Estyn

A report on

Blackwood Comprehensive School
Ty Isha Terrace
Cefn Fforest
Blackwood
NP12 1ER

Date of inspection: November 2015

by

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:

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

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

Context

Blackwood Comprehensive School is an English medium 11-16 school maintained by Caerphilly local authority. There are 932 pupils on roll. This figure has fallen slightly since 2009 when the school was last inspected, when there were 965 pupils on roll.

Around 21% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average of 17.4%. Around 35% of pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas in Wales. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language and come from a white, British background. A very few are fluent in Welsh.

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is around 18%, which is lower than the national average of 25.4%. The percentage of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is 3.2%, slightly above the national average of 2.5%.

The headteacher has been in post since September 2009. The senior leadership team is comprised of two senior assistant headteachers, three assistant headteachers and the school's business manager.

The individual school budget per pupil for Blackwood in 2015-2016 is £3,913. The maximum per pupil in the secondary schools in Caerphilly is £5,321 and the minimum is £3,879. Blackwood Comprehensive School is 13th out of the 14 secondary schools in Caerphilly in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Summary

The school's current performance	Adequate
The school's prospects for improvement	Adequate

Current performance

The school's current performance is adequate because:

- There is an improving trend of performance in all key performance indicators over the last three years at key stage 4
- In 2015, performance in many indicators at key stage 4 places the school in the upper half of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals
- The proportion of pupils gaining A* or A grades is well above the averages for similar schools and nationally
- At key stage 4, for the last four years, performance in English has been above the average for the family of similar schools and places the school in the upper half of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals
- Many pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning
- The majority of pupils make sound progress in lessons and develop their literacy and numeracy skills well

However:

- Performance in around half of the key stage 4 performance indicators places the school in the lower half of similar schools in two of the last three years
- Performance in the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics, is below modelled outcomes in two of the last three years
- In a minority of lessons, pupils make insufficient progress because of shortcomings in teaching and assessment
- A minority of pupils do not develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum well enough

Prospects for improvement

The school's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- Leaders have succeeded in bringing about strong improvements in many key indicators in 2015
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and most areas for improvement
- The governing body provides effective oversight of the school's work
- A wide range of partnerships enhances provision and contributes well to pupil outcomes

However:

- There has not been enough sustained impact on the school's performance over the last three years, especially with regard to the level 2 threshold
- Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning at all levels are not consistently robust enough
- Strategies to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are not sufficiently developed

Recommendations

R1 Raise standards, particularly in key stage 4

R2 Plan more effectively for the progressive development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills

R3 Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and written feedback

R4 Strengthen leadership arrangements and improve the rigour and consistency of self-evaluation and improvement planning to secure sustained improvements in pupils' standards

What happens next?

The school will draw up an action plan, which shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

Main findings

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?	Adequate

Standards: Adequate

Over the last three years, there has been improvement in all key performance indicators at key stage 4. However, in 2013 and 2014, pupils did not make enough progress from previous key stages in the majority of these indicators.

Performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics improved in 2014, placing the school in the upper half of similar schools based on levels of eligibility for free school meals and above the average for the family of schools for the third consecutive year. However, performance in this indicator was below modelled outcomes in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, performance in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics continues to improve, and is above modelled outcomes and the family average. This places the school in the top 25% of similar schools for this indicator. The proportion of pupils gaining five grades A* or A at GCSE was well above the averages for Wales and the family of schools in 2014 and 2015.

Performance in the level 2 threshold improved in 2014, having declined in 2013. However, in both years, performance in this indicator was below the family average and placed the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools based on levels of eligibility for free school meals. Performance in the level 2 threshold further improved in 2015. However, this still places the school in the lower half of similar schools. Performance in the capped point score also improved in 2014, having declined in 2013. This placed the school in the lower half of similar schools based on free-school-meal eligibility in both years, although it was above the family average in 2014. Performance in the capped point score has continued to improve in 2015, remains above the family average, and now places the school in the upper half of similar schools.

At key stage 3, at level 5 or above, there has been an upward trend in the proportion of pupils that achieve the core subject indicator. Performance in this indicator has been above the family of similar schools average for the last three years.

At key stage 3, the greatest difference between the performance of boys and girls can be seen in English. In 2015, at level 5 and above, boys do not perform as well as the average for boys in the family of similar schools. In 2014, at key stage 4, the gap between the performance of boys and girls is wider than that in similar schools and nationally in many indicators. In these indicators, boys perform less well than the average for boys in similar schools. In 2015, boys' performance has improved in all indicators, and is better than the average performance of boys in similar schools in many of them. However, boys continue to perform less well in the level 2 threshold than the averages for boys nationally and in the family of similar schools.

