



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Newport High School
Bettws Lane
Newport
NP20 7YB**

Date of inspection: November 2017

by

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

About Newport High School

Newport High School is an English-medium 11 to 18 school in Newport. There are 1,080 pupils on roll including 141 pupils in the sixth form, compared with 1,092 pupils and 178 in the sixth form at the time of the last inspection. The school is situated on the outskirts of the city of Newport. Most pupils come from the Bettws, Malpas, Crindau and Brynglas areas.

Around 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is higher than the national average of 17% for secondary schools in Wales. Around 45% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales.

Pupils at the school represent the full range of ability. Around 3% of pupils have statements of special educational needs compared with 2.8% for Wales as a whole. Around 30% of pupils have a special educational need, which is higher than the national average of 22.7%.

Most pupils speak English as their first language and come from a white, British background. No pupils speak Welsh at home.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2010. The leadership team is made up of two deputy headteachers, four assistant headteachers, a business manager and an achievement manager.

The school is currently a pioneer school and is working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to professional learning.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.
<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en>

Summary

In Newport High School, many pupils demonstrate a positive attitude towards their learning. These pupils make suitable progress in many lessons. Despite this, performance at key stage 4 is weak and is well below that in similar schools over the last three years.

Most staff develop positive working relationships with pupils, which enables them to participate purposefully in their learning. The school has designed a 'transition' curriculum for key stage 3 that enables pupils to settle in well. However, the curriculum does not incorporate a sufficiently co-ordinated approach to the development of pupils' skills, and teaching across the school does not challenge all groups of pupils well enough.

Senior leaders have a vision of their school where every individual is important and valued, and will be supported to achieve their very best. However, line management is not secure enough to ensure that all areas of the school's work are carried out sufficiently well. In addition, the lack of frank evaluation, secure planning and robust monitoring means that the pace of improvement is too slow.

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Adequate and needs improvement
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Adequate and needs improvement
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards, particularly at key stage 4 and in the sixth form
- R2 Improve the quality of teaching and assessment
- R3 Improve the co-ordination and planning for progression in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensure that curriculum arrangements meet the needs of all pupils
- R4 Strengthen the co-ordination of provision for pupils with additional learning needs
- R5 Strengthen leadership at all levels and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning

What happens next

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that special measures are required in relation to this school. The school will draw up an action plan showing how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress on a termly basis.

Main findings

Standards: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

Although many pupils generally make suitable progress in their lessons, performance at the end of key stage 4 has been weak and is well below that of similar schools over the last three years in most indicators.

In lessons, many pupils make suitable progress in developing their knowledge and skills. A majority recall previous learning suitably and apply it beneficially to new contexts and when solving straightforward problems. A few more able pupils make stronger progress, for example when considering common themes in challenging texts such as 'The Handmaid's Tale' and '1984'.

Many pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and the views and opinions of others. When prompted, the majority of pupils speak clearly and offer brief responses to teachers' questions about specific aspects of their work. A minority are reluctant to contribute to class discussion. A few do not listen carefully enough and, as a result, these pupils do not make enough progress.

When reading, many pupils locate information effectively in texts. They use a range of helpful strategies, for example in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, where they use skimming, scanning and highlighting to gather key information about e-commerce. The majority of pupils summarise information suitably to reinforce their understanding and to make valid judgements, for instance when considering differing accounts of the birth of Jesus. A few pupils have weak reading skills. This limits their ability to complete straightforward tasks as they often lack the vocabulary and skills to interpret text.

Across the curriculum, a majority of pupils write at length appropriately to explain their ideas. These pupils produce suitably structured written accounts to convey their thinking. They use appropriate language and techniques such as rhetorical questions to create effect in their persuasive writing. In a few subjects, a minority refine the quality of their written work well in response to teachers' comments. However, a minority of pupils do not develop their written work sufficiently. Their writing is brief and they do not choose language that is suitable for the purpose of the task. Most pupils make frequent spelling and grammar mistakes in their work.

