

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Bishopston Comprehensive School
The Glebe
Bishopston
Swansea
SA3 3JP**

School Number: 6704069

Date of Inspection: 12-15 March 2007

by

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Bishopston 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 Bishopston Comprehensive School took place between 12/03/07 and 15/03/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Gareth Hawtin Buckland 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 nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **short** 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. Bishopston Comprehensive School is a co-educational, 11-16 comprehensive school within the City and County of Swansea that was last inspected during the summer term of 2001. It is striving to become a focus for community developments in Bishopston and the surrounding area. The recent addition of an indoor sports' complex on the site, opened in December 2005, has provided further impetus towards achieving this aim.
2. The school serves Bishopston, Newton, Mayals, Three Crosses, part of West Cross and the South Gower peninsula to the west of Swansea. There are currently 1076 pupils on roll, almost all of whom have English as their first language. The school is heavily oversubscribed and continues to attract large numbers of applications each year.
3. Pupils are mainly drawn from the six partner primary schools of Bishopston, Crwys, Knelston, Mayals, Newton and Pennard. There are also a significant number of preferred placements from many other parts of the wider Swansea area. The catchment area is a combination of suburban and rural housing, that is predominantly privately owned, with a range of different types of accommodation.
4. Just fewer than 5% of pupils are registered as able to access free school meals. The key stage (KS) 2 assessments and predictive test data indicate that the pupils are broadly above average in ability on entry into the school. Currently, there are 18 pupils who have statements of special educational needs (SEN) and there are 124 pupils on the SEN register in total. This is a lower proportion than in schools nationally.
5. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2006. After consultation with staff and pupils, the agreed aim of the school was established, namely, that the school is to become "an outstanding learning community founded upon mutual respect".
6. The school is supported by a team of governors, with a new chairperson elected in October 2006, and a very active parent teacher association (PTA).

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's main objectives for the next three to five years have been established. These are to become a school where:
 - learning is the focus of all the school's work and teaching addresses the needs of all learners, thus facilitating an improvement in standards of achievement in all aspects of school life;
 - pupils have high expectations, set challenging targets, are able to assess their own progress appropriately and understand how to make improvements;
 - a suitable curriculum is provided, where individual pathways in KS4 are available for all pupils either through the school itself or by links and partnerships with other educational establishments or the business community;
 - an effective programme is developed to deliver the Learning Core and key skills to enable all pupils to be well prepared for post-16 pathways;

- leadership and management are effective in all aspects of school development;
- self evaluation is an integral part of our work and has a significant impact on standards of achievement through the development of all staff; and
- sound financial planning and management support the school's aspiration to become a true community school promoting lifelong learning and serving Bishopston and the surrounding area.

Summary

8. Bishopston Comprehensive School is a good school with many outstanding features. It has a number of particular strengths including:
- the high levels of challenge resulting in high performance of the pupils over an extended period of time;
 - exceptional planning for, standards in, and the continuous drive towards the improvement of key skills in all curriculum areas;
 - pupils' mature and responsible attitudes towards all aspects of school life;
 - the high degree of respect that exists at all levels;
 - the high quality of provision for the promotion of pupils' personal development including moral, social, cultural and spiritual development, through a new and innovative personal and social education (PSE) programme;
 - the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the senior leadership team (SLT) that enables middle managers to lead and all staff and pupils to reach their potential; and
 - the continuous drive towards excellence.

Table of grades awarded

9. In the seven key questions, the following grades were awarded.

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

10. Within the school's self-evaluation report, the school was undecided about whether the grade to be awarded for key question 2 should be either grade 1 or grade 2.
11. The inspection team awarded the school a grade 2 for key question 2 with the grades awarded to all other key questions concurring with those within the self-evaluation report.

Standards

Good and outstanding features

12. Results in National Curriculum (NC) tests at the end of KS3 in 2006 are outstanding and are exemplified by the following:
 - the KS3 core subject indicator (CSI) for the school was, at 80.9%, over 20% above the national figure;
 - more girls than boys attained the CSI but the separate performances of boys and girls were significantly above the local and national figures;
 - over 85% of pupils attained above level 5 in one or more of the separate subjects of English, mathematics and science with a high percentage of pupils attaining levels 6, 7 and 8 within one or more of these subjects;
 - in all core subjects and the CSI, the KS3 performance in 2006 was better than the local and national averages; and
 - when compared with schools of a similar intake, the school is consistently in the top 25%.
13. In the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, the school has managed to maintain extremely high standards of attainment. The results are outstanding because:
 - the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades is consistently around 80% and, in 2006, 79.2% of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades;
 - the five or more A*-C success percentage was 28% above the local education authority (LEA) figure and 27% above that for all-Wales;
 - the percentage of pupils attaining the CSI was 68% compared with 39% locally and 38% nationally; and
 - when compared with similar schools, the school's GCSE results in 2006 place the school in the top 25% for all but two of the indicators.
14. Pupils of all abilities, including the most-able pupils and those with SEN, generally perform very well. They are generally challenged to produce work of a high quality both in oral and written responses.
15. The development of key skills forms an integral part of the work of the school. Planning for key skills is very thorough and the standards in key skills are generally very good with some outstanding work in a number of areas. These are that:
 - standards of speaking and listening are very good across both key stages;
 - reading skills are very good;
 - the quality of presentation is generally very good within all ability levels;
 - considerable use is made of numeracy in a range of subjects across the curriculum;

- despite the pressures on availability of use of the information technology (IT) rooms, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is successfully incorporated into many subject areas;
 - standards in bilingualism are generally good;
 - the ability of pupils to work together to evaluate and improve their own skills is often outstanding; and
 - the use of the other wider key skills, including problem solving and researching and hypothesis testing, is an outstanding feature of the learning environment.
16. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills improve considerably as they progress through the school. The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum is an extremely strong feature of the school. The vast majority of pupils:
- display an outstanding attitude towards their work;
 - demonstrate very good behaviour in and around the school;
 - work well in all contexts and are motivated to improve their own performance;
 - recognise the importance of attending school, resulting in an annual attendance rate of 93% for the three terms prior to the inspection;
 - participate in a comprehensive and successful work-experience programme; and
 - through the PSE programme and a number of subject areas, develop a good understanding of issues relating to diversity of beliefs, attitudes and cultural traditions.

Shortcomings

17. The difference between the performance of boys and girls in obtaining five or more A*-C grades in GCSE is, at 12%, slightly wider than the local figure and the same as the national figure.
18. The attendance of a small minority of pupils is adversely affecting the overall attendance rate in the school.

