

Report by Julia Helen Cantle Longville  
Bedwas High School, 19/03/07

**Inspection under Section 28 of the  
Education Act 2005**

**A Report on the Quality of Education in**

**Bedwas High School  
Newport Road  
Bedwas  
CF83 8BJ**

**School Number: 6764093**

**Date of Inspection: 19-23 March 2007**

**by**

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- \* special schools;
- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
- \* adult community-based learning;
- \* youth support services;
- \* LEAs;
- \* teacher education and training;
- \* work-based learning;
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Bedwas High School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Bedwas High School took place between 19/03/07 and 23/03/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Julia Helen Cantle Longville undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	good with outstanding features
<b>Grade 2</b>	good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Grade 3</b>	good features outweigh shortcomings
<b>Grade 4</b>	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
<b>Grade 5</b>	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

**Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.**

This school received a standard inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Bedwas High School is an 11-18 community school, maintained by Caerphilly County Borough Council. There are 694 pupils on roll, slightly less than at the time of the last inspection, in March 2001. Of these, 89 are in the sixth form. This number is about the same as at the time of the last inspection.
2. The school is situated in Bedwas, which is approximately two miles from Caerphilly town. Most pupils and students come from the surrounding area, a large proportion of which is socially and economically disadvantaged. A significantly large number comes from the most economically deprived area of Caerphilly County Borough. Pupils transfer to the school from four primary schools. Just under 19% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, compared to 16.6% nationally. Almost all pupils have English as their first language. There are no pupils in the school who speak Welsh as a first language. A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages.
3. The school's intake includes the full range of ability. On entry, pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are lower than Unitary Authority (UA) and national averages. There are more pupils of average and lower ability and relatively few higher ability pupils. Thirty-two pupils have a statement of special educational need (SEN) and a further 138 pupils have been identified as needing some support.
4. The headteacher was appointed in January 1998. The Leadership Team (LT) is made up of the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and one assistant headteacher. The headteacher and assistant headteacher were in the school at the time of the last inspection

### The school's priorities and targets

5. The school has a comprehensive set of aims to promote pupils' academic, personal and social development. The school mission statement is 'Caring and Achieving'. Its vision statement is based on four main areas:
  - to provide an education of the highest quality for all pupils, which will prepare them academically, socially and personally for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life;
  - to promote an ethos of high expectations, clear values and continuous improvement within a caring, orderly and supportive community;
  - the belief that the education of all pupils is of equal value and with a commitment to the pursuit of individual excellence, achievement and success for all; and
  - commitment to prepare pupils for life and work as responsible and valued citizens in an ever-changing world.

6. The school aims are to:
- promote a culture of achievement, effort, success and excellence in all aspects of school life;
  - provide a curriculum, which is broad, balanced differentiated and relevant;
  - provide a learning environment that is disciplined, caring, tolerant and fair to all;
  - provide a community that encourages a sense of commitment, loyalty and belonging;
  - develop partnerships with parents, schools and colleges, employers and the wider community;
  - be a self-evaluating school, which seeks continuous improvement through effective planning; and
  - develop pupils' awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environment in which they live.
7. The School Strategic Plan (SSP) for 2006-2009 identifies seven priorities for development. These are:
- standards of attainment and achievement;
  - quality of teaching and learning;
  - curriculum provision and development;
  - ethos, care and support;
  - leadership and management;
  - management of resources; and
  - management of the expansion of the school.
8. An annual School Development Plan (SDP) is produced around the same key priorities for improvement.
9. The school's targets for 2007-2009 are:

Key stage 3	2007	2008	2009
English level 5 and above	72%	74%	75%
Mathematics level 5 and above	70%	70%	70%
Science level 5 and above	68%	68%	68%
All pupils gaining level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science	62%	62%	62%
Boys gaining level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science	52%	55%	56%
Girls gaining level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science	70%	68%	70%

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<b>Key stage 4</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
All pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C	43%	53%	54%
All pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A*-G	90%	92%	93%
All pupils gaining grade A*-C in language, mathematics and science	30%	38%	40%
Boys gaining grade A*-C in language, mathematics and science	26%	33%	32%
Girls gaining grade A*-C in language, mathematics and science	34%	43%	48%
Performance of boys compared to girls (+ or -)	-8%	-10%	-16%
Year 11 pupils with no recognised qualification (full or short GCSE, GNVQ or CoEA)	0%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Sessions missed by pupils of compulsory school age because of absence	9%	8.5%	8%

## Summary

### Summary

10. Bedwas High School is a very good school with many outstanding features. The school's particular strengths are the:
- extent to which everyone works together to achieve high standards across the school;
  - inspirational leadership of the headteacher and LT which enables staff and pupils to achieve their potential; and
  - drive towards achieving excellence and the emphasis placed on continuous improvement and high expectations across the school are outstanding.

In the seven key questions the following grades were awarded.

Key Question	Inspection grade
1. How well do learners achieve?	2
2. How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3. How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	1
4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?	1
6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	1
7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	1

### Standards

11. Overall, the standards achieved by learners have good features with no important shortcomings. The following table shows the grades awarded at Key Stage (KS) 3, KS4 and in the sixth form in the six subjects inspected.

Standards in subjects inspected			
Subject	KS3	KS4	Sixth form
English	1	1	1
Welsh second language	2	3	-
Mathematics	2	2	2
Design and technology	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	1
Business Studies	-	2	2

12. The following table shows the standards achieved by pupils and students at different stages in the six subjects inspected.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	16%	72%	12%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	10%	76%	14%	0%	0%
<b>KS3+KS4</b>	13%	74%	13%	0%	0%
<b>Sixth form</b>	36%	64%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	17%	72%	11%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observation of 64 lessons					

### **KS3 and KS4**

13. In 87% of lessons, pupils achieve standards that have good features and no important shortcomings. In all other lessons, good features outweigh shortcomings. Most of the outstanding work observed was in English. In these lessons, pupils achieve consistently high standards.
14. These grades are very good when compared with the most recent figures for all inspections in Wales, the national target for 2007 and the grades awarded in the last inspection of the school. These figures:
- surpass, by 22 percentage points, the WAG target for standards in 65% of lessons to be awarded grade one or grade two;
  - exceed the national target for 98% of standards to be graded one, two or three; and
  - compare very favourably to grades awarded at KS3 and KS4 in inspections across Wales.
15. The overall ability of pupils entering the school is well below local averages. Despite this, pupils make very good progress in their learning and almost all are successful in achieving agreed goals. Many achieve beyond what is expected. Pupils with additional learning needs receive very good support and generally achieve their potential.
16. Overall standards have improved considerably since the last inspection. The grades awarded are significantly better than at the time of the last inspection though the sample is different in size and nature.
17. Recent results in examinations and assessments by teachers at the end of key stages compare well with local and national averages. Overall, attainment is close to or above the average for similar schools where around 20% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. With few exceptions there has been improvement year on year since the last inspection.
18. At both key stages, the standards that pupils achieve in the key skills of communication, use of number and Information Technology are good. The school achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004.
19. Almost all pupils of all abilities, including those with additional learning needs, make very good progress in their learning both within and between key stages.

This is demonstrated in the significant improvement in attainment at KS3 and KS4 when compared to pupils' ability on entry to the school.

20. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to achieve whatever their background or ability. There are no barriers to learning. This is a school where it is very difficult for pupils to underachieve. As a result they are prepared very well to move through the different stages of their learning.
21. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. There is a very positive atmosphere in lessons and around the school. The behaviour of most pupils in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils have high levels of respect for their teachers and each other.
22. The school has made good progress in trying to increase attendance rates, particularly in comparison to schools locally. However, attendance at around 90% remains below the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) target for 2007 of 93%.
23. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are outstanding. Most pupils are mature young people with a very positive attitude to school. A particular strength is the way in which they make informed decisions about improvements to their school.
24. Most pupils have a very good understanding of equal opportunities and show great respect for diversity. They understand and use the values expected of them in the school. They are proud of their school. These high levels of respect are promoted in the very good assemblies and tutorial periods at the start of the school day. Inclusion is at the heart of the school.
25. The innovative and well-planned Work Related Education (WRE) programme prepares pupils extremely well for effective participation in the workplace and community.

### **The quality of education and training**

26. In the vast majority of lessons, teaching has good features and no important shortcomings. Teachers display a good knowledge of their subjects, examination board specifications and the teaching strategies which underpin effective learning. In the best lessons there are high expectations and positive working relationships.
27. In the small minority of lessons where there are shortcomings, lack of pace and challenge prevents pupils making progress. As a result, pupils are not engaged actively in the work which causes a small minority of pupils in some classes to behave inappropriately.
28. Equal opportunities are very well promoted and based on a good knowledge of pupils.

