

**A report on**  
**Caerleon Comprehensive School**  
**Cold Bath Road**  
**Caerleon**  
**Newport**  
**NP18 1NF**

**Date of inspection: March 2011**

**by**  
**Mr Gwyn Thomas**  
**Under Contract for**  
**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**  
**and Training in Wales**

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:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW

or by email to [publications@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:publications@estyn.gov.uk)

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

**© Queen's Printer and Controller of HMSO 2011: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.**

.

## Context

Caerleon Comprehensive School is an 11-18 mixed community school maintained by Newport Unitary Authority. The large majority of pupils come from the small town of Caerleon. Others come from Usk, Goytre and Little Mill in Monmouthshire, Ponthir in Torfaen, and Langstone in Newport. Some pupils come from the city of Newport.

Pupils of all abilities are received by the school. The vast majority of pupils come from socially and economically advantaged areas.

There are currently 1671 pupils on roll including 358 students in the sixth form. During the last inspection in April 2005, there were 1533 pupils on roll including 264 students in the sixth form.

There are 99.92 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 42.08 full-time equivalent support members of staff in the school.

In 2009-10, 3.11% of pupils were eligible for free school meals. This figure is well below the national average of 17.1%.

There are 2.9% of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and a further 8.1% require additional support. The percentage of compulsory age pupils on the special educational needs register is 11% which is well below the national average of 20.9%. In 2010, 10.2% of 15 year old pupils were on the special educational needs register.

Only two pupils speak Welsh as a first language. Six-per cent of pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language.

The headteacher was appointed permanently to the post in September 2010.

The school's mission statement is to maximise the potential of all in a happy, caring and disciplined environment

The school's aims are to provide a culture appropriate for future citizens, a caring and inspiring learning community in which all learners have high order skills and grow in self-worth and self-esteem.

The 2010-2011 individual school budget per pupil for Caerleon Comprehensive School is £3836 which compares with a maximum of £4263 and a minimum of £3713 for secondary schools in Newport. The school has the third lowest budget per pupil out of the 8 secondary schools in Newport.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

This is a good school where learners in all key stages achieve outstanding results. These include:

- standards achieved by learners over a four-year period;
- standards achieved in Welsh second language in a school where only two pupils speak Welsh at home; and
- standards of learners' wellbeing.

The school's other outstanding features include the:

- quality of care, support and guidance to all learners; and
- commitment of the learners and school community to succeed.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because of the:

- leadership qualities and vision of the headteacher;
- leadership team's clear understanding of the school's strengths and identified areas for improvement;
- clear priorities for improvement that are supported by well allocated resources;
- strong leadership skills of many middle managers;
- quantity of good teaching and wide learning experiences; and
- expansion of opportunities for learners to gain appropriate qualifications to enable them to reach their full potential.

## Recommendations

In order to improve further, the staff and governors of Caerleon Comprehensive School need to:

- R1 continue to implement strategies to improve the percentage of pupils achieving the level 1 threshold in key stage 4;
- R2 extend the amount of outstanding teaching to ensure that all learners are consistently challenged to reach their full potential;
- R3 strengthen the line-management links of the leadership team to ensure that members monitor the quality of teaching and learning rigorously on a formal and structured basis and to ensure consistency in aspects of assessment, target setting and reporting;
- R4 ensure that all departmental improvement plans specify clear targets and focused areas for improvement; and
- R5 work with the Local Authority to provide appropriate accommodation for the expanding sixth form.

### ***What happens next?***

*The school will draw up an action plan which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the excellent practice identified during the inspection.*

## Main findings

<b>Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?</b>
---

<b>Excellent</b>
------------------

### **Standards: Excellent**

In 2010 in key stage 3, the core subject indicator (the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum) English and science were in the top 25% when compared with similar schools in terms of the free school meals benchmark. Mathematics was in the top 50%. In 2010, results in the core subjects and the core subject indicator placed the school generally around the average within its family of 12 schools. (Groups of schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in deprived areas, having special educational needs and learning English as an additional language) Over a three-year period, nearly all indicators were in the top 25% of similar schools. This is an outstanding feature.

