



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

**Y Pant Comprehensive School
Cowbridge Road
Talbot Green
Pontyclun
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF72 8YQ**

Date of inspection: January 2017

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

Summary

Y Pant Comprehensive School has a very beneficial sense of community, where pupils feel secure and valued. As a result, standards of wellbeing are very high and contribute significantly to the excellent progress pupils make in their learning by the end of key stage 4. Senior leaders have developed a strong ethos of improving practice and high expectations. This includes a very good emphasis on professional learning, that results in highly consistent and effective classroom practice. This effective teaching skilfully balances the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills with subject-based knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils consistently achieve very good standards.

The school will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to maintain high standards and quality of provision and address the recommendations.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare a written case study, describing the best practice identified during the inspection.

Recommendations

R1 Increase the opportunity to develop information and communication technology skills across the curriculum

Main findings

1: Standards

Excellent

In lessons and over time, pupils at Y Pant Comprehensive School make very strong progress.

Most pupils recall previous learning very well and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills successfully to new situations. They develop and apply their thinking and problem solving skills extremely well. Many tackle complex concepts and problems presented in lessons confidently.

Nearly all pupils listen attentively and with respect to their teachers and each other. Many pupils are very confident and articulate when speaking. As a result, classroom discussions are often lively and thought provoking. These discussions extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, and challenge their thinking.

Most pupils read well and make effective use of a wide range of texts and sources in support of their learning. They interrogate and analyse texts effectively to identify key information and ideas. Many show a high level understanding of the information or interpretation offered.

Most pupils approach writing activities confidently. Their spelling, punctuation and grammar are appropriate for their age and ability, and when they make mistakes they identify and correct these successfully. Many pupils write very well, using a sophisticated range of vocabulary. They provide well expressed extended responses that are carefully constructed.

Most pupils apply their strong numeracy skills successfully in a range of appropriate contexts. For example, when completing a computer coding task. Many pupils make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning in lessons across the curriculum and are developing their ICT skills well.

As a result of the strong progress made by pupils over time, at the end of key stage 4 performance is consistently above modelled outcomes, and compares very well with that of similar schools. The more able do extremely well. Boys, girls and pupils eligible for free school meals perform better than these groups of pupils in similar schools. Those with additional learning needs make suitable progress against their targets.

At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils either continue their education in a school or further education college.

Overall, pupils in the sixth form progress well in general. Since 2013, there has been an improvement in the average wider points score and percentage of three A*-C grades achieved by sixth form pupils, and in 2016 performance in these indicators is above the average for Wales. The proportion gaining three A*-A grades in 2016 has also improved over the last two years and in 2016 is just above the Welsh average.

However, the proportion of pupils achieving the level 3 threshold remains below the Welsh average.

At key stage 4, nearly all pupils are entered for a Welsh language qualification and performance in both the full and short course has been consistently higher than in similar schools and nationally for the last three years. Many pupils make sound progress in developing their Welsh language skills, they have accurate pronunciation and are confident when speaking during paired activities.

2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
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Standards of wellbeing are very high and contribute significantly to the excellent standards that pupils achieve. Nearly all pupils feel safe in the school. They enjoy being at the school as well as participating in the learning experiences provided.

Many pupils are particularly positive about the impact that the recent move to the new school building is having on pupil behaviour. The behaviour of nearly all pupils in classes, assemblies and around the school is exemplary.

Nearly all pupils show very high levels of respect for other pupils and staff. They behave well as they move between lessons, and during break and lunchtimes. Pupils settle quickly into their lessons, and nearly all remain purposeful when activities change and when they encounter difficulties resolving problems.

Nearly all pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and many show a highly conscientious attitude to their work. This is a particularly strong feature of the school. Nearly all pupils work well in groups and pairs and many make valuable contributions to class discussion. They respond confidently to questions and provide valuable support to others. Most pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning, engage well in all activities and want to achieve as best as they can.

Most pupils show increasing maturity and greater independence in their learning as they progress through school. Many pupils become confident, capable and independent learners.

A majority of pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep healthy through diet and exercise. There are high participation rates in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

3: Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
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Overall, the quality of teaching is excellent.

Almost all teachers skilfully balance the development of subject knowledge and understanding with the development of literacy and numeracy skills. This approach makes a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning and the very high standards that they achieve.

Most teachers form very strong relationships with pupils and create extremely positive environments for learning. Across the school, clear learning objectives and high expectations ensure that nearly all pupils are challenged to achieve the best that they can. Teachers question pupils effectively and this encourages pupils to expand their answers and deepen their understanding successfully. This contributes extensively to developing pupils' ability to learn independently. Many teachers are especially good language models and this supports valuably the development of pupils' oracy skills.