29. The rigorous and regular monitoring and assessment of pupils' work and progress is fully embedded across the school. Pupils' progress and achievements are regularly analysed and reviewed. The quality of feedback pupils receive, both oral and written, on their progress, achievements and targets for improvement, is an outstanding feature of the school.
30. The range of learning experiences for pupils is outstanding. The broad, balanced and flexible curriculum is delivered to meet learners' aspirations and provide many opportunities to achieve accreditation. The curriculum provides good progression between years and key stages. It meets legal and course requirements including provision for a daily act of collective worship.
31. A wide range of out-of-school-hours activities, cultural and sporting visits and clubs is provided which broaden and enrich pupils' learning experiences. The school places a very strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development both within lessons and through the wide range of additional activities. This is a strength of the school.
32. An outstanding feature of the school is the highly developed curricular and pastoral links with partner primary schools which includes an inspired and innovative transition schools council. Pupils in Y7 and Y9 together with pupils from four local primary schools meet regularly throughout the school year and discuss aspects relating to the transition and induction of pupils into Y7.
33. Integrated programmes in Personal and Social Education (PSE), WRE, careers education and guidance are well developed. There are excellent links with Careers Wales and a range of employers to complement the experiences for pupils.
34. Pupils' entrepreneurial skills are developed well through a number of activities involving business and team-building events. They are further enhanced through outstanding links with an extensive range of partners, outside agencies and the community.
35. The school addresses social disadvantage and stereotyping in a very positive way. Teaching and support programmes encourage all pupils to succeed in their studies. Caring attitudes are fostered at all times
36. Promotion of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) programmes is outstanding. In recognition of this the school was awarded a Welsh Secondary Schools Award, the Eco Green Flag and was placed second in a competition to find the leading Welsh Eco Secondary School.
37. All pupils at KS3 develop bilingualism through the study of Welsh as a second language. All Year (Y) 10 pupils follow at least a short course in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Welsh. There are shortcomings in the development of the bilingual skills of Y11 pupils.

38. There are many outstanding features in the quality of care, support and guidance for pupils, the provision for pupils with additional learning needs, and the attention given to equal opportunities issues.
39. A team of monitoring and support staff manages the care, support and guidance of pupils highly effectively. This highly dedicated and inspiring team of staff oversee pupils' progress. They work very productively together to ensure that pupils are supported extremely well in all aspects of their personal, social and academic progress.
40. There are excellent procedures for ensuring that the views of pupils, parents and outside agencies are valued and taken into account. These play a significant part in enriching the personal, social and healthy development of all pupils.
41. Systems and procedures that monitor pupils' behaviour and performance are outstanding. They are understood clearly by pupils and applied consistently and fairly by staff. A database is used highly effectively to record and monitor pupils' progress and behaviour. Procedures for child protection and 'looked after children' are perceptive and robust. The school works very well in partnership with outside agencies to secure the welfare of pupils.
42. Support for pupils with additional learning needs has many outstanding features. These pupils receive excellent care and support from all staff. The needs of individual pupils are reviewed regularly and systematically.
43. The quality of provision for equal opportunities is outstanding. There are highly effective measures for dealing with bullying or any form of harassment. The school is very successful in ensuring that pupils recognise and respect the needs of others and this impacts significantly on all aspects of school life.

### **Leadership and management**

44. The school has made outstanding progress over the past six years. The headteacher has been instrumental in driving this improvement. She leads by example, providing clear direction and setting exceptionally high standards for all her staff and pupils. She is highly respected by staff, governors and pupils.
45. The core values of the school are related to caring and achieving. These are shared by all and are implemented on a daily basis by staff and pupils. Through strong leadership, the school is achieving its vision by providing good quality education for all in a climate in which high expectation is the norm.
46. The LT is exceptionally strong. Together they provide vision and very effective leadership. They line manage departments effectively through rigorous systematically planned, formal reviews that enable clear targets for improvement to be set.

47. A significant feature of the leadership and management at all levels is teamwork. The level of commitment of all members of staff in the school is remarkable.
48. Overall, the work of middle managers is particularly effective because they lead by example and are excellent role models. A strength of the school is the way in which the work of year tutors is rigorously managed and supported.
49. Governors are fully involved in strategic management of the school. They make an outstanding and regular contribution to all aspects of school life. Their expertise is used exceptionally well in curriculum time, as part of the enrichment programme and in meetings with parents.
50. Governors have a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the school's performance. Their role as 'critical friends', is particularly strong. They demonstrate tremendous drive and enthusiasm and are proud of their school.
51. All regulatory and legal requirements are met.
52. The school has an outstanding and fully embedded culture of self-evaluation that permeates all levels of staff and involves actively the governing body (GB), parents, pupils, students and external agencies. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are centred extremely well on learning and teaching and in supporting pupils and students to reach their potential.
53. The effectiveness of planning for improvement is outstanding. The very good team work and desire by all stakeholders to improve provision, standards and learning experiences for all pupils and students ensures that targets are generally met very well indeed.
54. Planning at all levels is outstanding. The clear link between self-evaluation, Department Development Plans (DDPs) and the SDP is an outstanding feature of the school. Staff at all levels understand the value of continuous reflection and review and use this to good effect.
55. All members of the school including staff, pupils, students, parents, partners, and governors are valued for the contribution they make to the success of the school.
56. The school has sufficient well-qualified teaching staff to enable the curriculum to be delivered effectively. Support staff work extremely effectively in conjunction with teachers to enable all aspects of the school to function efficiently.
57. The provision of learning resources in all departments is good and the provision of Information Communications Technology (ICT) equipment throughout the school is excellent.

58. Staff development and training at all levels has many good and several outstanding features. All aspects of staff development are closely and comprehensively linked to departmental and whole school priorities.
59. The accommodation has many good features and is sufficient for the number of pupils on roll. It is very well maintained within the available budget and provides a spacious stimulating learning environment. Despite these good features, the physical education accommodation is in poor condition and several science laboratories are in need of refurbishment.
60. The financial management of the school is outstanding and resource decisions are linked meticulously to the schools' priorities for development and improvement.
61. Overall, the school uses its resources extremely well and achieves very good value for money.

## **Sixth form**

### **Standards**

62. Overall, standards in the sixth form are good with outstanding features. Results in external examinations have improved significantly since the last inspection. Entry levels are much higher and almost all students achieve their potential. Overall the standards achieved in external examinations compare very favourably with local and national averages.
63. Students achieve good standards in the key skills of communication, the use of number and IT. They use their key skills well in lessons and in a wide range of enrichment activities.
64. Students in the sixth form make a valuable contribution to the school community. They have well-developed personal and social skills and are good role models for other learners.
65. A growing number of Y11 pupils continue their education in the sixth form. They have a very mature attitude to their studies and enjoy working in an environment in which they are valued and respected by their teachers and younger pupils in the school.
66. Most students in the sixth form know what career route they wish to follow. The range of experiences in the sixth form prepares them well for the work place and higher education.
67. The attendance and punctuality of the majority of students is good overall.

### **The quality of education and training**

68. Positive and productive relationships between students and staff are outstanding. Teachers are highly supportive of students and generous with their time.

69. Excellent records of students' progress and achievement are kept and regular monitoring and assessment are used extremely well to identify concerns and set targets.
70. Detailed subject and course knowledge are used effectively to prepare students for examinations. Resources are used to stimulate interest and challenge students.
71. Students show a good awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
72. In a small minority of lessons, over reliance on teacher exposition and lack of student involvement in the lesson hinders progress.

### **Leadership and management**

73. The leadership and management of the sixth form are very effective. The good and outstanding features in KS3 and KS4 are also evident in the sixth form.

### **Progress since the last inspection**

74. The school has made excellent progress in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection in March 2001. The school has improved significantly the:
  - achievement of boys;
  - results at GCSE in mathematics and science;
  - quality of teaching and learning in art;
  - standards in resistant materials courses in design and technology;
  - overall provision for physical education;
  - match between students' A level results and their capabilities;
  - proportion of teaching that is good or better; and
  - strategies for teachers to manage pupils' behaviour, especially that of boys.
75. Statutory requirements for the provision of religious education in the sixth form and for a daily act of collective worship have been met.

## **Recommendations**

1. Continue to improve attainment in external examinations.
2. Share the outstanding practice in teaching in order to eradicate the minority of shortcomings identified in this report.
3. Continue to improve the punctuality and attendance of pupils and students.
4. Improve accommodation for science and physical education

Aspects of all these recommendations are addressed in the SDP.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving this report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

## Standards

### Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

76. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

#### KS3 and KS4

77. The overall ability of pupils entering the school is well below local averages. Despite this, pupils make very good progress in their learning and almost all are successful in achieving agreed goals. Many achieve beyond what is expected. Pupils with additional learning needs receive very good support and generally achieve their potential.

78. The following table shows the standards achieved by pupils at each stage in the 53 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>KS3</b>	16%	72%	12%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	10%	76%	14%	0%	0%
<b>KS3+KS4</b>	13%	74%	13%	0%	0%

79. In 87% of lessons, pupils achieve standards that have good features and no important shortcomings. In all other lessons, good features outweigh shortcomings. Most of the outstanding work observed was in English. In these lessons, pupils achieve consistently high standards.

80. These grades are very good when compared with the most recent figures for all inspections in Wales, the national target for 2007 and the grades awarded in the last inspection of the school. These figures:

- surpass, by 22 percentage points, the WAG target for standards in 65% of lessons to be awarded grade one or grade two;
- exceed the national target for 98% of standards to be graded one, two or three; and
- compare very favourably to grades awarded at KS3 and KS4 in inspections across Wales.