In 2014, at key stage 3, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals improved in many key indicators. At key stage 4, in 2015, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved in all indicators over the last three years.

The performance of these pupils in the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics, the level 1 threshold, the core subject indicator and English is well above the average performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in similar schools. However, this group consistently performs significantly less well than the average for those in similar schools in the level 2 threshold.

At the end of Year 11, most pupils either continue their education in a school or further education college. In 2015, no pupils left the school without a qualification.

Many pupils have a positive attitude to learning and a majority demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm and motivation. Many listen to their teachers carefully, which helps them to engage successfully in tasks. They recall previous learning well, and apply their knowledge effectively to new topics. A majority of pupils work successfully in pair or group activities and work together to share and develop their ideas well. A minority demonstrate good independent learning skills and successfully take responsibility for their own learning. However, a minority of pupils are too passive in lessons and do not readily participate in tasks. Often, these pupils do not listen sufficiently well to their peers, and are reluctant to engage fully in class discussion.

The majority of pupils have good oral skills. They participate confidently in discussion work, demonstrating well-developed verbal responses, supported by a wide vocabulary and a sound grasp of subject-specific terminology. However, a minority lack the confidence and vocabulary to produce sufficiently clear explanations of their ideas.

The majority of pupils write accurately, imaginatively and with a clear sense of purpose. A minority write well-crafted and structured extended answers, with a few pupils using sophisticated vocabulary. However, the majority of pupils do not take enough responsibility for proof-reading their own work and rely too heavily on teachers correcting their writing. A minority make too many basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar and do not structure extended pieces of writing well enough. In a few cases, inadequate presentation and poorly-formed handwriting have a detrimental effect on the clarity of pupils' work.

The majority of pupils have sound reading skills, which enable them to select relevant information successfully from a range of sources. A minority of pupils use higher order reading skills well to make inferences and deductions and analyse texts. However, a minority of pupils do not use their reading skills well enough to interpret and summarise texts.

The majority of pupils have sound basic number skills and are confident in making mental calculations. However, in their written work, the majority of pupils do not routinely demonstrate the methods that they have used. The majority construct accurate graphs, for example when analysing climate in geography. However, a minority of pupils do not draw or label graphs or charts carefully enough. A minority of pupils demonstrate effective thinking skills, for example when analysing historical sources.

Over the last three years, key stage 3 performance in Welsh second language at level 5 or above has steadily improved, and has been consistently above the family

average. Performance in 2015 places the school in the upper half of similar schools based on levels of eligibility for free school meals, after placing it in the lower half in 2013 and 2014. At key stage 4, the proportion of pupils achieving a level 2 qualification in any Welsh language course is consistently above the family average, although for the last three years a few pupils have left school without any qualification in Welsh.

Wellbeing: Good

Most pupils feel safe in school and believe that the school deals well with any bullying. Many show a clear understanding of the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Most pupils behave with politeness and courtesy, showing respect and care for others. Many enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. The number of fixed-term exclusions is below local authority and national averages.

Rates of attendance improved in 2014 and were in line with modelled outcomes. This places the school in the top quarter of similar schools based on levels of eligibility for free school meals. Attendance rates have decreased slightly in 2015, and this places the school in the lower half of similar schools. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has been well above the family average for this group of pupils for the last three years. Persistent absence has decreased over the last three years, and is now below the family and national averages.

The Eco group has made useful contributions to developing school life, for example the successful running of the school allotment. Pupils participate in decision-making appropriately through the School Council. A majority of pupils play a useful role in their school and local community, for example through participation in charity events or supporting younger pupils with their reading. This helps them to develop their social and life skills well.

Key Question 2: How good is provision?	Adequate

Learning experiences: Adequate

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. At key stage 4, there is a suitable range of courses, including relevant vocational options.

The school has taken appropriate measures to promote to all teaching staff the importance of developing pupils' skills across the curriculum. However, overall progress toward implementing the literacy and numeracy framework has been too slow. As a result, teaching has not had sufficient impact on the standard of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. There is an appropriate range of intervention programmes for pupils with difficulties in literacy and numeracy, which helps them to make suitable progress in developing their skills. For example, the 'Befrienders' peer reading programme provides valuable support for younger readers, and develops the wider skills of the older pupils involved.

Many key stage 4 pupils take advantage of the after-school 'Lesson 6' session to support their studies well. The school also offers a wide range of sporting and cultural extra-curricular opportunities, including those that promote and develop their

use of the Welsh language. The school has successfully strengthened its provision for Welsh second language at both key stages. Pupils have appropriate opportunities across the curriculum to learn about the culture and history of Wales.

