

## **Post Inspection Parents Meeting – Q&A**

**3 sessions held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

### **Q - How do Improvements in school results compare with other schools performance in 2017 summer exams?**

A – At present all data is provisional, however early indications would suggest that the school's performance has improved whilst the majority of schools throughout Wales have seen a fall in a number of Key Indicators.

Level 2+ : Nationally, early indications are an 8% fall across Wales, Bedwas increase of 4% on 2016  
English Level 2: Nationally, early indications are a 17% fall across Wales, Bedwas an increase of 12% on 2016.

Maths Level 2: Nationally, early indications a 7% fall across Wales, Bedwas a similar fall of 8% on 2016.

These results will not be verified until late October or early November with the publication of Welsh Government Performance Data. This information will be relayed to all parents at this time.

### **Q - Early entry, does this affect pupils' outcomes?**

A – In our opinion, early entry allows pupils to experience GCSE, and as a result have access to a range of information identifying their areas for improvement. This is of benefit to all students and we would be against the present policy in England where all subjects are examined once, at the end of year 11. Our students benefit from early entry by being able to stagger the number of entries within any given exam period. Regardless of outcome, all Bedwas students are challenged following the results. Students with A\*/A grades can follow additional GCSEs and advanced courses. Those attaining grades B/C are included in one class to strive to improve their grades further. All students still to achieve a grade C or above can be grouped into appropriate sets and placed with teachers experienced at ensuring they attain the highest possible grades.

The Welsh Government could eliminate their concern over early entry by removing any students in Year 10 from any data published. It is our belief that students should be allowed to attempt the exams as many times as possible, in order to have the greatest opportunity of success.

### **Q - Changes in examination boards, will this have an impact at Bedwas?**

A - Welsh schools including Bedwas have been following WJEC specifications for a number of years. We do not expect this to have any negative impact.

### **Q -Estyn Recommendations – how many are there?**

A – The report has five recommendations;

1. Raise standards in KS4
2. Improve the quality of Teaching and Assessment
3. Improve the quality and impact of Leadership at all levels
4. Improve the rigour and accuracy of Self-Evaluation and the precision of Improvement Planning at all levels
5. Provide robust financial management to eliminate the budget deficit

### **Q – I am devastated that it appears that parents' views were ignored from inspection meetings and questionnaires. Report appears to have ignored positive comments made. In respect of the Inspection Parents Evening held, my view was that inspectors side-lined some parents from making such positive comments.**

A - We would like to thank the parents for their contributions leading up to inspection and the support we have received before, during and since the inspection. Unfortunately, the way in which information from questionnaires and meetings with parents and students was used is something beyond the control of the school.

### **Q - Are Estyn subject to any regulation or under any scrutiny?**

A - Not that the school is aware of.

**Q - In 3 years that my son has been here I have contacted school several times and feel that the Estyn Report does not reflect how supportive I know the school to be. How are you going to combat negative comments from the community? For example pupils have been overheard saying 'we go to the worst school in Caerphilly'?**

A - Thank you for your support. The label of 'Special Measures', especially when a school is named and shamed in this way, is a difficult concept to explain to the community. We have deliberately scheduled these meetings to inform parents of the contents of the Estyn report. We intend to circulate regular newsletters and updates of our progress. In addition, school assemblies will be used on a regular basis to inform pupils of the progress that the school is making.

We would also urge you to contact the school should there be any concerns and spread the positive messages of this evening's presentation to the community.

**Q - Will the cabinet member for Caerphilly be writing to the Welsh Government regarding the schools' Estyn experience, particularly about the timing of the inspection and the release of the report?**

A – The school is unable to answer this question, however your comment will be passed on to her.

**Q - Comments in the report appear to be mainly aimed at Senior Management, what action is being taken by the school and who is going to be monitoring that this improvement is being made? Are any additional staff being put in place to ensure improvement is sustained?**

A - The Local Authority is monitoring the school very closely. In addition, this school has a Challenge Advisor from EAS who will be supporting the Senior Leadership Team throughout the monitoring process by Estyn. We have appointed additional staff from within the school to an Extended Leadership Team with additional training and development being provided to these staff as appropriate.

**Q - In respect of the school plan for improvements, how confident are you of meeting this plan? Who is going to make sure that this school/SLT meets plan?**

A - The Post Inspection Action Plan will be quality assured by the Local Authority and our consortia, EAS. Regular meetings will be held at least every half term to establish the progress we are making against this plan. Termly inspections will also be held with Estyn, where the plan will be reviewed in detail. We will make every effort to meet the success criteria in all areas of the plan to ensure the best possible education for the students at Bedwas and to ensure that we are removed from Special Measures at the earliest opportunity.

