

ESTYN – Key findings

- Performance in nearly all key stage 4 indicators has shown an upward trend
- The majority of pupils demonstrate consistently good literacy and numeracy skills
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, show respect to each other and to their teachers and are courteous and respectful
- Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and contribute well in lessons
- In lessons and over time, the majority of pupils make at least expected progress and a few make better than expected progress
- Attendance levels over the last four years have improved and have placed the school in the upper 50% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals for three of the last four years
- The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved at a faster rate than that of other pupils in the school
- In many lessons, teachers set clear learning objectives, plan beneficial activities to make sure that pupils make progress in their learning, and meet the needs of learners well
- The headteacher provides firm direction and sets out clear expectations for many areas of the school's work
- The majority of middle leaders are providing effective leadership
- The school development plan is a well-focused document that highlights appropriate key priorities
- The senior leadership has provided useful guidance to middle leaders on how to conduct self-evaluation and improvement planning activities

Comments from the ESTYN Team

- The proportion of pupils achieving at least five A* or A grades in 2015 is better than the average for the family and equal to the average in Wales.
- No pupils, over the last four years, have left the school without a recognised qualification.
- Most pupils feel safe in school and many consider that the school responds well to any incidents of bullying.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes to their work, contribute well in lessons and make good progress.
- Attendance levels over the last four years have improved. For the last three years attendance has been above modelled outcomes. This has placed the school in the upper 50% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals.
- Pupils contribute well to decision-making through the school council, as senior prefects, as form representatives and in year councils, in the Gypsy Traveller Forum and on the governing body. Many pupils contribute to the wellbeing of other pupils as bully buddies, literacy and numeracy mentors and reading buddies. Many participate enthusiastically in community events. Most develop well their social and life skills.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum at key stage 3 and key stage 4 that meets statutory requirements and pupils' needs and interests effectively.

- At key stage 3, strong links with primary schools ensure that the curriculum builds systematically on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills. At key stage 4, there is a wide range of courses that provides nearly all pupils with valuable learning experiences. Comprehensive links with other schools, colleges and work-based providers enable pupils to progress to further study, training or employment.
- Many pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These give pupils valuable opportunities to enhance their learning outside the classroom.
- The school provides beneficial opportunities for pupils to learn about sustainable development and global citizenship through the curriculum as well as through extra-curricular activities.
- The school provides effective levels of care, support and guidance to enable pupils to access the school's provision and to achieve their potential. It has appropriate policies and arrangements to promote the health and wellbeing of pupils. The beneficial and comprehensive support systems have contributed to reducing exclusions and improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The school has appropriate strategies for dealing with pupils' behaviour and deals with any occurrences of poor behaviour well.
- The ethos of inclusivity and nurture is a strength of the school. Staff and pupils recognise and respect the diverse backgrounds of the school community. They work well together to create an environment that encourages positive participation and achievement for every pupil.
- Senior leaders at the school have ensured that self-evaluation and development planning are central elements of the school's strategy for improving its performance.
- The school has a comprehensive range of effective and well established partnerships with a wide range of partners. These links are particularly successful in supporting pupils' wellbeing.
- In partnership with the Torfaen Equal Project, the school provides exceptional support for Gypsy Traveller pupils and their parents. This is having a very positive impact on the attendance and outcomes for pupils from this community. This is a very strong feature of the work of the school.
- The school works well with its partner primary schools to prepare pupils effectively for the transition to secondary school. As a result, pupils settle quickly into Year 7.
- The school works effectively with parents during transition and throughout each key stage.