

School Report



▲ Headteacher: David Swallow

Didn't they do well!

Your school achieved some outstanding results in this summer's external examination results. The statistics are included in this report.

At GCSE, 46% gained 5 A*–C and this represented a 4% increase in last year's figures. It was the school's fourth year of successive improvement. Of particular note was the first cohort of GNVQ Hospitality and Catering students whose results reflected their hard work and commitment and the support of Mrs Lancaster.

This year students will complete the first presentation of the full award ICT GNVQ, offering them the opportunity to obtain the equivalent of four GCSEs.

Music and Photography results were strong along with English Language and Literature. Language and Literature results very closely replicated national pass rates — an excellent achievement with an all boys' cohort.

Overall these results reflect a tremendous effort from the Year 11 staff and it is particularly heartening to note that we have not only addressed the gender difference in Barry but the school's 5 A*–C results overtook those of the girls.

Those students who were attempting the first year of A2 examination papers produced pass rates comparable to last year's A level results. As this was perhaps not as academi-

cally able a year as last year's, these figures were even more heartening.

AS results showed improvement on last year's. Perhaps there is more of a realisation that Year 12 is a critical year.

Meanwhile, the SATs results in year 9 showed further continual improvement — they are an important indicator of the impact of the school's literacy and numeracy programmes.

Looking ahead

The school is growing in size and the school role now stands at roughly 1,350. Over 270 students entered year 7 this autumn, and we expect this figure to be matched in 2004.

With rising results and improving outcomes from our vocational and alternative curriculum programmes, governors and staff are thinking hard about options for the future of the school.

At sixth form level, change is in the air as a result of new funding arrangements for 16+ education in Wales. This is likely to offer opportunities to develop collaborative provision, but also creates an atmosphere of uncertainty. In this context we need to build on the success of the co-educational Barry Sixth Form, and develop ways of making the school a learning resource for the whole community. New flexibility is likely to be available in the

curriculum for 14–19 year olds; meanwhile we will pilot the Welsh Baccalaureate as an option for the vocationally inclined sixth former.

As part of this "blue skies" thinking, we need to think hard about the capacity of the school site and buildings, and plan for a learning community that is the right size to offer the broadest possible curriculum while ensuring caring pastoral support for children.

We need to safeguard the integrity of our site; currently we are lending pitches to the new Welsh medium comprehensive school, but it is very likely that we will require these for our own use once again in the medium term.

We need to make sure that growing numbers are accommodated in decent class rooms; redeveloping the art block is a possibility. There must be no return to "terrapins".

A watershed?

Our growth has wider implications. Our standard number has been reduced below the total number of potential boys in our intake. We believe that the Vale needs to look hard at options for secondary education in Barry and that this may mean finally grasping the nettle of co-education. This appears to be a growing desire amongst parents of children

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Finance

Russell Grant



▲ Current Tory leader Ian Duncan Smith was one of many distinguished visitors. Interviewed on TV after his visit he said “I learned more in a morning at Barry Comprehensive than in two years at Westminster.”



▲ We will build on the success of the co-educational Sixth Form

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in the town’s junior schools. In fact, it looks very much as if we stand at a watershed for schooling in our town. Our mission must be to ensure that everyone works together to offer the opportunities our children need to succeed. It is time for some “out of the box” thinking.

Matthew Griffiths
Chair of the Governing Body

Schools in the Vale of Glamorgan continue to receive less money per pupil than any other schools in England and Wales. This is a result of the way in which the National assembly determines the council’s revenue support grant. As a consequence, our limited budget restrains the ambitions of staff and governors for the school’s development.

In 2001-02 cuts of over £250,000 were necessary to balance the budget. In 2002-03, our budget requirement of £3.4 million has not been met, resulting in the further need to identify £200,000 of cost savings.

It is estimated that over the last eight years there has been a cumulative school budget shortfall of approximately £800,000. This cannot be allowed to continue.

The Chancellor’s measures to increase education funding are not finding their way into school budgets in the Vale.

Delivery and monitoring

The governors’ Finance Committee works closely with the head and his colleagues to make sure we get value for money. The Committee has delegated powers, which include the regular authorising of financial commitments and expenditure. This strategic management is only made possible by the day to day expertise and financial skill of the Bursar and her staff, a fact repeatedly applauded by the Vale council’s audit department.

Every effort is made to identify and secure grant assistance to fund specific initiatives in an attempt to balance the budget. Whilst the uncertainty of this is an inefficient way in which to fund the school, our limited financial resources dictate this approach.

We carefully husbanded reserves over the past three years to provide for the lease costs of up to date computers.

Our leasing period is up, and our reserves depleted, but we will be able to afford to continue to upgrade existing machines.

This method of financing maximised the budget available by spreading the financial commitment over more than one year and made sure that the school has and will keep pace with advances in technology.

Our overall financial priority is to ensure that staffing levels are maintained to be able to deliver the school’s development plan. In spite of our financial restraints, we have never reduced staffing levels and we have no intention of doing so.

Curriculum

Kath Beaudette

Despite the upheavals in the exam system, our GCSE and A level results continue on target. Governors wish to pay tribute to staff, pupils and parents for the hard work that has ensured children at this school achieve appropriate outcomes.

Mentoring

Much of the success at GCSE level must be attributed to the school’s mentoring programme, which continues to expand. This targets pupils who need or want extra support in Year 11 as the exams approach and is a partnership between staff, pupils, and their parents — some of whom work as hard as their sons on acquiring study skills. As a result boys at this school have beaten national trends and outperformed girls in their age group.

The mentoring programme has been flagged up as a means of accelerating boys’ achievement at this level, against the national trend. It was one of the main reasons that the leader of the Conservative Party, Ian Duncan Smith, chose to visit Barry Comprehensive in the autumn.

