



Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

A report on
John Summers High School
Chester Road West
Queensferry
Deeside
CH5 1SE

Date of inspection: 25 January 2011

by

Mr Peter Harris

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:

| 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.

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Context

John Summers High School is an 11 - 18 mixed, community school maintained by Flintshire Unitary Authority (UA). The school is situated in a large campus in Queensferry.

There are 405 pupils on roll including 52 students in the sixth form. During the last inspection there were 515 pupils on roll, including 59 students in the sixth form.

There are 29 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff and 23 FTE support members of staff in the school.

The school serves an area that has experienced considerable social and economic deprivation. Over 30% of pupils were eligible for free school meals (FSM). This figure is well above the national average of 17.1 %.

There are 3.4 % of pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 17 % require additional support. The percentage of compulsory age pupils on the SEN register is 38 %, which is above the National Average of 20.9%. In 2010, 32% of 15 year old pupils were on the SEN register.

No pupils speak Welsh as a first language.

A small proportion of pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language (EAL).

Post-16 education in the area is provided by the Deeside Consortium of Schools which consists of three other high schools and the local college of further education.

The senior leadership team (SLT) consists of the headteacher, one deputy headteacher and one assistant headteacher. The deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher were appointed to their present posts after the last inspection.

The School's aim is to 'Achieve Excellence Together'.

The 2010/ 2011 individual school budget per pupil for John Summers High School is £4169 which compares with a maximum of £4429 and a minimum of £3557 for secondary schools in Flintshire. The school has the second highest budget per pupil out of the 12 secondary schools in Flintshire.

Summary

| | |
|---|------------------|
| The school's current performance | Good |
| The school's prospects for improvement | Excellent |

Current performance

This is a good school because:

- R1 standards and wellbeing are good and improving;
- R2 there is an outstandingly strong ethos;
- R3 the provision is very effective in meeting learners' needs; and
- R4 It has particularly effective leadership and management.

Prospects for improvement

The school has excellent prospects for improvement because of the:

- inspired and inspiring leadership of the headteacher;
- exemplary support offered by senior leaders;
- very good team of staff, all of whom are committed to improvement;
- particularly successful track record over the last three years that has seen significant improvements in examination results and behaviour; and
- excellent systems of quality assurance.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the staff and governors of John Summers High School need to:

- R1: continue to improve further the standards and wellbeing of learners;
- R2: improve the quality of feedback to learners on how to improve their work;
- R3: further strengthen Welsh language development and the Welsh dimension of the curriculum; and,
- R4: continue to improve levels of attendance.

These recommendations feature in the school's current development plan.

What happens next?

John Summers High School will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Progress in addressing the recommendations will be published in the school's annual report to parents.

Main findings

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| Key Question 1: How good are outcomes? | Good |
|---|-------------|

Standards: Good

The school's performance is good in key stage 3 and key stage 4. There has been a continuous improvement in nearly all indicators over the last three years in key stage 3.

In 2010, the core subject indicator (CSI)* and the core subjects of English and science were in the top 50% when compared with similar schools nationally in terms of levels of FSM; English was in the top 25%.

The school's performance has been good or better considering that the percentage of pupils in receipt of FSM is well above the Welsh average. In 2010, results in English compared favourably with the family* of schools. Although results in all indicators have improved significantly since 2007, they continue to be below national averages.

Apart from in English, the percentage of pupils achieving (National Curriculum) NC level 6+ in the three core subjects in 2010 was below the family average.

In 2010, pupils' progress from key stage 2 to key stage 3 was in the top 25% of similar schools.

In 2010, the achievement of pupils at NC level 5+ in the non-core subjects was in the top half of similar schools; in art, design technology and in geography they were in the top 25%.

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In key stage 4, pupils' performance in all key indicators has improved from 2007. On the whole, the improvement is slightly greater than the national improvement in these areas. Results show that pupils are making better than expected overall progress.

In 2010, many indicators were in the top 50% when compared with similar schools nationally in terms of levels of FSM; the threshold level 1* was in the top 25% of similar schools.

Over the past two years, all sixth-form students who sat the equivalent of two or more Advanced (A) level examinations gained the level 3* threshold. This is in line with the national average.

In both key stage 3 and key stage 4, girls generally perform better than boys. However, for most indicators of performance, the difference is less than that nationally and for the family of schools. While nearly all pupils show improved results, girls attain higher standards than boys in English.

Specific groups of pupils, including those entitled to free school meals and those with additional learning needs make good progress relative to their ability.

Most pupils who learn English as an additional language make good progress.

At the end of key stage 4 in 2009 and 2010, no pupil left school without a recognised qualification. The proportion of pupils not engaged in education, employment and training on leaving school is above the national average. At the end of Y11, more than 40% of pupils continue their full-time education in school or in further education. At the end of Y13, a significant minority of students who had been following advanced level courses entered higher education. Many students continue in education and training. This is a good feature.

