

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on the quality of secondary education

in

Hawarden High School

The Highway
Hawarden
Flintshire
CH5 3DJ

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by

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







This inspection was a pilot of the new inspection framework and arrangements that are to be introduced in all schools from September 2010. The types of judgements and the format of the report are different to the reports on other schools that are still being inspected under the current arrangements and inspection framework.

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 provider's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

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

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

Estyn's reports follow its guidance for the writing and editing of reports, which is available on the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk). The table below shows the terms that Estyn uses and a broad idea of their meaning. The table is for guidance only.

| Nearly all | with very few exceptions | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Most | 90% or more | | |
| Many | 70% or more | | |
| A majority | over 60% | | |
| Half/around half | close to 50% | | |
| A minority | below 40% | | |
| Few | below 20% | | |
| Very few | less than 10% | | |

Context

Hawarden High School is an English-medium 11-18 comprehensive school of 1,114 pupils, including 181 in the sixth form. The school is over-subscribed and the sixth form is about 20% larger than at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils are drawn from the full range of socio-economic and social backgrounds, although there are few from deprived areas. About 6% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the Welsh average of about 15% for secondary schools. There are no pupils from Welsh-speaking homes, or who speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.

The intake is fully comprehensive and contains a relatively high proportion of pupils of above average ability. Just over 2% of pupils have statements of special educational needs compared with 3% for Wales as a whole. The school also has a unit for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

There have been a number of changes to the leadership of the school since the last inspection. The headteacher took up his post in January 2007. Since then, the leadership group has been revised and has a new deputy headteacher from September 2007 and new assistant headteacher from September 2009. A number of associate headteacher posts have also been created within the leadership group since January 2008.

Recently there have been a number of improvements to the accommodation and to information and communications technology (ICT) facilities. The school introduced the Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate in September 2008. Over the last two years, the school has gained a large number of national awards, such as the Customer Service Excellence Award, Investors in People, Leadership and Management Standard and ActiveMarc Cymru.

The school's aims are to develop "the maximum potential of all its pupils, both as individuals and as responsible members of the community, and to prepare them for a lifetime of learning".

Summary

| Overall judgement on the school | Good | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Prospects for improvement | Excellent | |

Overall judgement

This is a good school because:

- standards and wellbeing are good and improving; and
- provision is good with a few outstanding aspects, such as the curriculum.

Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because of the:

- outstanding leadership of the headteacher and other senior staff;
- particularly successful track record over the last three years that has seen significant improvements, for example in results, the curriculum and partnership working;
- well-established and rigorous systems to review progress and identify areas for improvement; and
- clear priorities for improvements that are supported by suitable plans and allocated resources.

Recommendations

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

- R1 continue to improve further the standards and wellbeing of pupils;*
- R2 strengthen the role of middle managers in the self-evaluation arrangements*;
- R3 extend best practice in teaching*;
- R4 make sure that there is consistency in the marking of pupils' work*;
- R5 appoint associate pupil governors;
- R6 give pupils a greater say in deciding on what and how they learn; and
- R7 strengthen the delivery of numeracy across the curriculum*.

What happens next?

Hawarden High School will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

^{*} These recommendations feature in the school's development plan.

Main findings

| Key Question 1: How good are outcomes? | Good |
|--|------|
|--|------|

Standards: Good

In key stage 3 and key stage 4, results are well above national averages and have improved significantly over the last three years.

In key stage 3, performance is above average for the last three years when compared with similar schools in terms of the free-school-meal benchmarks. Compared with its family of schools¹, the school's results are similar to the average in science and slightly below average in English, mathematics and the core subject indicator (CSI)². In 2009, pupils made good progress from the previous key stage.

In key stage 4, performance on nearly all indicators has improved over the last three years and is now nearer to the average for the family of schools. In 2009, the percentage of pupils attaining the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics improved by eight percentage points from 2008. No pupil left school without a qualification. In 2009, performance on most indicators is similar to, or above, average when compared to similar schools in terms of free school meal benchmarks. In 2009, pupils' progress from previous key stages is generally as expected.