The quality of education and training

Good and outstanding features

19. In the 65 lessons observed, the following grades were awarded:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3 %	6	65	29	-	-
KS4 %	26	65	9	-	-
Total %	15.4	64.6	20.0	-	-

20. Overall teaching has good features, some of them outstanding and no important shortcomings in 80% of all lessons. Good features outweigh shortcomings in 20% of lessons. The amount and frequency of teaching containing outstanding features is good. The proportion of lessons judged to be grades 1 and 2 is 11% higher than the national average for secondary schools published in the recent annual report by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of Schools in Wales.

21. The quality of teaching has risen when compared with the percentage of teaching deemed to be 'very good' in the previous inspection in 2001.
22. There are many good and often outstanding features in the quality of teaching in the school.
23. Exceptional working relationships have been established across both key stages with high expectations being a key feature of teaching and learning.
24. Good teaching is evident in both key stages and in all curriculum areas, generally characterised by:
 - sound planning and good subject knowledge;
 - appropriately designed activities to meet the learning needs of pupils of all abilities irrespective of gender, race and disability;
 - a willingness to take risks;
 - pupils being provided with target grades, knowing what they are and what they need to do to achieve them;
 - the use of a wide range of teaching and learning strategies; and
 - the development of pupils' understanding of key skills.
25. The development of key skills is a feature of teaching that is integral to most lessons in both key stages. Close attention to the skills of 'working with others' 'problem-solving' and 'improving own performance, is transforming the processes of learning, teaching and assessment practice across the school.
26. Outstanding practice in assessment occurs in a number of subject areas. Such practice is exemplified by the active involvement of pupils in their own assessment and the manner in which teachers and pupils discuss and negotiate targets and criteria for assessing progress made towards the targets.
27. The organisation and management of the school's "SuccessMaker" provision is similarly outstanding. The programme is genuinely inclusive with the focus on:
 - raising self-esteem;
 - celebrating success in a wide variety of ways; and
 - raising standards.
28. Reorganisation of the school's approach to assessment is well managed with good assessment practice evident in several curriculum areas.
29. Arrangements for tracking and monitoring pupils' performance are well established in the school. Pupils know their targets and how to achieve them. They are well supported in this by subject teachers and their learning managers.
30. The overall provision for care, support and guidance is outstanding, with particular features being:
 - the high quality links with partner primary schools that ensure smooth and successful transition arrangements for all pupils;
 - the highly effective transition arrangements at each new stage of learning for all pupils; and
 - the thought and consideration undertaken by all staff within the area of provision for pupils with additional learning needs.

31. Other aspects of education and training that contain outstanding features are:
- the large number of pupils who take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that successfully enrich the curriculum and contribute to the personal and social development of all pupils;
 - the development of activities to address issues of sustainable development and global citizenship;
 - the comprehensive PSE programme that develops pupils' knowledge of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues; and
 - the inclusive way that pupils with disabilities are successfully integrated in all aspects of school life.
32. All statutory requirements for assessing pupils' achievements and reporting on NC subjects are met. Teaching fulfils the regulations of examining bodies. The committed emphasis placed on the development of key skills and other aspects of the learning core reflects the national focus on the 14-19 learning agenda.

Shortcomings

33. Where shortcomings in teaching occur, they are associated with inconsistencies in the quality of planning or in its implementation.
34. A further shortcoming is some inconsistency in day-to-day assessment practice between, and occasionally within, subject departments. This is evident in the various discrepancies in assessment and marking practices across and within subjects. Additionally, the outstanding practice in self- and peer- assessment is yet to be fully shared and embraced by all curriculum areas.
35. The school is currently at an early stage in addressing the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) agenda for widening learning pathways for pupils in KS4.

Leadership and management

Good and outstanding features

36. The headteacher provides dynamic and progressive leadership while demonstrating a genuine desire to listen, consult and support all staff. Through these strengths, he achieves success by:
- having high expectations of himself and others;
 - enabling all staff to feel secure in their ability to take risks and express themselves;
 - allowing other leaders to lead;
 - encouraging staff to be innovative in their teaching; and
 - delegating responsibilities effectively.
37. Senior and middle managers have the capacity to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own work. The senior leaders have a strong presence around the school and have developed their link roles to subject areas effectively and efficiently.
38. Outcomes of the outstanding features of leadership in the school include:
- effective and efficient cross-phase transition;

- a continuing professional development programme (CPD) of high quality for staff, appropriately linked to individual and school priorities for improvement;
 - a performance management system that is outstandingly led by an assistant headteacher; and
 - the strong partnerships established with a wide range of external organisations.
39. There are many good features in leadership and management at all levels. These include:
- a governing body that has a good understanding of its role and is very well informed by the headteacher and others about all matters relating to the governance of the school;
 - governors who are fully involved in the strategic management of the school;
 - self-evaluation arrangements that are beginning to become embedded in the culture of the school;
 - a strong sense of ownership by staff of the priorities, targets and outcomes arising from the review processes;
 - good planning processes that successfully link the school development plan (SDP) to the departmental development plans; and
 - thorough target-setting processes to establish performance targets for pupils, departments and ultimately the school.
40. An outstanding feature of the adequacy, suitability and use made of staffing and learning resources is the manner in which the school has reaffirmed its commitment to providing small class sizes within a difficult financial period.
41. Furthermore, there are several good features within the management of resources. These include:
- accommodation that provides a good environment for learning and teaching;
 - displays of pupils' work that provide a stimulating environment;
 - well-qualified and highly committed teachers;
 - a good range of capable and experienced support and administrative staff;
 - good ICT facilities that are effectively used by subject teachers;
 - the manner in which the budget is rigorously managed by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and the senior administrative officer; and
 - the school providing good value for money.

Shortcomings

42. The few shortcomings within leadership and management include:
- widening consultation to assist in the development of a more inclusive self evaluation process;
 - ensuring all aspects of planning documents are more clearly presented; and

- the lack of opportunities for teachers to develop further the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Progress since the last inspection

43. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good in a number of areas. These are:

- accommodation which has been enhanced significantly by the new sports' facilities and additional classroom space; and
- the development of a PSE programme that has significantly enhanced the learning of all pupils.

44. Further to these areas, improvement has been good in:

- the monitoring and reviewing of teaching and learning across the school;
- the implementation of compulsory Welsh in KS4;
- the development of the spiritual aspect of school life;
- strengthening links with industry; and
- meeting statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship.

Recommendations

In order to build on the current success and, as identified in the SDP, the school should:

- R1 Ensure consistency of application of the school's assessment policy across all curriculum areas;
- R2 Continue to address the WAG's agenda for widening individual learning pathways for pupils in KS4; and
- R3 Refine further the processes of self-evaluation and planning.

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 1: Good with outstanding features

45. The grade awarded matches the school's self evaluation grade.

46. There are several outstanding features in how well learners achieve. These include:
- the high levels of attainment that the school has maintained in both KS3 NC tests and GCSE results;
 - the level of value-added attributable to the performances of the pupils when measured against prior performance and predicted potential;
 - the consistently high standards of key skills across the curriculum;
 - the attitudes displayed by pupils towards their learning; and
 - the emphasis placed on good behaviour, including self-discipline, and the manner in which pupils acknowledge the contribution this makes to their successes.