The enthusiastic Eco group has raised awareness in the school and wider community about energy saving and recycling. Their work on developing the memorial gardens and in reducing litter has been beneficial. The school provides many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about sustainable development and global citizenship.

Teaching: Adequate

In nearly all lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and develop strong working relationships with pupils. This creates a positive and supportive working environment. However, there is too much variation in the impact that teaching has on the standards achieved by pupils.

In the majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They plan well-structured lessons and use engaging resources that are matched closely to pupils' abilities. In these lessons, a wide range of challenging activities engages pupils well and enables them to make good progress. Teachers question pupils skilfully, probing and developing their understanding effectively. In a minority of lessons, teachers are also adept in developing pupils' subject knowledge as well as their literacy skills through a balanced blend of activities. In these lessons, teachers explain concepts clearly whilst also allowing pupils to develop their learning independently.

In a minority of lessons, teaching is less effective. In these lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils. Consequently, they plan activities that are insufficiently challenging, and provide a level of support that does not enable pupils to show enough independence in their learning. Questioning does not successfully engage all pupils, and does not challenge them sufficiently to develop their oral responses. As a result, a minority of pupils are too passive, which limits their progress. In both written work and class discussion, a minority of teachers accept limited responses too readily and are overgenerous in their praise.

Nearly all teachers mark pupils' work regularly. A majority of teachers provide helpful written feedback which informs pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve. However, in a minority of cases, pupils do not receive sufficient specific guidance on how to develop their work. Many pupils correct spelling mistakes in light of teacher feedback. A minority of pupils also respond well to written comments and improve their work successfully as a result, but in the majority of cases pupils make limited or no response to their teachers' feedback.

The school uses assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and plan interventions appropriately, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. Reports to parents contain useful information on pupils' progress, and most give clear targets for improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides pupils with a high level of care and support and makes effective provision for promoting their health and wellbeing. It has a successful focus on promoting good behaviour and encouraging a positive attitude to school. There are clear procedures in place to deal effectively with bullying and discrimination. Pupils know whom to go to if they have a concern, and staff support them well.

There is a wide variety of opportunities, both during and beyond the school day, for pupils to engage in physical activity such as trampolining and kayaking. The school makes appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. A worthwhile personal and social education programme, which includes valuable contributions from members of the local community, develops pupils' knowledge and skills well. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully through religious education lessons and the personal and social education programme.

The school uses an effective range of strategies to enhance pupils' wellbeing, for example targeted support to help vulnerable pupils improve their attendance and access learning successfully. It works well with a range of external organisations and specialist services to develop pupils' life skills and secure their wellbeing.

Pupils with additional learning needs have access to the whole curriculum and are suitably supported in their development. Pupils' individual educational plans identify appropriate targets for pupils and are monitored suitably.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

Learning environment: Good

The school's ethos is based firmly on valuing equality and achievement. The school is a calm and purposeful community based on strong mutual respect. It promotes equality effectively and challenges stereotyping well in all aspects of its work. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness and understanding of diversity and respect for minority groups. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and have the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of school life.

The accommodation is generally adequate, although parts of the buildings are in poor repair. However, the school works hard to make best use of the accommodation available. There is appropriate provision for information and communication technology. Displays in classrooms and corridors are of good quality in many cases, and support learning well. The school library is well resourced and is used effectively to develop pupils' learning. It has a particularly warm and welcoming atmosphere and is a beneficial resource for supporting the needs of more vulnerable pupils in the school.

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?	Adequate

Leadership: Adequate

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide the school with purposeful direction. They show a strong commitment to the school and are successful in promoting a clear strategic vision to the full school community. This is based on pupils becoming successful, well-rounded learners and young adults.

Senior leaders have identified appropriate strategic priorities for the school. These are focused appropriately on national and local priorities, such as reducing the impact of deprivation and improving the development of pupils' skills. Senior leaders generally use data well to monitor performance and middle leaders are increasingly held to account for the standards pupils achieve. This has contributed to improved outcomes, particularly in the performance and wellbeing of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, it has not had enough impact in the classroom, where the standards pupils achieve are below expectations in a minority of lessons and, at key stage 4, the level 2 threshold.

Leadership roles and responsibilities are set out clearly in detailed job descriptions. These roles are distributed well to meet the strategic aims of the school. Staff understand their roles and generally fulfil them effectively. There is a useful structure of regular meetings at all levels, with agendas driven by the priority for improved outcomes and provision. These meetings provide valuable opportunities for staff to discuss how their responsibilities contribute to improvements in outcomes and particular features of provision. However, there is not a strong enough emphasis in these meetings on understanding the high expectations needed in all areas of the school's work to secure sustained improvement.

