



Ysgol Gyfun

# Porthcawl

Comprehensive School

Inspection Report

# Highlights 2013



[www.porthcawlschool.co.uk](http://www.porthcawlschool.co.uk)



## Headteacher's Introduction to the Inspection Report 2013 Highlights



The governors, headteacher, staff, and pupils of Porthcawl Comprehensive School are delighted to share with you the publication of a very positive report from our Estyn inspection of Autumn 2013.

We are proud that the Inspection team said that "one of the school's strengths is the exceptional working relationship between teachers and pupils. This contributes very well to the positive learning environment in the school." In the analysis of our results at key stage 4 the performance of our pupils at GCSE "including English and Mathematics is well above expectations. No pupils leave without a qualification."

"The school works highly effectively with a range of partners and this work has a significant impact on pupils' wellbeing and achievement." We were pleased that the inspection team had recognised the excellent transition work that is carried out, including a wide range of activities with year 6 pupils in Primary Schools and also our links with Universities and Colleges to support the sixth form students.

"The school provides a very caring and supportive environment that has a positive impact on many aspects of pupils' wellbeing and personal development."

"Extra-curricular provision is extensive and has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement, wellbeing and attitudes to learning." In lessons our pupils were praised for "engaging well with activities, making sound progress and producing work of a very high standard. Many pupils have full and accurate recall of their work. Nearly all pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are ready to learn and participate well in lessons. The school has a strong ethos based on fairness and this creates a caring and disciplined environment."

**Overall, the school's current performance and the school's prospects for improvement are both described as good; having many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement.**

As a school we have assembled this brochure to share with you the success of our Inspection 2013.

A copy of the full report may be obtained from:

- **The School**
- **The Estyn website** [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)
- **The School website** [www.porthcawlschool.co.uk](http://www.porthcawlschool.co.uk)

This brochure contains excerpts taken from the Estyn Inspection Report on Porthcawl Comprehensive School.

*Date of Inspection October 2013. Crown Copyright 2013 publication date: 03/12/2013.*



# The Inspection

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:**



Judgement	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

The school's current performance	Good
The school's prospects for improvement	Good



## **"The current performance of Porthcawl Comprehensive School is good because:**

- performance at key stage 4 in qualifications that includes English and mathematics is well above expectations;
- attainment in the individual core subjects at key stage 4 is strong and compares favourably with that of similar schools;
- many pupils have a full and accurate recall of their work, make strong progress and produce work of a high standard;
- nearly all pupils behave very well in class and participate well in lessons.
- teachers and pupils have very good working relationships and this contributes to a very positive learning environment;
- there are good systems in place to support pupils with additional learning needs; and
- the school works highly effectively with a range of partners and this work has a significant impact on pupils' wellbeing and achievement."

## **"Prospects for improvement are good because:**

- the strategic vision established by the new headteacher and the newly-formed senior leadership team is very strong;
- a comprehensive review and planning cycle is well established across the school;
- the school makes good use of external reviews to inform its judgements;
- middle leaders produce detailed self-evaluation reports that effectively identify key areas for improvement; and
- leaders make prudent use of financial resources."



## Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Standards: **Good**

- "At key stage 4, performance in the indicator that includes English and mathematics is well above modelled expectations. Attainment in the individual core subjects is strong and compares favourably with that of similar schools."
- "At key stage 3, performance in English, mathematics and science has improved, and over all performance is higher than modelled expectations."
- "In science, performance places the school in the top quarter of similar schools."
- "Sixth form students gain a wide range of qualifications and make appropriate progress in most subjects."
- "Pupils with special education needs generally make progress in line with expectations."
- "No pupils leave the school without a qualification. This has been the case for the last three years. Very few pupils leave the school at 16 and are reported as being not in education, employment and training. This proportion is lower than both local and national figures."
- "In many lessons, pupils gain secure knowledge and understanding, and develop a wide range of effective skills. They engage well with activities, make sound progress and produce work of a high standard. They show a competent grasp of important subject concepts, and apply their understanding well to new situations."
- "Many pupils have a full and accurate recall of their work. . . They demonstrate a comprehensive recall of previous work and apply this in new situations to extend their learning further. They work exceptionally well in pairs and groups to collect, synthesise and evaluate information from a wide range of sources. They use complex subject terminology precisely to demonstrate their understanding of difficult concepts. They respond very well to challenging activities and are able to provide perceptive and analytical comments on their work. They are able to effectively plan, design and refine work while also acting on advice to make further improvements."
- "Most pupils listen well in lessons and respond effectively to their teacher and peers."
- "The majority of pupils speak clearly and confidently."
- "Many pupils demonstrate sound reading skills and are able to extract information from a variety of texts. Many pupils evaluate and analyse information well, and are able to explain ideas and reason clearly. Many pupils produce good quality extended pieces of written work and can write for a variety of purposes."
- "Many pupils make good progress in developing numeracy skills. They are able to use tables and draw graphs accurately to support their work in subjects such as science and geography."

## Wellbeing: **Good**

- "Nearly all pupils feel safe and well supported in school. Many pupils consider that the school deals well with bullying. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise. They participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, ranging from basketball to surfing. Many pupils are actively involved in decision-making. The school council and other groups have been effective in contributing towards important areas in the school, such as healthy eating and the appointment of staff."
- "Nearly all pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They are ready to learn and participate well in lessons. Nearly all pupils are courteous and relate well to one another, to their teachers and to other adults."



*"In science, performance places the school in the top quarter of similar schools"*

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

### Learning experiences: **Good**

- "The school provides a broad curriculum, which meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils. The key stage 3 curriculum builds well on pupils' experiences in key stage 2. At key stage 4 there is a comprehensive selection of general courses and an increasing number of vocational courses available to all pupils. More able and talented pupils are able to choose two subjects in an option column to extend their learning experience. Collaboration with other providers ensures that sixth form students can choose from a comprehensive range of academic and vocational courses."
- "Extra-curricular provision is extensive and has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement, wellbeing and attitudes to learning. There are a wide range of well-attended activities organised by the school which range from football and netball to gardening and game design clubs."
- "Provision for Welsh language development is good and enables pupils to make suitable progress. At key stage 4, most pupils are entered for a level 2 qualification in Welsh second language. Pupils' understanding of Welsh culture and traditions is developed effectively through a range of subjects, extra-curricular activities and trips, including an annual eisteddfod at a local theatre."
- "Opportunities to promote and explore issues around sustainable development and global citizenship in lessons and extra-curricular activities are beneficial. Pupil groups, such as the Eco group and the school nutrition and action group, make valuable contributions to the work of the school in these areas."

### Teaching: **Good**

- "One of the school's strengths is the exceptional working relationship between teachers and pupils. This contributes very well to the positive learning environment in the school. In many lessons, teachers plan very effective lessons that build well on previous knowledge and understanding. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils and they set challenging learning activities that strengthen

pupils' confidence and resilience. Pupils' differing needs are catered for well. This ensures that all pupils make good progress in lessons. Teachers give pupils beneficial thinking time, which enables them to develop more detailed responses. Furthermore, they provide a wide range of activities for pupils to work independently and with their peers."

- "The school collects and tracks pupils' progress well. Reports to parents and carers are informative. Teachers' comments are detailed and specific and targets are constructive. Parents and pupils have useful opportunities to respond to the reports."

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

- "The school provides a very caring and supportive environment that has a positive impact on many aspects of pupils' wellbeing and personal development. A wide range of learning experiences promotes pupils' moral, social and cultural development well. Assemblies and tutorial sessions provide good opportunities for reflection and help promote pupils' spiritual development effectively."
- "The school has appropriate systems in place to bring about good standards in attendance and behaviour."
- "The school works well with a range of external agencies and specialist services to meet the specific needs of individual pupils. A wide variety of support agencies catering for pupils' individual needs work together effectively to support pupils. Learning coaches and mentoring programmes support pupils' wellbeing effectively and they also provide suitable support for pupils' academic progress. The school provides a range of useful information for pupils and parents regarding options and career paths."
- "There are good systems in place to ensure that parents of pupils with additional learning needs are kept well informed about their child's education. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and give no cause for concern."



