

Headteacher's Statement following Estyn Inspection May 2012

Following our recent successful Estyn school inspection in May 2012, it gives me great pleasure to share with you a snapshot of the key findings. These findings demonstrate our commitment to our school vision of "Succeeding together - progressing with pride, for Excellence in Learning" and we can now celebrate what we are doing well and work together to improve the areas for development identified in the report.

The Governing Body is delighted that Estyn has recognised the improvements the school is already making:

"The school has made a significant number of improvements in a relatively short period of time. Since taking up his post in September 2011, the Headteacher has provided inspirational and dynamic leadership. He provides a specific and well-understood vision for the school, with a focus on improving standards in English and mathematics in particular. There is a clear sense of direction and the Headteacher communicates this enthusiastically to staff, parents and pupils. Staff have considerable confidence and trust in the ability of the Headteacher, supported well by the leadership team, to bring about change."

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Governors, to thank the huge number of parents who took the time to respond to the Parents' Questionnaire, and provide valuable feedback for the Inspectors and the School.

Responses to the questionnaire indicated that parents feel that "...the school is well run," that "...there is a good range of activities," feel "...comfortable to discuss their child's education and wellbeing", and that their "...child is making good progress. Many parents believe that the school helps their children to become more mature and prepares their children well for moving on to the next school or college and work."

The purpose of our vision is to promote excellence in learning and, as illustrated in the extract below, teaching and learning are praised:

"In the majority of lessons, teaching helps pupils to progress well in gaining new knowledge, understanding and skills. In these lessons, teachers communicate successfully the specific learning outcomes, relate the activities to key ideas and the overall sequence of lessons, and give pupils opportunities to reflect on what they have achieved. Instructions and explanations are clear and well judged. Tasks are presented well, often making good use of information and communication technology, and there is effective use of a wide range of learning materials. Activities designed to meet the objectives are appropriate and often make pupils think deeply about their work. In these lessons, teachers have suitable expectations of what pupils should achieve and lessons proceed at a good pace, with well-timed activities. In a few of these lessons, teaching is particularly effective with especially high expectations of pupils, and includes very challenging and searching questions and tasks."

"...Pupils show outstanding skills in reflecting on how to improve their own and others' work. This is of an exceptional quality, as they are adept at using clear criteria in their evaluations."

"The school is making good progress in improving its Welsh language provision."

We recognise that there are areas for improvement, indeed the School's own self-evaluation report clearly identified that although previous results showed an upward trend, performance was well below that of similar schools. Estyn agreed with our self-evaluation. The School cannot change the past, but it is clear that it is changing the future, *"...the Headteacher has tackled underperformance robustly, challenged perceptions and created an ethos of accountability among leaders. The school has introduced clear systems that focus strongly on the areas that need to improve most."*

We are confident that the significant improvements that we have made this year will deliver improved outcomes this very summer. Indeed, the report states that *"The new leadership team has only been in place for a short time, there has already been significant progress in improving behaviour, strengthening the quality of teaching and learning..."*

Under the recognised inspirational leadership of the Headteacher, the Governors and staff have already begun to rigorously address the recommendations made by Estyn. Our main focus is improving standards at Key Stage 4. The School is committed to working with all members of the learning community: Governors, staff, pupils, parents and carers, to create an aspirational learning environment in which all students strive for and achieve excellence.

As we all know, the people within any community can only perform well when there is a positive atmosphere and we are pleased that Estyn recognise this in their report:

"The school has a calm, purposeful and positive ethos. The school's vision of 'Succeeding together -progressing with pride, for Excellence in Learning' is successfully promoted and is evident in the culture of the school. It is an inclusive community that promotes equality of opportunity and appreciates diversity. Pupils with disabilities are able to access all areas of the school and are integrated very well into the life of the school. Equality and diversity matters are dealt with effectively through personal and social education provision."

"Most pupils behave well in classes and around the school. They are considerate and courteous, and relate well to each other. Behaviour has improved significantly over the school year, with a sharp reduction in instances of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils' attitudes to the school and their learning are positive."

"The school provides a safe and caring environment that effectively supports pupils' wellbeing and personal development. A valuable range of learning experiences promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well."

As Governors, we are glad that Estyn recognises that *"Governors are enthusiastic and supportive of the Headteacher and his vision for the school."* We realise that the school has made progress, but also realise that continuous improvement is the key to success and we will be rigorous in our role of ensuring that this is at the forefront of our work.

This positive Estyn report and future improvements would not be possible without the continued hard work and support of staff, pupils, parents and carers. The Governors would like to thank all members of the School community for their tremendous and continuing efforts.