The school's improved line management programme and performance review arrangements strengthen the school's culture of accountability within a supportive approach. Outcomes from the performance management process are used appropriately to shape professional development opportunities for staff. Although underperformance is largely dealt with aptly, overall, leaders at all levels have been too slow in ensuring that realistic and ambitious targets for improvement have been set, monitored and met.

The governing body provides effective oversight of the school's work. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. They have secure knowledge of performance data and they use this appropriately to challenge the school to help bring about improvements. The governing body plays a suitable role in setting the strategic direction of the school and, through its useful range of sub-committees, monitors progress towards strategic priorities effectively.

Improving quality: Adequate

The school has developed a clearly understood calendar of self-evaluation and improvement planning procedures. However, these procedures have not been successful in securing a sustained improvement across important areas of the school's work.

The school's self-evaluation report is honest and self-critical. It draws on an appropriate range of first hand evidence, including lesson observations, teaching and learning reviews and the views of pupils and parents. A thorough analysis of data identifies the strengths and most weaknesses in pupil performance. However, the evaluation of the quality of teaching and its impact on raising standards of pupils' work is too generous.

Over the last year, the school has extended and developed a more systematic approach to self-evaluation and modified its procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning more precisely. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this.

Most departmental self-evaluation reports include a comprehensive analysis of pupil performance data. However, their evaluation of important areas, such as the quality of teaching, is not robust or precise enough.

The school development plan is clear and concise. It includes areas for improvement identified from self-evaluation and national priorities such as developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. It includes mostly precise, measurable targets, appropriate strategies and sensible time scales. Overall, it provides a sound basis for further development. However, it omits a few important areas identified through self-evaluation, including pupil performance in the level 2 threshold, and does not give sufficient priority to others, such as attendance.

Many departmental development plans address well aspects of pupil performance highlighted in their self-evaluation. Heads of department agree targets to improve teaching in particular through the line management programme. However, the majority of these targets are not precise enough, and the strategies intended to bring about the improvements required are not robust enough.

Partnership working: Good

The school has developed strong links with a wide range of partners. This has a positive impact upon pupils' learning experiences and wellbeing.

Links with parents and carers are well developed. Parents are well informed and supported in helping their children prepare for a range of situations, including learning a new foreign language and preparing for external examinations.

Well-established links with partner primary schools have led to effective pastoral and curricular transition arrangements. The school provides a wide range of activities that help pupils to settle into their new school. These close links are leading to common approaches to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy and the assessment of pupils' work.

The school has secure links with local colleges that provide appropriate curriculum choices for a few pupils at key stage 4. These links also help most pupils, including those for whom traditional curriculum options are not appropriate, to make a smooth transition into post-16 education and follow useful courses

The school links well with a range of strategic partners. Pupils benefit from targeted support and guidance provided by a range of multi-disciplinary and voluntary organisations such as Careers Wales, local businesses and charity organisations.

The school works well with the local community in developing and sharing resources. For example, pupils grow vegetables in the school allotment and donate them to local sheltered accommodation. In addition, retired members of the local community take lunch in the school on a weekly basis as part of the 'Inter-generational Club'.

Resource management: Adequate

The business manager, with the support of the headteacher and governing body, ensures that the school's resources are managed prudently. Staff are well qualified and deployed appropriately to make best use of their knowledge and expertise to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of pupils.

Staff benefit from a wide range of continuing professional development opportunities, which are identified appropriately from performance management reviews and informed by the school's strategic priorities. All teaching and learning support staff are involved in one or more of the school's professional learning groups. These groups focus well on how to develop new or different ways to improve pupils' learning in areas such as thinking and digital literacy skills. The groups systematically share best practice information and resources among all staff, which is helping the school to become a stronger learning community.

The school's budget is set to ensure that it meets identified priorities and is monitored carefully. Particularly effective use is made of the pupil deprivation grant to provide additional support and further engage pupils eligible for free school meals. This has made a positive contribution to the improved attendance and performance of this group of pupils in many indicators. The school undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of this provision to ensure that it benefits these pupils.

On the basis of current performance, the school offers adequate value for money.