More students than ever are being mentored this year, with the programme adapted to meet the needs of students taking GNVQ courses. The vocational GNVQ, which students can match with GCSE courses, has enabled pupils to finish year 11 with more recognised qualifications.

Curriculum changes

In addition to expanding the GNVQ options on offer, plans to implement the Welsh Baccalaureate are progressing with the intention of giving a some sixth form students the opportunity to follow the Level 2 qualification in September 2003.

Improved GCSE results help more pupils to go on to further education, at college or through Modern Apprenticeships. Some, however, prefer to remain at school and we are determined to match our provision to their aspirations.

Challenges

There will be two challenges in the development of the curriculum in the coming year.

Currently under discussion from the Welsh Assembly are proposals for alternative curriculum provision for the 14–19 year old cohort.

Equally importantly, the impact of the changes to post-16 education from April 2003 on the joint Barry Sixth Form will have to be

Personnel

David Kennett



▲ Aiming high!



▲ Strength in the performing arts

considered; the school is committed to maintaining a co-educational sixth form provision and developing opportunities for young people and adult learners.

The major issue for governors this year has been the introduction of a new system of performance management.

We have been keen to ensure that our performance management policy, while respecting Assembly guidelines, does not impose unreasonable expectations on staff, or get in the way of our own procedures for self-evaluation, school improvement, and continuing professional development.

We have tried to agree a policy that focuses on the development of personal professional targets rather than a crude linkage of targets to pay. Pupils' success is a collective effort.

Governors responsible for setting the headteacher's performance objectives have received appropriate training.

Staffing

It is pleasing to note that in line with the improvement in educational results we have also been able to appoint new staff from better qualified applicants. It is not just parents who recognise a school that is improving!

We also have excellent induction and in-service training and support systems for newly qualified teachers and well developed relationships with universities providing teacher training.

Russell Grant's finance report analyses the cumulative underfunding of the school's budget, and lays this firmly at the door of the National Assembly.

Despite this situation, governors have consistently sought to maintain a favourable pupil-teacher ratio, and have resisted cuts in staffing at all costs.

Children in year seven continue to benefit especially from small class sizes so that they can get more personal attention during this important year in their young lives.

Welfare, sport and community

Pat Beard

Barry Comprehensive is proud of its links with a supportive community. Adults come into school to help our learners; children from the school are active in raising money for charity.

We continue to develop close links with feeder primary schools. Our open days for junior school children provide an eye-opening



▲ Caring pastoral staff work their own kind of magic

taste of life in and out of the class room.

The school has been delighted to see many of its friends as guests at school plays and musical evenings.

Sport

Meanwhile, our sports teams continue to excel. Our year 9 cricket side won the Cardiff and Vale league, and will compete at regional level next season. And our star gymnasts are looking forward to a trip to Portugal with their coach, to take part in the World Gymnastrada.

We have had some excellent results as well in PE at GCSE, AS and A2, and introduced the BTEC first diploma in Sport from September this year as a one-year course for students keen to pursue FE or a career in a sport-related field.

Policies

The governors have overall responsibility for school policies and have kept these under review during the year. A new race equality policy was developed and approved in the summer term. They also have a special duty towards children with special needs and have liaised closely with the department of learning support.

The department now has six teachers, six learning assistants and one youth worker.

It has tightened up procedures for annual reviews and transition plans in a way appreciated by parents of children with statements of special needs. There has been a focus on

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developing literacy support resources and on creating a class room environment that helps to raise pupil achievement.

We were delighted with the successes in year 9 and year 11 of children with support needs. In years 10 and 11 there is now additional resourcing for IT, and the department now “owns” three IT classes where the theme will be IT that is relevant to post-school life.

The department also worked hard to set up a new multi-option group in year 10, which supports pupils who had become demotivated.



Junior school enjoying their first encounter with the big school



The “LATCH” sleepathon

GOVERNORS

Barry Comprehensive School governors are committed to the school and to the role of Barry Comprehensive in the community. We strongly support the school’s partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan council and community schools throughout the Vale.

The Governing Body is made up of elected parent and teacher representatives, members nominated by the local education authority, and people co-opted for their commitment and their expertise. The head teacher is a governor. The next full election for parent governors will be held in September 2004.

The Governing Body meets formally twice or more a term to consider issues relating to the school’s development, management and curriculum. Committees and working groups of governors deal with pupil welfare, special needs, staffing and performance curriculum, premises and finance.

Parent Governors: Kath Beaudette, Pat Beard, John Doel, Tina Webb, Steve James, Mary Dyas

Co-opted Governors: Matthew Griffiths, Russell Grant, David Kennett, Nick Paulakis, John Stacey Marks

Teacher Governors: Jason Hicks, Brian Williams

Non-teaching staff Governor: André Desrosiers

LEA Governors: Chris Britten, Tony Hampton, Emlyn Williams, Graham Ellis, (one vacancy)

Headteacher: David Swallow

The Chair of the Governing Body is elected annually, in September. The present chair is Matthew Griffiths. He can be contacted by via the school, or via the Clerk to the Governors, Mrs Janice Davies, at the Vale of Glamorgan Council Education Department. The Vice Chair is David Kennett.

Minutes of the Governing Body can be inspected at the school or on the school web site.

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ANNUAL MEETING FOR PARENTS REQUEST FORM

Please complete this form and return it to the school before **Monday 20 January** if you would like governors to organise an annual meeting for parents. A meeting will be arranged to discuss this report formally if the parents of twenty or more pupils respond.

I/we would like to request an annual meeting for parents.

Name(s)

Pupil name(s)

Address

Tel