budget deficit. The headteacher has also established clear systems and structures to manage the school efficiently.

Monitoring and intervention procedures have been strengthened. These, together with the effective use of data to identify underperformance, contributed significantly to the school's improved examination performance at key stage 3 and key stage 4 in 2010. Performance management arrangements have not been systematic enough in recent years. These shortcomings are addressed in the school development plan and more formal arrangements are being introduced this year.

The governing body has established a revised committee structure with well-distributed responsibilities. In the past, governors were not aware enough of some of the school's shortcomings. However, they now have a much improved understanding of the issues and challenges the school faces, and provide good support and challenge.

The school responds well to national priorities such as the School Effectiveness Framework. It has established professional learning communities within the school and collaborates well with other Newport schools to provide a good range of post-16 learning pathways.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

The school's self-evaluation report is thorough, detailed and rigorous. It takes good account of performance data and department self-evaluations, and realistically identifies areas for improvement as well as strengths. Senior managers have a good knowledge of the school.

The few very good departmental reports are detailed and use data effectively, for example to compare different classes within the department and to compare the department's performance with other subjects. Most self-evaluation reports are well-structured and identify several suitable areas for improvement based on a realistic analysis of strengths and shortcomings. In a minority of subjects, self-evaluation reports are not thorough enough.

There has been good use of surveys to obtain the views of pupils and parents. Last term, almost all staff carried out peer observations, which led to a useful summary of good practice. However, an important weakness in self-evaluation arrangements is that they do not include enough first-hand evidence based on systematic and direct observation of classroom practice and scrutiny of pupils' work.

The school has a detailed two-year strategic plan, which contains a range of appropriate objectives that are very closely aligned to self-evaluation outcomes.

Actions are well-described and responsibility is spread appropriately across senior managers and other key staff. Several of the actions described have already led to good improvements in the work of the school. Many department development plans address whole-school priorities appropriately as well as particular departmental issues.

The school has a number of useful initiatives to improve teaching and learning. Two groups of teachers are carrying out action research on different topics as part of their individual higher degree courses. These groups have carried out lesson observations related to these topics and implemented several valuable initiatives that are having an important influence on practice within the school.

The school has not addressed all of the recommendations of the previous Section 28 report in 2004. In particular, the school does not currently comply with statutory requirements for teaching Welsh in Year 11 and has not significantly improved attendance or ICT provision.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has developed effective links and partnerships with a broad range of organisations and local businesses.

Valuable partnerships with other local schools and colleges enable the school to offer a wide range of curriculum choices for 14 to 19-year-old learners and to improve efficiency in its use of resources. These partnerships are developing useful methods of communication, which help ensure that students make appropriate progress. However, robust quality assurance procedures have not been established.

The school regularly meets its partner primary schools to promote continuity and progression in pupils' learning experiences between key stage 2 and key stage 3. These meetings provide useful opportunities for teachers to exchange information, discuss effective approaches to improve teaching and moderate pupils' work. Well-designed arrangements ensure that pupils settle in to school life smoothly.

The football and cricket academies are strengths of the school, providing good opportunities for the development of sporting excellence and academic achievement. The local community makes good use of the academies' facilities.

The good work of teachers within the professional learning communities in the school positively influences the school's ability to improve standards.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

Since the appointment of the new headteacher, a well-considered recovery plan, approved by the local authority, is effectively addressing an inherited budget deficit. The governors now have relevant information and contribute appropriately to decisions required to ensure that the budget is balanced properly.

The school has made significant changes to financial procedures to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately.

There are enough suitably qualified teaching staff who are deployed efficiently. An appropriate and significant reduction in personnel has been achieved without significantly undermining morale or curriculum provision.

The school provides adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Estyn received 12 responses to the parent questionnaire representing a very small proportion of the total number of parents. Of those that responded, many parents gave a positive or very positive response to most questions.

Most parents are satisfied with the school. They state that their children like the school and were helped to settle in well when they started school. They feel very comfortable about approaching the school to discuss matters about their child's education and wellbeing. They consider that there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities with all those responding stating that their children are encouraged to be healthy.

Many parents maintain that their children are safe in school and are making good progress. They consider teaching and staff expectations to be good and that homework reinforces learning. Many indicate that the staff treat and support their children well.

Many parents feel well-informed about their children's progress and that they are well-prepared for moving on to the next school or college. They think that the school is well-run. However, the majority of parents express concerns about pupils' behaviour.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 167 pupils, selected at random from across the age range. Most pupils state that they feel safe in school and have someone to turn to if they have any concerns. They say that staff encourage them to take responsibility, and help them to learn and make progress. Most pupils believe that they are doing well. Most confirm that the school helps them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds.

Many pupils indicate that staff treat them fairly and with respect and that the school deals well with bullying. Many believe that they have enough resources, that homework regularly helps them to understand and improve their work and that there are plenty of opportunities to get regular exercise. They feel well-prepared for further education or employment.

The majority of pupils say that the school teaches them how to keep healthy and takes account of their views, although key stage 4 pupils feel less well-consulted.

However, a significant minority do not feel that the school does enough to teach them to be healthy. About half of all pupils, and a majority of key stage 4 pupils, express concerns about behaviour.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

John Thomas HMI Reporting Inspector	Reporting Inspector
Mike Munting HMI	Team Inspector
Ceri Jones HMI	Team Inspector
Jackie Gapper HMI	Team Inspector
Janet Waldron HMI	Team Inspector
Steffan James HMI	Team Inspector
Julie Ann Price	Lay Inspector
Robert Davies	Peer Inspector
Paul Jenkins	School Nominee

## Copies of the report

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## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11