Appendix 1

6764046 - Blackwood Comprehensive School

Number of pupils on roll	914
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	20.2
FSM band	4 (20%<FSM<=30%)

Key stage 3

	School				Family average (2015)	Wales average (2015)
	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**		
Number of pupils in Year 9 cohort	198	185	198	189		
Achieving the core subject indicator (CSI) (%)	71.2	76.2	79.8	82.0	80.3	83.9
Benchmark quartile	1	1	1	2		
English						
Number of pupils in cohort						
Achieving level 5+ (%)	78.8	79.5	84.3	84.7	84.8	87.9
Benchmark Quartile	1	2	2	3		
Achieving level 6+ (%)	33.8	41.6	37.9	52.9	43.9	52.6
Benchmark Quartile	1	1	2	1		
Welsh first language						
Number of pupils in cohort						
Achieving level 5+ (%)	.	.	.	.	.	90.9
Benchmark Quartile	.	.	.	.		
Achieving level 6+ (%)	.	.	.	.	.	56.1
Benchmark Quartile	.	.	.	.		
Mathematics						
Number of pupils in cohort						
Achieving level 5+ (%)	84.3	79.5	84.8	89.4	86.2	88.7
Benchmark Quartile	1	3	2	1		
Achieving level 6+ (%)	42.9	46.5	40.9	52.9	53.2	59.5
Benchmark Quartile	2	2	4	2		
Science						
Number of pupils in cohort						
Achieving level 5+ (%)	83.3	90.8	94.4	92.6	89.5	91.8
Benchmark Quartile	1	1	1	2		
Achieving level 6+ (%)	39.9	40.5	45.5	52.4	48.7	58.5
Benchmark Quartile	1	2	2	2		

The core subject indicator (CSI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

. Denotes the data item is not applicable.

* This item may disclose information on individuals, or it is not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

The benchmark quartile compares the performance of one school against others who have similar levels of pupils with free school meals (FSM). FSM is used as a proxy of social deprivation in schools. This allows a comparison of the performance of a school against others who are in the same FSM category, and who might therefore have a similar intake of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

A school in benchmark quartile 1 is in the highest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are higher than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds. A school in benchmark quartile 4 is in the lowest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are lower than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

The benchmarks for Welsh are calculated using all schools that have pupils taking Welsh first language qualifications , and are based on the number of entries and do not include Welsh second language qualifications.

6764046 - Blackwood Comprehensive School

Number of pupils on roll	914
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	20.2
FSM band	4 (20%<FSM<=30%)

Key stage 4

	School				Family average (2015**)	Wales average (2015**)
	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015****		
Number of pupils aged 15	199	197	201	184		
Percentage of 15-year-old pupils who:						
Achieved the level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	50.8	45.7	48.8	59.8	50.6	57.6
Benchmark quartile	1	2	2	1		
Achieved the level 2 threshold	67.8	57.9	68.2	77.2	77.7	83.4
Benchmark quartile	2	4	4	3		
Achieved the level 1 threshold	96.0	91.9	96.5	98.9	95.5	94.3
Benchmark quartile	1	3	2	2		
Achieved the core subject indicator (CSI)	50.3	45.2	48.3	58.2	43.9	54.3
Benchmark quartile	1	2	2	1		
Average capped wider points score per pupil	330.6	310.2	332.5	344.6	331.0	342.3
Benchmark quartile	1	3	3	2		
Average capped wider points score plus per pupil	326.7	307.3	330.6	342.5	326.3	337.7
Benchmark quartile	.	.	.	.		
Achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-A	17.1	15.7	23.4	22.3	9.9	16.5
Benchmark quartile	.	.	.	.		
Achieved A*-C in English	57.3	56.3	65.2	74.5	61.3	68.3
Benchmark quartile	2	2	1	1		
Achieved A*-C in Welsh first language	.	.	.	.	.	75.1
Benchmark quartile	.	.	.	.		
Achieved A*-C in mathematics	62.8	52.8	53.2	63.0	58.5	64.2
Benchmark quartile	1	2	3	1		
Achieved A*-C in science	66.8	55.3	79.1	87.5	78.3	83.3
Benchmark quartile	3	4	3	2		

Includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.

Includes results for 15-year-old pupils, in maintained schools and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age. Ages at the start of the academic year.

The core subject indicator (CSI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

The average capped wider points score is calculated using the best 8 results from all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales for each pupil.

. Denotes the data item is not applicable.

* This item may disclose information on individuals, or it is not sufficiently robust for publication, not applicable or is otherwise unavailable.

** Key stage 4 examinations results for 2015 are provisional.

The benchmark quartile compares the performance of one school against others who have similar levels of pupils with free school meals (FSM). FSM is used as a proxy of social deprivation in schools. This allows a comparison of the performance of a school against others who are in the same FSM category, and who might therefore have a similar intake of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

A school in benchmark quartile 1 is in the highest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are higher than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds. A school in benchmark quartile 4 is in the lowest performing 25% of schools with similar levels of free school meals to this school. Therefore, the school's attainment levels are lower than many other schools with similar levels of pupils from deprived backgrounds.