81. Overall standards have improved considerably since the last inspection. The grades awarded are significantly better than at the time of the last inspection though the sample is different in size and nature. The percentage of lessons in which the highest grade was awarded is 7 percentage points better than that reported in the last inspection.

82. Overall, the most recent results in both key stages compare well with local and national averages. Girls generally outperform boys although the difference in their performance is not as large as it was when they entered the school.
83. Overall, attainment in the core subjects at KS3 is close to the average for similar schools where around 20% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. Performance in English and the three core subjects combined is outstanding. Although performance in mathematics and science has improved over time, it remains just below average when compared with similar schools in Wales.
84. At KS4, the rate of improvement over the past few years has been better than locally and nationally. The most recent GCSE results are mostly above the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving 5A\*-C and 5 A\*-G grades is slightly below local and national figures. Overall attainment in English and mathematics is better than it is in science. With few exceptions there has been improvement year on year since the last inspection.
85. Pupils achieve good standards in key skills. Pupils listen to their teachers and each other. They speak confidently and provide extended answers that demonstrate a good understanding of their work in different subjects. Overall, most pupils' written work is presented neatly and accurately. Many pupils are prepared to read aloud in class. They do so with expression and high levels of accuracy. Application of number is good overall. Pupils' numeracy and IT skills are good and they use them well in a range of different subjects across the, curriculum. Particular progress has been made in the development of pupils' IT skills. The school achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004.
86. With the exception of the majority of pupils in Y11, most pupils have a good understanding of the Welsh language and culture. They use their skills well in different contexts outside of Welsh lessons.
87. Almost all pupils of all abilities, including those with additional learning needs, make very good progress in their learning both within and between key stages. This is demonstrated in the significant improvement in attainment at KS3 and KS4 when compared to pupils' ability on entry to the school.
88. Most pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The systematic monitoring of pupils' academic progress contributes greatly to their ability to progress. There are no barriers to learning. This is a school where it is very difficult for pupils to underachieve. As a result they are prepared very well to move through the different stages of their learning.
89. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. There is a very positive atmosphere in lessons and around the school. The behaviour of most pupils in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils have high levels of respect for their teachers and each other. They are very courteous to visitors to the school. Most parents and pupils report that the school deals with inappropriate behaviour and bullying very quickly and effectively.

90. The positive approach to dealing with incidents of inappropriate behaviour has reduced the number of temporary and permanent exclusions. The school works hard to keep pupils in school.
91. The school has made good progress in trying to increase attendance rates, particularly in comparison to schools locally. However, attendance at around 90% remains below the WAG target for 2007 of 93%.
92. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills are outstanding. Many take on additional responsibilities that greatly enhance their skills. Most pupils are mature young people with a very positive attitude to school. A particular strength is the way in which they make informed decisions about improvements to their school.
93. Most pupils understand and use the values expected of them in the school. They are proud of their school. These high levels of respect are promoted in the very good assemblies and tutorial periods at the start of the school day. Pupils demonstrate the ability to carefully reflect and consider people less fortunate than themselves.
94. Most pupils have a very good understanding of equal opportunities and show great respect for diversity. Inclusion is at the heart of the school. Very high expectations are set for pupils that enable them to develop a clear understanding of what constitutes fairness and respect. They develop well-refined skills through the wide variety of initiatives and projects that are available to them.
95. The innovative and well-planned WRE programme prepares pupils extremely well for effective participation in the workplace and community. Many pupils take part in an extensive range of projects and initiatives that prepare them well for work related activities. The clear link between learning in the classroom as a preparation for work and further study is a very good feature of the school. There are strong links with the community and a wide range of businesses covering a large geographical area.

### **Sixth form**

The following table shows the percentages of standards of achievement in the 11 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected.

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
36%	64%	0%	0%	0%

96. Although the sample is small, these figures indicate that students achieve standards that have good features and no important shortcomings consistently. In a third of lessons there were outstanding features.
97. Overall, standards in the sixth form are good with outstanding features. The standards achieved by students in the six subjects inspected are good with

outstanding features in English and geography. There are good features and no important shortcomings in mathematics, design and technology and business studies.

98. Results in external examinations have improved significantly since the last inspection. Entry levels are much higher and almost all students achieve their potential. Overall the standards achieved in external examinations compare very favourably with local and national averages.
99. Students achieve good standards in the key skills of communication, the use of number and IT. They are mature young people with high levels of confidence. They use their key skills well in lessons and in a wide range of enrichment activities. They work very well together to solve problems and share ideas. They work independently when researching aspects of their work and organising specific events.
100. Students in the sixth form make a valuable contribution to the school community. They have well-developed personal and social skills and are good role models for other learners. Many students readily accept responsibility for supporting younger pupils and taking on voluntary work.
101. Students are well supported by their teachers. Their academic performance is monitored very carefully. They have a very good understanding about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
102. A growing number of Y11 pupils continue their education in the sixth form. They have a very mature attitude to their studies and enjoy working in, what they see as, an environment in which they are valued and respected by their teachers and younger pupils in the school.
103. Most students in the sixth form know what career route they wish to follow. The range of experiences in the sixth form prepares them well for the work place and higher education.
104. The attendance and punctuality of the majority of students is good overall.

## The quality of education and training

### Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

#### Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

105. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

#### KS3 and KS4

106. In the 53 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected the grades awarded for teaching were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
21%	66%	13%	0%	0%

107. Overall grades for the quality of teaching in 74 lessons observed across the curriculum were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
19%	65%	16%	0%	0%

108. In 19% of all the lessons observed, there were outstanding features in the quality of teaching, across both key stages. In 65% of lessons teaching had good features and no important shortcomings. Good features outweighed shortcomings in 16% of lessons. None of the lessons observed had important shortcomings. In the six subjects inspected, most of the lessons where the highest grade was awarded were in English where there was consistently high quality teaching.

109. There is very good planning in nearly all lessons, where clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils and followed by well structured lesson components to ensure these are met. Key skills are identified and opportunities for pupils to develop these are provided regularly.

110. The best lessons are characterised by:

- high expectations and activities which challenge and motivate pupils;
- positive working relationships between teachers and pupils;
- a lively pace;
- focussed support and guidance; and
- effective use of questioning.

111. In all other lessons observed some of the above features are evident but to a lesser extent. Opportunities for pupils to work independently and cooperatively are regular features of lessons. Resources are used effectively to stimulate and engage pupils.

112. Teachers display a very good knowledge of their subjects, examination board specifications and requirements, and teaching methods which underpins effective learning. This high quality knowledge and understanding is sustained because:
- teaching and learning is monitored strategically;
  - there are numerous opportunities for teachers to share their expertise and best practice; and
  - an effective Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme enables teachers to keep up-to-date with current initiatives.
113. An effective teaching and learning coordinator ensures high priority is given to this aspect of school life and facilitates the very good work which is taking place.
114. Equal opportunities are very well promoted and based on a good knowledge of pupils. Teachers make appropriate reference to Welsh culture and some encourage pupils to use their bilingual skills. However, there is inconsistency in bilingualism across the school.
115. In the minority of lessons where there are shortcomings, lack of pace and challenge prevents pupils making progress. They are not involved enough in their learning and there is too little interaction to enable them to learn from one another.
116. The inappropriate behaviour of a small minority of pupils in some classes disrupts the learning of others.

#### **Outstanding features**

117. The school has developed a very rigorous system for monitoring and assessing pupils' work and progress. The system is fully embedded across the school and includes effective use, and analysis of, a comprehensive range of assessment data. Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed and recorded. This provides a detailed profile of progress across the curriculum.
118. 'Snapshot Reports' are produced which identify whether or not pupils are achieving their targets. Prompt action is taken to address any shortcomings in performance. Information generated is given to parents and pupils in highly successful form tutor review days.
119. The quality of feedback pupils receive, both oral and written, on their progress, achievements and targets for improvement is of particularly high quality.

120. The good features of assessment found in most subjects also include:
- up-to-date marking of pupils' work which is accurate and informative;
  - positive use of pupil self and peer-assessment, allowing pupils to reflect on their own and others' achievement;
  - opportunities for pupils to redraft and improve their work;
  - recording of targets for improvement in pupil planners and progress files; and

- individual action plans that are reviewed regularly.
121. The school successfully identifies its most able and talented (MAT) pupils and has implemented a programme of learning experiences to stretch these pupils.
122. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment and reporting and satisfies examination board regulations.
123. Annual reports to parents provide good quality information on their children's academic and personal development. The current development to improve the consistency and quality of reports has proved to be effective in identifying pupil strengths and targets for improvement.

### Sixth form

124. In the six subjects inspected the grades awarded for teaching in the 11 lessons observed were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
36%	64%	0%	0%	0%

125. Overall grades for the quality of teaching in 23 lessons observed across the curriculum were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17%	83%	0%	0%	0%

126. In 17% of lessons observed, teaching was good with outstanding features and in 83% of lessons teaching was good with no important shortcomings. This is a high percentage, though it was a small sample and comparisons with other key stages or national figures are therefore not wholly reliable. In no lessons were there important shortcomings.
127. Positive and productive relationships and professional interaction between students and staff are particularly strong. Teachers are highly supportive of students and generous with their time.
128. Teachers have detailed subject and course knowledge and use it effectively to prepare students for examinations.
129. Resources, especially ICT resources, are used well to stimulate interest and challenge students.
130. Excellent records of students' progress and achievement are kept and regular monitoring and assessment is extremely well used to identify concerns and set targets.
131. Students show a good awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

132. In those lessons where there are shortcomings, there is over reliance on teacher exposition and lack of student involvement.
133. Reports are of good quality and these, along with well timed and well attended tutor days, are informative and helpful to students, parents and other interested parties.

**Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?**

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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134. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

<b>Outstanding feature</b>
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<p>135. As part of the Caerphilly Basin Schools' Partnership (CBSP), the school works very effectively with other institutions to provide outstanding curricular provision for sixth-form students. The partnership works well due to the strong commitment of the various management groups working collaboratively to provide the best possible options and education for students throughout Caerphilly. Students speak very highly of the arrangements, both from an academic and social perspective.</p>
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<p>136. The arrangements enable students of all abilities to progress successfully to employment or further and higher education courses.</p>
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137. The school delivers a series of well-structured programmes designed to enable each pupil to achieve their academic and social potential. In this the school is very successful with the majority of its pupils. They are encouraged to make improvements in performance year on year. Many pupils gain in confidence and enhanced aspirations as they progress through the school.

138. Every opportunity is taken to provide courses which are accredited by external examining bodies. This has resulted in a greater number of GCSE entries and passes in recent years. Pupils are aware of the need for good qualifications and are motivated well to succeed. The improvement in pupils' performance in external examinations is impressive.

139. A broad, balanced and flexible curriculum is available for pupils of all ages. At KS3, the school gives extra emphasis to the development of all aspects of literacy. This is because of the low level of ability of a significant proportion of pupils when they enter the school in Y7. This additional language work has made a significant impact on pupils' performance and confidence in many curricular areas.

140. At KS4, there is a good range of subject options. Pupils are actively encouraged to enter for GCSE examinations in all subjects. School programmes support targeted pupils in a very positive manner.

141. The school places strong emphasis on the development of pupils' basic and key skills. Particular emphasis has been placed on developing ICT skills in recent years. This has been most successful in improving pupils' basic skills and enhancing their self confidence. The schemes of work in all subjects feature the development of key skills in every lesson. The school has a full audit of the development of key skills in each subject. The well planned and delivered programme encourages pupils to track their own progress in each subject. Certificates are awarded to successful pupils in years 7, 8 and 9. The development in this area is outstanding.
142. Many out-of-hours activities, cultural and sporting visits enhance greatly pupils' learning experiences. Activities are supported well and pupils are encouraged to play an active part in planning and leading the programmes. Empowering pupils to take the lead in many extra-curricular activities is an outstanding feature of school.
143. The school promotes very successfully pupils' personal development by placing strong emphasis on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Programmes are developed based upon due regard for equality of opportunity and an understanding of the needs of others. This is a strength of the school as it permeates through all working relationships and encounters between staff and pupils.
144. There are highly developed curricular and pastoral links with partner primary schools. Transition arrangements, including the sharing of study programmes between schools, enable pupils to move confidently onto the next stage of their learning. The transition schools council, on which pupils from Y6 and Y7 are represented, is an inspired innovation which operates very effectively.
145. The curriculum provides good progression between years and key stages. It meets legal and course requirements including provision for a daily act of collective worship.

#### **Outstanding feature**

146. Promotion of ESDGC is a high priority in the school. The extensive activities are wide ranging, well understood and enthusiastically supported by the vast majority of pupils. They include recycling, surveys of water usage and wastage, automatic lighting, litter patrols and weekend clean ups. The pupils' Eco committee is enthusiastic, extremely committed and very well informed. In recognition of this outstanding practice the school received the Eco Green Flag Award and was placed second in a competition to find the leading Welsh Eco secondary school. This shows an outstanding level of commitment by all involved. It is also an outstanding example of the benefits to be gained in enhancing pupils' self esteem by empowering them to play an active role in the management of the school and community development.

147. Careers and WRE are well-established features of the curriculum. They provide very good support for pupils and good opportunities to meet employers. Careers Wales provides very good support. All pupils in KS4 take part in well-monitored work placements. A good debriefing programme is in place. Integrated programmes in PSE, WRE, careers education and guidance are well developed. GCSE short courses in these subject areas are delivered to all KS4 pupils.
148. The school has outstanding links with the local community, outside agencies and local businesses. A wide range of activities are generated to cater for the needs of employers. Pupils' entrepreneurial skills are developed well through business and team-building events arranged by local businesses.
149. The school addresses social disadvantage and stereotyping in a very positive way. Teaching and support programmes encourage all pupils to succeed in their studies. Caring attitudes are fostered at all times. All staff have adopted a positive and supportive role which gives pupils a healthy self-belief.
150. Bilingualism is developed through the study of Welsh as a second language for all pupils at KS3. All Y10 pupils follow a short course in GCSE Welsh. They are very keen to demonstrate their bilingual skills.
151. Despite this, there are shortcomings in the development of the bilingual skills of the majority of pupils in Y11. These pupils have not received regular lessons. They have, nevertheless benefited from an intensive Welsh summer course at the University of Glamorgan. Further school-based courses, concentrating on spoken and written Welsh with a vocational bias, have taken place in Y11 to complete the statutory requirement.
152. The school reflects national priorities for lifelong learning effectively. The level of achievement for all has risen considerably since the last inspection. Provision for 14-19 year olds has been transformed in that time. The outstanding links with other schools, colleges and providers in the Caerphilly area have significantly enhanced the provision for sixth form students. These, together with, arrangements for transition with partner primary schools are outstanding.

#### **Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?**

##### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

153. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

##### **Outstanding feature**

154. The school is highly innovative in providing opportunities for pupils and students to further their personal and social development and to respect the needs of others. Two excellent examples of this are the Transition Council and the Peer Mentoring Scheme.

155. The Transition Council involves pupils in Y7 and in Y9 together with pupils from four local primary schools. They meet regularly throughout the school year and discuss aspects relating to the transition and induction of pupils into Y7. The meetings are highly informative and play a significant part in ensuring smooth and effective transition into the school.

156. The Peer Mentoring Scheme is run in partnership with the local special school. Twenty students are trained mentors and meet weekly with pupils from the special school. The students are highly motivated and show a real commitment to the programme. They work with individual pupils and provide excellent support in assisting them to develop their skills in being independent. Many pupils and students have gained a qualification in peer mentoring as a result of their work.

157. The care, support and guidance of pupils is outstanding. It is managed highly effectively by a team of monitoring and support staff that includes the:

- deputy headteacher and senior progress manager;
- progress managers (heads of each year);
- co-ordinator for pupils with special needs;
- education welfare officer; and
- youth workers.

158. There is a distinct ethos of mutual respect for others that manifests itself across the work of the team. They meet regularly and have excellent knowledge and understanding of the needs of individual pupils. They communicate highly effectively with each other both formally and informally and also work very productively in consultation with carers and employers. This ensures that pupils are supported extremely well in all aspects of their personal, social and academic progress. Pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically about the support offered to them and value it greatly.

159. The school is highly pro-active in taking account of the views of parents. Parents are consulted well in relation to any issues relating to attendance, punctuality, behaviour or academic progress of their children. This is done effectively through telephone calls, informative letters that relate to good or

insufficient progress, questionnaires, and meetings with staff. Parents are also invited to meet with the Governors' Pupil Committee in order to support their child's personal development and behaviour.

160. There are excellent programmes for induction and transition across all key stages. Extensive and productive links with local primary schools ensure the smooth transition of pupils into the school in Y7. A very good range of activities and support booklets also ensure the effective transition of pupils from KS3 to KS4 and into the sixth form. The induction arrangements for the significant number of pupils who join the school from other schools are highly effective.
161. The personal and social education programme is excellent. It complies fully with the PSE framework and is enriched through very effective links with specialist agencies in the local community. The school is involved actively in piloting a range of national research projects, such as healthy eating, and these contribute greatly to enhance the learning experiences for pupils. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award for the past five years.
162. The vibrant school council contributes significantly to overall school life and is outstanding. It meets weekly and is highly productive. It has been involved in appointing senior staff, improving accommodation, evaluating learning experiences, and in modifying the school's policy for pupils' rewards and sanctions.
163. Systems and procedures to monitor pupils' behaviour and performance are outstanding. They are understood clearly by pupils and applied consistently and fairly by staff. A database is used highly effectively to record and monitor pupils' progress and behaviour. There is a highly structured and systematic reporting system that operates very well across the school. It focuses distinctly on providing appropriate support for those in need and is very effective in dealing with issues relating to inappropriate behaviour and underachievement.
164. Careers education is delivered very effectively through the PSE programme. Pupils have regular access to the Careers Wales website and produce an e-progress file to record their personal achievements. There are excellent links with Careers Wales and a range of employers to complement the experiences for pupils and students.
165. The school's response to child protection is perceptive and robust. There are well-defined systems and areas of responsibility that are understood clearly by all members of staff. The school works very well in partnership with outside agencies to secure the welfare of pupils. Complaints are handled with sensitivity and are dealt with very efficiently.
166. There are outstanding features in the quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and the senior progress manager oversee rigorously the work of the department. Particularly outstanding features include the:
  - management and oversight of smooth transition of pupils into Y7;

