

**Inspection under Section 10 of the
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comprehensive School
Mynydd Garnlwyd Road
Swansea
SA6 7QG**

School Number: 6704600

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by

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3508**

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- * pupil referral units;
- * independent schools;
- * further education;
- * adult and community-based learning;
- * youth support services;
- * LEAs;
- * teacher education and training;
- * work-based learning;
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Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comprehensive 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 Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comprehensive School took place between 27/03/06 and 30/03/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Brian William Medhurst 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:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	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 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. Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comprehensive School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive voluntary aided school within the City and County of Swansea Unitary Authority (UA) and the Catholic diocese of Menevia. There are 1271 pupils on roll, including 243 in the sixth form. At the time of the previous inspection, there were 1145 pupils in the school.
2. The school serves the whole authority and its environs. Most pupils are Catholic and come from Catholic primary schools, but around 30% are practising Christians of other denominations. There is a sizeable minority of pupils from ethnic minorities. Some of these pupils require extra help with learning English as an additional language, and this is provided for 33 of them. There are virtually no pupils who speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. The school caters for pupils with physical disabilities, as the situation requires. About half of the pupils reside in areas designated by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) as deprived in socio-economic terms.
3. Pupils entering the school represent the full range of ability. Overall, their ability profile is slightly above the UA average. There are 164 pupils on the special educational needs (SEN) register, including 25 who have statements of SEN. The school's intake is fully comprehensive.
4. Fifteen percent of pupils are entitled to claim free school meals, a figure below the UA average of 19.8% and very close to the national figure of 15.7%.
5. The school was inspected previously in January 2000. The headteacher, two deputy headteachers and three assistant headteachers were in post at that time.
6. Currently, the headteacher has oversight of two schools: Bishop Vaughan and Dylan Thomas (a local comprehensive). Because of this situation, Bishop Vaughan School has two deputy headteachers and four assistant headteachers that include temporary posts. A new headteacher has been appointed for Dylan Thomas School for September 2006.

The school's priorities and targets

7. In its mission statement, the school states that, "Bishop Vaughan is a Christian community in the Catholic tradition. Our mission is to provide an outstanding whole person education through which all are challenged to grow in wisdom, understanding, self worth and closeness to God."
8. The key characteristics that the school seeks to display are faith, scholarship, community, personal growth and social justice, all together in Christ.

9. The school aims to challenge all persons to use their God given gifts and talents to achieve excellence and make significant progress in all aspects of their school life. It expects everyone to recognise the fundamental dignity of everyone else and their status as children of God. It also aims to encourage everyone to take an active role in the life of the school, both within the classroom and elsewhere. The school strives to reward people for their efforts to better themselves and to help those around them.

Summary

10. Bishop Vaughan School is a good school. Within it, pupils benefit from high quality care, guidance and support whilst being challenged by good teaching to realise their potential for academic and personal success. The ethos of the school is influenced positively and strongly by its commitment to a Christian education in accordance with the principles of the Catholic faith.

Table of grades 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?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	3
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

Standards

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	KS3	KS4	Post 16
Mathematics	2	3	2
Science	1	1	2
Information technology	2	2	2
History	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2
Physical education	2	2	2

11. The following table shows the grades awarded for the standards that pupils and students achieved, at different stages, in the six subjects inspected in depth:

93 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key Stage 3	12	67	16	5	0
Key Stage 4	20	67	13	0	0
Combined KS3/KS4	15	67	15	3	0
Post 16	0	95	5	0	0
Whole School	12	73	13	2	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

12. National targets for 2007 are for 98% of lessons to be graded 3 or better and 65% to be graded 2 or better. As the table above indicates, the school almost matched the figure for grade 3 or higher with 97% and exceeded the target for grades 1 and 2, with a noteworthy 82%.
13. The school provides adequate opportunities for all pupils to achieve their potential. Overall, pupils work well and achieve success within the school's very supportive environment.
14. Pupils regularly perform well in external tests and examinations in both key stages. Such success can be seen in:
- the high proportions of pupils achieving level 5 or better in the Key Stage 3 national tests, and
 - the proportions of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE or equivalent grades A* to C, and A* to G, that are well above both national and local averages.
15. When the school's success in GCSE examinations is compared with that achieved in schools in Wales having similar intakes, the school performs above average or better. Even though the school's GCSE success compares well with local and national figures, the 2005 results fall just short of targets agreed with the UA.
16. Almost all pupils listen respectfully to teachers and to one another and they respond willingly to questions. All engage well in collaborative work in pairs and small groups. The depth and quality of discussion is variable. Most pupils read a wide range of texts including screen, graphs and media material. Pupils write in a range of forms and show understanding of audience and purpose. Most improve by planning and drafting extended work.
17. Overall, pupils' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. A small minority of pupils lack confidence in their numerical abilities when having to apply and use number in everyday situations.
18. Across the curriculum, good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' confidence and competence in using computers. In most subjects, pupils are developing their skills well in researching their projects using the Internet and other electronic data sources.

19. Key Stage 3 pupils have very positive attitudes to learning Welsh, but the bilingual skills of the majority of these pupils are underdeveloped. In Key Stage 4, results in the Welsh GCSE full course are consistently 20% above the national average.
20. Pupils usually make good progress, whatever their ability and prior attainment, in most subjects. Using a good range of strategies the school does well in attempting to ensure that pupils are fully aware of how well they are doing. Many pupils with SEN make at least good progress.
21. A few pupils make less progress than expected because they leave work unfinished and/or do not catch up on work missed. On a few occasions they are not always suitably challenged by the work presented.
22. The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is good overall. This is because pupils:
 - show interest in their work, usually sustain concentration and generally make effective use of their time;
 - are aware and respectful of the diversity of lifestyles, beliefs and other cultures through assemblies and lessons such as religious education and personal and social education (PSE);
 - are aware of the importance of equality of opportunity in society, and
 - show respect for their environment.
23. The vast majority of pupils behave responsibly and show good respect to visitors, their teachers and each other. They appreciate the expectations of the schools' code of good conduct.
24. The school has clear expectations on attendance and most pupils meet these well. Current figures, at around 91% to 92% exceed both UA and national averages. The consistency marks a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are usually punctual arriving at school unless there are difficulties with transport. They also move around school purposefully and are prompt at lessons.
25. With very few exceptions, pupils make good progress in their wider key skills. Problem solving skills are good. Pupils are often creative in the development and presentation of their ideas. The ability to work with others is good and occasionally outstanding.

Sixth form

26. The figures in the table far exceed the national targets for 2007, with students' standards of achievement being awarded grade 3 or higher in all lessons observed and grade 2 in 95%.
27. Recent success in A level or equivalent examinations does not match that achieved in the GCSE or equivalent assessments. In 2005, the proportions of students achieving success in two or more A level or equivalent examinations, at grades A to C and A to E were below UA and national averages. In a

substantial number of cases, low levels of attendance can be identified as being instrumental in causing this.

28. The school has recognised the problem of students failing to realise their potential in years 12 and 13, and from the grades awarded by the inspectors from lesson evaluations, it would seem that the actions taken to address the issues of underachievement are having a beneficial effect.
29. Course completion rates are good, with around 93% of students completing their chosen programmes of study in Y13. Most Y13 students progress on to higher education.
30. Students listen attentively to their teachers and peers. Many put forward opinions and support their views with evidence. Reading standards are good. Students respond to a wide range of texts demonstrating good skills of interpretation, critical analysis, cross reference and research. Students write effectively for a range of purposes.
31. Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings.
32. Many students make effective use of computers for research and/or communication purposes.
33. Most students now make good progress during their time in the sixth form, which is confirmed by the standards achieved in the subjects inspected in depth.
34. In many subjects, students are encouraged to take the initiative for their own learning, being challenged to undertake independent research or to solve problems. On the whole, they respond positively, make appropriate progress and are thus prepared well for learning beyond school.
35. The development of students' personal, social and learning skills is good because students:
 - show positive attitudes to learning and engage enthusiastically in their work;
 - are courteous and respectful to teachers, visitors and one another;
 - contribute to the life of the school by engaging in charitable projects, duties, the school's council and extra curricular activities, and
 - behave with a growing confidence and are positive role models and mentors for younger pupils.
36. Some students' attendance has been a cause for concern, but the situation is now greatly improved.
37. Students' behaviour is exemplary whilst in school. They appreciate and respect the facilities made available to them, both for study and for social activities.
38. A good proportion of students work independently and take the necessary measures to improve their own learning and performance.

The quality of education and training

39. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons observed during the inspection:

156 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key Stage 3	18	69	10	3	0
Key Stage 4	19	71	8	2	0
Combined KS3/KS4	19	70	9	2	0
Post 16	24	76	0	0	0
Whole School	20	71	7	2	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

40. The school is a happy and caring Christian community. Learners' spiritual development is good with outstanding features.
41. Teaching is predominantly good with no important shortcomings because most teachers:
- have extensive knowledge of the subjects they teach and this allows them to set suitably challenging tasks;
 - have high expectations of success and communicate these well to pupils, who generally respond well;
 - enjoy good relationships with their pupils that enable learning to occur in positive structured environments;
 - often make outstanding provision for pupils with SEN;
 - prepare well structured lessons based upon well designed programmes of study and schemes of work, and
 - use an appropriate range of activities and resources in lessons to maintain pupils' interest and involvement.
42. Where there are shortcomings it is because, in a few lessons, some teachers:
- do not challenge pupils sufficiently well to move them forward at the appropriate rate, especially the more able pupils, and
 - maintain a slow pace of work so that pupils become disinterested.
43. It is worth noting that many teachers willingly give freely of their own time to help pupils in a wide range of support and/or extra-curricular activities.
44. There are clear procedures for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievement. Practice is good overall, but there are still a few shortcomings in assessment.
45. The school generally meets pupils' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996. Overall, the

curriculum allows pupils of all abilities equality of access. Pupils are encouraged to achieve success in each key stage.

46. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced in each key stage. There are a number of good features, but a few shortcomings exist, mainly in respect of time allowances for subjects in the curriculum.
47. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for all pupils to study Welsh up to school leaving age, as a few pupils are withdrawn from Welsh classes in Key Stage 4. This is because the school considers it to be more beneficial for the pupils to receive extra support to improve their basic skills.
48. Many pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by the varied extra-curricular activities offered by the school.
49. Acts of daily communal worship together with opportunities to reflect and meditate within and outside school help learners develop an understanding of beliefs and values.
50. Learners' moral, social and cultural development has good features and no important shortcomings.
51. Pupils' learning is enriched by positive partnerships with parents, community, primary schools and other educational providers. Work-related education is very good with well-managed work experience and other activities. The effectiveness of the careers education and guidance programme is outstanding. The school has achieved the Careers Wales Quality Award.
52. Activities are arranged by the Welsh department to help pupils develop bilingual skills. These include the annual eisteddfod, theatre visits, residential courses and Menter Tawe events. The department also raises pupil awareness of the benefits of becoming bilingual with regard to employment in the area.
53. A recent audit identified that Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is effectively embedded in schemes of work of some subjects. This is not consistent across the curriculum.
54. There are some good features in promoting the awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. There is good encouragement for learners to develop entrepreneurial skills.
55. The curriculum overall, extra-curricular opportunities and work-related education ensure that the learning experiences reflect most national priorities and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.
56. The quality of care, guidance and support given to learners is good with outstanding features. The school plans and manages its care arrangements extremely effectively.
57. The quality of the support for pupils with additional learning needs has outstanding features. Such support enables them to make at least good progress.

58. The quality and provision for equal opportunities is good, but there are a few shortcomings, particularly in respect of the provision made for Welsh.

Sixth form

59. The quality of the teaching was adjudged to be best overall in the sixth form, with 24% of lessons being awarded the highest grade.
60. The good features described above for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are also present in most of the teaching in Y12 and Y13. Additionally, teachers often challenge students to undertake individual research projects and through carefully designed activities, also make it possible for students to make original and innovative responses. The assessment of students' work is good.
61. In many ways, students are prepared well for lifelong learning in other environments beyond school.
62. Work-related education is very good in the sixth form. The principal aspects are the well-managed work experience in vocational courses, and a range of useful supporting events and activities for all students. The programme for careers education and guidance is outstanding in its extent.
63. All the good and outstanding features of support and guidance found in the main school are present in the sixth form.
64. Students in the sixth form are mature and play an exceedingly useful role in the school's everyday life. They support younger pupils well, organise activities and undertake a variety of duties.

Leadership and management

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

65. The headteacher, together with the other members of the senior management team (SMT) provide good leadership.
66. All members of staff and the governing body share a common sense of purpose in promoting the Catholic values that underpin the school.
67. Leaders and managers have been successful in providing a clear educational direction for the school and in promoting high standards. The school has done well in promoting equality for all.
68. Target setting at all levels is a good feature of the school's systems. Procedures are generally effective.
69. The school has made good progress in implementing its plans for remodelling the workforce. Suitable provision has also been made in the timetable for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA).

70. The headteacher, the governors and other members of the SMT have finalised their proposals for the new teaching and learning responsibilities (TLR). Not all concerned parties have accepted these.
71. Most members of staff with middle management responsibilities lead and manage well within their subject-specific and/or pastoral areas of provision. There are, however, some shortcomings, usually attributable to inconsistent implementation of the school's policies.
72. The SMT has achieved well in many areas, but it recognises that it has not been wholly successful in encouraging all members of staff to share actively in the school's planned improvements.
73. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and their roles in its management. They are actively involved in all aspects of planning, monitoring and evaluation of school performance.
74. Members of the school's SMT have a good understanding of the establishment's strengths and shortcomings. This is confirmed by the inspection team's findings matching most of the school's own perceptions in its self evaluation report.
75. Likewise, many heads of department and other middle managers have, as a result of their own evaluation procedures, in-depth knowledge of their areas of responsibility. There is, however, some inconsistency in the rigour and effectiveness of these evaluations across the school.
76. The priorities within improvement plans are designed well to bring about change for the better, whilst subscribing to the school's main intent of being a Christian community within the Catholic tradition.
77. There are sufficient members of staff for the school to run efficiently. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and those comparatively new to the profession. The deployment of most staff makes good and effective use of their time, expertise and experience.
78. The quality and quantity of learning resources for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are good with a wide range and supply of textbooks and equipment.
79. The accommodation is sufficient for the numbers of learners currently on roll. It meets the pastoral and academic needs of the curriculum, but a few rooms are too small for some of the larger classes timetabled to use them. In lessons in the information technology (IT) rooms, the 16 or so computers in each room are insufficient for the numbers of pupils in most classes, and this has an adverse effect on the progress of some pupils.
80. The financial management of the school is very good. Overall, the school uses its finances and resources competently and achieves good value for money.

Sixth form

81. The sixth form is an integral and vital part of the school.

82. The good features of leadership and management as a whole are also evident in this section of the school. High expectations, monitoring of progress, teamwork and a commitment to succeed predominate life in the sixth form. Members of the SMT, subject teachers, heads of year and tutors all contribute to the smooth running of this section of the school.
83. There are several good features of the organisation and management of the sixth form. These include:
- a supportive and structured induction programme for new students;
 - an effective system of monitoring for students, and
 - a good range of extra-curricular activities.
84. In the sixth form, there is a good range and supply of textbooks and equipment. During lessons, when there are no classes, students use the library well for independent learning and research.

Progress since the previous inspection

85. As stated in the context section of this report, the school was inspected previously in January 2000. Overall, the progress made, in addressing the key issues for action highlighted in that inspection report, has good features and no important shortcomings.

Recommendations

- R1 Satisfy statutory requirements for the teaching of Welsh to all pupils in Y7 to Y11.
- R2 Continue to raise standards in all subjects, especially in those where shortcomings have been identified.
- R3 Review the curriculum and associated timetabling arrangements, to address the shortcomings highlighted in Key Question 3.
- R4 Members of the SMT should continue to seek further ways of encouraging all members of staff to share actively in the school's planned improvements, so that inconsistencies in implementing school policies are eliminated.

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

86. The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

87. The following table shows the grades awarded for the standards that pupils achieved in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in the six subjects inspected in depth:

72 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key Stage 3	12	67	16	5	0
Key Stage 4	20	67	13	0	0
Combined KS3/KS4	15	67	15	3	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

88. The good features and shortcomings of standards achieved in the six subjects inspected individually in depth can be found in later sections of the report.
89. National targets for 2007 are for 98% of lessons to be graded 3 or better and 65% to be graded 2 or better. As the table above indicates, the school almost matched the figure for grade 3 or higher with 97% and exceeded the target for grades 1 and 2, with a noteworthy 82%.
90. The school's intake represents the full range of ability with an even distribution across the whole span of aptitudes. Overall, the ability profile is slightly better than that of the UA. Measures of prior attainment and other indicators subscribe to support this comment. In most cases pupils, including those with SEN, meet or exceed expectations, particularly by the end of Key Stage 3.
91. The school provides adequate opportunities for all pupils to achieve their potential. Because of this, pupils generally work well and achieve success within the school's very supportive environment, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background and/or prior attainment.
92. Pupils regularly perform well in external tests and examinations in both key stages. Such success can be seen in:
- ongoing improvements in or maintenance of good standards over time;

- the high proportions of pupils achieving level 5 or better in the Key Stage 3 national tests in English, mathematics and science that are well above national averages;
 - the proportions of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE or equivalent grades A* to C, and A* to G, that are well above both national and local averages;
 - the above average proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in all three subjects: English, mathematics and science, and
 - the fact that pupils achieve an average GCSE points score in excess of UA and national averages.
93. When the school's success in GCSE examinations is compared with that achieved in other schools in Wales having similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school performs above average or better on all counts.
94. As is the case in many schools, girls often outperform boys in external examinations. The school is rightly pleased that the difference has been reduced in recent years, and that it now matches the national average gender gap.
95. Even though the school's GCSE success compares well with local and national figures, there are one or two shortcomings. These include:
- a slight rise in the proportion of pupils failing to achieve any GCSE or equivalent grade, and
 - a slight shortfall in matching challenging UA targets.
96. Almost all pupils listen respectfully to teachers and to one another. They respond willingly to questions. More able pupils give extended responses and usually use Standard English. Most know and use subject specific language. All engage well in collaborative work in pairs and small groups. The depth and quality of discussion is variable.
97. Most pupils read a wide range of texts including screen, graphs and media material. Most read aloud with accuracy and fluency. Many read with expression. The pupils with special educational needs made good progress. There is good use of the school's library.
98. Pupils write in a range of forms and show understanding of audience and purpose. They extend their writing when required. Most improve by planning and drafting extended work but a small number of middle and lower ability pupils leave work unfinished and do not always proof read so that errors of spelling and punctuation persist. Presentation of written work is mostly good.
99. Overall, pupils' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. In both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 there is evidence of some good and very good standards.
100. A small minority of pupils lack confidence in their numerical abilities when having to apply and use number in everyday situations. They have difficulty retaining mathematical concepts and are unable to apply them effectively. This is particularly evident in Key Stage 4.

101. The basic skills co-ordinator is responsible for co-ordinating numeracy across the curriculum. The school has carried out an audit across subject areas. The analysis of this audit and the implementation and development of a coordinated approach is in its very early stages. This is a school priority.
102. Across the curriculum, good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' confidence and competence in using computers. In most subjects, pupils are developing their skills well in researching their projects, using the Internet and other electronic data sources. The most able present their work very well using a good range of communication techniques. Pupils' skills in the use of presentation software in history and religious education are good. In electronics, pupils are confident and very competent users of complicated software to solve problems. In science, pupils use a very broad range of subject specific software very well for a variety of purposes. However, in a small minority of other subjects pupils do not readily use computers to research and present their work. Not all pupils are given sufficient opportunities to make creative use of computers and to develop higher order skills productively.
103. Key Stage 3 pupils have very positive attitudes to learning Welsh. The bilingual skills of the majority of these pupils are underdeveloped, as time allocated for them to study Welsh in Y8 is limited. In Key Stage 4, results in the Welsh GCSE full course are consistently 20% above the national average.

