



**Estyn**

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg  
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
For Education and Training in Wales



**BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL**  
**INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**

## **Inspection under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996**

**Ysgol Bro Ddyfi  
Greenfield Terrace  
Machynlleth  
SY20 8DR**

**Report by HM Inspectors**

**School number: 666/4003**

**Inspected 8 – 12 April 2002**

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## Contents

<b>1. Context</b>	<b>1</b>
The school and its priorities	1
<b>2. Main findings</b>	<b>3</b>
The main findings of the report	3
<b>3. Educational standards achieved by pupils</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Standards achieved in the subjects and areas of learning	9
3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum	11
<b>4. Ethos of the school</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	13
4.2 Behaviour and attitudes	14
4.3 Attendance	15
<b>5. Quality of education</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1 Teaching	16
5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting	17
5.3 Curriculum	18
5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	19
5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs	20
5.6 Partnerships with parents and the community, schools and other institutions	21
5.7 Partnership with industry	22
<b>6. Management</b>	<b>24</b>
6.1 The quality of self-evaluation and planning improvement	24
6.2 Leadership and effectiveness	25
6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	26

<b>7. Subjects and learning areas</b>	<b>29</b>
The standards achieved by the pupils	29
Welsh	29
English	30
Mathematics	32
Science	33
Welsh second language	35
Design and technology	36
Information and communication technology	37
Modern foreign languages – French	38
History	39
Geography	40
Religious education	41
Religious studies	42
Music	42
Art	43
Physical education	44
Media studies	46
Business studies	46
Health and social care	47
Key skills	48
Life skills	48
Personal and social education	48
<b>8. School improvement</b>	<b>50</b>
8.1 Progress since the last inspection	50
8.2 Key issues for action	51
<b>Annex</b>	<b>53</b>
Sixth-form annex	53
1. Standards	54
2. Quality of education	56
3. Leadership and management	58
4. Subjects and areas of learning	59
5. Recommendations	69
A. Basic information about the school	70
B. School data and indicators	70
C. NC assessment and pupil examination results	71
D. Basis of inspection evidence	73
E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	73

## 1. Context

### The school and its priorities

Bro Ddyfi School is a traditional bilingual comprehensive school controlled by Powys Unitary Authority (UA). It is situated in Machynlleth in north west Powys and serves a wide area. A high percentage of pupils come from Machynlleth itself and the remainder from villages or rural areas stretching as far as Carno in the east and Aberangell in the north west. The school also accepts a few pupils from the two other counties of Gwynedd and Ceredigion. At present, there are 284 pupils on the register compared with 254 at the time of the last inspection in October 1996. During the same period, pupil numbers in Years 7 to 9 have increased from 133 to 158 and in Years 10 to 11 from 81 to 97, although sixth form numbers have declined from 40 to 29. According to the school, half its pupils come from areas which are neither prosperous nor economically underprivileged, whilst the rest come from economically underprivileged areas. Nine percent of the pupils are registered for free school meals which is much lower than the percentage for Wales as a whole.

The school receives pupils from a full range of ability. The average ability levels of pupils starting in Year 7 have, for a number of years, been lower than the percentages for Wales as a whole. Tests now show that Year 7 ability levels are similar to the Welsh average.

There are 13 pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN), and a further 44 pupils at stages one to three of the SEN Code of Practice. The percentages of those with a statement and those at stages one to three are higher than the national average. The statements of four pupils merit modifying the National Curriculum (NC).

63% of pupils come from homes where English is the main language and 37% from homes where Welsh is the main language. 61% of pupils speak Welsh to first language standard and have lessons in Welsh as a first language. The school provides courses in both Welsh and English with some classes taught bilingually. In Years 7 to 9, one stream receives approximately 80% of the curriculum in Welsh and the remainder in English. The second stream receives approximately 50% of the curriculum in Welsh and the remainder in English while the third receives approximately 80% of the curriculum in English and the remainder in Welsh. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to take all their subjects in either Welsh or English, mostly in bilingual classes. In Years 12 to 13, a choice of courses are available in both Welsh and English.