During 2008-2010, pupils' achievement above level 5 and level 6 in the core subjects was above the family averages on many occasions and national averages on all

A report on Caerleon Comprehensive School  
March 2011

occasions. This is a good feature. However, pupils made lower than expected progress based on their attainment at the end of key stage 2 in the core subject indicator and mathematics in the last two years.

Over a three-year period, pupils' achievement at level 5 and above in the non-core subjects on a majority of occasions was in the top 50% of similar schools.

At key stage 4 in 2010, pupils' performance in all the core subjects, the threshold level 2 (a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSE's at grades A\*-C), the threshold level 2 including English and mathematics and the core subject indicator was in the top 25% when compared with similar schools in terms of levels of the free school meals benchmark. This is an outstanding feature. Overall, these indicators were above the family and significantly above the national averages.

Over a three-year period, pupils' performance was consistently outstanding in English, science and the threshold level 2 indicator. It was outstanding for two of the three years in mathematics, the core subject indicator and the threshold level 2 which includes English and mathematics.

The percentage of pupils achieving the level 1 threshold (a volume of learning equivalent to five GCSE's at grades D-G) has been weaker. In 2009 and 2010 it was in the bottom 50% of similar schools. Overall, pupils made lower than expected progress based on their attainment at the end of key stage 3.

Sixth-form students' performance has been exceptional over the last three years. The percentage of students gaining the level 3 threshold (a volume of learning equivalent to two A levels at grades A\*-E) is well above the national average for two of these years. On average, over a three-year period, 38% of students achieved the highest possible grade (A\*/A), with 85% gaining an A\*/A-C grade. These are outstanding features.

The school's average wider points' score (all externally approved qualifications at age 17) over a three-year period is a notable feature. Results have been consistently and significantly above the national averages.

The outcomes of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification have made a significant contribution to maintaining outstanding standards in the sixth-form.

At the end of key stage 4 during 2008-2010, all pupils left school with a recognised qualification. This was better than the national averages. At the end of Year 11 in 2010, nearly all pupils continued their full-time education in school, further education or in work-based training. Only 2% are not in education, training or employment. At the end of Year 13, most students continued in education and training. These are excellent features.

Contrary to national trends, during 2008-2010, boys outperformed girls in mathematics and science on a few occasions in both key stage 3 and key stage 4. The gap between the performance of boys and girls is frequently less than that for Wales.

A report on Caerleon Comprehensive School  
March 2011

Able and talented pupils perform very well. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. Most show continuous improvement throughout the year groups. About half of the pupils with a statement of special educational needs make good progress. Overall, the very few free school meals' pupils perform better in key stage 3 than they do in key stage 4.

In nearly all the lessons observed, able learners make very good progress whilst most other learners make good progress. They listen very well, speak clearly and express their views confidently. Their reading and writing skills are good or better. The standards of pupils' communication, numeracy and information technology skills are good in key stage 3 and key stage 4. In the sixth form, communication skills are outstanding and have impacted very positively on results. Collectively, these features are good.

In Welsh second language, pupils' achievement in key stage 3 is outstanding over a three-year period. Results are above the family and national averages on all occasions. In 2010 in key stage 4, most pupils gained an external qualification in Welsh second language. Pupils' speaking skills within the classroom and writing skills are strong. Of the pupils entered, 96% gained an A\*-C grade in the full course and 76% in the short course. The combined courses resulted in 81% gaining an A\*-C grade. At A level, 98% of candidates gained a C grade or above. These are outstanding results. However, across the school, learners' use of incidental Welsh is limited.

**Wellbeing: Excellent**

Nearly all pupils feel safe in school and receive good personal support. The very few incidents of bullying are dealt with well. Pupils are considerate, courteous and behave very well. These positive features have resulted in very few fixed term and no permanent exclusions over the last three years. These are very good features.