Many pupils apply their number skills well across the curriculum and carry out basic calculations successfully. These pupils apply their skills appropriately to new situations. For example, they draw charts and graphs accurately to present data, such as line graphs to display temperature change over time in science. A few pupils have less well-developed numeracy skills and find it difficult to tackle problems.

Nearly all pupils demonstrate basic ICT skills such as word processing and use presentation software competently. Most can use ICT proficiently for research, for instance when preparing project work about the history of Wales. Many pupils make beneficial use of software in a few subjects such as design technology. They use ICT effectively alongside their creative skills to manipulate imagery in art and photography.

Performance at the end of key stage 4 is very weak. It has been significantly below that of similar schools for the last three years in most indicators, particularly those including English and mathematics and the capped point score. The proportion of pupils gaining five A* or A grades at GCSE is also below that in similar schools and this has been the case for the last three years. Boys, girls, and pupils eligible for free school meals all perform consistently below these groups of pupils in similar schools in most indicators.

At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils either continue their education in a school or further education college.

The proportion of pupils in the sixth form achieving the level 3 threshold has been above the Welsh average for the last three years. However, over time, performance in the average wider points score and the percentage of three A*-C grades achieved by sixth form pupils has been variable. Performance in these indicators remains below the average for Wales. The proportion gaining three A*-A grades has been very poor over the last three years. Boys' performance remains significantly weaker than girls' performance over time in the average wider points score.

In sixth form lessons, many pupils make appropriate progress. These pupils are able to recall prior learning well, for example when using suitable subject specific vocabulary to describe sports injuries or using software skilfully to enhance their photography.

Pupil attitudes towards the Welsh language are generally positive. However, most pupils lack confidence in speaking aloud. The majority of pupils have a suitable basic vocabulary and are able to vary simple sentence patterns and tenses with support in their written work. At key stage 4, most pupils are entered for a Welsh language qualification. However, only a very few pupils gain a GCSE qualification in Welsh.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Adequate and needs improvement

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Many pupils feel safe and most feel well supported in school. In lessons, and around the school, most pupils behave well and are polite and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. An established and successful reward system, with attractive prizes, helps to create a positive ethos. There are clear behaviour sanctions, which are fully understood by staff and pupils. However, rates of fixed term exclusions remain high.

Many pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They apply themselves productively to tasks, sustain their concentration successfully, and work effectively in pairs or small groups. In a few lessons, a minority of pupils do not concentrate well enough and, as a result, do not sufficiently develop their knowledge, understanding or skills. These pupils lack resilience, and do not finish tasks.

Many pupils show positive attitudes towards healthy living, which is reflected in the high participation rates for extra-curricular sports clubs, such as lifesaving and badminton.

A few pupils develop leadership skills through engagement with whole-school roles such as the year representative on the school council. Through the introduction of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, a worthwhile peer-mentoring scheme has been established. As a result, the majority of pupils feel that the school deals well with instances of bullying. However, despite these specific opportunities for participation, a minority of pupils do not feel that the school listens well enough to their views.

Teaching and learning experiences: Adequate and needs improvement

Overall, the quality of teaching is adequate and needs improvement. In many lessons, teachers establish positive working relationships with their classes. They use their strong subject knowledge to plan suitable activities, use a variety of approaches to engage pupils well and explain concepts clearly. Where necessary, they manage pupil behaviour well.

Many teachers have well-established practices that develop pupils' subject specific skills appropriately. The majority of teachers use relevant questioning techniques to develop pupils' understanding and a few monitor pupils' progress closely. In a few lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and challenge them successfully, for example to participate in a class discussion on the Battle of Hastings and offer thoughtful contributions to the debate about contenders for the throne. These teachers plan sequences of well-constructed activities that build well on pupils' prior learning, for instance when developing pupils' understanding of trigonometry through a series of increasingly challenging examples.

In a minority of instances, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. They do not plan activities that are sufficiently well matched to pupils' ability and pupils spend too much time on undemanding tasks. These teachers do not use questioning well enough to probe and deepen pupils' understanding. They do not monitor pupils' progress in lessons closely enough and therefore are not able to address misconceptions promptly. As a result, the pace of learning is too slow and pupils make insufficient progress. In a few lessons, teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour well enough.

