

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

A Summary Report for Parents

**Whitchurch High School
Penlline Road
Whitchurch
Cardiff
CF14 2XJ**

School number: 6814050

Date of inspection: 2 March 2009

by

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Whitchurch High School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Whitchurch High School took place between 02/03/09 and 05/03/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by William Gwyn Thomas undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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 explains the terms that Estyn uses to indicate quantities. 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% |

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Grade 1 | good with outstanding features |
| Grade 2 | good features and no important shortcomings |
| Grade 3 | good features outweigh shortcomings |
| Grade 4 | some good features, but shortcomings in important areas |
| Grade 5 | many important shortcomings |

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **standard** inspection.

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 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 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 | Y 1 | Y 2 | Y 3 | Y 4 | Y 5 | Y 6 |
| Ages | 4-5 | 5-6 | 6-7 | 7-8 | 8-9 | 9-10 | 10-11 |

Secondary phase:

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | Y 7 | Y 8 | Y 9 | Y 10 | Y 11 | Y 12 | Y 13 |
| 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 |

Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Whitchurch High School is an 11-18 mixed, split-site community school maintained by Cardiff Unitary Authority (UA). Key stage (KS) 3 pupils are based on the lower school site and 14-19 pupils and students on the upper school site. There are currently 2283 pupils on roll with 486 students in the sixth form, compared with 2445 at the time of the last inspection in March 2003 when there were 492 students in the sixth form. Although there has been a seven percent decrease in pupil population since the last inspection, the school continues to be the largest comprehensive school in Wales.
- 2 The school is situated in Whitchurch, a northern suburban area of the city of Cardiff, and serves a wide area including Gabalfa, Birchgrove, Coryton, Llandaff North, Rhiwbina and Whitchurch. The school's catchment includes both relatively prosperous and economically disadvantaged areas. Approximately 25% of pupils come from areas deemed to be socially disadvantaged. The current percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) is 11%. The three-year average for the school is 10.1% during 2006-2008.
- 3 Pupils and students represent the full ability range. There are 95 pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 289 have been identified as needing some support. Eight pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum (NC). There are three pupils who are "looked after" by the local authority and a further two are dual registered.
- 4 About 94% of the pupils come from homes where the predominant language spoken is English, and no pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard within the school. Eighty-nine pupils and students receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
- 5 The headteacher and one of the deputy headteachers were appointed to their posts in September 2008. The composition of the senior leadership team (SLT) includes the headteacher, two deputy headteachers, and nine assistant headteachers.
- 6 Vocationally-based courses at KS4 and in the sixth form are being developed internally and in partnership with other providers in the area. The school also delivers the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) in year (Y)12 and the International Baccalaureate (IB) in Y12/13.

The school's priorities and targets

- 7 The school's mission statement is: "To be a caring, well ordered and successful community in which all individuals who come to learn and work here are able to develop their maximum potential". The school aims are set out clearly under six main headings.
- 8 The school has prepared a detailed improvement plan for 2008-2009 which identifies three main areas for development. The areas that have been identified comply with Estyn's seven key questions. The school also sets numerical targets for success at the end of KS3, KS4 and the sixth form that, in 2009:

