



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

A report on

**Westbourne School
4 Hickman Road
Penarth
CF64 2AJ**

Date of inspection: March 2018

by

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

About Westbourne School

Westbourne School is a co-educational independent school for pupils from 3 to 18 years of age. The school is situated in the town of Penarth in the Vale of Glamorgan. It was founded in 1896 and, since 2006, the proprietor has been Montague Place Limited.

The school is organised into two sections: the nursery and preparatory school, for nursery pupils through to Year 5, and the senior school for pupils in Year 6 through to Year 13. There are currently 172 pupils on roll. There are 50 pupils in the preparatory school and 122 in the senior school.

The majority of pupils live in Penarth, Cardiff and the surrounding areas of South Wales. Increasingly, the school is attracting students from around the world because of its International Baccalaureate Organisation World School status.

About 20% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Around 25% of pupils receive support in learning English as an additional language. The school does not aim to make pupils bilingual in English and Welsh. A few pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs.

Pupils may join the school at any stage depending on the availability of spaces. Prior to entry, prospective pupils spend two to five days visiting the school and are assessed on their literacy and numeracy skills. Almost all pupils in the preparatory school transfer to the senior school. The school requires pupils who wish to join the sixth form to have five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C or to have successfully completed the school's own pre-International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme course.

The principal was appointed in November 2017 and the school was last inspected in 2012. The head of nursery and head of the preparatory school both began their roles in September 2017.

The school describes its principal aim as 'Academic excellence in a global society; with progress for all.'

Summary

The standards achieved by pupils at Westbourne School are extremely high and pupils with English as an additional language make particularly good progress. In the sixth form, all pupils study the International Baccalaureate Diploma and results are extremely strong when compared to those of other schools internationally.

Pupils are well-motivated, enthusiastic learners who engage eagerly with the wide range of opportunities the school provides. Pupils feel that the school values their contributions and provides a safe environment where 'you can be unique'.

Where teaching is most effective, teachers ensure that their lessons inspire all pupils and encourage them to think and to explore ideas for themselves. Staff know the pupils well and respond expertly to their social and emotional needs.

The proprietor and the school's senior leadership team have a strong, clear vision that they share exceptionally well.

The school meets all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

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

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school meets the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

R1 Share best practice in teaching and assessment across the school

R2 Further strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning processes

What happens next

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Estyn will invite the school to prepare case studies on its work in relation to the support provided to pupils with English as an additional language and the approach to succession planning taken by the proprietor to ensure a smooth transition in the change to the schools senior leadership, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Standards: Excellent

The standards achieved by pupils at Westbourne School are extremely high.

In the nursery and preparatory school, pupils enter with a wide range of abilities and in the senior school, around half of pupils speak English as an additional language. As they progress through the school, most pupils make at least strong progress in developing their mathematical and English skills. In addition, most pupils develop an extremely secure understanding of subject knowledge and apply this to new contexts exceptionally well. Nearly all pupils with English as an additional language make particularly strong progress in developing both their English skills and subject knowledge.

Across the school, nearly all pupils develop their oracy skills to a very high standard. They are confident and articulate speakers and most are considerate listeners. In the preparatory school, for example, pupils in Year 4 predict a possible storyline using a range of expressive and imaginative language. Most senior school pupils answer questions thoughtfully using a broad range of subject specific vocabulary. For example, pupils in the sixth form clearly explain why the author has used specific vocabulary to cause tension and apprehension when analysing 'A View from the Bridge'. The development of oracy skills by pupils who have English as an additional language is particularly successful and many of these pupils are eager to share their views with their peers.

Most pupils read aloud confidently and with expression. As they move through the school, nearly all pupils use higher order reading skills to access texts that are more complex. They confidently skim and scan to extract relevant information from a range of sources accurately.

Most pupils make strong progress in developing their writing skills and take pride in the presentation of their work. By Year 6, most pupils write confidently for a range of purposes and different audiences, for example, writing imaginative accounts of being a captured animal. Pupils that are more able use a wide range of expressive vocabulary to engage the reader effectively. Most pupils in the senior school write accurately and at length with a clear sense of audience and purpose. Nearly all senior pupils apply their literacy skills well across the curriculum. For example, in history, Year 9 pupils evaluate the role of propaganda in Nazi Germany successfully.

Most pupils develop extremely strong numeracy skills during their mathematics lessons. For example, in Year 3, pupils measure their hands and feet accurately using cm and mm. Pupils in Year 6 calculate missing angles in triangles, use negative numbers to record temperatures and calculate the area of triangles correctly. As they progress through the senior school, pupils increasingly transfer the skills that they have learnt in their mathematics lessons to a range of contexts effectively. In Year 11 science, pupils use their number and measuring skills effectively in experiments to explore the impact of a variety of solutions on rates of osmosis and, in Year 12, pupils use statistical techniques when investigating a river's flow accurately.

Many pupils develop their thinking skills particularly well. For example, in the preparatory school, pupils consider whether Jesus was scared on the cross. In the senior school, pupils that are more able are particularly skilful at problem solving. These pupils systematically explore unfamiliar contexts, make connections with their previous learning and identify knowledge gaps, and choose suitable techniques to hypothesise and predict.