The school's main objectives are to develop an ethos which emphasises academic success and progress, where attendance is good, where vandalism and challenging behaviour are not a great problem, and where most parents are proud that their children attend the school. Emphasis is placed on teaching and learning and on the creation of a purposeful working atmosphere, within a stimulating environment that offers enjoyment and satisfaction. The school also aims to strengthen and develop the natural bilingual ethos of the school.

The school development plan (SDP) for 2001-2004 sets clear aims for improving the quality of education and raising standards. To achieve these targets, the SDP outlines areas for development and targets to be attained.

## **2. Main findings**

The school has made some progress since the last inspection but there are significant weaknesses which need to be addressed.

### **The main findings of the report**

#### **Educational standards achieved by pupils**

- In key stages 3 and 4, standards were satisfactory or better in 90% of the lessons observed during the inspection. They were satisfactory in 55%, good in 31% and very good in 4%. Standards were unsatisfactory in 10% of lessons. These figures are considerably lower than the national target of 50% for good or very good standards by the year 2002. Standards were more frequently unsatisfactory and less frequently good or very good at key stage 3 than at key stage 4. In Years 12 and 13, standards were either satisfactory or better in 100% of lessons. They were satisfactory in 45%, good in 45% and very good in 10%.

- The following table shows pupils' achievement in subjects and key skills:

Subject	Key stage 3	Key stage 4	Sixth form
Welsh	Good	Good	Good
Welsh Second Language	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
English	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Mathematics	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Good	
Chemistry			Good
Physics			Good
Biology			Good
Design and Technology	Good	Good	Good
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Geography	Good	Good	Good
Modern Foreign Languages	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Art	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Music	Good	Very good	Very good
Religious Education	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious Studies		Satisfactory	
Business Studies		Satisfactory	Good
Media Studies		Good	
Health and Social Care		Satisfactory	
Life Skills		Satisfactory	
Key Skills		Good	
Personal and Social Education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Information Technology		Good	
Information and Communication Technology			Satisfactory
Travel and Tourism			Good
Leisure and Recreation			Satisfactory
Physical Education	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	

### Standards in key skills

Key stage 3	Welsh First Language	Native Speakers	Learners	Learners
	Welsh	English	Welsh	English
Oral	Good	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Reading	Good	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Writing	Good	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Numeracy	Satisfactory Good			
ICT				

<b>Key stage 4</b>	<b>Welsh</b>	<b>English</b>
Oral	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Reading	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Writing	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Numeracy	Satisfactory	
ICT	Satisfactory	

<b>Years 12 &amp; 13</b>	
Literacy	<i>Good</i>
Numeracy	<i>Good</i>
ICT	<i>Good</i>

- At key stage 3 in 2001, results in Welsh, English, mathematics and science National Curriculum (NC) statutory tests were good and better than those for the LEA and Wales as a whole. Results met the national targets for 2002. They exceeded the target in Welsh. Girls achieved higher standards than boys, especially in English. Results improved considerably in 2001; pupils' attainment was lower than the percentages for Wales as a whole in both 1999 and 2000. Pupils achieved higher standards in English, mathematics and science than in about half of other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In Welsh, pupils achieved higher standards than in most of these schools.
- At key stage 4 in 2001, 47% of pupils gained five or more GCSE A\*-C qualifications. This is fewer than the 59% for schools in Powys as a whole and the Welsh average of 50%. In 2001, 18% of pupils achieved the core subject indicator (grades A\*-C in mathematics, science and either Welsh or English). This compares with 37% for Wales as a whole and 42% for schools in Powys. The figure has declined from 26% in 1999 and 24% in 2000. The low number of pupils achieving grades A\*-C in mathematics has a considerable effect on the performance of the school. The girls' performance is much better than that of the boys' in both Welsh and English, but similar in mathematics and science.
- Compared with most of the other schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds, the percentages for those gaining five GCSE grades A\*-C, five passes at A\*-G and one pass at grade A\*-G are all lower. However, based on pupils' achievements at Key Stage 3 two years previously, the progress made is similar to the average improvement for all pupils in Wales. Subjects where pupils improved by more than the average included physics, design and technology, history, music and Welsh. Subjects in which pupils made less progress than the average included English, mathematics, chemistry and physical education.