Pupils' progress in learning

104. Pupils usually make good progress, whatever their ability and prior attainment, in most subjects. Pupils 'looked after' by the UA and those from other ethnic heritages frequently do well whilst in the school.
105. Using a range of strategies, the school does well in attempting to ensure that pupils are aware of the levels at which they are working.
106. Across the curriculum, but not consistently so, pupils generally:
 - are aware of progress made in lessons and over time;
 - have at least good recall of previous work and apply this well in new situations and more demanding tasks;
 - have a good understanding of key concepts and can apply them in a range of tasks;
 - develop investigational skills that they put to effective use;
 - refine and develop skills through practice;
 - are prepared well to move on to the next stages of learning, and
 - make very good progress in response to very good teaching when it occurs.
107. Many pupils with SEN make at least good progress.
108. A few pupils make less progress than expected because they:

- leave work unfinished and/or do not catch up on work missed, more evidently so in Key Stage 3;
- do not organise themselves sufficiently well when preparing for tests and examinations, and
- are not always suitably challenged by the work presented.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills

109. The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is good. This is because pupils:
- usually show appreciation for and respond positively to good teaching;
 - mainly listen with respect and participate willingly in tasks and activities;
 - collaborate well when they work in pairs and small groups;
 - show interest in their work, usually sustain concentration and generally make effective use of their time;
 - respond to questions willingly and take part in class discussions;
 - are aware and respectful of the diversity of lifestyles, beliefs and other cultures through assemblies and lessons such as religious education and PSE;
 - are aware of the importance of equality of opportunity in society;
 - understand the demands of the workplace and community life through the programme for PSE, work experience and subjects taught;
 - usually behave well in lessons and around the school;
 - show respect for their environment;
 - make good progress in personal, social and moral development, and
 - show some ability to work independently.
110. The vast majority of pupils behave responsibly and show good respect to visitors, their teachers and each other. They appreciate the expectations of the school's code of good conduct. In lessons they honour the right of others to a fair hearing and listen and wait their turn with courtesy. In the playground they relax as a happy and harmonious community.
111. A small number of pupils in Y7, however, make insufficient progress in personal, social and learning skills because they do not always show kindness and respect for one another.
112. There is a very small number of individuals across all ages in school whose behaviour becomes discourteous and challenging when lessons do not fully occupy them.
113. The school has clear expectations on attendance and most pupils meet these well. Over the last few years the school has maintained good attendance rates in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. At around 91% to 92% they exceed both UA and national averages. The consistency marks a significant improvement since the last inspection and reflects the high level of rigour in school procedures and excellent support from the educational welfare officer (EWO). Absence is generally for sickness or authorised holidays in term time. Unauthorised absence

is usually low, but exceeded 2% in some year groups at certain times in the last year.

114. Pupils are usually punctual arriving at school unless there are difficulties with transport. They also move around school purposefully and are prompt at lessons.
115. With very few exceptions, pupils make good progress in their wider key skills.
116. Problem solving skills are good. In a number of lessons, pupils persevere effectively to solve a range of open-ended tasks. They generally formulate well-reasoned solutions and demonstrate good analytical and evaluative skills.
117. Pupils are often creative in the development and presentation of their ideas. Good examples are evident in the work in art, design and technology, English, music and physical education, where pupils display a high level of flair and originality.
118. The ability to work with others is good and occasionally outstanding. Pupils co-operate sensibly and productively in pairs and small groups. They engage in meaningful debate and show consideration and respect of each other's views.

Sixth form

119. The following table shows the grades awarded for the standards that sixth form students achieved in the six subjects inspected in depth:

21 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Post 16	0	95	5	0	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

120. The figures in the table far exceed the national targets for 2007, with students' standards of achievement being awarded grade 3 or higher in all lessons observed and grade 2 in 95%.
121. As described later in this report, standards achieved by students in all six of the subjects inspected in depth are at least good with no important shortcomings.
122. Recent success in A level or equivalent examinations does not match that achieved in the GCSE or equivalent assessments. In 2005, in only just under a quarter of the subjects examined at A level, students achieved better results than their GCSE grades would indicate. In a substantial number of cases, low levels of attendance can be identified as being instrumental in causing this.
123. In 2005, the proportions of students achieving success in two or more A level or equivalent examinations, at grades A to C and A to E were below UA and

national averages. Similarly with students' average points scores – below local and national figures. Results in previous years have been slightly better.

124. The school has recognised the problem of students failing to realise their potential in years 12 and 13, and from the grades awarded by the inspectors from lesson evaluations, it would seem that the actions taken to address the issues of underachievement are having a beneficial effect.
125. The school has an open entry policy for those wishing to continue their studies in the sixth form. In September 2005, 59% of the Y11 cohort remained in the school to continue their education.
126. Course completion rates are good, with around 93% of students completing their chosen programmes of study in Y13. Most of those who leave at the end of Y12 do so having obtained their required levels of accreditation prior to taking up employment or further education elsewhere.
127. Most Y13 students progress on to higher education. Around 85% of this year's students will be applying to do so through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). These are very good figures.
128. Students listen attentively to their teachers and peers. Many put forward opinions and support their views with evidence. There is confident use of a technical vocabulary and good collaboration in pairs and small groups.
129. Reading standards are good. Students respond to a wide range of texts including statistics demonstrating good skills of interpretation, critical analysis, cross reference and research. They refer to texts to support opinion.
130. Written work is often well structured. Students write effectively for a range of purposes. They respond to critical comments written by teachers so that final drafts are of a good quality.
131. Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. Numeracy is an integral part of many areas of the curriculum and students use their mathematical skills to advantage in numerous situations.
132. Many students make effective use of computers for research and/or communication purposes. Outstanding skills and outcomes were observed in the use of complicated CAD software in the sixth form. Computers are used well in music especially to enhance composing.

Students' progress in learning

133. Most students now make good progress during their time in the sixth form, which is confirmed in the subject reports that follow. Generally, students are motivated well to learn, but a few still find it hard to do so, because of time spent being absent from school. Those who attend regularly are mature and responsible young adults who organise themselves and their time effectively.

134. As assessment procedures in the sixth form are effective, students' progress and attainment, along with other aspects, are carefully and successfully monitored. These procedures, including good support from tutors, subject teachers, heads of year and SMT members, are influential in helping students to make progress and fulfil their potential.
135. In many subjects, students are encouraged to take the initiative for their own learning, being challenged to undertake independent research or to solve problems. On the whole, they respond positively, make appropriate progress and are thus prepared well for learning beyond school. A few students, however, are too reliant upon their teachers for guidance and support and do not make enough progress towards becoming self-sufficient learners.

The development of students' personal, social and learning skills

136. The development of students' personal, social and learning skills is good because students:
 - show positive attitudes to learning and engage enthusiastically in their work;
 - are courteous and respectful to teachers, visitors and one another;
 - collaborate well in pairs and small groups;
 - show appreciation for good teaching;
 - contribute to the life of the school by engaging in charitable projects, duties, the school's council and extra curricular activities, and
 - behave with a growing confidence and are positive role models and mentors for younger pupils.
137. As mentioned previously, some students' attendance has been a cause for concern, but the situation is now greatly improved.
138. Students' behaviour is exemplary whilst in school. They appreciate and respect the facilities made available to them, both for study and for social activities.
139. Students collaborate effectively with each other. Their ability to work with others is outstanding in all subject areas.
140. Students display competent problem-solving and creative skills. Particularly good examples are seen in art, design and technology, English, music and physical education where ideas, solutions, and written and practical outcomes demonstrate high levels of reasoning and innovation.
141. A good proportion of students work independently and take the necessary measures to improve their own learning and performance.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

142. The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

143. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 lessons observed during the inspection:

123 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key Stage 3	18	69	10	3	0
Key Stage 4	19	71	8	2	0
Combined KS3/KS4	19	70	9	2	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

How well teaching and training meets learners' needs and the curricular or course requirements

144. Teaching is predominantly good with no important shortcomings because most teachers:

- provide sensitive support that helps pupils to become confident learners;
- have extensive knowledge of the subjects they teach and this allows them to set suitably challenging tasks;
- have high expectations of success and communicate these well to pupils, who generally respond well;
- are able to 'tease' information from reluctant speakers in lessons;
- enjoy good relationships with their pupils that enable learning to occur in positive structured environments;
- let pupils know what is expected of them and help them to review progress at the end of lessons;
- use learning support assistants to best effect, so that all pupils have opportunities to achieve well;
- often make outstanding provision for pupils with SEN;
- prepare well structured lessons based upon well designed programmes of study and schemes of work;
- use an appropriate range of activities and resources in lessons to maintain pupils' interest and involvement;
- maintain a good pace of meaningful activity in lessons;
- are enthusiastic in their teaching and this enthusiasm helps motivate pupils and promotes a positive attitude to learning in them;

- meet most of the language needs of their pupils, including catering well for those for whom English is not their first language;
- treat all pupils equally well, whatever their gender, disability or racial background.
- present pupils with tasks that are well matched to their ability and prior attainment, so that they are challenged suitably to make progress, and
- use ICT advantageously to improve the learning environment.

145. Where there are shortcomings it is because, in a few lessons, some teachers:

- do not challenge pupils sufficiently well to move them forward at the appropriate rate, especially the more able pupils;
- pay too little attention to developing pupils' key skills, most noticeably in respect of numeracy and improving their own learning and performance;
- fail to cope effectively with the wide range of pupils' abilities in mixed ability classes;
- do not make best use of the information and communication technology (ICT) facilities that are available to enhance learning opportunities;
- maintain a slow pace of work so that pupils become disinterested;
- do not consistently promote incidental use of Welsh in their subjects;
- do not question in sufficient depth and sometimes provide the answers for pupils before they have a chance to answer, and
- dominate lessons and provide too little time for pupils to work independently.

146. It is worth noting that many teachers willingly give freely of their own time to:

- help pupils with their coursework and/or homework or to provide extra support for pupils with learning difficulties at lunchtimes and after school;
- help pupils catch up with their work when they return to school after a period of absence, and
- enhance and broaden pupils' education through a range of extra-curricular activities.