In many cases, teachers identify accurately the strengths and areas for development in pupils' work and provide them with suitable targets for improvement. Most comments refer to spelling and grammar and many pupils improve their writing when they use these comments to redraft these specific pieces of work. Over time, these pupils continue to make the same errors. Across the curriculum, only a minority of comments are sufficiently focused on improving subject skills as well as literacy skills. Most pupils respond appropriately to teachers' comments. However, in a minority of cases, comments are not specific enough to help pupils make improvements.

The school has a suitable vision and rationale for the curriculum. The well-established 'transition' curriculum for Year 7 and Year 8 pupils has a positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils as they transfer from their primary school to Newport High School. However, the strategic leadership of the 'transition' curriculum is underdeveloped and, as a result, the curriculum does not provide a sufficiently cohesive experience for pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding effectively.

The school has recently revised the key stage 3 curriculum appropriately to support pupils' progression into key stage 4. As a result, pupils have access to the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification from Year 9 onwards. This gives pupils valuable opportunities to develop their independent learning skills and confidence before progressing to key stage 4. However, the impact of this development on standards at key stage 4 is limited.

The range of courses offered at key stage 4 is appropriate and provides suitable academic and vocational courses to meet the needs of nearly all pupils. The alternative provision at 'Bettws in Bloom' provides valuable opportunities for those pupils at risk of disengagement to access a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs. Pupils with additional learning needs have access to broadly suitable courses in the inclusion centre. However, a few of these pupils do not follow suitably challenging courses.

A successful sixth form partnership with other schools in the area provides a broad range of subjects and wider experiences that help pupils in progressing to higher education, training or employment successfully.

Provision for the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum is inconsistent. Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in authentic, meaningful contexts are limited. As a result, teaching has not had sufficient impact on the standard of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. In particular, the co-ordination and quality assurance of the provision for skills are underdeveloped. There is an appropriate range of intervention programmes for pupils with difficulties in literacy and numeracy, which helps them to make suitable progress in developing their skills.

The school has an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activities to enhance their learning. This includes visits to France and involvement in creative learning projects, workshops on healthy relationships and positive citizenship and an anti-racism programme.

Care, support and guidance: Adequate and needs improvement

The school provides an appropriate personal and social education programme that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development suitably. Pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to engage with a range of external agencies to enhance their experiences, such as the Creative Arts council and St David's Hospice. In particular, there is a valuable focus on wellbeing and pupils benefit from, for example, anti-bullying and mental health awareness workshops with the Aneurin Bevan Health Board. The school ensures that all pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop their knowledge of healthy lifestyles and to consider choices carefully, for example with respect to what to eat and drink. Sixth form pupils benefit from increased links with higher education providers that promote their levels of aspiration.

Pupil consultations make a sound contribution to decision-making processes, including subject reviews. The school is providing further opportunities for pupil voice through the school council, anti bullying ambassadors and the eco committee. However, decisions made as a consequence of pupil involvement are not disseminated across the whole school population well enough.

The attendance of all pupils is tracked and monitored suitably by the school. There are procedures in place for monitoring behaviour across the school, although middle leaders do not implement this process consistently. The school monitors pupil behaviour appropriately and provides effective support for individual pupils in most instances.

Strong transition links and the use of the nurture group support vulnerable learners to settle effectively in Year 7. A wide range of external agencies are used to provide effective emotional support for learners, such as 'Inspire to Achieve' and the 'Unicorn Project'. Learning support assistants provide valuable support for pupils' emotional wellbeing.

The school does not provide effective support for all of the pupils with additional learning needs. Individual education plans do not identify appropriate strategies to help teachers support these pupils, particularly those in key stage 4. This means that approaches to supporting pupils with additional learning needs in lessons are not consistently effective. The school does not have sufficiently robust arrangements for ensuring that statutory annual reviews of pupils' progress are undertaken. It does not monitor the progress of pupils with additional learning needs closely enough and monitoring is particularly weak at key stage 4, within the off-site provision and the Inclusion Centre.