The benchmarks for Welsh are calculated using all schools that have pupils taking Welsh first language qualifications , and are based on the number of entries and do not include Welsh second language qualifications.

6764046 - Blackwood Comprehensive School

Number of pupils on roll	914
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	20.2
FSM band	4 (20%<FSM<=30%)

Key stage 4 - performance of pupils eligible for free school meals

	School				Family Average (2015**)	Wales Average (2015**)
	2012	2013	2014	2015**		
Number of pupils aged 15 eligible for free school meals	30	47	32	44		
Percentage of 15-year-old pupils eligible for free school meals who:						
Achieved the level 2 threshold including a GCSE grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	30.0	25.5	25.0	36.4	27.9	31.3
Achieved the level 2 threshold	53.3	36.2	37.5	52.3	60.6	68.2
Achieved the level 1 threshold	86.7	74.5	90.6	97.7	90.0	89.2
Achieved the core subject indicator (CSI)	30.0	23.4	25.0	36.4	24.4	28.8
Average capped wider points score per pupil	288.4	240.7	269.5	303.3	295.1	302.1
Average capped wider points score plus per pupil	284.6	236.6	266.7	300.6	288.6	295.1
Achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-A	10.0	4.3	9.4	13.6	4.7	4.3
Achieved A*-C in English	36.7	29.8	34.4	54.5	39.9	44.7
Achieved A*-C in Welsh first language	.	.	.	.	.	51.3
Achieved A*-C in mathematics	56.7	34.0	31.3	38.6	37.2	38.9
Achieved A*-C in science	60.0	27.7	56.3	75.0	67.6	73.5

Includes all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales.

Includes results for 15 year old pupils, in maintained schools and independent schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age. Ages at the start of the academic year.

The core subject indicator (CSI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving level 2 or above in English or Welsh (first language), mathematics and science in combination.

The average capped wider points score is calculated using the best 8 results from all qualifications approved for pre-16 use in Wales for each pupil.

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** Key stage 4 examinations results for 2015 are provisional.

More information is available on the Welsh Government website, My Local School, in the link below.
http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/index.html?lang=eng

Appendix 2

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to learner questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion		Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf		
I feel safe in my school	236		89 38%	138 58%	8 3%	1 0%		Rwy'n teimlo'n ddiogel yn fy ysgol.
			44%	52%	4%	1%		
The school deals well with any bullying	236		61 26%	141 60%	26 11%	8 3%		Mae'r ysgol yn delio'n dda ag unrhyw fwlio.
			26%	57%	14%	3%		
I have someone to talk to if I am worried	236		92 39%	131 56%	9 4%	4 2%		Mae gen i rywun i siarad ag ef/â hi os ydw i'n poeni.
			38%	52%	8%	1%		
The school teaches me how to keep healthy	236		57 24%	135 57%	39 17%	5 2%		Mae'r ysgol yn fy nysgu i sut i aros yn iach.
			24%	56%	18%	3%		
There are plenty of opportunities at school for me to get regular exercise	234		117 50%	107 46%	10 4%	0 0%		Mae digonedd o gyfleoedd yn yr ysgol i mi gael ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
			45%	45%	9%	2%		
I am doing well at school	236		88 37%	135 57%	12 5%	1 0%		Rwy'n gwneud yn dda yn yr ysgol.
			32%	62%	5%	1%		
The teachers help me to learn and make progress and they help me when I have problems	234		89 38%	133 57%	11 5%	1 0%		Mae'r athrawon yn fy helpu i ddysgu a gwneud cynnydd ac maent yn fy helpu pan fydd gen i broblemau.
			38%	55%	6%	1%		
My homework helps me to understand and improve my work in school	236		46 19%	121 51%	56 24%	13 6%		Mae fy ngwaith cartref yn fy helpu i ddeall a gwella fy ngwaith yn yr ysgol.
			20%	54%	21%	5%		
I have enough books and equipment, including computers, to do my work	235		114 49%	109 46%	10 4%	2 1%		Mae gen i ddigon o lyfrau, offer a chyfrifiaduron i wneud fy ngwaith.
			45%	46%	7%	1%		
Pupils behave well and I can get my work done	235		18 8%	118 50%	85 36%	14 6%		Mae disgyblion eraill yn ymddwyn yn dda ac rwy'n gallu gwneud fy ngwaith.
			10%	57%	27%	6%		
Staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect	235		68 29%	112 48%	44 19%	11 5%		Mae staff yn trin pob disgybl yn deg ac yn dangos parch atynt.
			29%	50%	16%	4%		