The rigour of assessment and its use in planning and improving learning

147. There are clear procedures for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievement. Practice is good overall because departments and teachers:

- in most subjects, adopt policies and strategies to implement the school's procedures;
- are familiar with the school's database which includes information on Key Stage 2 national tests, the All Wales Reading Test, Cognitive Abilities Test scores and predicted end of key stage results;
- use the school's database to identify pupils with SEN and to allocate pupils to groups and sets;
- examine pupils twice a year in each subject and use the results, along with results of common assessment tasks, to provide a working level for each pupil in Key Stage 3 and a working grade for each pupil in Key Stage 4;

- provide sub-levels for pupils in Key Stage 3 so that progress can be readily identified;
- track progress against previous and predicted results using the school's 'Traffic Light' system;
- identify under-achievement, take action and inform parents;
- in many subjects, moderate work to standardise marking;
- in many subjects, monitor the work of departments aiming at consistency of practice;
- analyse the results of external examinations each year in subject reviews with the senior management team;
- ensure that the requirements for the assessment of NC, examination boards and targets in IEPs are fully met;
- use the assessment data to plan lessons and review schemes of work in a few subjects;
- mark work rigorously, identifying strengths, weaknesses and setting targets for improvement in some subjects;
- involve pupils in their own assessment against known criteria in some subjects;
- provide annual subject reports for pupils and parents which identify strengths and indicate how improvements may be made, and
- meet parents of pupils in Y9 - Y11 once each year to discuss progress.

148. In addition, form tutors and heads of year:

- use the school's database to track individual pupil's attainment and progress in each subject;
- use the information to identify underachievement;
- discuss progress with pupils following the school's process of review during Assessment Days, tutor periods and on Work Related Days;
- summarise effort, achievement and progress to be included in annual reports, and
- on annual Assessment Days, meet Y7 and Y8 parents and pupils to discuss progress.

149. Members of the senior management team:

- have devised a whole school policy and mark scheme to guide departmental practice, aiming at consistency;
- compile the school's baseline database from which they predict end of Key Stage 3 levels and Key Stage 4 grades for each pupil;
- use the results of tasks and examinations, set by departments twice each year, to update the database. Provide new data, which includes differentials in performance so that progress can be tracked. This 'Traffic Light' system is effective and warns heads of department and heads of year of under achievement and of pupils at risk of under achievement;
- offer guidance to tutors and heads of year on how to conduct progress reviews with individual pupils and how to interpret data;
- arrange Assessment Days for parents and tutors for pupils in Y7 and Y8;
- arrange Parents' Evenings for parents and subject teachers for pupils in Y9, Y10 and Y11;

- collapse the timetable in the summer term for 'Work Related' days during which tutors meet pupils for a review of progress;
- discuss external examination results with heads of department in an annual process of review. New minimum targets are set for individuals, form groups and year groups;
- use their link role to support departments and monitor practice;
- mentor every pupil in Key Stage 4;
- ensure that a progress report is sent to parents / carers of pupils in years 7 to 10 each year and a full annual report is issued to all pupils in both key stages;
- ensure that assessment issues are discussed in meetings of the Academic Standards Groups so that further guidance is offered and good practice is shared;
- organise INSET for all staff to improve assessment practice, and
- include assessment, recording and reporting issues in improvement plans.

150. There are still a few shortcomings in assessment such as:

- inconsistent opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 3 to evaluate their own work against known criteria;
- in Key Stage 3, there is inconsistency in the quality of written feedback to pupils within and between subjects, so that pupils do not always know what to do to improve;
- in annual reports, targets set for improvement by subject teachers are not always subject specific. They are not always expressed in a language which can be clearly understood by pupils, and
- there is insufficient use of assessment results to inform planning of lessons and schemes of work.

Sixth form

151. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in the sixth form lessons observed during the inspection:

33 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Post 16	24	76	0	0	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

How well teaching and training meets learners' needs and the curricular or course requirements

152. The quality of the teaching was adjudged to be best overall in the sixth form, with the highest grade being awarded to 24% of lessons observed.
153. The good features described above for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are also present in most of the teaching in Y12 and Y13.
154. In several instances, students are rightly encouraged to take more responsibility for planning their own programmes of learning and to rely less upon their teachers for information and guidance at every stage of study. Teachers

challenge students to undertake individual research projects, using the Internet and other sources of data. Through carefully designed activities, many teachers also make it possible for students to make original and innovative responses.

155. In many ways, students are prepared well for lifelong learning in other environments beyond school.

The rigour of assessment and its use in planning and improving learning

156. The assessment of students' work is good because teachers, tutors and senior managers:
- write comments on work which show students how they can improve;
 - ensure that students know and understand the requirements of examination boards, including the criteria for success;
 - provide grades twice a year and use them to update the school's database;
 - use the data to track progress against previous results and predicted grades;
 - mentor every student in the sixth form;
 - review progress with students in lessons, tutor periods and Work Related days;
 - issue two progress reports and one full report for each student annually;
 - meet parents / carers each year to discuss progress, and
 - plan assessment activities, such as trial examinations, within the school's calendar of events.
157. There is a shortcoming in that tutors do not summarise annual reports showing development of personal, social and learning skills across subjects.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

158. The grade awarded by the inspection team does not agree with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. This is mainly because one statutory requirement is not fully met. A few pupils in Key Stage 4 do not attend core Welsh lessons, because the school believes that the alternative provided for them is more beneficial to their overall progress.

The extent to which learning experiences meet learners' needs and interests

159. The school generally meets pupils' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996.

160. Overall, the curriculum allows pupils of all abilities equality of access. Pupils are encouraged to achieve success in each key stage.

161. In Key Stage 4, pupils can gain a wide range of qualifications at GCSE level and in some vocational courses. Access to the sixth form is open to all pupils. Students have opportunities to gain qualifications at AS, A2 and in some vocational courses at different levels of accreditation.

162. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced in each key stage. There are a number of good features:

- all pupils in Key Stage 4 study religious education to GCSE level;
- pupils have opportunities to study French, Italian, Latin and Spanish;
- in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, a number of vocational courses are offered, and
- in the sixth form, there is a wide selection of AS, A2 and vocational pathways. The provision is enriched with further subjects offered through the Swansea Schools Partnership.

163. There are some shortcomings in Key Stage 3:

- in Welsh in Y8, there is insufficient time to meet National Curriculum requirements;
- drama is not timetabled as a discrete subject, and
- there is insufficient time allocated to information technology in Y9 and music across the key stage.

164. In addition, one or two timetabling and curricular issues were identified during the inspection:

- there is an imbalance in the distribution of lessons across the week for a number of teaching groups; and

- the 'option' lesson in Y8 precludes many pupils from studying drama or an extra lesson of Welsh.
165. There are some good features in the development of basic and key skills:
- the school has been successful in gaining the Basic Skills Quality award;
 - policies have been drawn up in literacy, numeracy and information technology, and
 - some key skills are identified in most schemes of work.
166. There are some shortcomings:
- numeracy has not been developed in some subject areas, and
 - an audit has not been carried out to identify in which subjects information technology is used across the curriculum.
167. Many pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by the varied extra-curricular activities offered by the school. The programme for musical and sporting activities is a particular strength, with many pupils gaining considerable success. Field studies, visits to theatres and trips abroad enrich pupils' learning experiences and their personal and social development.
168. The physical education department works hard to deliver a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These opportunities are recreational and competitive. The recreational activities are open to all and are very well attended. There is a comprehensive competitive programme that enables pupils to represent the school in a range of sporting activities.
169. Individual pupils have gone on to representative honours at regional level and some at international level.
170. The school is a Christian community that is happy and caring. Learners' spiritual development is good with outstanding features.
171. Acts of daily communal worship together with opportunities to reflect and meditate within and outside school help learners develop an understanding of beliefs and values. Experiences are enriched through stories, celebrations, rituals and inner expression of religion. Learners are developing outstanding Christian values and beliefs as well as awareness of other values and beliefs.
172. Learners' moral, social and cultural development has good features and no important shortcomings. Learners:
- are willing to express their views and show respect for those of others;
 - are developing an understanding of common values and an ability to re-assess their own values in the light of experience;
 - undertake responsibilities and co-operate well with others;
 - participate actively and responsibly across a range of activities;
 - show care towards others by fund raising for charities and good causes;

- are aware of other cultures and respect diversity and other people's way of life;
 - enrich their experiences and expand their horizons through various visits and school trips, and
 - have good relationships between themselves and with the staff.
173. Whilst these aspects are strengths of the school, a small minority of pupils in Y7 expressed some concerns about bullying in their year group. They recognised that bullying is dealt with in PSE and indicated that incidents reported to members of staff are dealt with quickly and effectively.
174. Pupils' learning is enriched by positive partnerships with parents, community, primary schools and other educational providers. Most of the expected liaisons are in place with many good features and no important shortcomings. The good features are:
- the quality of information provided for parents and the community, especially in newsletters, the Diocese Newspaper and the Annual Report from the Governors;
 - the extent of the fruitful links with the local Parishes;
 - the pupils' commitment to charity fundraising and to other community-based activities such as carol singing and a Christmas party for senior citizens;
 - the support from the community for the delivery of vocational subjects;
 - the consortium arrangements with neighbouring schools to broaden the sixth form curriculum, and
 - the strongly supportive nature of the good pastoral and curricular links with primary schools.
175. The shortcomings are:
- despite the good joint efforts with local schools in the sixth form consortium, students' uptake of courses is often low, and
 - the links with initial teacher training (ITT) establishments have not been used in the last two years, so pupils have been denied the benefit of the fresh views and approaches that trainees often provide.
176. The programmes for personal, health and social education, work related education and careers education and guidance meet The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) guidelines and are well planned in the teaching programme.

The extent to which learning experiences respond to the needs of employers and the wider community

177. Work-related education is good in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and outstanding in the sixth form. The principal aspects are the well-managed work experience for Y11 pupils and Y12 students, and a range of useful supporting events and activities across all years. It is the extent of the support programme that is outstanding in the post 16 provision. The good features include:

- the strong emphasis given in the career education and guidance programme to relating work-experience to option choices and pupils'/students' career aspirations;
 - the good and innovative management of career education and guidance ensures that subject departments are aware of and illustrate workplace applications of their subjects;
 - the high profile afforded to career education and guidance and work-related education in many aspects of school, especially in newsletters, parents' evenings and the annual report from the governors;
 - the programme of speakers, problem solving and/or team-building activities presented throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and especially in the sixth form, and
 - the opportunities afforded to Y9, Y11 and Y12 to explore option choices in relation to career aspirations.
178. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for all pupils to study Welsh up to school leaving age, as a few pupils are withdrawn from Welsh classes in Key Stage 4. This is an important shortcoming. Activities are arranged by the Welsh department to help pupils develop bilingual skills. These include the annual eisteddfod, theatre visits, residential courses and Menter Tawe events. The department also raises pupil awareness of the benefits of becoming bilingual with regard to employment in the area. Recent initiatives have promoted the appropriate use of Welsh in some subjects and in tutorial periods. Bilingual signs are evident around the school.
179. A recent audit identified that Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is effectively embedded in schemes of work of some subjects. This is not consistent across the curriculum.
180. There are some good features in promoting the awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include:
- a policy for sustainable development and global citizenship;
 - good coverage in the PSE, geography, religious education and science schemes of work, and
 - pupils' involvement in healthy eating initiatives and recycling projects.
181. The school has a good awareness of the needs of employers through its Governors, its partnership with professional advisers and the community links that support vocational initiatives in school.
182. There is good encouragement for learners to develop entrepreneurial skills. The good features are:
- problem solving and self-evaluation feature in many lessons;
 - from Y8 onwards, there are time-tabled skills and team-building events e.g. Industry Day and Enterprise Day.
 - there are talks from entrepreneurs through the Dynamo Project, and
 - the opportunity for some sixth form students to participate in a taxing pilgrimage.

183. There is a shortcoming in that the school has not found co-ordinators for activities like the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Young Enterprise schemes, which would provide opportunities for learners to take responsibility for longer-term initiatives.
184. The school is generally successful in ensuring that pupils and students acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to progress. Students are developing as independent learners.
185. The curriculum overall, extra-curricular opportunities, work-related education and the use of progress files in years 9 to 13 ensure that the learning experiences reflect most national priorities and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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186. The grade awarded by the inspection team does not agree with the grade awarded by the school in response to the comments made in its self-evaluation report. The school awarded a grade 2, but the inspectors judged that there were sufficient outstanding features to award the highest grade.

The quality of care, support and guidance for learners

187. The quality of care, guidance and support given to learners is good with outstanding features. The school plans and manages its care arrangements extremely effectively. Typical of the outstanding features are the following:

- the school's close co-operation with the area's health, welfare and education departments and the outstanding use made of the expertise within these external agencies;
- the induction programmes for all new pupils, that learners and parents confirm are outstanding;
- the extensive programme of personal and social education that the school offers all learners. It is enriched valuably by inviting experts to speak on specific subjects, and
- the exceptionally high quality of careers education and guidance.

188. There are also many good features in the provision made by the school. These include:

- good relationships with parents;
- close pastoral and curricular links with primary schools;
- effective monitoring of learners;
- predominantly effective procedures to deal with bullying;
- good procedures to satisfy regulations on recording attendance, with rapid follow-up to any attendance problems;
- good guidance for pupils when they make career choices as they move to Y10, the sixth form and further/higher education;
- good extra support for Y7 pupils from older pupils who have been trained as counsellors;
- effective provision for pupils who disrupt work in class. The 'internal isolation' is used well, with the main aim of returning pupils to mainstream classes as soon as possible;
- a positive discipline system that is, for the most part, used well. It encourages and recognises good effort and behaviour;
- child protection procedures that are well established and effective, and
- a clear policy and associated procedures to identify and to respond to health and safety concerns.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

189. The quality of the support for pupils with additional learning needs has outstanding features. Such support enables them to make at least good progress. The outstanding features are:

- exceptionally effective and varied use of the learning support and behaviour support assistants who help pupils with SEN across a wide range of activities;
- outstanding response to the requirements of the Code of Practice by:
 - * providing pupils with very good individual educational programmes (IEPs);
 - * involving parents and pupils in all appropriate activities;
 - * undertaking very rigorous and effective procedures to identify pupils' SEN, and
 - * the widespread use of outside agencies to support pupils with a range of complex SEN.

190. There are also good features such as:

- links with primary schools that ensure a smooth and informed transition for pupils;
- a variety of effective strategies to improve pupils' literacy skills;
- accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 for pupils with SEN;
- the very high level of success the school achieves in enabling pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties to remain in school, without disrupting the learning of others, and
- lunchtime homework clubs that enable pupils to catch up with their work.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

191. The quality and provision for equal opportunities is good, but there are a few shortcomings. The good features are:

- the school provides effective racial harmony, gender equality and acceptance of life in a diverse community;
- pupils with physical disabilities are well integrated into school life and the school ensures that by moving classes they have full access to the curriculum;
- every subject option is available to all learners and the school successfully challenges stereotyping when they advise pupils on their subject options;
- each pupil is given sensitive and effective support if difficulties arise at school or in the community;
- the school has good procedures to ensure appropriate support and help if required for the five pupils who are cared for by the UA;
- the school has good procedures which deal very firmly with any racial incident, and
- the parents and the pupils are confident that the school would respond without delay to any case of unfairness or wrongful discrimination.

192. The shortcomings are that:

- disabled learners do not have access to all areas of the buildings, and
- in Key Stage 4, a few pupils do not have access to a Welsh language course.

193. A few minor health and safety issues were reported to the school during the inspection.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

194. The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. It does not, however, match the grade awarded for Key Question 1. This is because there are inconsistencies in the implementation of policies across the school. These variations have not impacted adversely upon standards of achievement, but they do indicate a lack of shared determination to work cooperatively at all levels, to realise the school's vision.

How well leaders and managers provide clear direction and promote high standards

195. The headteacher, together with the other members of the SMT provide good leadership. The roles and responsibilities of the members reflect each individual's expertise and strengths. There is a corporate culture within this team and members share the headteacher's vision for the school.

196. All members of staff and the governing body share a common sense of purpose in promoting the Catholic values that underpin the school.

197. Leaders and managers have been successful in providing a clear educational direction for the school and in promoting high standards insofar as:

- the headteacher has given a clear lead about the centrality of good teaching and learning and equality for all;
- priorities for development are shared with all interested parties;
- school policies are reviewed regularly to determine their effectiveness and up-dated if necessary;
- performance management objectives are focused upon improving teaching and learning, and on assessment for learning;
- the staff handbook, regular bulletins, briefings and informal meetings maintain the transfer of information in the school;
- the clear line management structure provides opportunities for sharing aims, objectives and targets;
- adequate provision is made for teachers' professional development;
- there is a clear cycle of review, evaluation and planning for development to ensure that all concerned are aware of the school's priorities, and
- termly reports to the governors keep them fully informed and enable them to be involved in strategic planning.

198. The school has done well in promoting equality for all. This is to be seen in:

- the open access for all pupils to all aspects of the curriculum;

- the support and guidance systems to give all pupils the best opportunities to succeed, and
 - the very good special arrangements made for pupils with a range of learning difficulties.
199. Target setting at all levels is a good feature of the school's systems. Procedures are generally effective because:
- targets are challenging yet realistic;
 - targets are discussed and reviewed, and
 - whole school end of key stage targets are set based upon a wealth of data.
200. The school takes due regard of national priorities for improvement and other challenges and includes them appropriately in the school's improvement plan (SIP) and departmental improvement plans (DIPs). Good collaborative arrangements exist with other post-16 providers to enhance the curriculum for sixth form students. The design technology department is actively involved in the construction and ongoing development of an exciting Internet based learning package.
201. The school has chosen to withdraw a few Key Stage 4 pupils from Welsh lessons, to provide them with extra help to improve their basic skills. These actions result in a breach of statutory regulations, which require that all pupils should be taught Welsh up to the time they complete their statutory period of education.
202. The school has made good progress in implementing its plans for remodelling the workforce. Well-managed members of the administrative staff increasingly take on new tasks to good effect. Suitable provision has also been made in the timetable for teachers' PPA.
203. The headteacher, the governors and other members of the SMT have finalised their proposals for the new TLR. Not all concerned parties have accepted these.
204. The sixth form is an integral and important part of the school. Students provide much support for younger members of the school community and often provide good role models for these pupils. They also assist in mentoring pupils, organising the eisteddfod and help at many functions within the school. Charity work also forms a good part of their personal development.
205. The good features of leadership and management as a whole are also evident in this section of the school. High expectations, monitoring of progress, teamwork and a commitment to succeed predominate life in Y12 and Y13. Heads of year, tutors, subject teachers and members of the SMT all contribute to the smooth running of the sixth form.
206. There are several good features of the organisation and management of the sixth form. These include:
- a supportive and structured induction programme for new students;

- an effective system of monitoring for students, and
 - a good range of extra-curricular activities.
207. Most members of staff with middle management responsibilities lead and manage well within their subject-specific and/or pastoral areas of provision. In particular, inspectors noted that many heads of department:
- have produced good schemes of work that provide good practical guidelines for teaching and learning, and to help pupils achieve higher standards;
 - set challenging targets to raise standards;
 - co-operate effectively to share values and good practice within their areas of responsibility;
 - engender good teamwork in their departments, and
 - undertake self-evaluations within their areas of responsibility;
208. There are shortcomings, usually attributable to ineffective application of the good features highlighted above. Good intentions on paper are not always realised fully in practice.
209. The SMT has achieved well in many areas, but it recognises that it has not been wholly successful in encouraging all members of staff to share actively in the school's planned improvements.
210. There is a lack of consistency in implementing school policies in some departments. In some areas, leadership skills are underdeveloped whilst management skills are effective.

How well governors meet their responsibilities

211. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school and their roles in its management. They are actively involved in all aspects of planning, monitoring and evaluation of school performance. They meet their responsibilities well in all but one respect.
212. The good features are:
- effective and well targeted sub-committees;
 - well-informed and effective decision making, based on comprehensive reports from the headteacher;
 - valued and focused input to strategic planning, and
 - supportive and beneficial partnership with the UA.
213. The shortcoming is that the governors have failed to ensure that the statutory requirements for teaching Welsh have been met.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

214. The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

215. The school's self-evaluation report accurately and honestly addresses the seven key questions of the common inspection framework. The school has provided an overall judgement, listed good features and areas for development, and grades for each key question.

216. Members of the school's SMT have a good understanding of the establishment's strengths and shortcomings. This is confirmed by the inspection team's findings matching most of the school's own perceptions.

217. Likewise, many heads of department and other middle managers have, as a result of their own evaluation procedures, in-depth knowledge of their areas of responsibility. There is, however, some inconsistency in the rigour and effectiveness of these evaluations across the school, and there is room for a sharper focus in a few instances.

218. The school's methods of self evaluation and review have been recognised by the UA as worthy of dissemination to other schools.

219. The school's performance is measured effectively overall because:

- there is a clear cycle of review, evaluation and planning;
- departmental and whole school evaluation both use the same 'template' – the seven key questions of the common inspection framework;
- most staff use detailed analyses of examination results and a wealth of other appropriate data effectively to identify strengths and areas for development and to plan for future improvement;
- the school involves pupils, governors and parents in reviewing its provision;
- line management meetings are held regularly to focus on whole school and departmental issues;
- performance management issues are integral to evaluation procedures, and
- the school works closely with the UA to produce an annual school profile that reviews the school's current position and includes challenging yet realistic targets for the year.

220. Subsequent to these activities, the priorities in the SIP are established. These are then reflected in the DIPs, along with particular issues arising from specialist departmental requirements. The success achieved to date by the school, as recognised in Key Question 1, is testimony to the fact that information obtained

through evaluation procedures is used to good effect overall, despite the lack of uniformity of practice.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

221. The priorities within improvement plans are designed well to bring about change for the better, whilst subscribing to the school's main intent of being a Christian community within the Catholic tradition. To achieve its aims, priorities are supported through prudent allocation of resources, within any budgetary constraints that may exist from time to time.
222. Good features of planning for improvement for 2002 to 2005 included:
- a strong focus on continuing to improve teaching and learning – the key to raising standards;
 - challenging yet realistically achievable targets for Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and sixth form assessment outcomes;
 - an improvement in the standards of key skills;
 - improved assessment arrangements to include more involvement of pupils, and
 - further enhancement of the school's review and monitoring arrangements.
223. As this report comments elsewhere, the school has performed well in a number of the areas highlighted in its plans, but there is still room for further improvement.
224. Within its budgetary constraints, the school does well in providing resources to support proposed developments.
225. Wherever it is relevant and possible, the school rightly seeks to quantify the measure of improvement so that it can measure the extent to which targets have been achieved or exceeded. The wealth of data available and the analyses of this information assist well in this.
226. As stated in the context section of this report, the school was inspected previously in January 2000. Overall the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues for action highlighted in that inspection report.
227. For example:
- standards of teaching and achievement have improved across the curriculum;
 - the range of teaching strategies has been extended;
 - the gap between boys' and girls' performances in external examinations has been reduced by the application of a range of strategies to address the problem;
 - the school employs many effective schemes to improve pupils' levels of attendance and these continue to be successful;
 - standards of pupils' literacy have improved considerably, the school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, but there is still room for improvement, particularly with respect to the use of ICT across the curriculum;

- the library has been refurbished and its stock improved and many pupils make good use of the facilities, although the area is too small and because of this, some pupils are denied access at various times for health and safety reasons;
- the school now has a coherent whole school policy on assessment and its implementation does much to promote higher standards, but there is still inconsistency in the effectiveness of some aspects such as pupils' involvement in evaluating their own work against given criteria;
- the scope of development plans has been extended to cover the short, medium and long term, and they now tie in with departmental plans and budgetary considerations, and
- the system of monitoring and evaluation at SMT level now focuses upon teaching and learning, but there is still not uniformity of practice across the whole school.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

228. The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

The adequacy, suitability and use made of staffing, learning resources and accommodation

229. There are sufficient members of staff for the school to run efficiently. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and those comparatively new to the profession.

230. The good features can be summarised as:

- most teaching staff are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects and subjects to meet the needs of the curriculum;
- the bursar and administrative staff ensure that the office, reception and reprographics areas run efficiently;
- the bursar, who is responsible for the development of the site, and the caretakers contribute effectively to the maintenance and daily routines of the school;
- technician support in science, design technology, home economics and information technology is good;
- thirteen learning support assistants provide good support to the number of pupils with learning and behavioural problems; they work effectively with teachers;
- four behaviour support assistants make a very good contribution in monitoring pupils who are disruptive in lessons;
- four cover supervisors in the first instance look after classes for absent staff, otherwise they are deployed to support pupils in lessons, and
- a teacher librarian and a library assistant efficiently run and supervise the use of the library.

231. The one shortcoming within staffing is the high number of part time teachers employed by the school.

232. The quality and quantity of learning resources for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in the six subjects inspected are good with a wide range and supply of textbooks and equipment. The good features in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 include:

- a wide range of useful subject booklets produced in-house;
- an increasing number of subjects using interactive white boards and/or digital projectors to enhance their classroom teaching;
- good use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum including field trips, visits abroad, and visits to museums, art galleries and theatres;
- a range of visiting speakers to enhance pupils' learning experiences;

- four IT rooms that cater for the teaching of discrete IT lessons and, when available, are used by a number of subject areas across the curriculum, and
 - good provision of ICT equipment in science, design technology, modern foreign languages and music.
233. The library is used well. It has a wide range of fiction and reference books that are relatively up to date. In a room adjacent to the library, there are ten computers that are networked. Many learners use these effectively. In Y7, pupils have an induction lesson and use the library for one lesson each week in English. At various times, it is used well by a number of subject areas across the curriculum. It is open from 0830 until 1530 each day and the facilities encourage pupils' reading, independent learning and research.
234. In the sixth form, there is a good range and supply of textbooks and equipment. During lessons, when there are no classes, students use the library for independent learning and research.
235. The shortcomings in resources for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 include:
- in lessons in the IT rooms, the 16 or so computers in each room are insufficient for the number of pupils in most classes and this has an adverse effect on the progress of some pupils;
 - in a small number of subjects, resources are insufficiently differentiated for the talented and gifted, and less able pupils, and
 - the stock of fiction and reference books is low for a school of this size.
236. The accommodation is sufficient for the number of learners currently on roll. It meets the pastoral and academic needs of the curriculum and has the following good features in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4:
- most rooms cater well for all class sizes;
 - as far as possible subject rooms are arranged in suites;
 - in most corridors and classrooms, displays of pupils' work and subject information provide an effective and sometimes stimulating learning environment;
 - the good quality of the science laboratories;
 - the recently refurbished boys' and girls' changing rooms and the gymnasium, and
 - the school grounds and buildings are kept clean, well maintained and litter free.
237. Accommodation for the sixth form is adequate. It meets the pastoral and academic needs of the curriculum. The sixth form area has a large common room. Students do not have their own study room, but they are able to use the library and other areas when available.
238. The shortcomings in accommodation include:
- a few rooms are too small for some of the larger classes timetabled to use them;

- a small minority of lessons are taught in non-specialist rooms; most of these lessons are taught by part time teachers;
 - the red-gra facility and one football pitch are prone to flooding and are not well maintained. As a consequence, all hockey matches have to be played away from the school, and
 - the displays in a few parts of the school do not provide a stimulating learning environment.
239. Overall, the deployment, management and development of staff is adequate. The good features include:
- the deployment of most staff makes good and effective use of their time, expertise and experience;
 - the training and professional development of staff is in line with performance management needs, the SIP and the needs of departments and individuals. It is well coordinated, and
 - courses attended are evaluated and used to the benefit of the school.
240. The shortcomings in deployment and planning are related to the employment of 9 part time teachers. These concern constraints on planning the curriculum and timetabling.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

241. The financial management of the school is very good. The headteacher, the bursar and the governing body's sub-committee for finance and staffing effectively manage the available budget.
242. The following good features are evident:
- the finance sub-committee meets regularly and it receives detailed up to date reports from the head-teacher;
 - financial decisions are well focused on the curricular needs and the educational priorities identified in the SIP;
 - the school pursues all grants and sponsorships that are available;
 - the distribution of capitation to subject areas is fair and effective. There are also opportunities for subject areas to bid for extra funds to support planned developments;
 - the finance officer and the bursar are responsible for the day to day running of the finances;
 - the finance officer provides the headteacher and leaders of subjects with immediate breakdowns and current balances. Spending is effectively monitored, and
 - the recommendations of the last auditors' report have been addressed.
243. Overall, the school uses its finances and resources competently and achieves good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Mathematics

Key Stage 3: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4: Grade 3	Good features outweigh shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

- 244. The majority of pupils across the age and ability ranges answer questions orally with clarity, understanding and accuracy.
- 245. They are developing a sound knowledge of number, vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and the relationship between them.
- 246. They have spatial awareness and understand the concepts of area and volume using appropriate units.
- 247. Most pupils use calculators appropriately.
- 248. Most pupils with SEN make good progress.

Key Stage 3

- 249. In the NC tests at the end of the key stage, the proportion of pupils gaining at least a level 5 has been consistently high and above both the local and national averages over the last three years.
- 250. Most Y7 pupils have a sound understanding of angles about a point and on a straight line. They apply this knowledge to answer appropriate questions.
- 251. Pupils in Y8 apply the basic concepts of percentages to answer questions about everyday life situations.
- 252. The more able pupils in Y9 answer both direct and inverse questions linked to the circumference and area of a circle.

Key Stage 4

- 253. Success at grades A* - C in the GCSE examinations has improved over the last three years.
- 254. The more able pupils in Y10 are extending their knowledge of basic algebra moving from expanding brackets to the factorisation of quadratic expressions.
- 255. Middle ability pupils in Y10 are learning well techniques for investigations in readiness for their GCSE coursework.
- 256. Pupils in Y11, studying for the higher tier examination paper, have a sound knowledge of how to generate an expression to represent algebraically the

general term in a series of numbers. They are also progressing very well in their revision for the examination.

Post 16

257. Y13 students have a good understanding of a range of concepts in pure mathematics and mechanics or statistics. They adapt this knowledge to solve associated questions.
258. Y12 students are making good progress in understanding the basic concepts of pure mathematics and mechanics or statistics.
259. Students benefit from the small numbers of students in classes, in that they receive good individual support. In most lessons they make good progress overall.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

260. The more able pupils in a number of classes do not achieve their potential.
261. A minority of middle and lower ability pupils do not always complete their work or present it in a neat, logical way. They do not always correct work that is wrong, especially when answering questions in topic workbooks.
262. A small minority of pupils lack confidence in their mathematical abilities.

Key Stage 4

263. Incomplete and/or sub-standard coursework had an adverse affect on pupils' GCSE grades.
264. A small number of lower ability pupils have difficulty in listening to teachers and in retaining mathematical concepts. They are thus unable to apply these concepts effectively.