### Learning environment: **Good**

- "The school has a strong ethos based on fairness, and this creates a caring and disciplined learning environment. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum and they benefit from a wide range of opportunities that allows them to be involved in all aspects of school life. The school effectively seeks the views of pupils, parents, staff and governors to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities."
- "The school provides a bright and welcoming environment. Displays in classrooms and around the school are generally of a very high standard and are informative and celebrate pupils' achievement effectively. Classrooms are well equipped with information and communication technology."
- "The school manages the learning environment well and it has a planned rolling programme to update and provide new facilities when necessary. The recently built multi-gym and music facilities have improved participation rates for girls and boys in these aspects of school life respectively. Accommodation is of a good standard, and the school buildings and grounds are well maintained."



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

### Leadership: Good

- "The strategic vision established by the new headteacher and the newly-formed senior leadership team is very clear. It is comprehensive and focuses appropriately on important areas for improvement."
- "Leaders and managers at all levels have high expectations of their own work and the work of others."
- "Communication in the school is consistently good. Line management and departmental meetings are well run and have a clear focus on the management of projects aimed at improving the school. These meetings help leaders to monitor the implementation of change effectively and provide opportunities to evaluate success in raising standards in the school."
- "Curriculum and pastoral leaders work well with the leadership team. They have a shared understanding of how pupils and students learn best, which they use well to support teachers and classroom assistants. This makes a valuable contribution to a strong learning environment in the school that enables most pupils to thrive."
- "The governing body has a clear understanding of its role and governors are well informed about the performance of the school. They support the school well as critical friends and provide a strong sense of direction."



*"Leaders and managers at all levels have high expectations of their own work and the work of others"*

## *“Transition work with partner primary schools is of a very high quality”*

### Improving quality: **Good**

- “The headteacher and senior leadership team have a good and accurate understanding of how well the school is performing. A comprehensive review and planning cycle is well established across the school. It focuses appropriately on standards, teaching and learning and on ensuring that all learners achieve to their potential.”

### Partnership working: **Excellent**

- “There is a very wide range of good quality courses for learners to choose from, particularly in the sixth form. There are highly effective quality-assurance procedures in place to monitor course provision and outcomes. Transition work with partner primary schools is of a very high quality. It supports pupils effectively both academically and pastorally as they move between schools.”
- “The school has developed very strong working relationships with a wide range of partners that make a successful contribution to provision and standards. These partnerships are very effective in promoting pupils’ wellbeing and enhancing their learning experiences. In particular, the school’s collaborative intervention work for vulnerable pupils is of high quality. There is a comprehensive and highly co-ordinated approach to identifying pupils with specific social and emotional needs in the school and across partner schools. Highly effective support programmes, involving relevant agencies, are then planned and put into place by the school to address the issues identified. Progress made by pupils on support programmes is monitored and evaluated closely. The support that pupils receive is adapted as their needs change and develop. The impact on improving pupils’ social and emotional skills is significant.”
- “Links with the community are strong.”

### Resource management: **Good**

- “Staff at the school work very effectively together as a team. They co-operate successfully with colleagues in other schools and colleges to increase their professional knowledge and understanding. They share good practice constructively in this way and this has improved the quality of the school’s provision.”
- “Teaching and support staff are deployed effectively. They make good use of their time to plan and evaluate their work.”
- “The sixth form provision is cost-effective as a result of good partnership working with other providers.”
- “Leaders make prudent use of financial resources and align spending plans very well to the school’s development priorities. They maintain a suitable contingency fund that is used wisely to enhance the learning environment and upgrade resources when needed. Governors receive regular financial updates and monitor the school’s spending closely. In view of the overall judgement of standards, the school provides good value for money.”





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