Their success in attaining agreed learning goals

Good and outstanding features

47. In 2006, the KS3 CSI for the school was, at 80.9%, over 20% above the national figure. Despite more girls than boys reaching this level, the separate performances of boys and girls were also significantly above the national figures.
48. The percentage of pupils attaining level 5 and above in each of the separate subjects of English, mathematics and science is above 85%. An outstanding feature is the high percentage of pupils attaining levels 6, 7 and 8 within one or more subjects.
49. In all core subjects and the CSI, the KS3 performance in 2006 was better than the local and national averages. Furthermore, when compared with schools of a similar intake, the school is consistently in the top quartile.
50. In KS4, the school has maintained extremely high standards of attainment in GCSE. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades is an outstanding feature of the school's performance. In 2006, 79.2% of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades and 92.9% of pupils achieved five or more A*-G grades. These percentages are slightly lower than the results from 2005.
51. GCSE results compare extremely well with the LEA and national results; the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C is 28% above the LEA figure and 27% above that for all-Wales. One particularly impressive feature is the percentage of pupils attaining the CSI in year (Y) 11. In 2006, 68% of pupils attained the CSI, compared with 39% locally and 38% nationally. This achievement is enhanced further by the high percentage of all GCSE grades awarded at A* and A grades; in 2006, the figure was 38.1%.

52. Overall, when compared with similar schools, the school's GCSE results in 2006 place the school in the top quartile for all but two of the indicators, where they are in the top of the second quartile.
53. A range of data is used to set numerical targets for the end of each key stage. In both key stages, these targets are exceeded. In KS4, the performance of the pupils in 2006 demonstrated a significant level of value added when compared with the pupils' attainment on entry and the targets set by the school.
54. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, generally perform very well. The most-able pupils are generally challenged to produce work of a high quality both in oral and written responses. Pupils with SEN are successful in their work and good use of individual education plans (IEPs) ensures good levels of participation and success in mainstream classes.
55. The development of key skills forms an integral part of the life of the school. The standards in key skills are generally very good with some outstanding work in a number of areas.
56. Standards of speaking and listening are very good across both key stages. Pupils of all abilities listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They speak with clarity and confidence in a range of contexts across the curriculum. Within whole-class and group discussions, pupils not only respond to questions but also raise their own questions and are capable of sustained discussion and debate.
57. Reading skills are very good; generally, access to the curriculum is not hampered by an inability to read materials that are used in lessons. Independent research is undertaken in a significant number of subject areas and pupils carry this out with enthusiasm.
58. Good examples of sustained and extended writing are evident across a number of areas of the curriculum. The quality of presentation is generally very good and pupils take pride in the work they produce.
59. There is considerable evidence of numeracy being used within many areas of the curriculum; the ability of pupils to use number in a range of contexts is very good.
60. Information and communication technology is successfully used by teachers and pupils. This area of key skills has developed extremely well recently particularly for promoting independent research, drafting and redrafting and creating presentations. The use of spreadsheets is evident where appropriate.
61. Standards in bilingual skills are good. All signs are bilingual and are produced to a high standard. Incidental use of the Welsh language is heard in registration and assemblies. The culture of Wales is celebrated in the school and is evident in some of the displays of high quality around the school.
62. Standards in the use of the wider key skills are often outstanding. Frequently, pupils demonstrate a keenness to work together in pairs and in small groups. In these situations, the combination of high standards of discussion, high quality questioning, the evaluation of their own work and the ability to suggest improvements is often outstanding practice in learning.
63. The development of independent learning skills is good. Pupils acquire new skills and knowledge and develop new concepts and understanding through a range of pieces of work in class and for homework.

Shortcomings

64. When considering the performances of boys and girls in gaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE, the difference is, at 12%, slightly wider than the local figure and the same as the national figure. However, the attainment of both boys and girls is dramatically better than the local and national figures.

Their progress in learning

Good and outstanding features

65. Pupils readily acquire new skills, knowledge, concepts and understanding, often applying these successfully to new and challenging learning situations.
66. Generally, pupils display enthusiasm for, and engagement in, the work they undertake. Pupils recognise and understand the progress they are making and are able to explain how they can make further progress.
67. Pupils are able to reflect on the work they are doing, either individually or in small groups. An outstanding aspect of this is the manner in which peer assessment is used to raise standards and establish targets which, in turn, are discussed and moderated by the teacher involved.
68. Pupils make extremely good progress through each transition point in their learning and successfully move on without any significant pause in their learning experiences. Pupils of all abilities progress well to fulfilling their potential. The ability of the pupils to adapt their learning to unfamiliar situations is a significant strength of their learning experience.

Shortcomings

69. There are no significant shortcomings.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

Good and outstanding features

70. A significant factor contributing towards the outstanding standards of attainment is the contribution that pupils make through their very good personal, social and learning skills. They use these skills exceptionally well in all aspects of school life.
71. The SMSC development of all pupils is undertaken well; pupils display maturity and understanding within a range of challenging situations, often presented within PSE and other aspects of school life such as the school council.
72. The attitude of pupils towards their work is very good. Active engagement in the tasks presented in lessons, allied to an overt enjoyment in their learning, is an outstanding feature of the culture of the school.
73. Pupils move between lessons in a sensible and orderly manner. The school is a happy and relaxed community and the positive use of the communal areas around the school demonstrates a sense of ownership and pride on the part of the pupils.
74. Pupils behave responsibly around the school and in lessons. They understand the importance of good behaviour in a learning environment. The strong emphasis placed upon the importance of self-discipline, working with others and improving one's own performance establishes the classroom as a place in which effective learning takes place.

75. The mean level of attendance over the last three academic terms has been, at 93%, satisfactory. The school recognises that this level of attendance needs to continue to improve. Punctuality to school, registration and lessons is generally good.
76. Pupils, parents and other partners comment favourably on the ability of pupils to solve problems, improve their own learning and consequently, at the end of KS4, successfully move from school to another educational establishment or to establish themselves successfully within the world of work.
77. Care, respect and concern for others are key aspects of themes within the school's PSE programme and are features openly visible within the daily work of the school. Such strengths, linked with an awareness of diversity within society ensure that all pupils are capable of successfully adapting to the wider community beyond the school.
78. The school provides pupils with good work experience opportunities through a comprehensive and successful programme that is well established in the school. Employers' evaluations indicate the high quality contribution made by the pupils they receive.

Shortcomings

79. There are no significant shortcomings.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

80. The school was undecided between a grade 1 or grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team confirmed a grade 2.

