

For Information

A. Estyn Inspections Summary
(Published since your update on 18 January 2018)

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School

Bishopston Comprehensive School

February 2018

Link to full report <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Bishopston%20Comprehensive%20School.pdf>

New Inspection Arrangements:

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

Useful Information / Background Reading

1. Closing the attainment gap: 15 key lessons learned in the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) first 6 years

The EEF is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement.

The following summarises 15 key lessons the EEF has learned about 'what works' to improve teaching and learning; and then scaling that evidence to create the maximum possible benefit for children and young people, particularly those facing disadvantage.

Eligibility for free school meals (FSM) is used as the proxy measure of economic disadvantage.

1. Early Years education has huge promise in preventing the attainment gap becoming entrenched before children start school. However, it has not yet yielded as much as it should. Professional support and training for early years workers is key. Areas with potential include communication and language approaches; self-regulation strategies; and parental involvement.
2. What happens in the classroom makes the biggest difference - improving teaching quality generally leads to greater improvements at lower cost than structural changes. There is particularly good evidence around the potential impact of teacher professional development; but the supply of high quality training is limited.
3. Targeted small group and one-to-one interventions have the potential for the largest immediate impact on attainment. Some whole class and whole-school interventions have shown promise but may take longer to show results.
4. The transition between phases of education – notably early years to primary, and primary to secondary – is a risk-point for vulnerable learners. Schools need to diagnose pupils' needs as soon as possible to put in place effective support to help those falling behind to catch up.
5. The challenge of improving post-16 attainment is a particular issue for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. A majority of students eligible for free school meals have not achieved a good standard in English and mathematics by age 19. More evidence is needed to identify the best ways to improve outcomes for these learners.

6. Pupil Premium funding is a valuable focus to support senior leaders in raising the attainment of disadvantaged young people. But it is vital that schools (as well as early years and post-16 settings) consider how all their resources can be used to achieve this goal. Good teaching for all pupils has a particular benefit for disadvantaged pupils.

7. There is a strong appetite for educators to engage with and use evidence. Up to two-thirds of senior leaders use the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit to make decisions, while more than 10,000 schools in England have signed up to take part in one of the EEF's trials so far.

8. Robust and independent evaluation of high potential programmes is not only possible, but essential. Evidence is a crucial tool to inform senior leaders' decision-making and help them identify 'best bets' for spending. Time and money is too scarce to stick with approaches and programmes which do not make a real difference. The effective use of evidence means strategically abandoning ineffective approaches, as well as implementing new ones with positive evidence behind them.

9. We know enough in key areas of teaching and learning to start making a positive difference now. While generating new evidence remains essential, in areas such as literacy there is no excuse for not deploying the existing, extensive evidence to support teaching practice. The growing bank of EEF guidance reports gives teachers the best available evidence in a range of key areas.

10. Teaching assistants can be deployed more effectively. Though previous research had suggested that teaching assistants can have a negative impact on children's learning, EEF trials have shown how, when properly trained and supported, teaching assistants working in structured ways with small groups can boost pupils' progress.

11. How a project is implemented is vital and arguably as important as its content. Successful projects have clarity around their structure, objectives and target group, with high-quality training and materials that allow for adaptation and strong implementation. The EEF's forthcoming guidance report, *A School's Guide to Implementation*, draws out what we have learnt over the last six years.

12. Most programmes are no better than what schools are already doing: around 1-in-4 EEF trials show enough promise for us to re-invest in. Teachers and decision-makers are right to be discerning about where they spend their limited funds.

13. Catch up is difficult: we should aim to get it right first time round for all children. The EEF evaluated over 20 catch-up programmes that aimed to support struggling readers at the transition from primary to secondary school. Though some were shown to be effective in boosting attainment, no single programme delivered enough to close the gap.

14. Essential life skills (or 'character') are important in determining life chances and can be measured in a robust and comparable way. Much less is known, however, about how these skills can be developed and whether they lead to increased academic attainment. This is a major focus of work for the EEF.