- In the 2001 examinations, sixth form students at Bro Ddyfi achieved results which were on average approximately half a grade higher than those of other students in Wales who attained similar standards at GCSE level. The grades achieved by students sitting at least two A-level examinations were all within the A-C range. Students' average points score was much better than in the previous year and compared favourably with that of Powys and Wales as a whole.

### **Quality of education**

- At key stages 3 and 4, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 91% of lessons. It was satisfactory in 39%, good in 42% and very good in 9%. It was unsatisfactory in 9% of lessons. These statistics are fairly close to the national targets for 2002, i.e. 95% at least satisfactory and 50% good or very good. There was more unsatisfactory teaching and less good teaching at key stage 3 than key stage 4. The teaching does not always do enough to develop pupils' bilingualism, especially in bilingual classes.
- In Years 12 and 13, the quality of teaching was either satisfactory or better in 100% of lessons. It was satisfactory in 34%, good in 60% and very good in 6%.
- At key stages 3 and 4, the quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. On the whole, pupils' work is marked regularly and thoroughly, and clear and constructive comments are offered. Marking is unsatisfactory in mathematics. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good. Full reports are prepared for parents.
- In Years 12 and 13, teachers assess students' work thoroughly. Their written work is marked promptly and in a helpful manner. In mathematics, students' work is not marked often enough.
- At key stages 3 and 4, the quality, range and balance of the curriculum is good, but the inadequate time given to statutory religious education at key stage 4 restricts pupils' progress. The quality of schemes of work is satisfactory although some are good or sometimes very good. On the whole, planning for key skills is satisfactory; in numeracy it is not at present sufficiently developed. The development of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good and sometimes very good. The programme of work for personal and social education (PSE) is focussed and meets statutory requirements. Extracurricular provision is satisfactory; it is limited at lunchtime and there is little opportunity for boys to play team games against other schools.

- In Years 12 and 13, the quality of the curriculum is good. Although the choice of academic and vocational subjects available to students is comparatively limited, most students' curriculum is appropriately broad.
- Few students take up vocational courses and few pupils in Year 11 opt to return to the sixth form.
- There are no partnerships with other schools or colleges to extend the range of studies available.
- On the whole, provision for SEN pupils is satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is unsatisfactory in mathematics and some SEN pupils have only a limited experience of a foreign language at key stage 3. Specialist staff provide good support for pupils, but the school's arrangements do not allow the co-ordinator to exert sufficient influence on developments in departments across the school.
- Partnership with parents and the community is good. There are also good links with partner primary schools. Partnership with industry is satisfactory. Although some good links exist with local business and industry, they do not extend sufficiently across the curriculum.
- The quality of help and guidance given to pupils is good. On the whole, they receive effective academic guidance. This includes a scheme for mentoring by class tutors, and additional help in a homework club for those wishing to participate. The social inclusion unit contributes well towards helping individual pupils and reassimilating them into mainstream classes. Pupils receive good careers advice. The school also maintains regular contact with relevant external agencies in order to discuss any difficulties facing pupils. In years 12 and 13, students are well supported.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Although group worship fully complies with statutory requirements, it does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunity to reflect on life experiences, consider ideas and feelings and respond to them. The school encourages the nurturing of respect, consideration for others and good behaviour. The majority of pupils respond positively to this.
- The social and cultural development of pupils is good on the whole. Senior pupils help younger pupils in homework clubs and on the School Council and there are good examples of them all supporting local cultural and charitable activities. They have a good awareness of the Welsh curriculum. The school promotes their awareness of other cultures, and a healthy attitude towards racial equality and the appreciation of diversity although there is at present no specific scheme to develop these.