Most teachers plan well for progression in learning and give the opportunity for pupils to develop their reading and written work. They provide stimulating and meaningful activities that build incrementally and adapt their teaching to meet the needs of most pupils.

Nearly all teachers have sound subject knowledge and use a wide range of teaching methods supported by high quality and interesting resources. In most lessons, teachers maintain a strong pace to the learning, give clear instruction and successfully manage the classroom through well-established and clear routines. They provide outstanding support to pupils, challenging them to develop a wide range of vocabulary and complex written answers.

Most teachers offer useful oral feedback to pupils that allows them to develop their learning well. Written comments by teachers are helpful, precise and clearly understood by pupils. Pupils respond well to these comments. Teachers shrewdly provide useful and appropriate opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning and that of others. As a result, feedback to pupils improves the quality of their work effectively.

The curriculum at key stage 3 and key stage 4 provides a broad and balanced range of experiences that meets the needs of pupils and builds well on previous work. There is a wide variety of beneficial vocational and general courses at key stage 4 and post 16.

Additional experiences such as theatre visits and guest speakers enrich and extend the opportunities for learning. The school provides a wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities such as sports, pyrography and animation.

The school has skilfully implemented the Literacy and Numeracy Framework across the curriculum. This is a strong aspect of teachers' planning. Nearly all subjects provide purposeful and worthwhile opportunities to develop pupils' literacy or numeracy. Planning for progression in developing ICT skills across the curriculum is not as thorough as for literacy and numeracy. The school has carefully planned arrangements to support pupils with weak literacy and numeracy skills, which are thoroughly monitored and evaluated.

The school offers worthwhile provision for Welsh. The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of Welsh history and culture.

4: Care, support and guidance	Excellent
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The school has a strong sense of community and pupils feel secure and valued. There is a well-established culture of high expectation in the school. Staff consistently encourage pupils to have positive attitudes to learning and to behave respectfully. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and conducive to learning and wellbeing.

The school provides very strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through the curriculum, the 'thought for the week' programme, educational visits, opportunities to take on responsibilities and a variety of extra-curricular activities and special events. Pupils are successfully nurtured to share important values such as fairness, respect for difference, caring for others and a concern for the environment.

The school has a very effective and robust system to track and monitor the progress of pupils. A comprehensive range of timely information about pupils' progress in learning feeds into this system. Teachers and leaders use the system very well to challenge pupils to attain high standards and to target suitable support and interventions for pupils who need them, for example to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Targeted support and interventions are tightly monitored and adjusted if they are not having the desired impact on pupils' progress. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported well.

The school encourages pupils to make healthy lifestyle choices, through appropriate curriculum activities as well as through the services it provides on site. However, opportunities for physical activity are relatively limited. The school is taking appropriate steps to improve attendance and reduce exclusions for the very few pupils whose behaviour affects their progress. The school works successfully with a range of external organisations to support pupils' wellbeing.

The school listens to pupils very well. The school parliament provides a useful structure for pupils to meet and discuss issues in the school. The school took good account of pupils' views in the design of its new building by, for example, building a roof-top classroom that pupils had seen when they were taken on visits to look at existing newly-built schools. Subject leaders consult pupils about teaching and learning and use the information well to refine their curriculum and schemes of work. The school carries out a wellbeing audit regularly, which gives every pupil a valuable opportunity to share how they feel about themselves, their relationships and their progress in school. This is used well by staff alongside other information they have about their pupils to identify those who may benefit from additional support.

The school communicates well with parents and provides them with regular information about the life and work of the school. Parents receive helpful half-termly reports that show how well their child is progressing in their learning as well as reporting on their attendance, behaviour and effort.

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

5: Leadership and management	Excellent
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Senior leaders have developed a very strong ethos of improving practice and high expectations. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and standards, and has created a unified and mutually supportive staff. Leaders have managed the transition to the new school building very well to ensure that the wellbeing of staff and pupils remains strong. There is a clear shared vision for the school that is focused on continually improving standards.

The roles of the senior leadership team have been revised recently, and these support the school's priorities well. The school has established valuable whole-school strategic lead roles for emerging leaders to develop their leadership skills and to support the senior leadership team with priority areas. Middle leaders understand and carry out their roles effectively. Heads of department work well with senior leaders to develop their areas of responsibility proficiently to raise standards.

The school has well-refined systems of data tracking to monitor progress against its improvement targets, and to plan and hone strategies. Data is also used very effectively to evaluate the performance of teachers. Leaders use these systems well to deal with underperformance sensitively, robustly and successfully.

Management meetings focus appropriately on the analysis of tracking information. This helps to identify pupils who are underperforming and to instigate and monitor interventions that help them to succeed.

The school meets national and local priorities well. It plays a pro-active role in school improvement in the region. School planning and policies pay good attention to developing literacy, numeracy and tackling poverty and disadvantage.