In the lessons observed, most learners made good progress. Overall, pupils' communications' skills, including literacy skills, are good. Pupils' extended writing skills are appropriate. In the sixth form, students' communication skills are good.

Across key stage 3 and key stage 4 many pupils also achieve good standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and numeracy.

In Welsh second language, pupils' achievement in key stage 3 and key stage 4 is adequate. Though the percentages of pupils achieving level 5+ and GCSE at grade C and above have increased since 2006, they still fall behind national and family averages.

Pupils make limited use of incidental Welsh.

*Core subject indicator refers to performance in English or Welsh, mathematics and science, the core subjects of the NC.

L2 threshold represents a volume of learning equivalent to 5 GCSE's at grades A-C.

*L3 threshold represents a volume of learning equivalent to 2 A levels at grades A-E.

*Families of schools have been created to enable schools to compare their performance to similar schools across Wales. Families include schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, living in deprived areas, having special education needs and learning English as an additional language.

*The average wider points' score accommodates all externally approved qualifications.

Wellbeing: Good

Pupils and students show consistently good attitudes to keeping healthy and safe.

Learners feel well cared for, safe and pursue healthy lifestyles both emotionally and physically. Learners' participation in fitness sessions and sporting activities is high. A large number of learners participate actively in a wide range of activities in the local community and beyond.

They relate well to one another, are considerate and courteous, display a high degree of care towards one another and are prepared well for life and work outside school. The social and life skills of many learners are good.

Overall pupils' attendance levels are adequate though within its family of schools over the past three years, the school's attendance levels compare well.

Learners show exemplary levels of behaviour both in class and around the school. No pupil has been permanently excluded within the last two years and fixed-term exclusions have been reduced significantly.

Learners believe that their viewpoint and opinions are valued. The school council groups provided good opportunities for learners to make decisions about life in school.

| | |
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| Key Question 2: How good is provision? | Good |
|---|-------------|

Learning experiences: Good

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets all statutory requirements, including learning pathways (LP) 14-19.

The school is very successful at meeting the diverse needs of a wide range of learners, for example in introducing drama in key stage 3. Furthermore a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, work experience and community placements all help to broaden and enrich the experiences on offer.

The curriculum in key stage 3 builds systematically on the work of the partner primary schools. In key stage 4 and in the sixth-form successful consortium working allows the school to offer students a very wide range of pathways.

In key stage 3 there are thorough arrangements to ensure that pupils develop skills of communication, numeracy and ICT across all subjects. In key stage 4 these skills are embedded into the schemes of work and their provision is monitored very effectively. In the sixth form, students develop these skills as a part of their Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ).

Arrangements for developing the Welsh language, the Welsh dimension of the curriculum and education about sustainable development are appropriate. The provision for the understanding of global issues is consistently good.

Teaching: Good

The quality of teaching is consistently good. It is now a significant strength of the school.

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Teachers plan lessons in detail, providing a wide range of learning activities and explain the purpose of the lessons clearly to learners. Lessons follow a common structure and use good strategies to engage and motivate learners. Teachers have high expectations and provide good support and praise.

Teachers meet the needs of learners successfully. Professional relationships in the classroom are strong. Teachers have good subject knowledge and know their pupils well. They integrate essential skills effectively.

The overall assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers take good account of pupils' prior learning. They assess pupils' understanding effectively during lessons and mark learners' books regularly. However, guidance given on how to improve the quality of their work is insufficiently detailed in key stage 3 and key stage 4.

Parents receive comprehensive annual reports that contain attainment levels, teacher's comments on effort and targets for improvement.

Care, support and guidance: Good

The school provides good care, support and guidance to all learners.

Well-planned strategies successfully reduce barriers to learning and ensure full access to the curriculum. Since the last inspection, the school has been highly effective in promoting good behaviour.

The school's personal and social education (PSE) programme is comprehensive. It makes a valuable contribution to the inclusive ethos of the school. The provision for health and well being is excellent.

Learners have good access to a wide range of support and guidance. The school uses specialist services effectively to support individual learners.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedures for safeguarding.

Provision for learners with additional learning needs (ALN), including for those learners who are more able and talented, is good. The school uses a range of data effectively to gather information about them and plan appropriate provision.

Staff work together to ensure that learners receive appropriate support and activities to meet their needs. Although individual education plans set out appropriate strategies for improvement they do not always contain specific measurable targets.

Learning experiences successfully promote learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learning environment: Good

The school is an inclusive community where learners receive equal access to all activities. This is a very good feature.

There are clear policies and procedures to deal with instances of discrimination and these are supported very well by a highly effective PSE programme of study. Learners have very positive attitudes to diversity.