Pupils' performance at the end of key stage 4 is of an extremely high standard. Over the last three years, nearly all pupils achieved the level 2 threshold (equivalent to five GCSEs at grade A* to C) and the level 2 threshold including English and mathematics. Performance in the core subjects has greatly exceeded national averages in each of the last three years. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*/A at GCSE is also extremely high. In 2017, around half of pupils achieved this indicator, which is well above the averages for independent and maintained schools in Wales.

For the last three years, no pupil has left the school without a recognised qualification. At the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils remain in full-time education.

In the sixth form, pupils' performance in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is particularly strong when compared with that in other schools internationally. In each of the last three years, the average points score per pupil and most subject averages exceeded the worldwide average. In 2017, all pupils passed the Diploma. Of these pupils 80% achieved above the world average of 30 points while 13% achieved more than 40 points.

At the end of Year 13, in 2017, all pupils progressed to higher education.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning: Excellent

Throughout the school, nearly all pupils have extremely high levels of wellbeing and positive attitudes to their learning.

Almost all pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are extremely welcoming to visitors and are keen to share their pride in their school. Nearly all pupils are polite, well-mannered and caring, and treat their peers and adults with respect.

Almost all pupils are well-motivated, enthusiastic learners who respond positively in lessons. They are competent and eager to apply their knowledge to different contexts and problems such as Year 7 pupils writing 'top tips' to help others to design a website. Most pupils sustain their concentration well during lessons and work effectively both independently and in small groups. They engage enthusiastically in a range of tasks such as pupils in the nursery who are eager to count the mermaids in the pictures while listening attentively to the Peter Pan story.

Across the school, most pupils feel safe, secure and well cared for. They know who to go to for help if they are worried or upset. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through the importance of eating a healthy balanced diet and taking regular exercise. For example, they embrace the school's 'wellness week' and participate with great enthusiasm in activities such as yoga, 'rainbow walks' and creative colouring. This helps pupils to improve their mental and physical wellbeing.

Many pupils attend the school's extra-curricular clubs to extend their knowledge and interests. For example, they enjoy 'bushcraft' where they practise their survival skills, or editing the school's newsletters as part of the young journalists club. Many clubs and activities are for pupils across the age groups. This fosters extremely positive working relationships across the school and further strengthens the school's exceptionally caring and supportive community.

Most pupils take on leadership roles and responsibilities eagerly. They enjoy taking part regularly in assemblies where they educate their peers on important topics such as how to be digitally safe and to celebrate different cultures and beliefs. Members of the school council are proud of their positions and take their responsibilities seriously. They are listened to and have influenced changes positively both within the school and in the local and wider community. This includes purchasing new resources such as nets for the basketball posts and organising a Halloween party to raise money for charity.

Sixth form pupils complete a series of challenges for the 'Creativity, activity, service' programme of the International Baccalaureate. This develops their commitment and perseverance particularly well. For example, working individually or in collaboration with others, pupils have organised visits to a local hospital, looked after endangered species at an aquarium and built a Christmas tree with re-cycled materials. These experiences strengthen and extend pupils' learning and life skills considerably.

Teaching and learning experiences: Excellent

The school provides a curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

In the nursery and preparatory school, teachers plan an exciting and engaging curriculum that builds progressively on pupils' skill development and knowledge. At GCSE, the school offers pupils a broad range of subject choices including Latin and computing. All sixth form pupils study for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. The school offers these pupils opportunities to study an extensive range of subjects, for example Vietnamese to meet individual first language needs and subjects such as visual arts. In addition, within this qualification, the school's teaching of 'theory of knowledge' enhances pupils' higher order and critical thinking skills. This enables them to reflect on how they learn, and to make links between academic disciplines. The school provides an effective tailored curriculum for pupils with English as an additional language.

The school provides pupils of all ages with an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities that enhance the curriculum effectively and match pupils' interests well. For example, younger pupils have the opportunity to take part in activities such as dodgeball and nature club, whilst older pupils can attend chess, Chinese and basketball. In addition, the school offers pupils a comprehensive annual programme of visits to places of interest to support their learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 visit The Egyptian Centre in Swansea whilst older pupils visit Bletchley Park to investigate patterns and codes.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Where teaching is most effective, teachers use highly engaging resources and teaching methods. They ensure that their

lessons inspire all learners and encourage pupils to think and to explore ideas for themselves. Nearly all teachers have very positive and respectful working relationships with pupils. They know the pupils well and respond expertly to their social and emotional needs. This includes planning for the diverse language needs of pupils.

Most teachers engage pupils well in their learning and provide them with stimulating activities. They develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding progressively as they move through the school. They use a wide range of different teaching methods to make their lessons interesting, for example, motivating video clips to introduce a new topic. Many teachers use high quality questioning skills to probe pupils' understanding and to move their learning forward successfully. However, in a few lessons teachers do not always provide pupils with activities that suit their ability well enough.