- rigorous use of behaviour management systems that are enhanced by the student assistance programme;
  - excellent care and support provided by learning support assistants;
  - use of youth workers to support individuals and groups of pupils; and
  - quality of relationships between staff and pupils.
167. The needs of individual pupils are diagnosed effectively. Assessment data is used well to identify generic and subject specific targets in their individual education plans. These are reviewed regularly and systematically to monitor progress. All requirements relating to the SEN Code of Practice are met.
168. There is a wide range of additional support to meet pupils' individual needs. For example, younger pupils are given additional support to promote their reading skills through the use of trained students in the sixth form. Furthermore the school makes excellent provision to meet the needs of looked after children.
169. There are excellent strategies to prevent pupils who misbehave from disrupting the work of other pupils. The staged response and referral procedures include the involvement of a Governor Pupil Committee and ensures that disruption is kept to a minimum.
170. Strategies to meet the needs of more able and talented pupils continue to be refined. The school maintains a comprehensive register of such pupils and uses some subject specific resources and extra curricular challenge activities to address their needs. The school recognises that this is an aspect for improvement and has plans to enrich the experiences for pupils further.
171. The quality of provision for equal opportunities has many outstanding features that includes highly effective measures to:
- recognise and address the diverse needs of pupils and students;
  - promote gender equality and challenge stereotyping through pupils' and students' choice of subjects;
  - combat any form of oppressive behaviour;
  - eliminate any discrimination relating to disability; and
  - recognise and respect the needs of others.
172. Pupils in need of additional support are catered for effectively through a broad range of strategies. These include individual or group counselling and support for any personal difficulties. Youth workers provide invaluable support to pupils through initiatives such as the students assistance programme and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
173. Equal opportunities are promoted actively through the learning experiences offered to pupils and students. Performance of boys and girls is monitored closely and stereotyping is challenged through pupils' choices of subjects in KS4 and in the sixth form. The school is involved in piloting the Womankind project as part of the PSE programme and this is very effective in enhancing pupils' awareness of issues relating to gender equality.

174. The school promotes race equality and human rights actively through activities such as:
- assemblies;
  - charity work and fund raising activities;
  - display and posters around the school;
  - links with Kenya and Japan;
  - visits to other countries including Japan, Kenya, France, Italy and the USA; and
  - links with the local special school.
175. In recognition of the above the school has won a number of awards for pupils' work in this area.
176. Valuable steps have been taken to eliminate discrimination on disability. The school has been proactive in establishing very effective links with the Disability Advice Project. These links have been instrumental in providing useful training for staff relating to disability access and disability discrimination.
177. The school places considerable emphasis on respect for others and has highly effective measures to address oppressive behaviour of any type. Any incidents of bullying or racial discrimination are dealt with sensitively and firmly. Pupils comment extremely positively that they feel very secure and happy in the school.

## Leadership and management

### Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

178. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one higher than the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation. This is because, the inspection team identified a number of outstanding features.
179. The grade awarded for key question 5 is one grade higher than the grade awarded for key question 1. This is because the outstanding leadership and management of the school have resulted in significant improvement in the overall achievement of pupils and students.
180. The school has made outstanding progress over the past six years. The headteacher has been instrumental in driving this improvement. She leads by example, providing clear direction and setting exceptionally high standards for all her staff and pupils. She is highly respected by staff, governors and pupils. Much of this success is attributed to the fact that she knows her staff and pupils well and uses this information to provide excellent support and guidance. Together with the other members of the leadership team, she operates an open door policy.
181. The LT is exceptionally strong. Together they provide vision and very effective leadership. Each member has clearly defined responsibilities that complement each other well. Their individual strengths are used to good effect. They are highly successful in initiating and managing change. The quality of their work is exceptional. They are always available to staff and pupils and are prepared to 'go the extra mile' to ensure that the school is as successful as possible.
182. The core values of the school are related to caring and achieving. These are shared by all and are implemented on a daily basis by staff and pupils. Through strong leadership, the school is achieving its vision by providing good quality education for all in a climate in which high expectation is the norm.
183. The school's key principle to promote a culture of achievement, effort, success and excellence for all reflects priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government. Other priorities, to develop awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environment are firmly embedded in many aspects of school life.
184. A significant feature of the leadership and management at all levels is teamwork. The level of commitment of all members of staff in the school is remarkable. Individual staff are encouraged and empowered to take on and implement fully new initiatives. This work of the school is regularly recognised as good practice externally.

185. Line managers meet regularly with departments. They follow a set agenda that is planned over a year. This allows the LT to identify particular areas for improvement on an individual department basis and as a whole school. The action taken is strategically planned and impacts positively on standards, teaching and learning.
186. Overall, the work of middle managers is particularly effective because they lead by example and are excellent role models. They expect high standards from pupils and staff and they want to be successful. They carefully delegate responsibilities effectively and regularly review their own and others' work on a formal basis.
187. A strength of the school is the way in which the work of year tutors is rigorously managed and supported. Weekly meetings with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and youth workers promote excellent communication about all aspects of pupil performance.
188. Rigorous formal reviews of departments enable clear targets for improvement to be set. These reviews are planned systematically and provide detailed information on the performance of departments.
189. These reviews enable staff at all levels to generate plans that are focused on improving standards. Planning at all levels is outstanding. The clear link between self-evaluation, DDPs and the SDP is an outstanding feature of the school. Staff at all levels understand the value of continuous reflection and review and use these to very good effect.
190. There is an excellent system in place to carefully monitor pupils' academic progress and behaviour. This information is used exceptionally well to provide very specific well-targeted support and mentoring that is extremely well matched to individual pupils' needs.
191. Staff development needs are met through regular attendance at training events. There is a good balance between in-house and external training. When teachers attend training outside of school there is a requirement for them to disseminate this to others by providing in-house training. There is also a very good system in place to monitor the quality and impact of training on standards, teaching and learning. Teachers are expected to review and evaluate the impact of training, a term after it has taken place. This is very good practice.
192. All members of the school including staff, pupils, students, parents, partners and governors are highly valued for the contribution they make to the success of the school.

### **Outstanding feature**

193. The school has a well-established Governor Pupil Committee that meets once every two weeks. Pupils who are a cause for concern and their parents are invited to meet the committee to discuss the problems the child is having and to establish strategies for improvement. These very productive meetings enable teachers and governors to reinforce the rules of the school and to identify consequences of continued inappropriate behaviour and underachievement. Clear targets are established with the pupil and specific dates are identified to monitor progress. These meetings are an outstanding feature of the way in which the school continually promotes high expectations and standards for all.

194. Governors are fully involved in strategic management of the school. They make an outstanding and regular contribution to all aspects of school life. Their expertise is used exceptionally well in curriculum time, as part of the enrichment programme and in meetings with parents.

195. Governors have a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the school's performance. Their role as 'critical friends', is particularly strong. They demonstrate tremendous drive, enthusiasm and commitment and are very proud of their school.

196. All regulatory and legal requirements are met.

### **Key question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?**

#### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### **How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated**

197. This grade awarded by the inspection team matches that awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

198. The findings of the inspection team match very closely those of the school. The grades for Key Questions 5 and 7 are each one grade higher than those awarded by the school because the team has recognised several features that are outstanding rather than good, as judged by the school.

### **Outstanding feature**

199. A particularly outstanding feature of self-evaluation is the part pupils and students play in helping the school plan for improvements. Pupils' and students' views on learning and teaching, and several other aspects of school life, are taken into account fully. Their opinions are gathered by electronic surveys and by completing other questionnaires. The outcomes of these form a significant part of departmental reviews and planning for the future. The line manager for a subject department, together with the head of department, also meets with a small sample of pupils and students who put their views forward. Their suggestions are acted upon. For example, teachers use ICT and practical activities more in lessons to engage pupils and students further. Consequently, pupils and students feel they are part of the self-evaluation process and that their opinions are important. They feel valued by staff and, because of this, their attitude towards them, and motivation for their work, are enhanced.
200. The school has an outstanding and fully embedded culture of self-evaluation that permeates all levels of staff and involves actively the GB, parents, pupils, students and external agencies. There is a calendar of review and evaluation meetings and events for the year.
201. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are centred extremely well on learning and teaching and in supporting pupils and students to reach their potential. Self-evaluation is based very well on a wide range of first hand evidence. The school council is an effective and innovative body that involves pupils and students well in discussion and decision-making.
202. The school's self-evaluation report is extensive, detailed and highly evaluative. It identifies clearly the school's strengths and areas for development in all key questions of the framework for inspection and gives substantial evidence to support the judgements made. The report, as part of the many and systematic procedures for self-evaluation and planning, is used very effectively to plan for improvements across all aspects of school life.
203. The planned, systematic and consistent procedures for monitoring and evaluating performance across the whole school, and over many aspects of its work, are outstanding. The documentation used is of extremely high quality, consistent in format and very effective in supporting plans for future development at all levels.
204. Support staff are involved well in evaluation processes concerning their immediate areas of work. The school recognises in its self-evaluation report that their involvement could be extended further and there are plans for this.
205. The school analyses examination data, benchmark and other data, thoroughly and makes exceptionally good use of it to analyse trends over time and in planning for improvement.