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are satisfactory. The school is an orderly community. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in the majority of classes. Nevertheless, in a number of classes, particularly at key stage 3, the behaviour of some individuals is unsatisfactory and has a serious effect on the lessons and standards. Pupil attendance is satisfactory. The school works diligently to promote good attendance. Despite this, a small number of pupils are often absent.

### **Management, leadership and self-evaluation**

- The school's leadership and efficiency are satisfactory. The school has an effective management structure. Although an appropriate range of school policies have been drafted, developed and revised their influence on school practice needs to be monitored more thoroughly. Departmental leadership is satisfactory, although there are some departments where it is good and sometimes very good. The school does not pay sufficient attention to ensuring that various policies are implemented consistently in some departments.
- The SDP is a useful management tool, although suggested targets and actions are not always specific enough. Departmental development plans (DDPs) follow the same pattern as the SDP, but not all of them have been sufficiently developed and their quality varies considerably.
- The governing body is supportive of the school. It makes an important contribution towards curricular, organisational and financial aspects of the school's work.
- Although the school has procedures for self-evaluation and planning for improvement, their implementation is not sufficiently consistent to influence work across the school to any great degree. The senior management team has made good progress, in analysing statutory test and external examination results, with a view to identifying and monitoring pupil and departmental progress and setting targets for improvement.
- The school manages its budget effectively and ensures value for money. However, expenditure per pupil is high at key stages 3 and 4, and in Years 12 and 13. On the whole, the school makes good use of its staff, accommodation and resources. Although the school has ensured a number of improvements to accommodation since the last inspection, there are some shortcomings which still need attention.

### **Response to the last inspection**

- The school was last inspected in the Autumn term of 1996. It responded well, on the whole, to the key issues raised. The school still needs to address problems arising from the poor condition of the old building which houses the refectory and a classroom.

### **3. Educational standards achieved by pupils**

#### **3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning**

At key stages 3 and 4, standards were satisfactory or better in 90% of the lesson observed during the inspection. They were satisfactory in 55%, good in 31% and very good in 4%. Standards were unsatisfactory in 10% of lessons. These figures are considerably lower than the national target of 50% for good or very good standards by the year 2002. There were more unsatisfactory standards and fewer good or very good standards at key stage 3 than key stage 4.

Standards in Welsh, design and technology and geography are good at key stages 3 and 4. In music, they are good at key stage 3 and very good at key stage 4. In English and science, standards are satisfactory at key stage 3 but good at key stage 4. In Welsh second language, history, art and PSE, standards are satisfactory at key stages 3 and 4. In modern foreign languages and physical education, standards are unsatisfactory at key stage 3 but satisfactory at key stage 4. In religious education, standards are satisfactory at key stage 3 but unsatisfactory at key stage 4. In religious studies, business studies, health and social care and life skills, standards are satisfactory at key stage 4; in media studies, key skills and information technology, they are good. In mathematics, standards are unsatisfactory at key stages 3 and 4.

In the sixth form, standards are good in Welsh, English, chemistry, physics, biology, design and technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages, business studies and travel and tourism, and satisfactory in Welsh second language, mathematics, art, religious education, information and communication technology and leisure and recreation.

On the whole, more able students achieve higher standards in relation to their potential at key stage 4. In a number of subjects, pupils of average or below average ability fail to realise their full potential across the key stages. The assignments set do not always correspond sufficiently to the pupils' individual needs, especially in mixed ability classes where there is a wide range of ability. SEN pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

In 1999 and 2000, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 3, according to statutory tests, was below the percentages for Wales as a whole. In 2001, however, there was a considerable improvement in standards. 66% of pupils achieved at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either Welsh or English, compared with 50% for Wales as a whole. In each of the core subjects, pupils achieved levels which exceeded the Welsh average. Results reached the national target for 2002 and exceeded the target for Welsh. Girls achieved higher standards than boys, especially in English.

Compared with other schools where pupils come from a similar background, standards in English, mathematics and science were higher than in approximately half the other schools. In Welsh, pupils achieved higher standards than most of the other schools.