Most teachers provide pupils with useful oral feedback during lessons on what they have done well and how they can improve their work further. However, the quality of teachers' written feedback is more variable. Where this feedback is most effective it clearly shows pupils how they can improve their work. These teachers provide opportunities for pupils to respond to their comments. They ensure that pupils amend their work or complete additional tasks to extend their learning further.

Care, support and guidance: Excellent

The school provides high level care support and guidance for its pupils. The exceptional individualised help that pupils receive from staff makes a significant contribution to their outstanding performance and wellbeing.

Pupils' personal development is promoted extremely effectively through the school's well-planned personal and social education programme up until Year 11, then through the International Baccalaureate programme in Years 12 and 13. These programmes provide a comprehensive range of age-appropriate topics, including ethical issues and opportunities to reflect on religious and non-religious views about life's important questions.

The school has valuable partnerships with outside agencies such as the emergency services who visit the school to tell pupils about their work. As pupils progress through the nursery and preparatory school, there are increased opportunities to develop their knowledge about healthy lifestyles. This includes, understanding the importance of exercise and personal safety.

The senior school's personal and social education programme prepares pupils well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. For example, as well as a suitable emphasis on learning about age-appropriate healthy lifestyle themes, there is a strong focus on citizen-related topics such as human rights, cultural diversity and justice, law and order. The International Baccalaureate programme in the sixth form makes an exceptional contribution to developing pupils' life skills and their understanding of their responsibilities as global citizens.

The school provides pupils with additional valuable opportunities to prepare them to become active citizens, and to influence the work of the school. For example,

members of the school council work together enthusiastically to respond to other pupils' suggestions for improving the school. They have been successful in influencing recent changes such as the introduction of new playground equipment in the nursery and preparatory school, and water fountains in the senior school.

The school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs is highly effective. In particular, the personalised and sensitive support provided by staff helps pupils to integrate well into school life and achieve strong outcomes. This support also includes, where appropriate, working with outside partners, and flexible extra provision for pupils learning English as an additional language.

Across the school, staff make beneficial use of the school's robust monitoring, tracking and reporting system to help pupils to improve and make progress. Half-termly progress reports are reviewed routinely with pupils and shared with parents and carers. This approach strengthens partnership working with the school and helps parents to support their child's learning.

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

Leadership and management: Excellent

The proprietor and the school's senior leadership team have a clear vision, which they share exceptionally well across the school and its wider community. All leaders want all pupils to achieve academic excellence. They aim to create a family ethos that supports British and Welsh culture whilst valuing strongly the influence and inclusion of international pupils. The school is highly successful in achieving these aims.

Senior leaders work very well at a strategic level. For example, they recognise the potential of staff and provide beneficial opportunities for them to learn about all aspects of the school's work. This forward thinking and planning, coupled with the support from established leaders, has enabled staff to move seamlessly into new leadership positions and build on the school's existing strengths. Teachers also benefit from this supportive model. The principal is an exceptionally effective role model for teaching and learning and, along with his senior staff, he has embedded a culture where teachers talk openly and confidently about their practice. For example, after lesson observations and feedback by senior staff, all teachers have the opportunity to take part in a series of peer observations. This improves the opportunities for teachers to learn from each other and to have a professional dialogue around effective teaching and feedback methods.

The proprietor hosts an off-site strategic planning week on an annual basis. This provides senior leaders and members of the administration team with a highly beneficial opportunity to work together to agree future priorities in terms of strategy, curriculum and capital spend. For example, leaders debate strenuously which projects will add the most benefit to pupils' standards and wellbeing.

Through activities such as rigorous book scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks, the principal and his deputies have an accurate understanding of standards within the school. Leaders share outcomes from these activities usefully with all staff

and use the information well to celebrate success and plan for future developments. However, the self-evaluation report does not fully reflect this beneficial understanding. The school improvement plan identifies suitable actions but timescales for completion are not always clear.

Communication across all areas of the school is a strength. For example, nearly all meetings result in agreed actions within set timeframes. Leaders have high expectations of staff in terms of achieving high quality outcomes for the pupils in their care and their contribution to the wider work of the school. All staff know their responsibilities well and carry out their roles diligently. Leaders use the school's performance management system effectively to highlight strengths and areas for development in the work of individual members of staff.

Leaders make very good use of the expertise of their staff and deploy them exceptionally well to meet the needs of pupils. For example, the strategy of using the same teacher to teach specific subjects across Years 4, 5 and 6 has improved transition for pupils and their standards. Leaders effectively support new staff, for example, they provided time for a new teacher to work with the outgoing post holder to ensure consistency of approach for pupils learning English as an additional language.

The school provides a suitable range of resources to support pupils' learning. The recent enhancement of the information and communication technology hardware has supported the improvement in pupils' skills well. The investment in the outdoor areas of the preparatory school has improved pupils' opportunities to use the outdoor space regularly. This has given pupils greater opportunities to develop their physical and creative skills.

The school complies with all of the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Copies of the report

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

Under the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003, the school must provide copies of the report to all parents of the school. Where a pupil is subject to placement by a local authority, a copy of the report should be sent by the school to each relevant authority.

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 and needs improvement	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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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