206. The GB, headteacher and LT are very well informed about their areas of responsibility. They are very approachable and there exists an obvious and effective team spirit amongst all staff.
207. Middle managers are well informed about their areas of responsibility and evaluate their work well. Departmental development plans are mostly of good quality and reflect well the SDP. Middle managers generally set appropriate and sufficiently focused targets for improvement.
208. Members of the GB, together with heads of year, are active in monitoring and reviewing the behaviour and attendance of pupils, and in giving support to them to improve. Various other bodies, such as the Eco-Committee and the Transition Council, play an important part in evaluating and refining systems to enable improvement in the quality of experiences for pupils and students to take place.
209. Systems for tracking the standards and general progress of individual pupils and students are outstanding. They are extremely rigorous and inform staff very well about individuals so that they can help them to reach their potential.
210. The effectiveness of planning for improvement is outstanding. There is very good teamwork and the desire by all stakeholders to improve provision, standards and learning experiences for all pupils and students. The clear links between self-evaluation, DDPs and the SDP is outstanding.
211. Teamwork ensures that appropriate and measurable targets and deadlines are set and are generally met very well indeed. In particular actions have led to measurable improvements in achievement, attainment, behaviour, attendance and, significantly, in self-esteem for very many pupils and students.
212. The GB, headteacher and LT are very effective in highlighting the most important things that need to be done to move the school forward and are largely successful in doing so. Challenging targets for improvement have had a positive effect on pupils' and students' learning and academic progress and also on their personal and social development.
213. Priorities are supported well, through very efficient financial control, with adequate allocation of resources.
214. The Investors in People (IIP) award and the Eco Green Flag award have been achieved and give excellent evidence of the effectiveness of plans to improve.
215. Workload and remodelling reforms have been dealt with effectively, giving members of staff opportunity to gain support and training.
216. The effectiveness of planning for improvement is shown further by the excellent progress that has been made in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection in March 2001. The school has improved significantly the:
  - achievement of boys;

- results at GCSE in mathematics and science;
- quality of teaching and learning in art;
- standards in resistant materials courses in design and technology;
- overall provision for physical education;
- match between students' A level results and their capabilities;
- proportion of teaching that is good or better; and
- strategies for teachers to manage pupils' behaviour, especially that of boys.

217. Statutory requirements for the provision of religious education in the sixth form and for a daily act of collective worship have been met.

### **Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?**

#### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

218. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one higher than the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation. The inspection team judged there to be several outstanding features and no important shortcomings

#### **Outstanding feature**

219. Every member of the schools' teaching, support and administrative staff has access to a carefully planned, very well coordinated and appropriate individual development programme. Staff development and training at all levels are exceptional. There is a smooth transition from newly qualified teacher (NQT) induction to early professional development (EPD) and CPD. Staff training is linked very closely to the school's priorities for improvement, performance management and to individuals' development needs. This programme enables staff members to develop and improve their performance, to critically review and share their experiences with other colleagues and to provide pupils and students with high quality experiences to enhance their learning.

220. There are several outstanding features in the school's provision for staffing, learning resources and accommodation.

221. There has been significant improvement to ICT facilities. This has resulted in a considerable increase in the number of computers and computer suites throughout the school. Interactive whiteboards or digital projectors have been installed in virtually every classroom.

222. The number of staff is sufficient for the school to run efficiently and to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. Teaching and support staff are suitably qualified and knowledgeable. Many are very experienced. They are deployed effectively and nearly all teach their specialist subject. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and efficiently in a range of activities that enhances targeted pupils' learning.

223. Highly competent and experienced support staff enable all aspects of the school to function effectively and efficiently.
224. The EWO who is based on-site, provides very good support.
225. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for workload and remodeling. All members of teaching staff are allocated appropriate planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and resources. These arrangements give very good value for money.
226. Accommodation and learning resources are used very well. Many parts of the school have been redecorated to provide a more conducive learning environment. The good features in the provision for accommodation and learning resources include:
- regular, effective cleaning of rooms, halls, corridors and grounds;
  - bright and colourful displays of pupils' achievements and work which contributes to providing a positive and stimulating environment;
  - sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils on roll;
  - mainly large size classrooms;
  - extensive grassed playing fields and floodlit all-weather pitch, and
  - a spacious, well equipped and full-time staffed learning resource centre (LRC).
227. However there are a few shortcomings in the standard of accommodation. In particular the poor state of repair of the accommodation for physical education and several of the science laboratories which are in need of refurbishment.
228. Access ramps are provided for all blocks and there is a toilet for those with disabilities near the main hall. The school has made a bid to the UA for a lift. Currently access to upper floors for those with mobility problems is difficult.
229. Overall, the school is well resourced and this has a positive impact on teaching and learning. There are some outstanding features and numerous good features in the effective and efficient way the school manages its resources. Outstanding features include:
- systematic, methodical and extremely rigorous financial management to ensure cost effectiveness in every aspect of school's expenditure and investment programmes;
  - very close links between allocation of resources and identified priorities for improvement contained in the SDP;
  - frequent reviews, analysing in great detail the utilisation of resources;
  - extensive use of external resources to enhance learning opportunities for all pupils and students, and
  - strong links between subject department plans and budgets including frequent very detailed monitoring of expenditure.
230. The school manages its budget very prudently and retains healthy contingency reserves for unforeseen circumstances and future planned projects. The school tirelessly seeks ways of raising additional funds and has been very successful in securing grants and sponsorships. This additional funding is used well to

enhance learning opportunities for all pupils and students. Senior leaders, administrative staff and the governors finance committee monitor spending decisions very effectively.

231. Despite the small classes in the sixth form staff are, overall deployed economically.
232. Site management personnel, responsible for the maintenance and security of the schools buildings, contribute effectively to day-to-day practices and procedures in the school.
233. Good features in the management, deployment and development of teaching and support staff are:
  - successful implementation of the arrangements associated with the workload agreement including the appropriate allocation of resources for teachers' time for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA);
  - very good support provided for initial teacher trainees and newly qualified teachers (NQTs);
  - administrative staff flexibility, enabling duties to be covered effectively during staff absences;
  - detailed job descriptions for all members of staff, and
  - comprehensive, well-established and very well documented health and safety routines and risk assessments.
234. Given the good standards pupils achieve, the high quality of teaching and support and guidance provided, the school manages its resources effectively, efficiently and prudently to give very good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

**Key stage 3: Grade 1**      **Good with outstanding features**  
**Key stage 4: Grade 1**      **Good with outstanding features**

#### Key stage 3

##### Outstanding features

235. Pupils develop a very good understanding of writing from different cultures. They use texts from Shakespeare and other writers from the literary heritage with high levels of confidence.
236. Pupils display very good listening skills. They show that they can absorb relevant information, respond to instructions and apply what they have heard to enhance their understanding of the text they are studying.

##### Good features

237. The great majority of pupils speak confidently in lessons. Many use a wide range of vocabulary and make valid contributions to oral activities in the classroom.
238. Pupils' reading skills are very good. They read aloud with fluency, understanding and expression.
239. Writing skills are very well developed particularly in Y9. Pupils redraft work conscientiously and produce writing that expresses ideas clearly. They also demonstrate a good grasp of the technical skills of writing in line with indicated levels of ability.
240. Pupils use drafting effectively as a tool for improving their work in terms of the levels of syntax, punctuation and spelling required to produce high quality work.
241. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs are taught with sensitivity and work is pitched skilfully to suit pupils' different levels of attainment and so they make sound progress.

##### Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings

## Key stage 4

### Outstanding features

242. Most pupils respond accurately and with a high degree of clarity. They display very good understanding of topics in question. In class discussions and in focused group work they demonstrate maturity and purpose in discussions with one another.
243. Standard of writing are consistently outstanding. Much good writing is well sustained by pupils and is often the product of considered drafting and careful planning.

### Good features

244. Standards are very good overall. GCSE results are good in both language and literature.
245. Pupils respond well to a wide range of texts, including Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *The Merchant of Venice* and Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Pupils confidently use pre 1914 literature, such as, Maupassant's *The Vendetta*.
246. The great majority of pupils successfully complete tasks that prepare them well for the demands of their GCSE course.
247. Pupils are highly motivated and eager to learn and respond positively to the broad range of tasks across the three attainment targets.
248. Standards of reading are good and more able pupils show that they can read demanding texts such as *Macbeth* with expression and understanding. These pupils also display very good levels of subject knowledge in which they show clear awareness of key literary terminology.

### Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings

**Sixth form:            Grade 1            Good with outstanding features**

### Outstanding features

249. Most students articulate outstanding knowledge and understanding of texts, concepts and theories relating to what they have studied, for example, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and Chaucer's *The Nun's Priest's Tale*. They express critical viewpoints confidently and accurately. They are able to work independently and conduct research highly effectively.

250. Students are able to work very productively in groups and collaborate in a mature manner so that their presentations are of high quality and contribute to the learning of the whole group. Individual presentations show high levels of understanding and personal research in relation to key texts.