In the sixth form, all learners attained the level 3 threshold, which is well above national averages. Attainment on the wider points score was just below national averages in 2009, although it was well above them in the two previous years. In 2009, most Year 12 students gained at least three key skills qualifications at level 2 or 3.

In all key stages, girls attain higher standards than boys. This is because girls' results have improved at a faster rate than boys'. Specific groups of pupils, including those entitled to free school meals, looked-after children and those with additional learning needs, made at least the expected progress.

Pupils make good progress in each key stage in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to move on to the next stage of learning. Most pupils remain in full-time education at the end of key stage 4, either in the school or elsewhere. Over 70% go on to higher education after the sixth form. Less than 1% of pupils leaving in summer 2009 are not in education, training or employment. These figures are much better than national and local averages.

Pupils make good progress during lessons. The majority of pupils remember previous work and use this well to learn new skills. In many subjects, pupils develop

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Families of schools have been created this year to enable schools to compare their performance to similar schools across Wales. The families are provisional for 2009. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in deprived areas, from ethnic minority backgrounds, and having special education needs.

² The core subject indicator relates to performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.

their thinking skills well and apply these effectively to solve problems. Most listen well to teachers and each other, and this supports their progress in learning. Many pupils read and write well, and can express their views clearly. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in a few lessons but overall these skills are underdeveloped. In general, pupils' ICT skills are good.

In 2009, most pupils gained a GCSE in Welsh second language from a full or short course. This is a significant improvement on previous years. Throughout the school, pupils are increasingly aware of the Welsh language and their Welsh identity. Pupils do not use Welsh independently enough or make enough use of their Welsh-language skills outside Welsh lessons.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils have a secure understanding of how to become healthy. They have positive attitudes to healthy eating. They exercise regularly and most engage readily in a wide range of activities that promote their physical fitness. Pupils feel safe.

Pupils are motivated to do well and willingly engage in activities within and outside the classroom. Attendance rates over the last three years compare well with similar schools. Almost all pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school.

Many pupils play an extensive role in a wide range of activities in the local community, including having a say about them through the work of the junior community council. Through the school council and other groups, pupils contribute effectively to many aspects of school life, particularly in relation to healthy eating and the school environment. Although pupils have been influential in helping to develop a number of policies and contribute to the process of appointing senior members of staff, they are not yet associate members of the school's governing body. By various means such as regular questionnaires, pupils give their views on a wide range of issues. However, they do not have enough say on issues concerning how and what they learn.

Pupils relate well to each other and have well-developed social skills. They readily take on responsibilities and older pupils are well prepared for life and work outside school.

| Key Question 2: How good is provision? Good |
|--|
|--|

Learning experiences: Excellent

The curriculum has many outstanding features and fully meets the needs of pupils and local community.

The curriculum is balanced, very broad and flexible. Pupils aged 14 to 19 choose general or vocational courses from a wide range of options with clearly-defined progression through to further or higher education. The school collaborates well with other providers to make sure the needs of all pupils are met effectively. The school has exceeded the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure well ahead of schedule.

Provision for the delivery of key skills is exceptionally good in key stage 4 and in the sixth form. An outstanding feature is that most pupils aged 14 to 19 are working towards qualifications in key skills. In key stage 4, most pupils are working towards the communications qualification at level 2, while in the sixth form pupils have key skills as part of their work on the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. In key stage 3, teachers plan well to support pupils in developing their key skills. Basic skills provision is good and older pupils support younger pupils to help them improve their skills.

The school provides pupils with a very rich variety of extra-curricular activities and experiences. Many of these activities provide older pupils with opportunities to gain additional qualifications.

The school provides particularly well for education for sustainable development and global citizenship, including making good use of links with the local community and places in other parts of the world.

The school has made a good start in raising the awareness of staff and pupils of opportunities to use Welsh around the school. Teachers plan well to include examples of the culture of Wales in many lessons.