81. There are outstanding features and these include:
- the quality of working relationships allied to the high expectations of pupils and the high level of challenge in tasks, particularly in KS4; and
 - the creative and innovative use of "SuccessMaker" across all abilities and ages.

82. In the 65 lessons observed, the following grades were awarded:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Y7	0	7	1	0	0
Y8	2	7	7	0	0
Y9	0	8	2	0	0
KS3	2	22	10	0	0
Y10	5	15	3	0	0
Y11	3	5	0	0	0
KS4	8	20	3	0	0
Total	10	42	13	0	0
Total %	15.4	64.6	20.0	0	0

83. Comparison with grades awarded in the last inspection is difficult because of the introduction of a category for 'outstanding' features in teaching in grade 1. Furthermore, the size and nature of the samples of teaching that were inspected during each inspection are different. However, it is clear from the evaluations in this inspection that the quality of teaching has risen, with 80% of lessons judged to be grade 1 or 2 compared with 23% of teaching deemed to be 'very good' in 2001.
84. Only 20% lessons were given grade 3 and no lessons were judged to be grades 4 or 5. The proportion of lessons judged to be grades 1 and 2 is 11% above the national average for 2005-6 which, at 69%, is the all-Wales figure for secondary schools published within HMCI's annual report of 2005-06.

How well teaching meets pupils' needs and curricular or course requirements

Good and outstanding features

85. Teachers in both KS3 and KS4 have exceptional working relationships with their pupils. Expectations are high on both sides and this makes for a purposeful and productive learning environment.
86. In KS4 in particular, teachers plan and provide stimulating and challenging learning activities for their pupils and have high expectations of all learners. These levels of challenge were observed, for example, in the development of pupils' research skills in mathematics and in the use of innovative teaching techniques in history.
87. Good teaching can be observed in both key stages and in all curricular areas. It is characterised generally by sound planning and good subject knowledge, but also by a willingness to take risks and by a determination constantly to push pupils a little further.
88. This process is assisted by the simultaneous development of pupils' understanding of key skills. These are targeted in all planning documentation and are integral to most lessons in both key stages. In particular, close attention to the skills of 'working with others', 'problem-solving' and 'improving own performance', is transforming the processes of learning, teaching and assessment practice across the school.
89. A strong feature of teaching in the school is the extent of professional support that is made available to teachers. This goes well beyond attendance at in-service training courses, though this occurs in abundance, and is extensively evaluated. There are networks of self-help activities that operate both within and beyond the school. These enable teachers to identify current developments and exchange ideas, either through the various learning committees or with colleagues in other schools.
90. Outcomes of one or other process can be found in some innovative and stimulating teaching observed during the inspection. It was evident, for example, in:
 - the history department's use of simulation in Y8 to develop understanding of the predicament of managing a family budget in Tudor times, and of 'fortune graphs' in Y11 to analyse trends and turning points in the development of television and cinema;
 - in the use of self and peer-assessment to promote creative writing in English; and
 - in the many opportunities given to pupils in art to talk about, and critically evaluate, their own work and that of other pupils.

91. Teachers plan and cater appropriately to meet the learning needs of pupils of all abilities irrespective of gender, race and disability. This is achieved partly by the nature of the activity. For example, high levels of inclusion were observed in music and drama. It is also achieved partly through the range of teaching methods used such as small-group work, problem-solving activities or peer-assessment, as seen in a number of subject areas.
92. Pupils are given target grades in all subject areas and, in most cases, they know what they are and what they need to do to achieve them. For the most part, pupils have a good idea of how well they are doing, though occasionally, some are unsure about the meaning of descriptors attached to the highest levels.

Shortcomings

93. Shortcomings in teaching in a minority of lessons, particularly in KS3, include one or more of the following features:
 - a lack of alignment between planning documentation and what happens in lessons;
 - occasions where no clear statement about lesson objectives was stated and/or the length of the lesson was not judged accurately; and
 - occasional failure to meet the learning needs of pupils of differing abilities.

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

Good and outstanding features

94. Some outstanding practice in assessment occurs in English, history, art and religious studies. In these areas, assessment practice is inextricably linked to key skills. All pupils are encouraged, not only to improve their own performance through self and peer-assessment but also to think critically about their own thinking, about ways of approaching and solving problems and then to express these thoughts to other pupils.
95. In English, pupils have reached the stage of collaborating with the teacher to devise assessment criteria for written tasks and of deciding which written work is worthy of display. This growing sense of ownership of their own learning increases pupils' motivation and is having a direct impact on standards of achievement.
96. The organisation and management of the school's "SuccessMaker" provision is similarly outstanding. The programme is genuinely inclusive. What makes it so is the way in which it involves pupils of all abilities and reaches far beyond improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, impressive though pupils' learning gains undoubtedly are.
97. The focus is rather on raising self-esteem, on celebrating success in a wide variety of ways and on raising standards. The programme has widened its intake to include Y10 pupils entered for 'fast-track' English literature and is organised in such a way that pupils' access to the mainstream curriculum is minimally disrupted. As in mainstream subjects, self-assessment plays a major part in the "SuccessMaker" experience.
98. Development of the school's approach to assessment is well managed. "Assessment for Learning" has a high priority in development planning and accountability at all levels. It is being encouraged through the work of one of the five learning committees

and awareness is being raised across the school; good practice is starting to be disseminated.

99. Good assessment practice is evident in several curricular areas. In general, this is characterised by:
- well-planned assessment tasks;
 - detailed, levelled, mark schemes, written for use by pupils as well as by teachers;
 - teachers' marking that identifies strengths and weaknesses and suggests targets for improvement;
 - opportunities for pupils to mark their own and other pupils' work, thus increasing their awareness of the meaning and purpose of each task; and
 - the compilation of a portfolio of pupils' assessed work that promotes consistency of marking across a department.
100. Arrangements for tracking and monitoring pupils' performance are well established in the school. Good records are kept in all subject areas and extensive use is made of the up-dated SIMS system for the monitoring of progress in respect of target levels or predicted grades.
101. Pupils know their targets and how to achieve them. They are well supported in this by both subject teachers and learning managers. Particularly good monitoring practice occurs in science, involving a more precise adaptation of the basic SIMS package.
102. The system of reporting to parents meets all statutory requirements and provides detailed and accurate information about each pupil's progress, effort and, where applicable, attainment. Considerable improvement has occurred in the depth and precision of subject teacher comments which was criticised in the last inspection report.