Many learners have a very good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and have positive attitudes towards exercise and diet. They participate regularly in fitness, sporting and related extra-curricular activities.

Pupils' attendance levels are very good and are in the top 25% when compared with similar schools. The school's attendance rates places it well above the average figure for its family of schools during the last three years.

In nearly all lessons observed, most pupils work very well with each other. Their attitude to learning is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to the standards they achieve.

A good feature of the school's life is the varied and wide range of opportunities available to learners to participate in the community of the school and beyond. The school council, Eco-group and other groups are involved positively in the decision-making processes in the school. Students attend governing body meetings and participate in staff appointments.

In the sixth form, students' skills of improving their own learning, problem solving and working with others are outstanding.

A report on Caerleon Comprehensive School  
March 2011

Learners are prepared very well for life and work outside school and have exceptional social skills.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>	<b>Good</b>
---	-------------

**Learning experiences: Good**

While inspectors judged outcomes to be excellent, they awarded this key question one grade lower because a few areas were identified for improvement.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and meets the needs of learners and the local community. There is a wide range of options available for learners aged 14-19. Very good progress has been made to meet fully the requirements of the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure for September 2011.

The school groups and sets pupils according to ability. There is appropriate flexibility for pupil progression.

The school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. These provide outstanding opportunities for pupils to engage in musical, sporting and other activities.

The provision for key skills is developing at key stage 3 and key stage 4. The recently appointed team of co-ordinators is developing wider opportunities to accredit key skills. These are delivered very effectively in the sixth form through the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Provision for Welsh in the curriculum at key stage 3 and Year 10 is good, and very good in Year 11, with nearly all pupils being entered to gain qualifications in Welsh. A co-ordinator has recently been appointed to oversee the Cwricwlwm Cymreig and the Welsh dimension and an audit has been undertaken by departments.

Sustainable development and global citizenship are promoted successfully by the school.

**Teaching: Good**

Nearly all lessons observed were at least good with a few having outstanding features.

Within the lessons observed, many teachers have very good relationships with learners and support them well in lessons. Teachers use a good range of resources and teaching methods to engage learners effectively.

In the majority of lessons, teachers use appropriate questioning to challenge and develop learners' thinking. Other good features in teaching include the use of effective plenary sessions, good pace, with resources and tasks being adapted well to suit the ability range of learners. In a minority of lessons, teachers are overtly directive and do not provide sufficient challenging tasks.

A report on Caerleon Comprehensive School  
March 2011

Assessment of learning is inconsistent across the school and is not clearly linked to levels and grades. The quality of marking varies between and within departments. It is insufficiently diagnostic to enable learners improve their work and achieve their full potential.

Target setting and assessment for learning is underdeveloped across the school. However, in a few departments, it is well developed where learners know their present performance and target levels.

Parents receive an annual report on the progress of their children. These vary in the quality of subject-specific target setting and the use of marks and grades.

**Care, support and guidance: Excellent**

The school provides outstanding care and support and this is enhanced by a range of external specialist services.

A very well co-ordinated Personal and Social Education programme offers clear guidance, information and good advice to learners. The school's highly inclusive ethos ensures that everyone is supported in a caring environment.

Learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Contemporary topics successfully enhance this provision.

There is a wide range of activities to promote learners' health, wellbeing and fitness.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

The school has excellent provision to meet the requirements of learners with additional learning needs. There are very effective arrangements to identify, monitor and support learners. A comprehensive set of guidelines contribute significantly towards planning appropriate provision. They offer a wide range of suggestions on how to respond to the different needs of learners. The flexibility of this provision is an outstanding feature.

Individual education plans are clear and specific, and parents are kept well informed.

Teachers adapt resources and tasks appropriately, and these are reviewed regularly. Support members of staff make a valuable contribution to the quality of provision. These make a positive impact on the quality of provision.

**Learning environment: Good**

The school is an inclusive family orientated community where equality and diversity are promoted fully. The school meets its legal requirements with the implementation of its well-established policies and procedures. All learners have access to the extensive curriculum irrespective of race, gender or background.