Teaching: Good

Teachers explain the purpose of lessons clearly to pupils. Most lessons follow a logical structure, progress at a good pace and involve the use of suitable resources, including ICT. In a minority of lessons, teachers organise very challenging activities that help pupils to think deeply about the work. Teachers draw on their subject knowledge to make presentations, explanations and demonstrations interesting and relevant. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils. Working relationships with pupils are generally very good. In a few lessons, teachers do not engage pupils enough or help them to make enough progress.

Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide an accurate assessment of the level of their work. Pupils understand what their marks mean and have a secure idea of their overall targets and progress. Many pupils also assess their own work and a few assess the work of fellow pupils. Many teachers give pupils useful feedback during lessons. Increasingly, teachers write helpful comments on pupils' work. There are many examples of good practice, for example in English and science, but this practice is not consistent across the school.

There are suitable procedures to record information on pupils' progress and achievements. The information is used well to track pupils' progress and to identify any underachievement. Parents are well informed about the progress of their children. Parents receive reports that contain clear information on the level of pupils' attainment, their attitudes to work and the strengths and weaknesses in their work. Most reports also identify suitable targets for improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

Teachers and other staff provide good advice and guidance to pupils that enable them to make confident and well-informed choices about the courses they follow.

Teachers and managers provide a high level of care. They work well with a large number of agencies and organisations to promote pupils' health and wellbeing. They respond quickly and effectively to concerns regarding pupils' wellbeing. Where required, pupils receive appropriate personal and specialist support. The school has appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding pupils.

Provision for personal and social education (PSE) is a particularly strong feature of the school. It contributes significantly to the ethos of the school, and the health and wellbeing of learners. An outstanding aspect of the PSE is the involvement of trained senior pupils in various aspects of the health education programme.

Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. The school has well-organised systems to identify and support these pupils. Individual education plans are comprehensive and set out suitable targets for improvement, which are regularly reviewed. External agencies work in partnership with the school to ensure pupils' needs are met. Relevant staff keep parents of pupils with additional learning needs fully involved and well informed about the support their children receive.

Learning experiences throughout the school promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The positive school ethos provides a stable and ordered environment in which values such as respect, honesty and fairness are promoted. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their personal beliefs and values, and the school promotes understanding of other cultures.

Learning environment: Good

The school promotes equality and diversity effectively. There are well-established policies and procedures that ensure the school meets its duties under the Race Relations Act. Issues of racial and social equality are explored and discussed through the PSE programme, in several subjects and in assemblies.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. Teaching and support staff are suitably qualified and are deployed effectively. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained, in good decorative order and are appropriate for the numbers of pupils on roll. Toilet facilities are generally appropriate, but in a few cases are not maintained to acceptable standards of hygiene.

| Key Question 3: How good are leadership and | Good |
|---|------|
| management? | |

Leadership: Good

The leadership by the headteacher and other senior managers is an outstanding feature of the school. There is an exceptionally clear and strong commitment to school improvement, based on consultation and a shared vision. The school has a clearly-communicated strategic direction. Senior managers have high expectations of staff and pupils.

There has been extremely good progress over the past three years in putting effective systems and structures in place. These have resulted in better accountability in relation to managerial responsibilities at different levels, and a significant trend of improvement in pupils' attainment.

Well-structured performance management arrangements help identify suitable professional development opportunities for all staff. Middle managers are becoming more effective in assuring the quality of their areas of responsibility. However, in a minority of cases, they have not yet had enough impact on the pupils' standards and progress.

The school takes good account of national priorities, especially in relation to extending the curriculum for 14 to 19 learners in collaboration with other local providers. It also takes good account of regional and local needs in extending the subjects on offer to learners, including, for example aeronautical engineering and construction. The headteacher is playing a lead role in the local authority's enrichment programme for more able and talented learners and in the introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate. The school is also committed to raising the profile of the Welsh language and promoting pupils' Welsh identity through improving Welsh language provision.

Governors are committed to help the school improve. They have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and make frequent visits to the school to observe activities and talk to pupils.