Reports to parents are detailed and provide useful information on their child's strengths and targets for improvement. The school has an appropriate tracking system in place to monitor suitably the academic progress made by most pupils. However, the school's ability to use this system to provide suitable targeted support is limited by inaccurate assessment of pupils' progress.

Leadership and management: Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement

School leaders have a clear sense of purpose based on supporting all pupils to achieve. However, the systems and processes for driving the school towards its priorities are fragmented, and this has impacted negatively on the pace of change. In addition, self-evaluation and planning for improvement are not coherent enough. As a result, leadership has not had sufficient impact on improving pupils' standards of achievement.

Leaders promote the vision for the school well. It is shared widely with all stakeholders, and underpins school policies and approaches to developing practice. This common understanding has had a positive impact on the ethos of the school and on pupils' wellbeing.

There is a clear rationale for many of the school's strategic decisions, such as the development of the key stage 3 curriculum, which has been of benefit to pupils' pastoral transition. However, leaders do not manage strategic projects methodically enough to monitor and evaluate success. This means that key pieces of strategic work have not achieved the desired outcomes efficiently or effectively enough.

The school has recently reorganised leadership roles and responsibilities to reflect the school's priorities. However, the allocation of roles and responsibilities is not suitably aligned to support important aspects of the school's work well enough. In particular, line management arrangements do not support the development of key strategic priorities.

Senior leaders provide middle leaders with suitable opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The school has recently refined processes to analyse performance data and most middle leaders use this data beneficially to evaluate the performance of their area of responsibility. This has enabled senior leaders to hold middle leaders to account for pupils' performance more suitably and has resulted in greater consistency in the processes to support the work of middle leaders.

Management meetings focus appropriately on the school's priorities and provide useful opportunities for leaders at all levels to discuss important areas of the school's work. However, in many cases, these meetings focus too heavily on operational issues rather than on systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of strategies.

Governors are supportive of the school and provide appropriate scrutiny of its work. They are suitably involved in the life of the school. However, governors do not challenge the school sufficiently robustly regarding the impact of strategic decisions.

The school's systems for self-evaluation and improvement planning are ineffective. Leaders gather an appropriate range of first-hand evidence about the standards that pupils achieve and the quality of teaching, but evaluations are too generous. Senior leaders have identified many of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, the self-evaluation report does not include clear evaluations of the quality of the school's work in many aspects. The quality of middle leader self-evaluation reports is too variable.

The school development plan outlines the school's vision clearly and specifies in detail the aspects of its work that require improvement. The plan includes a suitable range of actions to address these aspects. However, the school does not prioritise these actions well enough, and a minority of success criteria are not appropriate. As a result, leaders are not able to monitor the progress that the school is making rigorously enough. Furthermore, the school has not made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection in 2013.

The school makes appropriate use of pupil feedback to contribute to its quality improvement processes. Senior leaders are beginning to develop approaches to involve parents in the work of the school and to use their views to help drive improvement.

Arrangements for performance management are suitable. Staff have objectives that broadly address the school's priorities. In a few specific instances, leaders have tackled underperformance robustly and there are appropriate processes in place to support staff to improve their practice. However, overall, performance management targets are not precise enough and do not enable the school to assess progress accurately.

Senior leaders have established a supportive culture for the professional learning of teachers. All teachers take part in the school's structured professional learning programme and many are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to share and discuss classroom practice. However, the impact of this work on improving the standards that pupils achieve has been limited.

The school business manager works with senior leaders and with the local authority to ensure that the school's budget is managed effectively. The school is suitably staffed, and leaders make sure that teachers who are working across the curriculum are supported appropriately. Spending is allocated suitably towards key improvement priorities. The school uses its Pupil Development Grant (PDG) to fund a range of appropriate strategies to tackle the impact of poverty. However, leaders do not monitor and evaluate actions in the PDG plan carefully enough to ensure that strategies have a sustained impact on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils.

Copies of the report

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

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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