Shortcomings

103. The main shortcoming is a lack of consistency in day-to-day marking practice between, and occasionally within, subject departments. Curricular areas are allowed to develop their own methods of assessment, so long as they are consistent with whole-school policy. This is a sensible, pragmatic position but one that is dependent on general compliance.
104. In a few cases, signs of inconsistent interpretation of the school's assessment policy are evident, for example, in:
- books that have been unmarked for extended periods of time or pages contain only a single, large tick with no explanation of what it represents;
 - comments that are encouraging but superficial; and
 - comments that do not include a target for improvement.
105. A further shortcoming is that the identified outstanding practice in self and peer-assessment has not yet been fully embraced by all curricular areas. The implementation of a whole-school approach to "Assessment for Learning" is work-in-progress and, as such, incomplete.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

106. The grade awarded matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

107. There are several outstanding features and these include the:

- exceptional commitment to the development of pupils' key skills;
- promotion of pupils' personal development including moral, social, cultural and spiritual development through its PSE programme;
- extensive range of extra-curricular activities, academic, cultural, artistic and sporting; and
- development of activities to address issues of sustainable development and global citizenship.

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

Good and outstanding features

108. The school shows outstanding commitment to the development of pupils' key skills. As a result of a systematic audit and a programme of awareness raising and staff training, key skills are now firmly embedded in all aspects of the school's curriculum.
109. Key skills are highlighted in schemes of work and are made explicit in lessons. Pupils' understanding of key skills is very good. The school has recently received the Welsh Secondary Schools' Association's award for its work in the development of key skills.
110. The school's promotion of pupils' personal development, including moral, social, cultural and spiritual development, through its PSE programme, is outstanding.
111. The programme has been meticulously planned and gives excellent support to teachers through detailed lesson guidance. Planning of the programme includes the contribution of specialist teachers for aspects such as sex education and work-related education.
112. The school's very good relationships with local partners have also encouraged the very valuable contribution of visiting speakers. There is a very good complementary programme for collective worship, which covers assemblies and collective worship and reflection in tutorial time; through this programme, the school meets the statutory requirement.
113. The assistant headteacher who co-ordinates the PSE programme is committed to its on-going development with the result that current and newly-emerging themes are incorporated on a regular basis.
114. The school's curriculum generally meets the needs and aspirations of pupils and is equally accessible to all. In KS3, some pupils choose to study Latin and Spanish outside of the main timetable provision, a valuable enhancement of the curriculum. In KS4, more-able pupils have the opportunity to study an AS module in science and an additional mathematics GCSE, adding further breadth to the curriculum. The curriculum in both key stages meets statutory requirements fully and satisfies the regulations of examining bodies.

115. In Y7, there is very good curricular progression from KS2. Bridging projects are in place in the core subjects and staff work well in partnership with partner primary school colleagues. A pilot project in which teachers from the English and mathematics departments teach a group of more able and talented pupils from the neighbouring primary school twice a week is already meeting with considerable enthusiasm and success.
116. The KS4 curriculum provides continuity and progression from KS3, including the introduction of a range of new subjects. In KS4, the completely open-choice option system provides considerable flexibility and results in almost every pupil's first choice being met. This is a very good feature.
117. A small group of pupils follows a more vocational curriculum. The vocational courses on offer, provided by local colleges, are fairly limited. However, pupils benefit greatly from the different curricular experience, while being able at the same time to remain within the mainstream for the core subjects and the PSE programme.
118. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches the formal curriculum. Pupils participate in music and drama activities, extra-curricular sports and visits. There is also a wide variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils clearly appreciate all that is on offer. The school's community facility of its on-site sports centre further enhances extra-curricular provision.
119. The school has very positive links with its community and values its partners in the community as a resource. In return, the school gives much back through charity work and whole-school musical and drama performances.
120. Bishopston Comprehensive School is fast developing as a community school. The link with the sports centre is very well managed and the community co-ordinator is highly pro-active, looking constantly to fulfil the school aim of being a school 'as a community, for the community and in the community'.
121. Partnerships with local colleges are strong. In KS4, pupils receive a wide and comprehensive range of information about future learning pathways. Members of staff from the college visit the school and opportunities are provided for pupils to visit the colleges.
122. There are effective links with parents and the school benefits from the efforts of a very committed and pro-active PTA. The school works closely with the Swansea Institute, regularly receiving students on initial teacher training and valuing the contribution trainee teachers make to its work.

Shortcomings

123. There are no significant shortcomings.

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

Good and outstanding features

124. The school provides work-related education through the PSE curriculum. The programme of study was devised in close collaboration with Careers West Wales. It is a comprehensive programme, including a range of work-related projects and entrepreneurial activities in both key stages, such as designated enterprise days and the Dynamo project.

125. All pupils have two weeks' experience of work towards the end of Y10. Very good use is made of Progress Files.
126. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is in evidence across the curriculum. The annual eisteddfod is given a high profile within the school and pupils regularly undertake visits to the Glanllyn Urdd centre in Bala. Bilingual signs can be seen around the school and there is evidence of bilingualism and the incidental use of the Welsh language in assemblies and registration. All requirements are met.
127. The school successfully promotes equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils. It ensures that pupils with disabilities are fully integrated alongside their peers. Through the flexibility built into the open option system in KS4, the aspirations of the widest possible range of pupils are met.
128. Across the subject range, through the PSE programme and across a spectrum of extra-curricular projects, the school is wholeheartedly addressing the national priority for sustainable development and global citizenship. It is clear that pupils have a very good awareness and understanding of the issues involved. The school has received an eco-schools' bronze award and the school council continues to maintain the school's clear focus on recycling.
129. The school's committed emphasis on key skills and all other aspects of the learning core reflects the national focus on the 14 – 19 learning agenda.

Shortcomings

130. Despite the good work being undertaken on gender issues, there remains some imbalance of gender and stereotyping in the pupils' choices of subjects in KS4. There is also some imbalance of gender in some subjects where pupils are set by ability.
131. Even though there is a very positive picture portrayed in respect of meeting the needs of learners and the wider community, the school is still at a relatively early stage in addressing fully the WAG's agenda for widening individual learning pathways for pupils in KS4.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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132. The grade awarded matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

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| <p>133. A number of outstanding features were identified, including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• involvement of Y10 pupils in the Y9 option arrangements;• transition arrangements for pupils moving from Y6 to Y7;• support provided for pupils through the PSE programme;• quality of careers education and guidance; and• thought and consideration undertaken within the provision for pupils with additional learning needs. |
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The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

