

19 October 2016

Dear

Freedom of Information Act: Inspection reports

I am writing in response to your request, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to be provided with information on the following:

1. Has there been an inspection done recently on Cowbridge Comprehensive School and if so please may I have a copy?
2. School workforce: Does every teacher have "Qualified Teacher Status"?
3. Are the Welsh speaking schools for cultural reasons or educational? What are the benefits?
4. As I pay tax and council tax what is the percentage of tax given to Welsh speaking schools?
5. Does the school curriculum collate with O levels and A levels, and are they completely studied or are parents relied on for extra private tuition?
6. What are the provisions for disabled children? Are they mainstreamed?
7. Who inspects the universities – governments look to benchmark their universities with those courses (English language taught) on this basis. What is the position of primary and secondary schooling?

Under the FOIA, Estyn is required to:

- (i) confirm or deny whether it holds the information of the description specified in the request; and
- (ii) communicate the information requested to the applicant. You should note that this is effectively a decision that the information can be released into the public domain and not simply to the specified applicant.

I have investigated your queries with the relevant inspection teams and can confirm the following:

Has there been an inspection done recently on Cowbridge Comprehensive School and if so please may I have a copy?

The last inspection of Cowbridge Comprehensive School was carried out in 2013. I enclose a copy of the report with this letter.

School workforce: Does every teacher have “Qualified Teacher Status”?

In maintained schools, every teacher is required to have this status. However, there is no requirement for teachers in independent schools to hold Qualified Teacher Status.

Are the Welsh speaking schools for cultural reasons or educational? What are the benefits?

It is statutory that all maintained schools in Wales teach Welsh. The emphasis given to teaching Welsh depends on the nature and context of the individual school. Welsh is the main medium of the teaching and learning in around a quarter of the schools in Wales. In other schools, Welsh is taught as a second language. The reasons why schools teach Welsh are both cultural and educational. Welsh Government sees that there are advantages for pupils to learn Welsh and becoming increasingly bilingual. Such advantages include providing young people with the opportunity to appreciate diversity, expand their horizons, enrich their experiences of life and attain a skill that is desirable in the workplace. The cognitive and even health benefits of being bilingual are well-documented in a considerable body of research. Bilingualism appears to be advantageous on certain thinking dimensions including creativity, divergent thinking and communicative sensitivity.

Estyn is of the opinion that to encourage the development of such benefits and skills is both advantageous and desirable for young people in Wales.

As I pay tax and council tax what is the percentage of tax given to Welsh speaking schools?

Estyn does not hold this information, although I imagine that levels vary across local authorities. You may be able to find out more information in relation to the Vale of Glamorgan by contacting the Vale of Glamorgan Council, or the Welsh Government statistical department may be able to help with the overall Wales picture.

Does the school curriculum collate with O levels and A levels, and are they completely studied or are parents relied on for extra private tuition?

It is the responsibility of the school's headteacher and governing body to plan the school's curriculum. At key stage 4, pupils in Wales study a mixture of vocational and GCSE qualifications. School sixth forms offer A level and vocational qualifications, although in schools, it is predominantly A level courses that are offered. Pupils receive their education at school, although some parents source extra private tuition for their child/children.

What are the provisions for disabled children? Are they mainstreamed?

Children with disabilities will receive their education in both mainstream and special schools. Where they access education and what support they receive will depend on the nature of their special educational needs, which may or may not be related to their disabilities. For some children, they will have a statement of special educational needs which gives a legal entitlement to the support identified in the statement. More information about this can be found in the [Code of Practice for SEN](#), available from the Welsh Government or through their website. In addition, all schools need to produce a strategic equality plan which sets out how they will ensure that they do not discriminate against pupils with a disability.

Who inspects the universities – governments look to benchmark their universities with those courses (English language taught) on this basis. What is the position of primary and secondary schooling?

Universities are inspected by QAA (the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education), whose website can be found at the following address: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en> In relation to the position of primary and secondary schooling, I am currently unable to ascertain what information you are seeking on this matter, but if you are able to clarify, or have any further queries, do not hesitate to contact me.

I hope that this information is helpful to you. If you are not satisfied with the decision Estyn has taken regarding your request for information, you are entitled to request that we review the matter. Your request for a review should be addressed to the Feedback and Complaints Manager, and received no later than 20 working days after the date of this communication.

If you are still not satisfied, you also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 745
Fax: 01624 524510
Email: enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



Robert Gairey
Swyddog Arweiniol Cyhoeddiadau / Lead Officer:
Publications