15. Sharing effective practice between schools – and building capacity and effective mechanisms for doing so – is key to closing the gap. Teachers and school leaders now have access to a significant and growing body of academic research with enormous potential to improve pupil attainment and save schools money. Research on its own is not enough; applying the findings to the classroom is a real challenge.

The full report is available [here](#).

2. Counter Terrorism in Schools

In July 2017 Kirsty Williams, Cabinet Secretary for Education wrote to all Cabinet Members with responsibility for Education in Wales to draw attention to Counter Terrorism in Schools. The letter raised awareness to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 which places a responsibility on schools to:

'have due regard, in the exercise of their functions, to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and challenge extremist ideas that support or are shared by terrorist groups'

The UK Government published the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales for specified bodies including education providers. The link to this document is below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

In support, the Welsh Government has:

- published an updated version of the guidance document 'Respect and Resilience – developing community cohesion' <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/110209respecten.pdf> which includes an associated self-assessment toolkit. The guidance ensures that schools in Wales have information to help them meet the legal requirements of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015,
- Developed the Keeping Learners Safe Guidance, <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe-en.pdf>

the Welsh Government guidance on the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002,

- Developed the HWB website – digital learning for Wales, to include an e-safety zone which contains resources, links, advice and support for children young people, parents/carers and educational professionals and promotes safe responsible use of the internet by all,
- Included a challenging extremism module through Global Citizenship Challenge in the Welsh Baccalaureate,
- Been working with colleagues from the South West Grid for Learning to develop bilingual resources for teachers to provide lessons around online safety.

Although at this point in time, there is no intelligence to suggest schools are at greater risk, it is important to stress that there is a need for schools to review their policies and procedures to ensure these are sufficiently robust to deal with such an incident.

Guidance was issued to schools previously advising a review of all safeguarding policies to include a specific paragraph reflecting the training and the need to consider extremism and radicalisation alongside other safeguarding responsibilities.

It is pleasing to note that since 2014, the Home Office accredited training WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness on Prevent) has been delivered to 80 Swansea schools. This training has been delivered by our Channel Partnership Chair and Lead Officer for PREVENT – Paul Thomas who can provide advice, guidance and support.

Swansea schools have a range of site specific emergency plans, developed under the direction of our Emergency Management and Health and Safety Service. These include security, bomb threat and effective “lock down” protocols, which have been, both exercised and activated successfully. If you require further information in relation to Counter Terrorism please contact:

emergency.management@swansea.gov.uk

Additionally all school trips and visits, are authorised via the “Evolve System” which includes the scrutiny of all risk assessments, emergency arrangements, supervision and security provisions to ensure they are suitable and sufficient. These are signed off by the Health and Safety Officers, who also liaise with the Emergency Management Officers if required, before the event proceeds. If you have any concern in relation to Health and Safety for school trips and visits please contact Nicole Overton on 07796 275028 or via Nicole.Overton@swansea.gov.uk

Support is also offered for schools including briefings for parents and staff to reassure them of the arrangements in-place to protect children and young people. Specific guidance in relation to crowded places, threat levels and signposting to “Stay Safe” awareness training has been provided to every school within the City and County of Swansea.

The above range of support mechanisms are in place to help schools manage potential incidents of counter-terrorism in schools. As good practice, the Local Authority is calling on each Swansea school to appoint a governor with responsibility for the broader challenge of safeguarding within the school. Whilst this is not a mandatory role, it is recommended good practice. Your governing body may consider that the designated Child Protection Governor can also take on this broader role. However, given the serious nature of these issues and the broader context to elements of safeguarding your governing body may take a decision to appoint a different governor to have this overall responsibility. Whichever way your governing body plans to address these issues will be for individual governing bodies to decide, however, I cannot stress enough the importance of all governing bodies considering these options and taking an appropriate decision in response to this request.

If you would like further information on school governance, as always the School and Governor Support Unit will be able to provide advice and guidance and can be contacted on 01792 636550. Alternatively, if you would like to speak to Kathryn Thomas about this letter please do not hesitate to get back to her either by email or by telephone