### **Good features**

251. The majority of students display well-developed skills in critical analysis. They are highly motivated and demonstrate good standards in their written and oral work.
252. Students are able to offer thoughtful viewpoints and use language and terminology that are appropriate to the subject and related concepts.
253. The vast majority of students understand key themes within the historical and cultural contexts of texts.
254. The most able students engage fully with critical debates and writing in an informed and analytical manner.
255. The majority of students show the capacity for independent thought and judgement as well as developing skills in critical reasoning.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings

<b>Welsh second language</b>
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<b>Key stage 3:</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>Key stage 4:</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Good features outweigh shortcomings</b>

### **Key stage 3**

#### **Good features**

256. Nearly all pupils provide accurate responses in oral exchanges when using familiar sentence patterns. When practising speaking in pairs, most pupils complete tasks well and consolidate language introduced during the lesson.
257. They extend their responses when prompted and are becoming increasingly more proficient in doing this across the ability range.
258. Their pronunciation of familiar vocabulary is good.
259. Pupils listen well to the teacher and to each other. They show a good understanding when listening to different voices and accents on CD or on video.
260. Pupils read and understand short passages based on vocabulary already

acquired. They complete accurately comprehension tasks which require extraction of specific information from the text. Reading skills are being developed and pupils read aloud in class with good intonation.

261. Sentence patterns are written fairly accurately. Pupils produce a variety of written work to convey factual and personal information and express opinions about the district and hobbies. Most pupils make good use of the past tense when discussing weekend activities and are able to give information about what they, and others, have done.
262. Most pupils consolidate their oral work by producing a number of related written tasks. They produce short paragraphs, questions and answers which are completed fairly accurately.
263. The more able pupils complete more extended written tasks and can vary their sentence patterns effectively.
264. Pupils with SEN are making good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

265. A minority of pupils is uncertain in their oral responses and lacks fluency, especially when using new language items. A few pupils do not have a good understanding of what they hear when asked to complete a grid requiring specific information.
266. Reading aloud can be a problem for a minority of pupils in that they mispronounce words, read slowly and without expression. A few pupils fail to transfer their speaking skills on to paper. Their written work contains incorrect language patterns and words that are wrongly spelt.
267. Some pupils fail to complete written tasks within the allocated time and as a result there is unfinished work in their exercise books. Less able pupils have difficulty with written work. Their work is inaccurate and incomplete.

### **Key stage 4**

#### **Good features**

268. The majority of pupils has enough vocabulary to discuss certain topics and use familiar sentences patterns accurately in set situations.
269. The more able pupils use a range of vocabulary, constructions and verb forms fairly confidently when conveying information. They extend their responses expressing opinions with confidence. They have a very good understanding of what they hear.
270. The more able pupils following the GCSE full course show a good understanding of reading material. They use what they have read to complete written tasks accurately.

271. Pupils following the full GCSE course understand a selection of reading and viewing materials and respond to the contents accurately.
272. Pupils following the full GCSE course complete a fairly good variety of written tasks which is based on the need of the external examination. They produce descriptive paragraphs, letters containing personal details and dialogues accurately.
273. More able pupils complete extended pieces of writing while the less able only complete short paragraphs, dialogues and basic language exercises.
274. Pupils with SEN are making good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

275. Recalling language previously learnt is a problem for the less able pupils and they lack confidence and fluency when speaking.
276. Pupils of lower ability understand more language than they use. Their insecure knowledge of previous work leads to uncertain oral responses. They rely heavily on notes and handouts when responding orally.
277. Pupils following the GCSE short course and the less able following the GCSE full course frequently experience difficulty in pronouncing written words, they are hesitant and do not pronounce words correctly.
278. Many pupils following the GCSE short course produce written work which is brief and incomplete. They use basic sentence patterns and a limited vocabulary.
279. The less able pupils make basic grammatical and spelling errors when completing written tasks and they rely heavily on teacher support.
280. Lack of regular lessons makes it difficult for the majority of pupils in Year 11 to retain what they learn and is having an adverse effect on the standard of their achievement. They only make limited progress.

<b>Mathematics</b>
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<b>Key stage 3:</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>Key stage 4:</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>

### **Key stage 3**

#### **Good features**

- 281. Pupils deal effectively with numbers and can classify them appropriately. They understand the properties of prime, square and triangular numbers and demonstrate ability to estimate answers to various mathematical problems.
- 282. Pupils understand the concept of probability and use terms such as less likely and more likely with understanding. They solve simple problems related to choice.
- 283. Pupils name two or three dimensional geometrical shapes or objects with confidence. They calculate correctly areas and volumes of several regular shapes and objects.
- 284. Pupils use the concept of ratio effectively and apply it to solve difficult problems. They understand that ratios can be simplified to lower terms and that the same rules apply to simplifying fractions.
- 285. Pupils understand what is meant by average and can find the mean, median and mode of a list of numbers in a practical context.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 286. A minority of middle ability pupils do not always complete their work. This hinders their progress in lessons and when preparing for tests or examinations.
- 287. Some pupils have difficulty recalling work previously covered and this prevents them making progress.

### **Key stage 4**

#### **Good features**

- 288. Pupils across the ability range have good numerical skills which they use to good effect across the programme of study.
- 289. In algebra pupils are able to solve equations, including fractional equations correctly.
- 290. Graph work is generally correct with co-ordinates plotted accurately whatever type of graph is being constructed. Pupils are able to factorise equations and can solve quadratic equations and expand brackets as necessary.

291. Pupils of all levels of ability deal appropriately with symmetry and know what is meant by line and rotational symmetry.
292. In statistics pupils can create tally charts and use the subsequent results to draw appropriate graphs.

### **Shortcomings**

293. Graphs are not always drawn using a ruler where appropriate and this creates errors in determining results or answers.
294. Some pupils have difficulty understanding their work and this prevents them moving on to new topics.

### **Sixth form**

**Sixth form:            Grade 2            Good features and no important shortcomings**

### **Good features**

295. Students use Calculus confidently to differentiate and integrate expressions as required and work at a high level.
296. Students understand that a vector equation of a given line has components and use this knowledge well to solve various problems.
297. In mechanics they use equations of motion including Newton's law effectively to solve associated problems confidently.
298. In pure mathematics they use given information to determine the equation of a line between two given points.
299. In statistics students calculate the mean and variance of a given set of values.

### **Shortcomings**

300. There are gaps in some students' work which impacts negatively on their progress. Some work is untidily presented.

## Design and technology

<b>Key stage 3</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>Key stage 4</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>

### Key stage 3

#### Good features

301. Pupils follow, and apply successfully, a design process, to design and make a variety of products in food, textiles and resistant materials.
302. Research skills are good and pupils collect and make use of relevant resources to help them make design decisions.
303. Pupils plan well for making. They develop a good understanding of practical and creative processes in a range of materials. Practical outcomes are usually of good quality.
304. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the materials and components they use in their class tasks. They apply electronic control effectively in their project work.
305. Pupils use ICT well for a variety of purposes including Computer Aided Design (CAD) Computer Aided Manufacture (CAM).
306. Pupils of lower ability, and those with SEN, make good progress and realise their potential.

#### Shortcomings

307. Pupils' understanding of structures and methods used to reinforce them is at a very basic level.
308. A significant minority of pupils has weak drawing skills. The design ideas of these pupils lack originality and annotation.

### Key stage 4

309. Pupils understand the function of a design process, and the majority apply it well to guide their project work.
310. Pupils carry out relevant research and analyse a range of open-ended design problems. Where appropriate they model their ideas effectively.
311. Graphical communication skills are good in Y10 and are also evident in the work of more-able pupils in Y11.

- 312. Making skills are good overall. Pupils show interest and focus in their practical tasks. They generally use tools and equipment confidently and safely and produce individual and well-finished products.
- 313. Knowledge and understanding of materials, processes, components and their application are good.
- 314. A range of ICT skills including CAD/CAM are developed and applied well in class and coursework tasks.

### **Shortcomings**

- 315. The design work of a minority of pupils is disorganised and lacks both content and quality.
- 316. A few Y11 boys lack interest and focus, consequently, the progress and completion of their coursework is impeded.

### **Sixth form:            Grade 2            Good features and no important shortcomings**

- 317. Students work independently on individual projects. They display, through their work, a good awareness and appreciation of design principles.
- 318. Students' design work is good. Effective research into commercial products is carried out and used well in the development of the students' own ideas.
- 319. The use of sketchbooks to record ideas and design drawings enhances pupils' design skills.
- 320. Freehand sketching is annotated and leads to more advanced drawing, often produced with the aid of CAD packages. The use of computer-generated graphics is evident in most students' work.
- 321. Making skills are good. Practical products are innovative and incorporate a range of materials and techniques. A good proportion of products show careful consideration for sustainable development.
- 322. Knowledge and understanding of materials, processes and technical terminology are good.

### **Shortcomings**

- 323. Design specifications are not always developed well or used effectively in the production and evaluation of design ideas and outcomes.