	Number of responses / Nifer o ymatebion		Strongly Agree / Cytuno'n gryf	Agree / Cytuno	Disagree / Anghytuno	Strongly disagree / Anghytuno'n gryf		
The school listens to our views and makes changes we suggest	235		38 16%	121 51%	66 28%	10 4%		Mae'r ysgol yn gwrando ar ein barn ac yn gwneud newidiadau rydym ni'n eu hawgrymu.
			17%	53%	25%	5%		
I am encouraged to do things for myself and to take on responsibility	234		93 40%	131 56%	9 4%	1 0%		Rwy'n cael fy annog i wneud pethau drosof fy hun a chymryd cyfrifoldeb.
			35%	60%	5%	1%		
The school helps me to be ready for my next school, college or to start my working life	232		90 39%	113 49%	25 11%	4 2%		Mae'r ysgol yn helpu i mi fod yn barod ar gyfer fy ysgol nesaf, y coleg neu i ddechrau fy mywyd gwaith.
			36%	54%	9%	1%		
The staff respect me and my background	236		89 38%	125 53%	20 8%	2 1%		Mae'r staff yn fy mharchu i a'm cefndir.
			37%	53%	7%	2%		
The school helps me to understand and respect people from other backgrounds	233		86 37%	131 56%	14 6%	2 1%		Mae'r ysgol yn helpu i mi ddeall a pharchu pobl o gefndiroedd eraill.
			36%	56%	7%	1%		
Please answer this question if you are in Year 10 or Year 11: I was given good advice when choosing my courses in key stage 4	102		34 33%	41 40%	19 19%	8 8%		Atebwch y cwestiwn hwn os ydych ym Mlwyddyn 10 neu Flwyddyn 11: Cefais gyngor da wrth ddewis fy nghyrsiau yng nghyfnod allweddol 4.
			29%	51%	16%	5%		
Please answer this question if you are in the sixth form: I was given good advice when choosing my courses in the sixth form	15		4 27%	4 27%	2 13%	5 33%		Atebwch y cwestiwn hwn os ydych chi yn y chweched dosbarth: Cefais gyngor da wrth ddewis fy nghyrsiau yn y chweched dosbarth.
			27%	50%	16%	7%		

Responses to parent questionnaires

denotes the benchmark - this is a total of all responses since September 2010.

	Number of responses / Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree / Cytuno'n gryf	Agree / Cytuno	Disagree / Anghytuno	Strongly disagree / Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know / Ddim yn gwybod	
Overall I am satisfied with the school.	269	117 / 43%	145 / 54%	6 / 2%	1 / 0%	1	Rwy'n fodlon â'r ysgol yn gyffredinol.
		44%	50%	5%	1%		
My child likes this school.	265	133 / 50%	126 / 48%	4 / 2%	2 / 1%	5	Mae fy mhlentyn yn hoffi'r ysgol hon.
		47%	48%	4%	1%		
My child was helped to settle in well when he or she started at the school.	267	135 / 51%	127 / 48%	3 / 1%	2 / 1%	2	Cafodd fy mhlentyn gymorth i ymgartrefu'n dda pan ddechreuodd yn yr ysgol.
		51%	45%	4%	1%		
My child is making good progress at school.	258	118 / 46%	134 / 52%	4 / 2%	2 / 1%	9	Mae fy mhlentyn yn gwneud cynnydd da yn yr ysgol.
		46%	49%	4%	1%		
Pupils behave well in school.	239	42 / 18%	177 / 74%	16 / 7%	4 / 2%	28	Mae disgyblion yn ymddwyn yn dda yn yr ysgol.
		25%	60%	12%	3%		
Teaching is good.	259	103 / 40%	146 / 56%	8 / 3%	2 / 1%	8	Mae'r addysgu yn dda.
		35%	59%	5%	1%		
Staff expect my child to work hard and do his or her best.	265	145 / 55%	117 / 44%	3 / 1%	0 / 0%	5	Mae'r staff yn disgwyl i fy mhlentyn weithio'n galed ac i wneud ei orau.
		52%	46%	2%	1%		
The homework that is given builds well on what my child learns in school.	255	98 / 38%	143 / 56%	12 / 5%	2 / 1%	10	Mae'r gwaith cartref sy'n cael ei roi yn adeiladu'n dda ar yr hyn mae fy mhlentyn yn ei ddysgu yn yr ysgol.
		33%	56%	9%	2%		
Staff treat all children fairly and with respect.	244	97 / 40%	128 / 52%	13 / 5%	6 / 2%	21	Mae'r staff yn trin pob plentyn yn deg a gyda pharch.
		36%	52%	10%	3%		
My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise.	257	101 / 39%	142 / 55%	14 / 5%	0 / 0%	8	Caiff fy mhlentyn ei annog i fod yn iach ac i wneud ymarfer corff yn rheolaidd.
		35%	56%	8%	1%		
My child is safe at school.	261	96 / 37%	162 / 62%	3 / 1%	0 / 0%	9	Mae fy mhlentyn yn ddiogel yn yr ysgol.
		43%	53%	3%	1%		
My child receives appropriate additional support in relation to any particular individual needs'.	223	87 / 39%	122 / 55%	12 / 5%	2 / 1%	32	Mae fy mhlentyn yn cael cymorth ychwanegol priodol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw anghenion unigol penodol.
		37%	52%	8%	2%		
I am kept well informed about my child's progress.	253	82 / 32%	146 / 58%	22 / 9%	3 / 1%	11	Rwy'n cael gwybodaeth gyson am gynnydd fy mhlentyn.
		35%	51%	12%	3%		