Post 16

265. On entry to the sixth form, a small number of Y12 students have difficulty in applying some basic algebraic techniques.

Science

- Key Stage 3: Grade 1** Good with outstanding features
Key Stage 4: Grade 1 Good with outstanding features
Post 16: Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Outstanding features

Key Stage 3

266. In the last three years, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5 and above has been well above the national average in Key Stage 3 national tests.

267. Most pupils have very secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics covering all aspects of the NC, at levels above their stage of development.

Key Stage 4

268. In the last two years, the percentage of pupils attaining A*-C grades in GCSE examinations has been significantly above national averages.
269. Some pupils complete investigations to a very high standard. The vast majority of investigations are completed to at least a good standard and access the higher marks in all skill areas.

Good features

Key Stage 3

270. Most pupils recall key concepts well, and apply them to a range of tasks, problems and applications of science in familiar and unfamiliar situations.
271. A majority of pupils have a good understanding of the link between scientific principles and applications associated with healthy living and aspects of sustainable development.
272. Many pupils use definitions of scientific terms accurately and apply principles with confidence in many problem-solving activities and focused homework tasks.
273. Pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their ability.
274. Pupils develop good practical skills. Most pupils work safely and collaborate well in shared practical activities.
275. By the end of the key stage, many pupils are developing good investigative skills.

Key Stage 4

276. Most pupils across the ability range have a good understanding of the more complex principles developed in the key stage in life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical properties.
277. More able and a majority of average and lower ability pupils have a good recall of previous work and apply their knowledge to a range of tasks and applications across many topics in the NC.
278. A majority of pupils develop a good awareness and understanding of the contribution that science makes to industry, the environment and the economy.
279. Pupils use detailed scientific knowledge and understanding, as well as preliminary work, to inform their plans. Measurements are systematically recorded, and repeated when anomalous results are obtained.
280. Most pupils analyse their results in detail using appropriate graphs or numerical methods and assess the validity of their findings. More able pupils evaluate their work in considerable depth, often critically commenting on procedures and suggesting ways to develop the investigation.

Post 16

281. Most students in biology, chemistry, physics and vocational course science make at least good progress in their respective programmes of study.
282. Many students have a good recall and understanding of key concepts and principles.
283. The majority of students are able to apply their theoretical understanding to a number of tasks involving the analysis of data and problem solving to consolidate their knowledge of the topic.
284. Students are developing good practical skills. They apply their theoretical knowledge to analyse and evaluate their observations in depth.
285. Some students maintain well-organised files. In some groups, students provide feedback of good quality to inform others of the analysis of practical work and information from independent study.

Shortcomings

286. Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
287. A few pupils have less secure recall and understanding of current and previous work.

Post 16

288. A few students have less secure knowledge and understanding of some of the topics covered.

Information technology

Key Stage 3: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

289. At least two-thirds of pupils have good practical computing skills. Most pupils access the network and select icons and menus to load the required software well. The most able show very good skills in retrieving saved files and develop their projects confidently, without support.
290. Most pupils communicate information effectively in a variety of forms. They create interesting and informative presentations. In most of the lessons observed, the most able made good independent use of the basic facilities of the software.
291. Almost all pupils readily use the Internet to research their projects. The most able are very discerning in what they select to use when developing their ideas.

292. In the hotel leaflet project, pupils show good spatial awareness and girls in particular produce leaflets that use coordinated colour combinations very effectively. Thus they achieve the best impact on the required audience.
293. Pupils with SEN are well-motivated and confident learners who achieve well to realise their potential.

Key Stage 4

294. Almost all pupils have good practical skills when using computer hardware. The most able are very confident and competent in using a broad range of computer software.
295. In the Y11 examination group, pupils effectively design a basic database. They are all clear about the importance of a primary key when designing and establishing fields in a new database. The most able use appropriate information technology terms well when describing what they're doing.
296. All pupils effectively collect information from a broad source, including the Internet, which they use well to solve the problems set them. Careful consideration is given to the effect their outcomes may have on different audiences.
297. As a result of good support in lessons, all pupils are clear about what to do and how to improve on the standards achieved.
298. Pupils with SEN show good motivation and achieve well in their project work.

Post 16

299. Most students have a very good understanding of computer hardware and a very broad range of peripheral equipment. They show a good understanding of computer systems in general.
300. All students have very good practical computer skills and can readily select and use appropriate software to carry out their projects. They can identify and classify the required software needed to solve a problem well and can use the range effectively when designing their projects.
301. The most able of students have a good understanding of visual basic and they use it well to develop programmes.
302. Most students are developing a good understanding of the types of testing and validations required to prove the reliability of their projects. They understand what needs to be tested and how to test user requirements. Most students make appropriate modifications to their designs as a result of their analysis of user feedback.
303. In general work, students show good skill levels in using search engines to look up information from the Internet. They are generally discerning about the information they select to use and are mindful of the impact required on their audience.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

304. Too many pupils lack sufficient depth of knowledge about the more complex facilities of software. They neither complete tasks quickly nor seek to move on to new challenges with any degree of urgency.

Key Stage 4

305. A significant proportion of pupils are over dependent on their teachers. Their understanding and use of the higher order and more complex facilities of software are underdeveloped, and they lack a sense of urgency in completing tasks as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Post 16

306. A minority of students aren't always sufficiently focused on meeting target dates for the submission of coursework. Non-attendance affects overall standards in too many instances.

History

Key Stage 3: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

307. Pupils have good levels of background knowledge and a secure understanding of chronology. They recall their previous learning successfully and can apply this information when investigating challenging historical problems.
308. From Y7 onwards, pupils develop good investigative approaches when examining historical problems. They use a variety of sources of evidence effectively to compare and contrast differing interpretations of historical events and movements. As a result, they provide valid explanations of the causes of changes that occur over time.
309. In Y7 and Y8, pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding of, for instance, the reasons for the witch-craze in the 16th and 17th centuries. They use evidence well to determine the geographical and religious factors underlying the phenomenon.
310. By Y9, pupils become increasingly confident in testing their sources of evidence for reliability, bias and usefulness. They evaluate the sources effectively and use them to develop well-balanced oral and written arguments in which they show awareness of how interpretations of history emerge and also change.
311. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils can distinguish between long-term and short-term causes of change, for instance in their examination of the problems which were solved and those which were created by the Treaty of Versailles in 1918.

312. Most Key Stage 3 pupils achieve good standards in selecting, organising and communicating information through a wide range of challenging written tasks, such as source evaluations and essays. Pupils' extended writing skills are increasingly well developed; they use a good range of subject-specific vocabulary and write for a range of different purposes. Their thinking skills are successfully targeted through the construction of concept maps.

Key Stage 4

313. Pupils are successful in building upon the knowledge and skills acquired in Key Stage 3. They become increasingly mature in approaching their tasks with greater depth and insight.
314. They are well focused upon providing convincing explanations for the attitudes and motivation of people in the past, asking more complex questions of the sources of evidence. Above average and average ability pupils achieve good standards in identifying and explaining, for example, the reasons why the Mormon Church established itself in Salt Lake City.
315. Their work on the history of medicine over time ensures that their chronological understanding is well developed. Below average ability pupils also achieve good standards commensurate with their ability.
316. Most Key Stage 4 pupils produce well-organised and well-presented written work. Some use ICT tools effectively to enhance their written work and further develop their research skills.
317. Pupils make good progress in applying their knowledge and understanding from other curricular areas, such as literacy, to raise their standards in their written work, and to extend their problem-solving and independent learning skills.

Post 16

318. Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of the historical debates surrounding Nazi attitudes to German youth and also of British policy relating to Ireland between the end of the 18th century and 1921.
319. In Y13, for instance, students make good progress in dealing with the very complex primary and secondary sources that relate to the various options available to the British government in dealing with the "Irish Question".
320. They make good efforts to meet the rigorous demands of the A level examination to master the historiography of the period. Students identify interesting and relevant questions to ask of the sources and are clear about the operation of bias and propaganda.
321. Students are increasingly confident in identifying the differences in interpretation found in the works of the experts on these areas and they use their analytical skills effectively to evaluate and explain the differences found in the works of professional historians.

322. Students demonstrate a good ability to construct balanced and opposing arguments in their oral and written work. Essays and source evaluations show that they have good skills in selecting and organising the material that they need to use in order to respond to the challenging problems that they are required to consider. There is good evidence, from their oral and written work, that students can weigh and measure the wide range of factors that must be considered in order to arrive at a balanced and well-considered judgement.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

323. A minority of pupils do not regularly complete their written assignments. There are variable standards in the depth with which they tackle historical problems.
324. The work of some pupils, in both key stages, lacks adequate detail in order to provide a satisfying response to the question with which they are challenged.
325. A minority of pupils find it difficult to address the demands of source evaluation.
326. Some pupils, especially in Key Stage 4, are not sufficiently aware of the particular historical and cultural development of Wales, especially in their own local environment.

Post 16

327. The written and oral work of a small minority of students lacks the adequate depth and detail to produce a fully developed and convincing argument. A few of these students do not evaluate the sources of evidence with sufficient insight and depth.

Music

Key Stage 3: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

328. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, produce a pleasing tone and clear diction, and give suitable attention to musical detail.
329. They perform confidently, with appropriate technique and a high degree of accuracy on classroom instruments and keyboards. Most maintain good ensemble in group and whole class performances.
330. Pupils compose in response to a range of suitable stimuli. Melodic work, including improvisations, is often rhythmically interesting and melodically balanced and well shaped.

331. Pupils have a good awareness of musical elements. When appraising, most show good understanding of relevant technical terms and make perceptive comments.

Key Stage 4

332. GCSE results in recent years show that many middle and lower ability pupils achieve up to two grades above their minimum targets.
333. Pupils, drawn from the full range of ability, perform with a good sense of style and maintain secure ensembles in group performances.
334. Much of the work in composing displays imaginative treatment of ideas and has a sense of style and structure. A few compositions are enhanced by the use of ICT.
335. Pupils' commentaries about their compositions, and responses in appraising tasks, show that most pupils are able to identify technical and expressive features well.