Good and outstanding features

134. The overall provision for care, support and guidance is outstanding. Very effective leadership is provided by learning managers for their teams of form tutors. Form tutors stay with their forms as pupils' progress through the school and develop a very good understanding of the pupils in their charge.
135. Pupils' performances are constantly monitored and their targets tracked by form tutors. Should there be a cause for concern, learning managers contact parents and interview pupils. The performance of these pupils is then reviewed at six-weekly intervals.
136. Staff encourage parents and carers to work in partnership with them in the education of their children and in school life in general. Learning managers and the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) are in regular contact with parents and carers, keeping them well informed about pupils' progress.
137. Pupils are very effectively guided and supported in choosing courses in KS4. The 'Option Fayre' is manned by Y10 pupils who give the Y9 pupils the benefit of their experiences and advice on course content and suitability. The 'Options Evening' is supported by external agencies and careers advisers. Parents and pupils find this hugely beneficial.
138. Benefits arising from these arrangements produce outstanding features that include the:
- involvement of Y10 pupils being not only beneficial to Y9 pupils but helping the Y10 pupils with their own communication and presentation skills; and
 - options choices being entirely open ensuring no restriction on what pupils may choose and all pupils having equal access to all courses.
139. There is a very good, well-established and well-planned programme of induction. The transition arrangements between Y6/Y7 are an outstanding feature, with good use of the Limacon computer package that ensures that pupils are allocated to appropriate classes and friendship groups.
140. Pupils are also supported by reading and numeracy mentors from Y11 and prefects have undergone training on conflict resolution before being assigned as mentors.
141. The support offered by the school's PSE programme is outstanding. The school has undertaken an audit of learning outcomes across the curriculum and carefully constructed an extremely detailed programme based on the PSE framework. Some outstanding features of this programme include:
- detailed coverage of attitudes and values, skills and knowledge and understanding at both key stages;
 - sexual and health aspects delivered by specialist staff; and
 - the range of external speakers supporting the programme.
142. The school has an effective school council with members elected by their peers. Members are pro-active and committed. The school takes careful account of the considerations of the council. Minutes are circulated to tutor groups.
143. There are many effective systems in place to monitor pupils' punctuality, attendance and behaviour. First-day calling and follow-up procedures are well established and

pupils and parents are reminded frequently of the importance of regular attendance. The education welfare officer (EWO) is based at the school two days a week enabling prompt action to be taken when there is cause for concern.

144. The quality of careers education and guidance is outstanding. The school was recently highlighted as a model of good practice in a Careers Wales internal inspection. There are very strong partnerships with the Careers Company and local businesses and agencies.
145. Pupils are very well informed before making choices relating to their education and guided appropriately for the world of work. An outstanding aspect of this process is the level of support for pupils, enabling them to make well-informed decisions relating to choices concerning their further education or entering the world of work.
146. Policies and guidelines for assuring pupils' well-being and health and safety when in the school's care are well managed. The school's staff includes a school nurse and a number of designated first-aiders.
147. All school trips undergo rigorous and appropriate risk assessments before being sanctioned.
148. Through PSE and other lessons across the curriculum, pupils are made aware of the benefits of healthy life-styles. The school council is currently seeking to achieve the healthy schools' accreditation.
149. The school has effective child protection procedures and established policies in place for dealing with appeals and complaints. The school has a child protection policy, the requirements of which are implemented effectively. All staff undertake regular training and are fully conversant in the procedures.

Shortcomings

150. There are no significant shortcomings.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

Good features

151. Overall, provision for pupils with additional learning needs is very good. There is a very strong inclusive ethos in the school and there are several outstanding features including:
 - pupils with physical disabilities and sensory impairments being fully included in all aspects of the life of the school;
 - the range and quality of additional strategies and initiatives for more-able and talented pupils;
 - the organisation and implementation of the "SuccessMaker" programme; and
 - the implementation of the behaviour policy, together with carefully structured pastoral support programmes, resulting in a very low number of pupils with fixed-term exclusions; only two pupils have been permanently excluded in the past five years.
152. The school uses a range of appropriate strategies to diagnose and support pupils with SEN. All pupils who require them have IEPs. All staff, including support staff, have copies and use them effectively.

153. At present, the provision for pupils with SEN is being carried out successfully by the acting SENCO. Records are well maintained and the school meets all statutory requirements in regard of statements of SEN, their annual review, and the drafting of transition plans.
154. There is good liaison between the acting SENCO and subject departments. Provision across the curriculum is good and staff match tasks to abilities and incorporate appropriate challenge.
155. A large team of learning support assistants (LSAs) provides very effective support to pupils with statements of SEN. There is very good liaison between LSAs and subject teachers allowing for differentiation of resource material. Support is sensitively handled and LSAs encourage pupils to develop independent learning skills.

Shortcomings

156. The IEPs currently used in the school have weaknesses in the recorded detail; targets are insufficiently focused and the plans do not record progress.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

Good and outstanding features

157. The school gives good support and guidance to learners and takes appropriate action in relation to their social, ethnic or linguistic background. Good use is made of pastoral programmes, assemblies and posters around the school to highlight relevant issues.
158. The school is generally effective in its promotion of gender equality and good race relations. All potential issues are promoted through the pastoral programme and assemblies. There is comprehensive evaluation of results and departmental analyses of gender imbalance take place. Gender stereotyping is actively discouraged, with all pupils being given equal access to the curriculum and all school activities.
159. Policies for behaviour, race equality and equal opportunities are successfully applied throughout the school. Pupils benefit from the fully inclusive ethos of the school and behaviour displayed by pupils throughout the inspection was good.
160. The school has successfully planned and created areas within the school that cater well for the needs of disabled pupils and adults. These facilities include stair lifts and ramps where required and easy access to disabled toilet facilities. Teachers are provided with additional resources such as microphones to use with classes that include pupils with disabilities. The school actively works to provide a suitable solution so that no pupil is disadvantaged in any way.
161. The PSE curriculum and assemblies successfully address important diversity issues. Any racial incidents are recorded in line with LEA legislation though these incidents are rare. Pupils are very involved with raising money for a number of world charities raising their awareness of poverty on a global level.

Shortcomings

162. There are no significant shortcomings.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

163. The grade awarded matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

164. There are several outstanding features including:

- the effective, inclusive ethos within the school;
- the approach taken by the headteacher towards developing leadership within the school;
- the strength of the performance management procedures and the use of subsequent CPD for school improvement; and
- the pro-active involvement of the governing body in the school improvement agenda.

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

Good features

165. The strong, inclusive ethos, with its impact being all staff feeling empowered in their individual practices and areas of responsibility, is a key feature of the school.
166. The aims and values of the school are explicit in policy and are largely fulfilled. The mission statement, to be an outstanding learning community founded upon mutual respect, is known and understood by all members of the school community. The statement is published in school documentation and displayed around the school in multi-lingual format.
167. The headteacher has, during his four terms in post, provided dynamic and progressive leadership. He demonstrates, consistently, a real desire to listen, consult and support and, consequently, all staff feel valued and empowered. All leaders are allowed to lead.
168. The headteacher has high expectations of all, provides clear direction and makes a significant impact on the standards achieved and the quality of education provided. As a result, pupils feel secure, achieve highly academically and develop personally and socially.
169. A number of outstanding features in terms of leadership and management are evident and include the headteacher and relevant assistant headteacher providing very effective leadership in cross-phase transition. It is a transparent, bilateral and high profile process that is sensitively led so that pupils settle quickly and make excellent progress.
170. A further outstanding feature is the assistant headteacher's leadership of staff appraisal and review of performance. This is an integral part of the school's drive for improvement and promotes professional development and leads to an enhancement in the quality of provision. It is a model of best practice.