The school offers equal access to the curriculum and successfully challenges stereotypical attitudes, choices, expectations and achievements.

Full use is made of relevant and available resources in the community to supplement and enrich the curriculum. Overall, the accommodation is good and well maintained. However, the gymnasium is insufficient for the school's needs.

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? | Good |
|--|-------------|

Leadership: Good

The vision and strategic direction provided by the headteacher are excellent. Senior leaders provide exemplary support and together they have made a significant contribution to the improved standards. They have a positive impact on the ethos of the school.

Very good teamwork has ensured a strong commitment to school improvement from all staff. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities; they have high expectations of themselves and their pupils and students. Communication is clear and there are well-defined lines of accountability.

The governing body is well informed and acts as an effective critical friend. Partnership with the local authority is productive.

The school meets current Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and local priorities, such as collaborative working to deliver LP 14-19 and transition from the primary school.

Improving quality: Excellent

Self-evaluation is highly effective at whole school and departmental levels. Staff and governors are fully involved in the process. It has made a significant contribution to the planning and securing of improvement since the last inspection.

Assessment data are carefully analysed to measure trends. These are used well to identify how learners are doing and to set further targets. Robust quality assurance that includes classroom observation is used to evaluate teaching and learning. Governors make very good use of these regular reports.

Learners, parents and carers are given opportunity to offer their views on a range of issues which impact on learning and teaching. These are taken into account when forming evaluative judgements.

The school development plan makes very good use of the outcomes of self-evaluation to plan for the future. It identifies clear priorities and targets for improvement together with appropriate resources, time-scales and designated responsibilities for the monitoring and review of outcomes.

The school diagnoses and meets staff training needs in an effective way. There is a beneficial culture of collaboration between teachers and a professional learning community is beginning to develop.

The school has made very good progress in addressing nearly all of the key issues for action outlined in the previous inspection report. The improvement in teaching and pupil behaviour has been excellent.

Partnership working: Good

The school has developed strong strategic partnerships with consortia of other secondary schools and the local college of further education. These make a significant contribution to the range and quality of education provided at John Summers High School.

The management of these partnerships is very effective. The partners trust each other and pool resources and share expertise. Furthermore the effectiveness of the shared provision is ensured by rigorous quality assurance arrangements. The school makes strenuous and largely successful efforts to work in partnership with parents and carers.

The school has established good curricular links with its local primary schools and these make an important contribution to ensuring continuity and progression between key stage 2 and key stage 3. There are good links with the community, local businesses and teacher training providers.

Resource management: Good

The school manages its resources successfully with procedures in place to ensure that they are allocated to meet identified priorities within the school development plan. Expenditure is monitored regularly. This ensures that sufficient funding is available to meet the need of departments and whole school priorities.

Staff are deployed effectively in order to make good use of their time, expertise and experience to support learning.

There are systematic and accurate budgeting arrangements within the school. These include appropriate arrangements for contingencies which are monitored carefully, and approved by the governing body in consultation with the SLT. Departmental budgets are allocated through a transparent formula.

Comprehensive arrangements ensure the school meets statutory requirements relating to the national agreement on 'Raising Standards and Tackling Workload' balance.

As a result of the improved standards, a strong focus on collaboration to increase the range of courses and qualifications at key stage 4 and at 16+, and careful management of resources, inspectors judged the school to be providing good value for money.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder satisfaction report

Responses to parent questionnaires

Fifty-one parent questionnaires were completed, representing a moderate proportion of the total number of parents. Overall, they expressed positive views about the school. Nearly all say that the school expects their children to work hard and to do their best. Nearly all parents are satisfied with the school and say their children like being there. Most feel that their children are safe at school and that their children are making good progress, the teaching is good and that their children are well prepared for moving on to college or work. Most say that the school is well run and find it approachable if they have any questions or concerns. Many feel they are kept well informed about their children's progress.

Responses to learner questionnaires

Questionnaires were completed by around 16% of the pupils, who were selected at random. All pupils feel safe in school. All feel they are doing well in school, that there are enough resources to enable them to learn well and they have many opportunities to get regular exercise. They say that teaching is good, and that they are encouraged to do things for themselves and to take on responsibility. All feel the school helps them to be ready for the next stage of education, training or work. Many feel that the school deals well with bullying and that they have someone to talk to if they are worried. Many also say that they are treated with respect, and that they are helped to understand and respect people from different backgrounds. A majority of pupils feels that the school listens to their views and think behaviour is good.

Appendix 2

The inspection team

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Mr Peter Harris | Reporting Inspector |
| Mr David Hughes | Team Inspector |
| Mr Glyn Griffiths | Team Inspector |
| Mr Gwynoro Jones | Lay Inspector |
| Mr Peter Rees | Peer Inspector |
| Paula Stanford | School Nominee |

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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 |