Governors know the school well. They challenge leadership decisions and performance outcomes rigorously to help to set the strategic direction of the school.

Leaders have a very thorough understanding of the school, the school self-evaluation report is detailed and accurate. The development plans and aspirational targets are effective in securing strong sustained performance. Where school leaders identify strengths, there are well-established systems for sharing these so that others can benefit. This supports well the culture of self-improvement throughout the school.

The school has developed highly effective processes to ensure standards and provision are strong. Departmental evaluations provide detailed and honest reflections on the work of the department. These link very well to departmental action plans which are of a very high standard. When senior leaders identify any underperformance in subjects robust actions have had a measurable impact on improving standards.

The school places a strong emphasis on professional learning, and this results in highly consistent and effective classroom practice. The school provides many valuable opportunities for teachers to improve their skills, including participation in research which benefits both their own practice and that of other colleagues. The

school actively supports and collaborates with other schools. This has strengthened the practice of teachers within the school.

There are suitable levels of staffing and leaders deploy staff to make the best use of their expertise. The school bursar works effectively with the headteacher to ensure that school's budget is managed well. Spending is allocated appropriately towards key improvement priorities. The school uses its Pupil Deprivation Grant to fund a range of appropriate strategies to tackle the impact of poverty. The school makes effective use of its tracking systems to measure the impact and value for money of specific activities and interventions.

About the school

Y Pant Comprehensive School is an English-medium 11-18 school maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taf local authority. It serves the areas of Pontyclun, Talbot Green, Dolau, Brynna and Llanharry. There are 1,271 pupils on roll of which 216 are in the sixth form. These numbers are similar to those at the time of the last inspection in 2011.

Around 12% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average in secondary schools of 17.1%. Around 3.5% 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 pupils are fluent in Welsh.

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is around 18%. This is lower than the national figure of 25.1%. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is 1%, this is below the national figure of 2.4%.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2012. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, six assistant headteachers and the bursar.

The school is currently a pioneer school and is working with the Welsh Government and other schools to take forward developments relating to professional learning.

The individual school budget per pupil for Y Pant Comprehensive in 2016-2017 is £3,918 per pupil. The maximum per pupil in the secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is £5,455 and the minimum is £3,918. Y Pant Comprehensive is 16th out of the 16 secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf in terms of its school budget per pupil.

Appendix 1: Summary table of inspection areas

Standards	Excellent
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Excellent
Teaching and learning experiences	Excellent
Care, support and guidance	Excellent
Leadership and management	Excellent

Estyn evaluates a provider's effectiveness using a four-point judgement scale:

Excellent	Strong, sustained performance and practice
Good	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
Adequate, needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory, needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

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January 2017

Appendix 2: Performance data

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Number of pupils on roll	1281
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	11.8
FSM band	2 (10%<FSM<=15%)

Key stage 3

	School				Family average (2016)	Wales average (2016)
	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Number of pupils in Year 9 cohort	214	210	210	206		
Achieving the core subject indicator (CSI) (%)	81.8	84.3	92.9	95.6	92.2	85.9
Benchmark quartile	3	4	1	1		
English						
Number of pupils in cohort	214	210	210	206		
Achieving level 5+ (%)	86.0	88.6	94.8	96.1	94.3	89.2
Benchmark Quartile	3	4	1	1		
Achieving level 6+ (%)	52.8	58.6	67.1	51.5	67.0	56.2
Benchmark Quartile	2	2	1	4		
Welsh first language						
Number of pupils in cohort	.	.	.	.
Achieving level 5+ (%)	.	.	.	.	93.3	92.0
Benchmark Quartile	.	.	.	.
Achieving level 6+ (%)	.	.	.	.	33.3	57.2
Benchmark Quartile	.	.	.	.
Mathematics						
Number of pupils in cohort	214	210	210	206		
Achieving level 5+ (%)	86.9	89.5	93.3	97.1	95.1	90.1
Benchmark Quartile	3	3	2	1		
Achieving level 6+ (%)	61.2	66.7	71.9	77.2	73.1	62.7
Benchmark Quartile	2	2	1	1		
Science						
Number of pupils in cohort	214	210	210	206		
Achieving level 5+ (%)	90.7	91.9	95.7	98.1	96.6	92.8
Benchmark Quartile	3	4	2	2		
Achieving level 6+ (%)	54.7	61.0	66.2	74.8	73.1	62.9
Benchmark Quartile	2	2	2	1		

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.