Partnership working: Excellent

Working with partners and a range of stakeholders lies at the heart of the school's improvement over the last three years. The school has formed good partnerships with other local providers to extend its curriculum choices for 14 to 19 learners, and to improve efficiency in its use of resources. The detailed monitoring and evaluation of the experiences of its learners on courses provided by partner providers are sector-leading features of the school. Senior managers visit the other providers regularly and take robust action to address any concerns.

The school has established extensive curricular links with its feeder primary schools to promote continuity and progression in pupils' learning experiences. All subjects have a transition plan, and there is a comprehensive programme of cluster moderation to ensure consistency in teacher assessment.

Communication with parents is particularly good. Parents speak very highly of the responsiveness of the school to issues they raise or areas of concern. There are good links with the community, local businesses and teacher training providers.

Quality improvement: Good

The headteacher and senior managers have a thoroughly comprehensive overview of performance in all areas of the school. Through systematic and well-established self-evaluation procedures, there is a very accurate and realistic awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. In the last three years, senior managers have shown the capacity and determination to implement robust actions that have had a significant impact on many areas of the school's work.

The school development plan contains clear and appropriate priorities, and includes a wide range of initiatives to achieve these objectives. Faculty plans address whole-school priorities appropriately as well as particular issues identified through

departmental self-evaluation. Specific action plans are in place for those subject areas where there is underachievement. Generally, performance targets are suitably challenging although, in a few cases, they do not reflect previous achievement or comparable figures in similar schools well enough.

Senior managers are fully committed to promoting best practice in all aspects of teaching and learning, and strengthening the quality of management at all levels. Many staff benefit from attending a wide range of training courses, a significant proportion of which are accredited. Although teachers do observe each other teaching occasionally in a few subjects, the extent to which these arrangements are used to promote best practice is underdeveloped.

The school has made generally good progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources well. There are robust procedures to ensure that resources are allocated to meet identified priorities. Spending is planned and monitored well.

Staff are deployed efficiently and there are appropriate arrangements to make sure the school meets statutory requirements relating to the national agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload'. There is a suitable premises development plan that underpins an ongoing programme to maintain and improve accommodation.

Through rigorous management of resources, a strong focus on collaboration to increase the range of courses and qualifications at key stage 4 and in the sixth form, and improving standards, the school provides good value for money.

Appendix 1

Data report:

The data report is available on the Estyn website: www.estyn.gov.uk

Stakeholder satisfaction report:

Responses to parent questionnaires

Four hundred and eighty-one parent questionnaires were completed, representing a high proportion of the total number of parents. Overall, they expressed positive views about the school. Nearly all say that the school expects their children to work hard and to do their best. Nearly all parents are satisfied with the school and say their children like being there. Most feel that their children are safe at school and that their children are making good progress, the teaching is good and that their children are well prepared for moving onto college or work. Most say that the school is well run and find it approachable if they have any questions or concerns. Many feel they are kept well informed about their children's progress. A few parents feel that there are not enough activities including trips or visits, but many do not share this view.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Questionnaires were completed by around 30% of the pupils, who were selected at random. Nearly all pupils feel safe in school. Most feel they are doing well in school, that there are enough resources to enable them to learn well and they have many opportunities to get regular exercise. They say that teaching is good, and that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to take on responsibility. Most feel the school helps them to be ready for the next stage of education, training or work. Many feel that the school deals well with bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are worried. Many also say that they are treated with respect, and that they are helped to understand and respect people from different backgrounds. A majority of pupils feels that the school listens to their views and think behaviour is good.

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk)

Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

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 National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

| 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 |

Appendix 2

The inspection team

| Nigel Vaughan | Reporting Inspector |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Mererid Stone | Team Inspector |
| Iolo Dafydd | Team Inspector |
| John Thomas | Team Inspector |
| Ceri Weatherall | Peer Inspector |
| Justine Barlow | Lay Inspector |
| Paul Ellis | Provider nominee |

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