

March 31st, 2015

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Following our Estyn Inspection in January, I can now confirm that the final report has been published and can be accessed on our School website or through the Estyn site.

The Inspection was carried out over one week in January by a team of 6 Inspectors. All aspects of our work were covered and the report contains a number of different judgments related to pupil outcomes, pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning, the quality of our teaching and leadership of the School.

Like all schools we are measured by a number of different performance indicators. Of particular importance are the outcomes pupils achieve in English, Maths and the standards of literacy and numeracy. It is important to note that the Estyn Inspectors recognised that results in English and Maths are better at Pontypridd High when we are compared with similar schools in Wales. In fact we are in the top 25% of Schools for this indicator which is considered to be the most important of all. They also concluded that the quality of teaching is at least Good and how pupils progress well with their literacy and numeracy skills. We have made a commitment to improving standards in these areas over the last 3 years and it is rewarding to see this is now a strength of our school. With such good results in the most important key performance indicators, we are disappointed that the report includes a current performance judgment of 'adequate'. We understand that there are 3 reasons for this. Firstly, whilst the gap in outcomes between our boys and girls needs to close further. Secondly Inspectors want to see attendance continue to increase and finally, we should aim to further reduce the number of days lost to pupil exclusions. We have made significant progress in each of these areas since September and are confident that by the end of this year our current performance will be judged as Good.

For the reasons above, the Inspectors have identified three recommendations which relate to improving outcomes for boys and further increasing attendance whilst reducing days lost to exclusions. I would argue that these such issues could probably be identified as areas for improvement for most secondary schools in Wales. What I am pleased about is that a number of key areas that relate to English, maths, literacy, numeracy, standards of teaching, pupil attitudes to learning and the quality of school leadership are not mentioned as areas for improvement. This is because the quality of provision at Pontypridd High is well established, with high expectations on all staff and pupils to produce high standards.

The Inspection Report includes a number of other judgments related to our provision and leadership. (These are included from pages 6 to 11). I trust you will be reassured by the 'Good' judgments for different aspects of our work and that, almost without exception the comments for each area compliment and praise the work of pupils, staff, governors and parents. Having read a number of school reports from across Wales I can assure you that these comments show the school to be good, if not excellent in many different ways.

This was a very thorough Inspection of our School. The outcomes and comments presented in the final report reflect the progress we are making and the fact that we compare favourably with the top 25% of Schools in Wales when compared on key indicators such as those which include GCSE passes in English and maths. I trust you will acknowledge the positive nature of this report and the fact that so few recommendations reflect the fact that we are performing well in all of those areas which have a significant impact on school improvement.

My thanks to everyone who makes a contribution to our School. Whilst the Estyn Team arrived at our School with little knowledge of our work, they left knowing that we have a positive and inclusive ethos and that we are an orderly, supportive and caring community that effectively meets the needs of a wide range of pupils.

We should all be very proud of what we are achieving together and my thanks as always for your continued support.

Please contact me at School should you want to discuss any aspect of the Estyn report in more detail.

Yours faithfully

Huw Cripps
Headteacher