171. Members of the SLT have a strong presence around the school. They reinforce academic expectation, offer pastoral care and maintain the high standards of behaviour. Links with subject leaders are well developed and work efficiently.
172. There are clear policies for equality of opportunity. Their effectiveness is evident in the inclusive ethos of the school, specifically in access to the curriculum, staff roles and the very good provision for pupils with a range of additional educational and physical needs.
173. In improving the school's provision, very good account has been taken of national and local priorities. Education for sustainable development and global citizenship are now well integrated across the whole-school curriculum in addition to discrete delivery through PSE.
174. The school has formed strong partnerships with a number of external organisations and collaborates effectively with local providers of education. This has resulted in direct benefits for pupils as well as indirect gains for staff through self-help in-service training that enhances their knowledge and skills and ultimately their delivery to pupils.
175. There is a very thorough review of the quality of work of departmental teams and individuals within them, through annual self-review, a robust performance management cycle and biennial departmental reviews that involve external consultants. Targets arrived at are understood and developments to ensure targets are met and supported through appropriately identified CPD.
176. The quality of the CPD programme that is available to teaching and non-teaching staff is outstanding. All staff are encouraged to engage fully in CPD and other training, in order to meet the challenging targets set. The CPD programme is effectively managed and firmly linked into development planning and performance management; all training is evaluated and its impact on current practice identified.
177. The high standards that pupils achieve and the quality of many aspects of the school's provision provide evidence of the effectiveness of the CPD programme.

Shortcomings

178. There are no significant shortcomings.

The extent to which governors meet their responsibilities

Good and outstanding features

179. The governors are a pro-active body who possess significant expertise in a range of fields and fulfil their role very effectively. They provide substantial input in terms of strategic planning and financial management.
180. The strength of the governance of the school is that:
 - governors are extremely well informed and monitor the school's progress closely through a variety of systems;
 - the governing body successfully acts as a critical friend to the school particularly in issues relating to school performance and financial matters; and
 - governors are very supportive of the school and of its activities and attend many of its public events.

181. Decision-making processes, involving the main body and the committees within the established committee structure, are both efficient and effective.
182. Lines of communication are very good. Relations between the newly-appointed chairperson and the headteacher are very productive. The governing body is prepared to challenge decisions and ask questions.
183. The governing body meets all its regulatory and statutory requirements.

Shortcomings

184. There are no significant shortcomings.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

185. The grade awarded matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

Good and outstanding features

186. Although the school's self-evaluation arrangements are relatively recent, good progress has been made in embedding a reflective culture in the school. The headteacher and other senior managers know the school well and they have produced a comprehensive and honest appraisal of the school both on departmental and whole-school level.
187. Taking into consideration the school being undecided between a grade 1 or grade 2 for key question 2 in its self-evaluation report, the inspection team's grades for the seven key questions in the inspection framework agree with the school's own grading.
188. The school has established a robust process of self-evaluation that includes:
- a clear cycle of self-evaluation throughout the year;
 - lesson observation that informs performance management;
 - planned, biennial departmental reviews led by external consultants;
 - annual self-evaluation reports by departments that feed into the whole-school self-evaluation report;
 - targets and priorities, identified by departments in their self-evaluation reports, becoming the basis of departmental development planning;
 - staff committees, established as working parties, that look at different aspects of school life; and
 - governors being well informed about the self-evaluation procedures and outcomes.
189. Staff have a good understanding of the self-evaluation process and some departments have started to develop peer observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work as aspects of the departmental self-evaluation process. There is a strong sense of ownership by staff of the priorities, targets and outcomes arising from the self-evaluation processes in the school.

190. The school uses a broad range of evidence, including classroom observations, analysis of performance data, feedback from examination boards and evidence from other external perspectives, to ensure accuracy when identifying areas of strength as well as those for further development.

Shortcomings

191. A sample of pupils in Y7 have been surveyed about their settling into school early in the autumn term but a more comprehensive survey of pupils, parents and other partners has yet to be included fully into the school's self-evaluation process.

192. Questionnaires have been developed to address this aspect of self-evaluation but they have not yet been used as part of a wider survey.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

Good and outstanding features

193. There are good procedures in place to plan for improvement. The SDP is a one-year document that follows the three to five year priorities established by the governing body and headteacher.

194. Departmental development plans (DDP) generally link well with the whole-school plan and are informed by the departmental self-evaluation process.

195. Target-setting procedures for pupils' performance are thorough with targets being established for each pupil, based upon a range of prior performance and predictive indicators. These are accumulated to a subject level to establish appropriate targets for subjects/departments; these subject targets are scrutinised and then agreed. This process is rigorous and known to all.

196. The school's performances at GCSE and KS3 have been very good over a number of years. The school has managed its budget very well to support priorities for improvement and has identified 14-19 learning pathways and developing community links as important priorities for the present. The school's use and development of the "SuccessMaker" programme is a very good example of effective priorities in resourcing.

Shortcomings

197. Both at whole-school and departmental levels, neither time limits nor costings are included in development plans; this limits their effectiveness. Furthermore, success criteria in these plans are not sufficiently quantifiable and quantitative data and targets are not included.

198. Time for meetings between heads of department and their link senior staff is restricted by the high contact ratio of teachers.

199. Pupils' performance targets are not published in the SDP or in other whole-school documentation. However, the targets are available in departments and for pupils.

Progress since the last inspection

200. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good in:

- extending and re-furbishing accommodation; and
- the development of a PSE programme.

201. It has been good in:

- the monitoring of teaching and learning;
- the implementation of compulsory Welsh in KS4;
- developing the spiritual aspect of school life;
- improving links with industry; and
- meeting statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

202. The grade awarded matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

203. There is one outstanding feature in this key question, namely, the management of resources in the school, particularly the budget, within the current fiscal climate, resulting in the unitary authority (UA) identifying the school's management of its budget as an example of best practice.
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The adequacy, suitability and use made of staffing, learning resources and accommodation

Good and outstanding features

204. There are enough suitably qualified and experienced teachers to teach effectively all aspects of the curriculum. The technical staff provide good support in design and technology, science and ICT. The SENCO deploys LSAs effectively to help improve the education of pupils with SEN. Administrative and other support staff efficiently undertake their roles in the day-to-day running of the school.

205. Since the last inspection, there has been considerable improvement in the quality of the accommodation. Most subjects are taught in adjacent suites of rooms. A new sports' facility provides very good accommodation for physical education and new teaching rooms have allowed for the removal of a number of unsatisfactory, temporary classrooms.

206. The school makes effective use of some specialist, off-site facilities at the university to enrich the learning experiences of pupils.