A very positive learning atmosphere permeates all aspects of the school's activities.

Teaching and support staff are effectively deployed to deliver educational programmes of high quality. The accommodation is sufficient to meet the needs of

A report on Caerleon Comprehensive School  
March 2011

the learners on roll. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained. Most of the toilet and changing facilities are in good order. Displays of learners' work in both the classrooms and corridors provide a stimulating and positive learning environment.

However, the accommodation for sixth-form students for private study and social activity is insufficient.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Good</b>
--	-------------

**Leadership: Good**

While inspectors judged outcomes to be excellent, they judged leadership and management to be good because there are a few aspects of monitoring which are not formal enough.

The leadership team, governing body and middle managers are successful in promoting many aspects of the school's mission statement to maximise the potential of all pupils in a happy, caring and disciplined environment.

Overall, the leadership team and governing body have high expectations which are reflected in the quality of the distributed leadership of many middle managers. Collectively, they have been able to ensure that results have improved.

The school has an effective system for reviewing examination results, setting departmental targets and improvement planning. This contributes to the strategic direction of the school. The school improvement plan and many departmental self-evaluation reports have a clear focus to raise standards and move the school forward. However, there is a lack of a formal structure to ensure all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment are monitored rigorously on a regular basis to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential.

Currently, many leaders use data effectively to analyse the school's progress and evaluate performance within subject areas to inform the review process. However, the lack of a clear system to identify pupils' targets early in each key stage limits the opportunities to monitor performance critically, identify underachievement and inform strategies for improvement.

The school has appropriate arrangements for the performance management of all staff. Individual training needs are met effectively through a comprehensive programme of in-service training, attendance on a wide range of courses, involvement in examination board activities and opportunities to gain further qualifications.

Governors are enthusiastic and supportive of the school. Through their attendance at departmental review meetings they have a good understanding of performance and areas for development. Their role as critical friends has recently been extended successfully through involvement in sub-committees which are convened before the half-termly governors' meeting. Governors meet legal and regulatory requirements.

A report on Caerleon Comprehensive School  
March 2011

The school has responded well by implementing many local and national priorities. Good progress has been made with the 14-19 Learning Pathways' programme, the transition plan with partner primary schools and learners' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship issues. The school's response to the development of incidental Welsh is limited. Plans are well developed for the accreditation of key skills and the extension of the Welsh Baccaulaureate as an option at key stage 4.

**Improving quality: Good**

Self-evaluation procedures used by the school have a number of good features. All self-evaluation reports have successfully addressed all quality indicators in the three key questions within the new Inspection Framework.

The school's self-evaluation report provides a balanced analysis of strengths and areas for improvement. Most departmental self-evaluation reports analyse performance critically, identify strengths and areas for further improvement. The departmental review meeting involves the headteacher or deputy headteacher, line manager, governor, and where possible, a local authority adviser. They evaluate the department's performance effectively. This helps set targets and priorities for improvement for the academic year.

There are good features in the processes to inform self-evaluation. These include the detailed analysis of performance data, analysis of trends and progress over time. First-hand evidence is collected through lesson observations and book reviews. However, the lack of a structured programme for lesson observations and book reviews at all levels limits the impact of quality assurance procedures to inform planning for improvement. A lack of formal meetings between line managers and heads of department reduce the effectiveness of the self-evaluation process.

Most priorities identified in the school improvement plan give the school a clear focus for improvement. However, these are not rigorously applied and monitored across all departments.

In a minority of departmental improvement plans there is a lack of clarity in identifying specific areas for improvement particularly in teaching and learning, and assessment to raise standards.

The school regularly takes account of the school council and parents' views which have resulted in changes to school procedures and facilities.

There is an effective system for identifying the continuing professional needs of all staff. Training is managed effectively through whole-school development days and attendance at a wide range of external courses. Opportunities are provided for all staff to gain further qualifications. The school promotes teachers' involvement in moderation and marking responsibilities to inform examination assessment procedures very effectively.