At key stage 4 in 2001, 47% of pupils gained five or more GCSE A\*-C qualifications. This is below the 59% for schools in Powys as a whole and the Welsh average of 50%. It is also a little lower than the target of 50% set by the school itself.

Compared with most of the other schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds, the percentages of pupils gaining five GCSE passes at A\*-C, five successful A\*-G passes and one A\*-G pass are all lower. However, judging from pupils' achievements at key stage 3 two years previously, the progress made is similar to the average for all pupils in Wales. Subjects where standards were higher than the average included physics, design and technology, history, music and Welsh. Subjects in which pupils made progress below the average included English, mathematics, chemistry and physical education.

In 2001, the percentage of pupils attaining the core subject indicator was 18%. This compares very unfavourably with 37% for Wales as a whole and 42% for Powys. The mean percentage for pupils from similar backgrounds is 49%. Compared with these figures, the school's performance is low. The figure has declined from 26% in 1999 and 24% in 2000. The low numbers of pupils achieving grades A\*-C in mathematics have a considerable effect on the performance of the school.

In terms of percentages of pupils achieving grades A\*-C, the girls' performance is much better than that of the boys' in both Welsh and English but similar in mathematics and science.

In the 2001 examinations, sixth form student grades were on average approximately half grade higher than those of other students who had achieved similar standards at GCSE level. Students sitting at least two A levels all achieved grades ranging between A and C. The corresponding figure for Powys was 70% and 62% for Wales as a whole. The average student's points score was 28 (the equivalent of grades A, A and B) and compares well with 19 for Powys students and 18 (the equivalent of three grade Cs) for students in Wales. This result was far better than in the previous year when many students sat only two A levels and the average student score was below 13.

### **3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum**

#### **Literacy**

Standards of oracy among pupils in Welsh medium classes at key stage 3 are good in both Welsh and English. They generally listen well to each other and to teachers. They contribute confidently to discussions in Welsh in most subjects. They are also able to discuss readily in English as required, for the most part in English lessons. Their oral responses in some lessons however, are not sufficiently detailed. Reading standards are good in both Welsh and English. Writing standards are good in both languages and standards of bilingualism are developing well. Pupils also develop some important dual literacy skills, such as the ability to read a text in English and discuss its contents in Welsh as required.

In bilingual classes at key stage 3, pupils' oracy standards are satisfactory in both languages. They are able to follow the gist of lesson through the medium of Welsh and respond briefly with a word or two in Welsh. In subjects such as music, history and physical education, pupils respond in Welsh and English as required, although the great majority has more developed verbal skills in English. Similarly, with reading and writing, the majority of pupils are far more confident in English. Sometimes Welsh language achievements are restricted because the readability level of some texts is too high for them. In a few other subjects, for example science and mathematics, pupils' ability to handle subjects in both languages is not sufficiently developed. Although their oral, reading and writing standards are satisfactory in English, pupils are not always sufficiently attentive nor willing to make any oral or written responses in English which are longer than a short phrase or sentence.

In English medium classes at key stage 3, pupils' English oral standards are satisfactory. However, their responses are for the most part short. Reading standards are satisfactory. Pupils show a satisfactory understanding of what they read in English, both in subject textbooks and other texts. Writing standards are satisfactory on the whole, although they do not write at length in English. Pupils' standards of achievement are satisfactory in Welsh language lessons and they make further use of the language in physical education.

At key stage 4, where classes are bilingual, parallel use is generally made of Welsh and English. Pupils' oral, reading and writing standards are satisfactory in the language in which they work. However, bilingual skills are not developing sufficiently, particularly among learners. In a few subjects such as history and geography, pupils occasionally practice their literacy skills in both languages by writing in Welsh after reading in English. In such cases, they show a good understanding of the content and have a satisfactory grasp of terminology in both languages.