**Q - School will be expected to provide additional information and undertake additional reporting, how will this affect pupils?**

A - Reports for Estyn will be collated by the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team. It will have no impact on lessons or the teaching of students in the school.

**Q - In respect of recommendations, when will parents be updated with progress and action? Will action plan be available to parents?**

A - The school plans to update parents with progress half termly throughout the year. This will be done by Newsletter, text, e-mail. Senior staff will be available to discuss progress at all parental consultations this year. The Post Inspection Action Plan will be available once Estyn has approved it which is expected to be mid-October.

**Q - What is school currently doing about standards of teaching to improve performance and attainment? Concern that lessons were deemed adequate during Inspection week, adequate is not good enough.**

A - The school has extensive self-evaluation calendar that has been operating for a number of years. The monitoring of lessons is carried out not only by SLT and Middle Leaders, but also calibrated by our Challenge Advisor, EAS and other professionals. We feel our processes and judgements are accurate and that the examination success of 2016/17 validates our previous judgements. Estyn do

not report on the outcome of individual lessons therefore it is difficult for us to calibrate their comments against our own Self-Evaluation judgements.

However, we agree adequate is not good enough and strive to make 'Good' a minimum requirement for all lessons. Our monitoring and Self-Evaluation activities this year will have calibration from a wide range of professionals from outside the school. In addition the sharing of best practice within the school will continue with Teaching and Learning forming the basis of most INSET activities during the year.

**Q – My son will be doing his GCSE's this year, I feel that the school is a positive one but very concerned about Science going into Year 11. What is the school doing to support this?**

A - We share your concerns with regard to Science and are acutely aware of the difficulty with effectively staffing this important area of school. The school has sought the support of EAS and their advisor, together with our own staff, provided a number of additional sessions for students in the lead up to their summer exams. We will continue to make additional time available for affected students during this year, with pupils sitting exams this year our main priority. The school will also look to appoint further Science staff within the department as soon as possible.

**Q - Report indicates that teachers are not pushing pupils enough. Personally I have had issues with Show My Homework as some pupils' homes do not have internet or computer access, issues appear to have been left unresolved despite many contacts with school.**

A - Show My Homework and other web based learning activities are extremely beneficial for students. We understand that some families may have difficulty in accessing these in the home. The school has a Lunchtime Homework provision, operating every day and an afterschool provision twice per week. Here pupils can access IT resources, the internet and receive help with homework or coursework. We hope pupils will make use of this facility.

**Q - Report highlighted issues with disruption in class and impact on pupils, what is school doing about this?**

A - Low level disruption of any kind is detrimental to learning. The school have a proven track record in dealing with discipline issues. In light of the report we will be further reviewing our policies and ensure that all staff are equipped to deal with issues and that positive behaviour is a clear feature of all lessons. Senior Leadership will continue to monitor all lessons through the day as we carry out on-call activities and new learning walks.

**Q - Are underlying reasons for pupils' poor behaviour being identified and addressed?**

A - Many types of disruption caused by students will have an underlying problem that needs to be identified and addressed. Our wellbeing team have and will continue to monitor disruption, and where issues arise will initiate intervention and support both internally and externally of the school.

**Q - Supply Teachers and quality of work achieved within these lessons is of concern, how will the school address this?**

A – A good question and an issue that all schools have concerns about. Staff sickness and training opportunities cannot be avoided and it is for the school to find appropriate ways to ensure the learning of students continues through the year.

All of our part-time staff will be approached over the coming weeks and where possible will be used to cover colleagues when absent. The students know these staff well, and their use will ensure us continuity of provision and improve quality of cover lessons. We are also looking to maintain contact with supply teachers who have a proven track record at Bedwas to ensure they can be called upon when necessary.

**Q - Budget, what does the additional support referred to in your presentation cost the school and how will it affect per pupil funding?**

A – As a school in Special Measures we are automatically categorised as a 'Red' school within Welsh Government Categorisation. This enables us to access some additional funding. In addition, the Local Authority through its support mechanism, will provide a range of additional resources that enable us

to ensure the Post Inspection Action Plan can be implemented fully without using core funding. This will not affect the per pupil funding as it will be a short term measure. The Local Authority have been exceptionally supportive at this difficult time.

**Q - Will the council be putting in further funding to support the school?**

A - The school have been supported extremely well by the LA especially since the inspection. The school has been assured that reasonable requests for support would be given due consideration and be a priority for the local authority. The school and LA want to ensure that the Special Measures label is lifted as soon as possible.