The school's involvement in professional learning communities is developing well through departmental groups, an in-house group focusing on assessment for learning

A report on Caerleon Comprehensive School  
March 2011

and collaboration with schools in the local authority and family. Opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues within departments are developing well.

The good features of teaching and learning have been maintained since the last inspection. However, there are shortcomings with aspects of assessment. There are still insufficient funds available to improve aspects of the accommodation.

**Partnership working: Good**

The school has developed effective links with a wide range of organisations. It has a clear vision on how to enhance learners' programmes through informal and formal partnership arrangements.

The school has made a significant contribution to the development of the newly-formed Newport post-16 collaborative structure. This has ensured an enhanced curricular provision in a cost effective manner. Vocational courses in key stage 4 are delivered successfully in a partnership link with the local college and another school.

Very effective joint strategies and working practices have been developed with partner primary schools. This has ensured very good continuity and progression in pupils' learning and wellbeing.

The joint working practices with a wide range of partners have significantly enriched the opportunities and support available to all learners.

The quality assurance procedures to monitor learners' progress within the 14-19 collaborative programmes are being developed.

**Resource management: Excellent**

The school is appropriately staffed to teach the planned curriculum effectively. The careful deployment of specialist teachers ensures the successful utilisation of their expertise and experience. Statutory requirements in respect of the national agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' are fully met. Effective use is made of planning, preparation and assessment time. All support and administrative staff provide outstanding assistance to teachers and learners.

The appropriate use of the excellent teaching resources in lessons is matched very well to learners' requirements.

The school ensures that spending decisions and financial planning are based soundly on departmental and whole-school planning. The outstanding management of the budget by the bursar, headteacher and the finance sub-committee is achieved by regular financial benchmarking, best value exercises and a rigorous monthly reconciliation of accounts.

The school provides excellent value for money through the outstanding achievement of its learners.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

Estyn received 51 responses to the parent questionnaires. This is a low return. However, many gave positive responses to most questions.

Most parents felt that their children were helped to settle in to a new school where they are happy and safe. Members of staff have high expectations and there is a good range of activities.

Many parents say that they are satisfied with the school which is run well. Their children are making good progress. Teaching is good and children behave well. They are treated fairly, given sufficient homework, and receive appropriate additional support. Many are able to approach the school on any issues.

Many feel that their children become more mature and are prepared to take on greater responsibility. Their children's wellbeing and development are promoted well. Good advice is given to their children in readiness to move to their next school, college or work.

A significant minority of parents believe that they are not kept well informed about their child's progress.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Estyn received responses from 507 pupils. Most pupils state that they feel safe in the school, have enough resources and are doing well. Teachers support pupils to learn and make progress. Most are encouraged to do things for themselves and be responsible for their own actions.

Many pupils believe that the school deals well with bullying, has someone available to deal with worries, and helps them to understand and respect others. Pupils are respected and treated fairly.

Many are satisfied by the way they are prepared for life after school. Many pupils state that there are plenty of opportunities for them to exercise and the majority of pupils feel that the school teaches them how to keep healthy.

A majority of pupils believe that homework helps learners to improve their work. The majority feel behaviour in class is sufficient to allow them to get on with their work. The majority of sixth-form students stated that they were given good advice when choosing courses in key stage 4.

The majority of pupils were of the opinion that the school did not listen to pupils' views.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team

Mr Gwyn Thomas	Reporting Inspector
Mr Glyn Davies	Team Inspector
Mr Glyn Griffiths	Team Inspector
Mr Dylan Gwyer-Roberts	Team Inspector
Mr Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector
Ms Catherine Falcus	Peer Inspector
Mrs Rhiannon Hughes	School Nominee

### Contractor

EPPC/Severn Crossing Ltd  
Suite F2A Britannic House  
Britannic Way  
Llandarcy  
Neath  
SA10 6JQ

### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

### 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 five during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of six 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	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The four key stages cover the following year groups:

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