## **Numeracy**

Numeracy standards are satisfactory across the curriculum. In a number of subjects, pupils make appropriate use of skills such as the analysis and interpretation of questionnaires, the presentation of statistical data, the use of spreadsheets, the creation and analysis of graphs, timing and accounting and the use of shapes, patterns, scales and formulae to complete various tasks. There are a number of other subjects where pupils do not make sufficient use of their numeracy skills. The school is addressing this and numeracy is one of the main fields of development in the SDP.

## **ICT**

At key stage 3, the level of ICT skills among pupils is good across a wide range of computing aspects. The vast majority of pupils are able to use a computer effectively to complete a range of simple tasks, including word-processing and publishing and the use of simple databases and spreadsheets. Pupils develop and apply these skills fairly consistently in a number of subjects. They are also able to make use of the computer to collect data for scientific experiments and use a simple music programme to help them compose and edit music. In addition to this, in design and technology in Years 8 and 9, pupils use the computer for technical drawing, the editing of digital pictures and controlling a range of equipment including a lathe, a robot and an electrical circuit. Many pupils become quite skilled in these aspects of the work. However, a few pupils have difficulty in following instructions on how to use computers for managing technical drawing.

At key stage 4, levels of ICT skills among pupils are satisfactory. Pupils following the GCSE course in information technology (IT) achieve good standards. Other pupils aim at acquiring a key skills qualification at level 1 or 2. They become better versed in computing theory, more proficient in using the computer for various purposes, complete a suitable range of exercises and build appropriate portfolios. However, few of the tasks they achieve derive sufficiently from their work in other subjects. Some pupils, therefore, are not encouraged to produce work of a sufficiently high standard.

## **4. Ethos of the school**

### **4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The provision for the spiritual and moral development of pupils is satisfactory. The provision for the social and cultural development of pupils is good.

Collective worship fully meets statutory requirements, but there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to reflect upon life experiences, consider ideas and emotions or silently respond to them. Pupils participate regularly in collective worship. Musical contributions by the occasional soloist and groups of pupils such as the choir with harp accompaniment help create a suitable atmosphere. However, pupils' oral contributions and readings are not always sufficiently clear and audible. In some subjects, especially Welsh and English, pupils have regular opportunities to reflect, often through literature, on a variety of contemporary matters, which include pacifism, the environment and conservation. Pupils' responses are positive. They have an opportunity to discuss their own beliefs and those of others, especially at key stage 4, and respond well.

Pupils' moral development is satisfactory. Moral matters are discussed in some subjects and during periods of group worship and PSE lessons. The school emphasises the nurturing of respect, consideration for others and good behaviour, and the majority of pupils respond positively.

Pupils' social development is good on the whole. Where pupils have an opportunity to work in small groups or pairs they usually do so responsibly. Nevertheless, there are too few opportunities of this kind. Some of the older pupils help the younger ones in the homework clubs held at the school. They also help younger pupils in the School Council. Pupils take part in concerts and eisteddfods and raise money for worthy causes. They also do some voluntary and charitable work, such as helping to prepare talking books for the blind.

The cultural development of pupils is good. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig plays an important part in the life and work of the school. The work done in a number of subjects, especially geography and, to a lesser extent, modern foreign languages, adds considerably to pupils' perception of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig. Local visits and those further afield, including foreign countries, and overseas links with other young people via e-mail in French, extend the experience and broaden the horizons of a number of pupils. The school promotes awareness of other cultures and a healthy attitude towards racial equality and appreciation of diversity in PSE lessons, but there is no structured plan for developing these across the school.

## 4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are satisfactory.

The school describes behavioural expectations clearly in its prospectus and school-home diary.

Generally, the school is an organised community. Pupils move around sensibly and courteously, and there are very few examples of a lack of consideration. Pupils are also friendly, welcoming and helpful to visitors.

In most classes, pupils' behaviour is consistently good and the relationship between pupils and teachers is warm and sensitive. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and arrive at class ready to work. They are observant, appropriately responsive; they persevere with their work, and manage to concentrate, work collaboratively and support each other.