207. The school provides good access for pupils with physical disabilities.

208. There are some pleasant recreational areas for pupils and the grounds and buildings are well maintained throughout. There is little evidence of litter or graffiti. Overall, the accommodation provides a good setting for learning and teaching to take place.

209. Information and communication technology facilities at the school are good with approximately one computer to every five pupils. Some teachers use data-projectors and interactive white boards to enrich their lessons.

210. Pupils have adequate access to a range of resources to support their learning. Colourful displays of pupils' work in classrooms and public areas of the school help to enhance the quality of the environment.

Shortcomings

211. The school allocates insufficient funds for purchasing library books. In particular, there is a lack of reference books. While some departments use the library frequently, the majority of teachers rarely use the library as a resource to support pupils' independent learning.
212. Despite the adequacy of the ICT facilities, the popularity of ICT as a subject means that all the computer rooms are often fully timetabled with ICT lessons. This reduces the opportunities for some teachers to develop the use of ICT across the curriculum.

How efficiently resources are managed to provide value for money

Good and outstanding features

213. The way that the school manages its resources is an outstanding feature of the management of the school. Despite recent budget cuts, the governing body has re-affirmed its view that providing small class sizes should be a major priority.
214. The headteacher and the finance committee of the governing body have made wise spending decisions and thereby enabled the school to accommodate these cuts without affecting the quality of education on offer. In addition the governing body has released a modest sum so that the school can begin to address the priorities identified in the SDP.
215. In line with the policy of small class sizes, teachers are well deployed and their expertise is put to good use.
216. After taking into account the effects of inflation, the amount of money allocated to support the curriculum has declined over the past five years. Nevertheless, departments spend their money wisely to ensure that there are adequate levels of books, materials and equipment.
217. The deputy headteacher and the senior administrative officer manage the day-to-day spending of the school budget very effectively. The finance committee of the governing body rigorously oversees their work. The most recent audit report was favourable and the UA views the school's procedures as a model of good practice.
218. Professional development is extremely well managed by an assistant headteacher and there are very good arrangements for the identification and prioritisation of training needs. The school has been pro-active in obtaining additional training funds from the general teaching council for Wales.
219. Teachers' performance management objectives are firmly linked to whole-school priorities. All employees have access to appropriate training and the school holds the, "Investors in People Award". Criminal record bureaux checks are carried out on all employees by the UA on behalf of the school.
220. The school has met the workload agreement and teachers have sufficient time for planning, preparation and assessment; this time is effectively used by teachers. Following appropriate consultations, the governing body has revised the management structure of the school in line with the teaching and learning responsibilities (TLR) guidelines. The sensitive way in which these changes have been introduced has maintained staff morale and commitment.
221. Given the recent budget reductions the school achieves good value for money.

Shortcomings

222. There are no significant shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

The headteacher, staff and governors are pleased to report that the findings from the ESTYN inspection have endorsed the school's own self evaluation report which had been written prior to the inspection. The many outstanding features have been fully recognised and clearly demonstrate the professional and positive manner with which the teaching and support staff discharge their duties in providing pupils with opportunities to achieve excellent standards in all aspects of school life.

Comments about the outstandingly high standards achieved by so many of our pupils reflect the quality of teaching and learning right across the school. Our external examination results place us in the top few schools in Wales and the recognition of high levels of value added provides further evidence that pupils achieve well at all levels.

We are proud of the fact that good teaching, with some outstanding features has been identified across the school, with 80% of classes where teaching was awarded a grade 1 or grade 2. In addition, the excellent development of the key learning skills across the curriculum is playing a significant part in the raising of standards in all key stages. To improve learning still further, our development plans already highlight the need to share the outstanding practice identified in Assessment for Learning in all areas of the curriculum. This will enable pupils to set themselves challenging targets and understand how to make further progress towards these targets.

The continued development of our 14 to 19 pathways will enhance our curriculum which has already been described as 'good with outstanding features'. This reflects the exceptional work of all our staff in ensuring that our pupils are given every opportunity to succeed at all levels. Pupils 'display an outstanding attitude towards their work' and 'demonstrate very good behaviour in and around the school'. The report also notes that the school is 'a happy and relaxed community'. The quality of provision for equal opportunities has good and outstanding features and we will continue to fully integrate all pupils irrespective of gender, race or ability in all aspects of school life.

The school is committed to enhancing the local and global environment. References to our sustainable development programme, recycling, and litter and graffiti free site are testimony to the work of the pupils, parents, staff and governors associated with the school.

It is reassuring that the report states 'in almost every respect the school achieves its overall aim'. The headteacher, leadership team and leaders/managers at all levels will continue to set a clear vision and a strategic direction to raise standards. This will be achieved in conjunction with the staff, pupils, governors and parents/carers as we strive with renewed vigour to become:

'an outstanding learning community founded upon mutual respect'.

The school would like to acknowledge the work of the inspection team. Their very positive endorsement of our school means that we can confidently move forward and build on the many outstanding features which are highlighted in the final report.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Bishopston Comprehensive School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-15
Address of school	The Glebe Bishopston Swansea
Postcode	SA3 3JP
Telephone number	01792-234121
Headteacher	Mr I P Thompson
Date of appointment	January 2006
Chair of governors	Dr E Manson
Reporting inspector	Mr Gareth H Buckland
Dates of inspection	12-15 March 2007

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Total
Number of pupils	222	208	209	218	219	1076

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	55	11	60.42

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.8:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	N/A
Average teaching group size	22.84
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	77.9

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	91.7	92.0	89.8	93.3	92.0			91.8
Term 2	93.8	92.7	91.6	91.2	90.7			92.0
Term 3	96.4	94.4	94.9	94.1	91.7			94.3

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	4.94
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	9 Temporary 1 Permanent

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2006																
Total number of pupils in Y9: 218																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	11	31	40	12	1	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	21	35	24	8	0	0	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	21	39	29	1	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	18	24	32	15	0	0	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	30	35	26	0	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	19	33	27	12	0	0	

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment			
In the school	80.9	In Wales	57

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 2006	226
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	51

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	93	84	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	79	51	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	93	83	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	68	39	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	98	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	91	74	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	99	91	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	1	9	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	1	4	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1			
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2			

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Eight inspectors and the school's nominee, spent a total of 31 days in the school and met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

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

Members of the inspection team met with:

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

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- one hundred and twenty six replies to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- a range of pupils' work in all subjects across the curriculum from Y7 to Y11.

After the inspection, the registered inspector held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Gareth Buckland	KQ1
Helen Adams	Support on KQ4 & 7
Alan Kelly	KQ2
Irene Mackie	KQ3
Paul Donovan	KQ4
Anthony Sparks	KQ5
Dylan Gwyer-Roberts	KQ6
David Hughes	KQ7
David C. Williams	Nominee

Acknowledgements

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

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