	Number of responses Nifer o ymatebion	Strongly Agree Cytuno'n gryf	Agree Cytuno	Disagree Anghytuno	Strongly disagree Anghytuno'n gryf	Don't know Ddim yn gwybod	
I feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.	262	129 49%	126 48%	5 2%	2 1%	8	Rwy'n teimlo'n esmwyth ynglŷn â gofyn cwestiwn i'r ysgol, gwneud awgrymiadau neu nodi problem.
		43%	49%	7%	2%		
I understand the school's procedure for dealing with complaints.	248	79 32%	138 56%	26 10%	5 2%	20	Rwy'n deall trefn yr ysgol ar gyfer delio â chwynion.
		31%	56%	11%	2%		
The school helps my child to become more mature and take on responsibility.	260	100 38%	150 58%	10 4%	0 0%	6	Mae'r ysgol yn helpu fy mhlentyn i ddod yn fwy aeddfed ac i ysgwyddo cyfrifoldeb.
		38%	55%	6%	1%		
My child is well prepared for moving on to the next school or college or work.	207	63 30%	121 58%	21 10%	2 1%	43	Mae fy mhlentyn wedi'i baratoi'n dda ar gyfer symud ymlaen i'r ysgol nesaf neu goleg neu waith.
		32%	55%	10%	2%		
There is a good range of activities including trips or visits.	259	95 37%	138 53%	21 8%	5 2%	10	Mae amrywiaeth dda o weithgareddau, gan gynnwys teithiau neu ymweliadau.
		37%	51%	10%	2%		
The school is well run.	258	104 40%	147 57%	5 2%	2 1%	9	Mae'r ysgol yn cael ei rhedeg yn dda.
		43%	50%	5%	2%		

Appendix 3

The inspection team

Steven William Pringle	Reporting Inspector
Karen Newby-Jones	Team Inspector
Tony Sparks	Team Inspector
Denise Wade	Team Inspector
Hywel Jones	Team Inspector
Catherine Mary Jenkins	Lay Inspector
Stephen Diehl	Peer Inspector
Susan Fowles	Nominee

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

Year groups, the Foundation Phase 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 local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	N	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	3-4	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 Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

Foundation Phase	Nursery, Reception, 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

Glossary of terms

Key stage 3 terms

The core subject indicator (CSI)

Progress in learning through key stage 3 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 7 in the main).

The core subject indicator in key stage 3 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh [1]
- mathematics
- science

By the end of the key stage 3, at the age of 14, pupils are expected to reach level 5 and more able pupils to reach level 6 or above.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 5) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

Key stage 4 and sixth form terms

Core subject indicator (CSI)	This relates to the expected performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
Families of schools	These have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to that of similar schools across Wales. Families include nine other schools with similar proportions of pupils: eligible for free school meals, living in 20% most deprived areas of Wales, having special education needs at school action plus or statemented and with English as an additional language acquisition less than competent.
Level 1	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade D to G.
Level 1 threshold	This represents the equivalent of five GCSEs at grade D to G.
Level 2	This represents the equivalent of a GCSE at grade A* to C.

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[1] This indicator does not include Welsh second language qualifications.

Level 2 threshold including English or Welsh[1] and mathematics	This represents the equivalent of five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English or Welsh[1] and mathematics.
Level 2 threshold	This represents five GCSEs at grade A* to C or their equivalent.
Level 3	This represents the equivalent of an A level at grade A*-E.
Level 3 threshold	This is the equivalent of two A levels at grade A* to E.
Average wider points score	This includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the relevant age, for example at the age of 16 or at the age of 18.
Capped wider points score	This includes the best eight results from all qualifications approved for use in Wales at the age of 16.
Benchmarking groups	Schools are grouped together according to the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in order to compare their performance with similar schools in different indicators.
Modelled outcomes	This is a prediction of a school's mean performance based on the statistical relationship between the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and a particular indicator.