## Geography

<b>Key stage 3</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>
<b>Key stage 4</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good features and no important shortcomings</b>

### Good features

#### Key stage 3 and Key stage 4

324. Pupils use case studies to develop awareness and an appropriate sense of place at different scales. Local and Welsh examples are used in conjunction with those of distant places to exemplify different geographical phenomenon.
325. Pupils in Y7 display a good capacity for role-play in a geographic context. They understand the needs of key personnel in matters relating to land use.
326. At KS3, most pupils demonstrate a clear grasp of the cause and effect of natural hazards and, in the case of the December 2004 tsunami, most display empathy towards those affected.
327. At KS4 pupils have the capacity to identify urban land use zones through the analysis of socio-economic data and map evidence. They describe the functions and forms of those zones accurately.
328. The majority of pupils, at both key stages, use maps, data set, photographs and other geographic resources effectively to draw conclusions on various issues. They locate places effectively and display the capacity to produce appropriate graphs and time-maps.
329. Fieldwork enhances most pupils' contextual understanding of geographic phenomenon.
330. Most pupils develop a clear understanding of their work. They confidently discuss what they have learned and record it accurately in their written responses.

### Shortcomings

331. A minority of pupils has difficulty concentrating when discussing geographical issues, for example, the tsunami and issues to do with urban change. They give short answers orally and in writing. This has a negative effect on the standards they achieve.
332. Pupils' ability to research aspects of their work is limited.

**Sixth form:            Grade 1            Good with outstanding features**

**Outstanding features**

333. Students show a clear understanding and capacity to use detailed statistical analysis in monitoring the relationship between different variables. They review the relationships between river size and the suspended load carried and also soil depth and slope angle to ascertain the nature of these geographical correlations.

**Good features**

334. Students display a clear understanding of the demographic features of China. They understand the range of challenges affecting this changing demography. Students produce and scrutinise age-sex pyramids effectively and draw firm conclusions from their analyses.

335. Students demonstrate a good awareness of the inter-relationship between social, economic, environmental and political phenomena in matters relating to water resource development and functions in China.

336. Students are confident in seminar and presentation situations and discuss various geographical issues maturely and with good reasoning.

**Shortcomings**

There are no shortcomings.

<b>Business studies</b>
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**Key stage 4:            Grade 2            Good features and no important shortcomings**

**Good features**

337. Pupils, generally, make very good progress. They do well in their coursework and at GCSE and standards have been consistently good in recent years compared with the results of other schools locally and nationally.

338. Pupils in Y10 know that the financial year runs from April to March and gain a good knowledge of business terminology. They show good understanding of elements of profit and loss accounts and balance sheets. They use specific vocabulary, such as asset and liability, accurately.

339. Pupils in Y11 use terms such as net or gross profit and revenue knowledgeably. Girls use this information a little better than boys. Most pupils use their numeracy skills to good effect to calculate business and performance ratios. Pupils with SEN achieve well relative to their abilities.

**Shortcomings**

- 340. Pupils do not use computers during lessons to research aspects of their work.
- 341. Pupils do not use the outcome of their research well enough to make presentations of their work.

**Sixth form:            Grade 2            Good features and no important shortcomings**

- 342. Students achieve good standards both in coursework and at AS and A2-level examinations. Their standards are usually above those achieved locally or nationally. Standards have been consistently good in recent years and many make very good progress.
- 343. Students gain a good understanding of the problems, opportunities and risks associated with setting up and running a business. Many gain a good working knowledge of patterns of employment, labour turnover, job-sharing and employment legislation.
- 344. Students in Y12 and Y13 have good understanding of the business environment, including business accounting, finance and marketing. Boys do almost as well as girls and all complete a large quantity of good quality, well-ordered written reports and essays.
- 345. They use computers to very good effect in research work at home or in the learning resource centre

**Shortcomings**

- 346. Students are reticent to give public presentations of their work because they have too few opportunities to improve their skills.
- 347. Students rarely use computers in lessons to research aspects of their work.

## School's response to the inspection

348. The headteacher, staff and governors are extremely pleased and proud that the findings of the inspection team recognise that Bedwas High School is a very good school with many outstanding features.
349. The award of the highest grade in five of the seven key questions and grade 2 in the two other key questions has recognised the many outstanding features of the school and is an endorsement of the school's own rigorous self-evaluation procedures which were judged to be outstanding. These grades have also fully supported the inspectors' findings that our school has made 'outstanding progress over the past six years' since our last inspection in March 2001. They also note that there has been excellent progress in all the key issues highlighted for attention in our last report.
350. These comments are most rewarding and clearly reflect the particular strengths of the school which include, 'the extent to which everyone works together to achieve high standards across the school', 'the inspirational leadership' and 'the drive towards achieving excellence and the emphasis placed on continuous improvement'.
351. We are particularly delighted to note the recognition given to all members of the school community including governors, staff, pupils, students, parents and partners for the contribution they have made to the success of our school. It is very pleasing to see that the 'outstanding contribution of the governors to all aspects of school life', the 'exceptional quality of work of the leadership team' and the 'remarkable level of commitment of all members of staff in the school' have been fully acknowledged. This has meant a great deal to us, as have the many positive comments about our pupils and students. We are, quite rightly, very proud of our young people.
352. The ethos of our school is of the highest importance to us and it is pleasing to note that the inspectors recognised that our 'core values of caring and achieving are shared and implemented by all on a daily basis', that there is a 'very positive atmosphere in lessons and around the school', that 'pupils have high levels of respect for their teachers and each other', that the 'quality of provision for equal opportunities is outstanding' and that 'inclusion is at the heart of the school'.
353. It is most pleasing to note that standards have improved considerably since the last inspection. We are also pleased that the quality of teaching in 84% of lessons in KS3 and KS4 was awarded grade 1 and 2 as were 100% of lessons in the sixth form and that the outstanding features of our target setting and assessment systems have been duly recognised.
354. It is most rewarding to note the inspectors judgement that 'the range of learning experiences we provide for our pupils is outstanding', that 'there are no barriers to learning' and that we are 'a school where it is very difficult for pupils to underachieve'.

355. We are particularly pleased that the report has acknowledged the outstanding features in the quality of care, support and guidance which our pupils receive, the provision for pupils with additional learning needs and the attention we give to equal opportunities issues. We are also pleased that the personal, social and learning skills of our pupils have been judged as outstanding as have our links with our extensive range of partners including our primary schools, outside agencies and the community.
356. The inspection has been an informative and supportive process which has made an invaluable contribution to the future development of our school. The positive endorsement of our school in so many areas of work and achievements means that we can move forward with confidence and build further on the many outstanding features and successes that are highlighted in the report.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Bedwas High School
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Newport Road Bedwas Caerphilly
Postcode	CF83 8BJ
Telephone number	02920 859800
Headteacher	Mrs Marcelle Anita Cook
Date of appointment	January 1998
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Clive Hughes
Reporting inspector	Julia Helen Cantle Longville
Dates of inspection	19-23 March 2007

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	120	112	115	155	112	41	42	697

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	40	1	40.7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.1
Average teaching group size	21.1
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	79

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	93.4	90.7	91.4	87.9	91.1	90	87.5	90.9
Term 2	89.1	90.3	88.8	88.4	88	86.7	85.9	88.9
Term 3	91.6	89.9	88.9	89.3	91.9	82.6	81.6	90.9

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	18.9
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	33 (temporary) 7 (permanent)

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006																
Total number of pupils in Y9: 115																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	22	41	27	7	0	0	
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	8	21	35	24	8	0	0	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	19	33	28	10	0	0	
		National	0	5	1	0	0	1	6	18	24	32	15	0	0	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	23	37	31	4	0	0	
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	19	33	27	12	0	0	

- D Pupils excepted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum  
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence  
W Pupils who are working towards level 1  
EP Exceptional Performance, where pupils at Key Stage 3 perform above level 8

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)	
by Teacher Assessment	
In the school	61
In Wales	58

## Public Examination Results:

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ</b>	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	115
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	38

<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:</b>	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	88	87	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	45	46	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	84	86	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	37	33	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	96	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	74	72	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	91	93	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	9	7	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	3	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	0		
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0		

<b>For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2006	44
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006	41
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006	3

	<b>School</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>Wales</b>
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	63	61	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	98	93	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	17	18	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0		

UA Unitary Authority

## Appendix 4

### **Evidence base for the inspection**

Fifteen inspectors, including a peer assessor and the school's nominee, spent a total of 42.5 days in the school and met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

- 97 lessons or part lessons taught by teachers in all subjects;
- acts of collective worship;
- registration and form-tutor periods; and
- a few extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

- staff, governors and parents before the inspection began;
- senior managers, middle managers, teachers, support assistants and administrative staff;
- representatives of the community and other partners; and
- groups of pupils and students.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 27 replies to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- a range of pupils' work in all subjects across the curriculum from Y7 to Y13.

After the inspection, the registered inspector held meetings with the senior leadership team and governors.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Julia Longville	Registered Inspector Context, Summary, Recommendations KQ1, KQ5, Appendix
Martin Rawle	KQ2
Ron Graham	KQ3
David Williams	KQ4
Alan Cooke	KQ6
Kerry Jones	Lay Inspector KQ7
Philip Taylor	SEN
Charlie Harris	English
Heulwen Jones	Welsh Second Language
Peredur Francis	Mathematics
Margaret Herbert	Design and Technology
Alan Pritchard	Geography
Robert Isaac	Business Studies
Robert Davies	Nominee
Patricia Hicks	Peer Assessor

### Acknowledgement

The Inspection team would like to thank the governors, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy during the inspection.

### Contractor

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