

**Belong . . .**  
**Believe . . .**  
**Achieve . . .**



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Headteacher: Mr T Williams M.A.

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Chair of Governors: Mr C Gore

24<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on our progress since our Estyn inspection in October 2018. The Full Governors' report to parents for 2018-2019 is available to view on the website.

At the time of the inspection, despite a pleasing set of results from the previous summer of 2018, Estyn needed evidence of a positive trend of data over more than one year. Even with some excellent results in the summer of 2019, a few aspects were not as good as expected which ultimately affected some of the whole school performance measures, resulting in four recommendations to take forward.

During Mr Williams' absence, our Staff and Senior Leadership Team, led by Acting Headteacher Sian Mainwaring, have made significant progress in addressing the issues within the four Estyn recommendations.

Moving forward, we also needed to ensure that we maximise any external support available to us as a school. Due to the continued absence and uncertainty around the return of Mr Williams, just before Christmas we asked the Local Authority to consider further increasing the leadership capacity. This would allow the rest of the Leadership Team to revert their focus to responsibilities within their substantive roles. This was agreed by the Local Authority and we have been extremely fortunate to have Dr Heather Duncan, Headteacher of Lewis Girls School, join us in a full-time executive capacity since the start of this term.

Alongside this, it is vital we utilise the support of the Education Achievement Service (EAS). The EAS is the consortium that provides challenge and support for all schools within Caerphilly Borough. In order to maximise the amount of support offered, the Welsh Government guidelines categorisation process means that we are required to be placed in a red category. The Governing Body wholeheartedly agree this is the right move for our school, at this point in time, in order to ensure that our strong progress continues, and we will be able to come out of Estyn monitoring in the near future.

Looking forward to the results this summer, we are extremely pleased that our current Year 11 pupils' achievements are promising to be the best ever in the life of Islwyn High School so far. Our recent Mathematics results are 65% C+ with 25% A\*-A grades. This follows on from similar results for this year group, where, at the end of Year 10, in addition to many pleasing module results, 65% of pupils achieved a full English Literature GCSE at C+.

We will forever be indebted to Mr Williams for his pivotal role in successfully managing the merger of two separate schools in our community. Undoubtedly, without his vision, leadership skills, dedication and level of commitment, Islwyn High School would not have become the established, dynamic institution we see today. I know you are aware Mr Tim Williams has suffered from ill health and has been on sick leave since March 2019. As of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020, Mr Williams has retired on medical grounds. We would like to thank Mr Williams for all he has done for the school and wish him well for the future.

I would like to also use this opportunity to thank you all for your vital, continued support for both your child, and for us as a school. I will ensure that you are kept up to date with ongoing developments and please feel free to get in touch with me via the school at [ihzca@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:ihzca@caerphilly.gov.uk) if you have any queries.

Chris Gore  
Chair of Governing Body