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6744096 - Y Pant Comprehensive

Number of pupils on roll	1281
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	11.8
FSM band	2 (10%<FSM<=15%)

Key stage 4

	School				Family average (2016)	Wales average (2016)
	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Number of pupils aged 15	207	210	212	200		
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	67.6	75.2	66.0	79.0	69.3	60.2
Benchmark quartile	1	1	2	1		
Achieved the level 2 threshold	92.3	92.9	91.0	96.5	89.9	83.6
Benchmark quartile	1	2	2	1		
Achieved the level 1 threshold	98.6	98.1	98.1	99.5	98.3	95.3
Benchmark quartile	2	2	3	2		
Achieved the core subject indicator (CSI)	67.6	70.0	66.0	77.5	67.3	57.5
Benchmark quartile	1	1	1	1		
Average capped wider points score per pupil	374.9	376.6	369.7	379.6	362.0	344.2
Benchmark quartile	1	1	2	1		
Average capped wider points score plus per pupil	369.3	371.3	363.4	375.8	358.8	340.3
Benchmark quartile	.	.	.	.
Achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-A	30.4	37.6	21.7	29.5	20.2	15.8
Benchmark quartile	.	.	.	.
Achieved A*-C in English	76.3	86.7	78.8	86.0	77.5	69.3
Benchmark quartile	1	1	1	1		
Achieved A*-C in mathematics	72.9	76.2	69.3	80.0	75.1	66.9
Benchmark quartile	1	1	3	1		
Achieved A*-C in science	96.1	90.5	98.1	96.5	90.7	82.3
Benchmark quartile	1	2	1	1		
Number of pupils aged 15 who entered Welsh First Language:	.	.	.	.
Of those who entered Welsh First Language:						
Achieved A*-C in Welsh	.	.	.	.	66.7	75.1
Benchmark quartile	.	.	.	.

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.

For pupils entering Welsh First Language, the best grade of Welsh language and literature is taken. The denominator for this indicator is the number of 15 year olds who entered Welsh First Language, rather than the total number of 15 year olds.

. Denotes the data item is not applicable.

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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.

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6744096 - Y Pant Comprehensive

Number of pupils on roll	1281
Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) - 3 year average	11.8
FSM band	2 (10%<FSM<=15%)

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

	School				Family Average (2016)	Wales Average (2016)
	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Number of pupils aged 15 eligible for free school meals	34	29	21	15		
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	41.2	58.6	23.8	80.0	40.4	35.5
Achieved the level 2 threshold	91.2	86.2	66.7	86.7	73.1	70.9
Achieved the level 1 threshold	94.1	96.6	95.2	93.3	92.3	92.1
Achieved the core subject indicator (CSI)	41.2	55.2	23.8	73.3	38.9	32.7
Average capped wider points score per pupil	341.7	343.9	306.0	346.3	317.6	311.1
Average capped wider points score plus per pupil	333.9	337.1	301.6	343.9	312.5	305.2
Achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-A	17.6	13.8	4.8	13.3	6.7	4.5
Achieved A*-C in English	50.0	75.9	47.6	80.0	51.9	47.1
Achieved A*-C in mathematics	50.0	58.6	28.6	80.0	48.6	43.6
Achieved A*-C in science	91.2	86.2	90.5	86.7	80.3	71.7
Number of pupils aged 15 who entered Welsh First Language:	.	.	.	.
Of those who entered Welsh First Language:						
Achieved A*-C in Welsh	.	.	.	.		50.9

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.

For pupils entering Welsh First Language, the best grade of Welsh language and literature is taken. The denominator for this indicator is the number of 15 year olds who entered Welsh First Language, rather than the total number of 15 year olds.

. Denotes the data item is not applicable.

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6744096 - Y Pant Comprehensive

Number of pupils on roll in sixth form

215

Key stage 5

	School				Family average (2016)	Wales average (2016)
	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Number of pupils aged 17	90	98	96	98		
Average wider points score per pupil	717.5	718.9	807.9	909.8	884.0	824.9
Number of pupils aged 17 entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels:	88	92	85	94		
Of those who entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels:						
Achieved the level 3 threshold	95.5	92.4	94.1	95.7	98.5	98.0
Achieved 3 A*-A at A level or equivalent	14.8	6.5	4.7	7.4	7.4	6.6
Achieved 3 A*-C at A level or equivalent	48.9	55.4	64.7	76.6	71.7	70.9

Includes all qualifications approved for use in Wales.

Includes results for 17-year-old pupils, in maintained schools, achieved during the academic year and any examinations taken at earlier age. Ages at the start of the academic year.

The average wider points score for 17 year olds includes all qualifications approved for pre-18 use in Wales.

The level 3 threshold is based on the number of 17-year-old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A levels.

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Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website at the link below.

<http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/index.html?lang=eng>

Copies of the report

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

We used this inspection to pilot developments to the common inspection framework, the inspection process and the inspection report format. We will review these arrangements and make any changes required before introducing them nationally in September 2017.

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:

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