Post 16

336. Students, drawn from across the ability range, perform with confidence and a good sense of style.
337. Most Y12 students are acquiring good understanding of Bach "Chorale" cadence and "Serialism" composing techniques. Most of the Y12 and Y13 free style compositions demonstrate good understanding of melody writing and basic harmony, and have a sense of style and structure. Some are imaginative and enhanced by effective use of ICT.
338. Most students have good knowledge and understanding, and make perceptive comments when discussing the main features of their set works. Aural skills are developing well.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

339. A few pupils, in certain classes, are unable to play in time with others. A small minority of improvisations are less convincing and limited in musical interest.

Key Stage 4

340. A few compositions are rather limited in musical interest.

Post 16

341. A few Y12 students are not always totally secure in "Chorale" cadential techniques. A small number of free style compositions are rather restricted in their musical interest.

Physical education

Key Stage 3: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

- 342. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject, listen very attentively, respond well to the teacher's instructions and ask appropriate questions to improve their knowledge and understanding.
- 343. The large majority of pupils evaluate each other's work very effectively in order to improve their physical performances.
- 344. They work very well collaboratively, in pairs, groups and in team situations, engaging safely in activities, when working independently of the teacher.
- 345. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge of specific muscle groups, using the correct terminology. They have a clear understanding of the effects of exercise on the body and the importance of safe warm up and cool down practices.

Key Stage 3

- 346. In gymnastics, pupils are able to plan sequences effectively and understand the importance of body tension and extension when attempting to improve clarity of body shape.
- 347. A high proportion of pupils can demonstrate very good quality of movement on the floor and on apparatus, with the more able pupils performing vaulting skills over a range of apparatus with good flight on and off the apparatus.
- 348. In netball, pupils demonstrate good footwork. They land with control and pivot to pass. Generally, they apply previously learned skills well in small-sided games, maintaining good standards of footwork and showing spatial awareness.
- 349. In football, pupils are able to maintain close control of the ball when dribbling at different speeds. They practise and refine their skills, maintain them when placed under pressure and understand the importance of support play when moving into a space to receive a pass.
- 350. In rugby and basketball, pupils demonstrate sending and receiving skills with accuracy in both activities, and in rugby show good footwork when running with the ball.

Key Stage 4

- 351. In health-related exercise lessons, pupils are able to identify different components of fitness and the aspects of games or sports which require the development of these components. They demonstrate increased flexibility and

strength in attempting to meet the differentiated targets identified in a scoring system.

- 352. In volleyball, pupils are able to demonstrate a volley pass effectively, with some able to maintain lengthy rallies. They respond well to more extended tasks that require good positioning and footwork to develop three touch volleyball.
- 353. In basketball, pupils demonstrate good footwork, dribbling, sending and receiving skills. The more able apply those skills well in a game situation.
- 354. Pupils following the GCSE course are able to demonstrate understanding
- 355. of the key principles of fitness and apply them in exercise programming. They show high order ball skills in dribbling, sending and receiving in football and hockey.
- 356. They apply their skills very well, often using one touch passing in conditioned games. The more able are adept decision makers in a full game.

Post 16

- 357. Students are enthusiastic and well motivated learners.
- 358. Most students are able to identify components of different methods of guidance in teaching skills and demonstrate understanding of the key concepts underpinning them. They are able to apply their knowledge and understanding in different contexts.
- 359. Students can identify phases of a skill and strengths and weaknesses in those phases. They can formulate an action plan to maintain the strengths and develop remedial action to improve identified weaknesses.
- 360. Most students are proficient in incorporating theoretical aspects that they have studied in anatomy and physiology into their action plans. They also make use of contemporary studies when applicable.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

- 361. The skill levels of a small number of pupils in basketball and rugby are not well developed.

Key Stage 4

- 362. A small minority of pupils experience difficulty in utilising peripheral vision when dribbling a ball in a congested area and are unable to apply skills in a full game situation.

Post 16

- 363. A few students do not apply their knowledge in sufficient depth when developing their arguments around teaching skills.

School's response to the inspection

The school is pleased that in overall terms the inspection team has agreed with the school's own self evaluation report.

The school is pleased that inspectors have recognised that Bishop Vaughan is a good school with high quality care, support and guidance, good teaching and learning, and a distinctive ethos committed to a Christian education within the principles of the Catholic faith.

The school welcomes the inspectors' findings in respect of key questions one and two; in particular the good features identified in standards, teaching and assessment.

While the school accepts the inspectors' grading of key question three on a technicality because of the few (less than ten) pupils not doing the core Welsh lesson at Key Stage 4, the school's management still feel strongly that there are many good features, recognised by inspectors, which outweigh shortcomings. The school's governors and managers feel that the arrangements that have been made for these pupils are in the best educational interests of individuals. The arrangements are responsive to, and have the full support of, parents/guardians as well as the pupils. The school was disappointed that the exceptional arrangements it had made to facilitate a very few students to study Welsh in year 12 (AS level) were not given due recognition.

The school is very pleased that care guidance and support (key question four) have been judged to be outstanding by inspectors. The school's management at all levels had judged this provision to be good, because it is difficult, even presumptuous, to judge what is done routinely as being outstanding. Nevertheless the SMT feel that the grade one judgement reflects the quality of care and commitment to every pupil and student of all staff whether SMT, middle managers, class teachers, tutors or support staff.

The school has worked hard at establishing processes for evaluation to improve quality and standards. This is recognised in confirmation of the school's self-evaluation grades for key questions five and six. However, the school recognises that much remains to be done to bring all areas of the school up to the level of the best. The school will use the inspectors' findings to help do this.

The school is pleased to have a grade two confirmed for key question seven. Governors and SMT feel this is a very good achievement against a background of difficult financial constraints and the restrictions this places on planning and improvement.

The school welcomes the inspection report overall. It does reflect that Bishop Vaughan is a good and popular school, although there are clearly areas for improvement. The inspection was conducted during a difficult week in which the normal routines were disrupted by particularly bad weather conditions and by a one-day Unison/GMB national strike.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comprehensive School
School type	Secondary; Voluntary Aided
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18
Address of school	Mynydd Garnlwyd Road, Morrison Swansea
Postcode	SA6 7QG
Telephone number	01792 772006

Headteacher	Mr J Blackburn
Date of appointment	September 1998
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs J Gomes
Reporting inspector	Mr B Medhurst
Dates of inspection	27 th to 30 th March 2006

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	186	185	203	236	218	156	87	1271

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	65	9	69

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	18.4 : 1
Average teaching group size	25
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	73.8

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	94.2	92.3	92.4	90.4	91.7	88.3	90.8	91.4
Term 2	92.1	91.1	91.9	88.8	89.8	82.1	81.5	88.2
Term 3	91.3	90.8	90.0	88.6	95.4	79.4	91.2	89.5

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	15
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	35

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2005															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 228															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	1.3	17.4	41.3	24.8	13.5	0	0
		National *	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.4	1.7	8.1	21.3	33.6	23.5	9.4	0.2	0
	Test	School	0.9	1.7	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.9	16.5	42.6	21.7	12.6	n/a	n/a
		National *	0.5	3.5	2.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.5	20.4	32.6	22.7	10.1	n/a	n/a
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.9	0	0	0	0	1.3	13.0	19.6	41.3	23.0	0	0
		National *	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.9	6.8	18.9	25.7	31.6	13.7	0.3	0
	Test	School	0	2.2	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.7	13.0	18.7	42.2	22.2	n/a	n/a
		National *	0.3	5.1	1.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.1	17.2	19.9	36.0	15.0	n/a	n/a
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.4	0	0	0	0	1.3	12.6	20.4	38.3	26.1	0	0
		National *	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.4	6.0	20.1	32.8	27.1	11.6	0.1	0
	Test	School	0	3.0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.9	12.6	23.5	34.3	25.7	n/a	n/a
		National *	0.3	0.4	0.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.7	16.6	32.5	28.2	13.0	n/a	n/a

- 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 in Key Stage 3 perform above level 8
 * National figures are for 2004

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	70.9	In the school	67.8
In Wales	57.7	In Wales	57.1

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2005	218
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	44

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	89	84	87

attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	64	51	52
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	89	82	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	46	40	38
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	92	98	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	80	74	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	91	92	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	9	8	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	4	3

For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2005	221
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2005	76
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2005	3

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	55	66	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	89	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	17	20	20

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Seventeen inspectors (including the school's nominee, the diocesan inspector for religious education and a peer assessor) spent the equivalent of 58 days at the school.

156 lessons were observed, covering all areas of the curriculum.

Inspectors attended assemblies, tutorial sessions, registrations, and observed a range of extracurricular activities.

Inspectors held many discussions with the headteacher, members of the school's management team, heads of department, staff with whole-school responsibilities, and members of support staff.

The registered inspector and a colleague inspector met with the governing body prior to the inspection week and the registered inspector reported the main findings to them following the inspection.

Work across the curriculum, from representative pupils from each year group, was examined. Pupils' work was also scrutinised elsewhere and during lesson observations.

Inspectors held formal discussions with groups of pupils and students selected from Y7 to Y13. They also talked with many learners informally.

Prior to the inspection, the registered inspector met the staff.

Twenty-five parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. Ninety-four replies to the questionnaire were received and analysed. A few parents also wrote to the registered inspector.

Comprehensive documentation, including the school's self-evaluation report, was scrutinised before, during and after the inspection period in school.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
Mr Brian W Medhurst Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 2, 5, 6
Dr Michael H L Snow Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4, 5
Mr S Glyn Davies	Key Question 3; Sixth form co-ordination; Science
Mrs Lynn Bithell	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 3
Mr Heddwyn Evans	Key Question 4; Contribution to Key Question 3
Mr Alan Edwards	Key Question 7; Contribution to Key Question 1; Mathematics
Mrs Mary Crandon	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3
Mr Keith Hopkins	Contribution to Key Question 1; Information technology
Mrs Margaret Herbert	Contribution to Key Question 1
Mrs Anne Newman	History
Mr Mike Fitzgerald	Physical education
Mr Alan Wynne Williams	Music
Mr David Jones	Science
Mr Martyn Williams	Support role
Mrs Rose Felton	Diocesan inspector – religious education
Mrs Janet Glover	School's nominee
Mrs Patricia Landers	Peer assessor

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Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, staff and pupils of Bishop Vaughan Catholic Comprehensive School for their courtesy and co-operation during the inspection.