However, despite the school's initiative, in a number of classes, especially at key stage 3, the behaviour of some individuals has a serious effect on the lessons and standards achieved. These pupils are inattentive to both teachers and their peers, show disrespect towards other people's points of view, interrupt teachers, are noisy and disrupt the flow of lessons.

The school self-assessment document and SDP have identified the need to improve standards of behaviour. This is confirmed by a substantial minority of the high proportion of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. A series of strategies have been introduced in order to explain clearly to pupils the school's positive intention to secure improvement. The management of these strategies is satisfactorily promoted by the pastoral system of the entire school. The school behavioural management policy is based on a phased system of monitoring and penalties, but there are no particular means of recognising and acclaiming good behaviour. Although there are merit cards for good work, these do not cover good behaviour.

The home-school diaries are an effective means of drawing attention to and monitoring pupils' behaviour and their attitude towards work. The social inclusion and individual pupil monitoring unit has had a beneficial effect in a number of cases. During last year, the school made extensive use of temporary suspension as a last resort in its behavioural management programme. The suspensions have had a positive influence in most cases. Pupils return to school and receive aid through individual programmes. Pastoral staff have positive attitudes towards all the pupils and aim to ensure improvement in all cases.

The school clearly states on all possible occasions, its opposition to any cases of bullying, for example in morning assembly and pastoral sessions. The school deals with cases of unacceptable behaviour promptly and effectively.

### 4.3 Attendance

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

There has been some improvement in levels of attendance since the last inspection in 1997. Generally, the attendance rate for younger pupils is better than for the school as a whole. In some classes in Years 10 and 11, the attendance rate is more variable and is sometimes as low as 87%.

A small number of pupils are often absent for long periods of time. As the school is comparatively small, these have quite a considerable effect on the general attendance rate. The school knows these pupils well and, despite continuous contact with their homes in order to improve their attendance, often with the support of the Education Welfare Officer, only limited progress has been made in some cases.

The number of unauthorised absences is low. In the Spring term of 2002, there was an increase in unauthorised absences, particularly in Year 11 classes. This was because the school had become more thorough in categorising absences. However, there are some examples of unauthorised absences which are recorded in school registers but not included in the school statistics.

During the current academic year, the school has set sensible targets for both attendance and unauthorised absence. The school is working diligently to promote good attendance by monitoring and offering prizes and recognition.

The school's attendance registers comply with the requirements of National Assembly circular 3/99.

## 5. Quality of education

### 5.1 Teaching

At key stages 3 and 4, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 91% of the lessons observed during the inspection. It was satisfactory in 39%, good in 42% and very good in 9%. It was unsatisfactory in 9% of lessons. These figures correspond fairly closely to the national targets for 2002 of 95% satisfactory or better and 50% good or very good. There is more unsatisfactory teaching and less good teaching at key stage 3 than key stage 4.

The quality of teaching is consistently good in Welsh, English, design and technology, geography, music and media studies. In the other subjects, teaching is satisfactory with examples of good teaching in a number of subjects. There are a few examples of unsatisfactory teaching in a number of subjects, especially at key stage 3. There are also examples of very good teaching, particularly in science, music and design and technology.

Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good in most subjects. There is some teaching by non-specialist teachers, for example in French and art. This has a detrimental effect on standards to some extent.

Lessons are usually carefully planned. In the majority of subjects, teachers use a good range of educational strategies, and some make good use of ICT.

Where teaching is good, achievement and behavioural expectations are high. In addition to this, the following good features were identified:

- suitable pace of the lesson;
- good relationship between teachers and pupils;
- good presentation of the lesson by the teacher, which often includes useful revision of the previous lesson;
- praise and recognition to encourage pupils;
- suitable support, including the adaptation of texts and tasks to individual ability;
- good preparation for examinations;
- good use of self-assessment;
- good questioning by the teacher; and
- good planning for oral activities, including class discussion and group work.

However, in a considerable minority of lessons, teachers do not respond firmly enough to some pupils' negative attitudes, poor concentration, speaking out of turn or bad behaviour. In addition to this, the following unsatisfactory aspects of teaching were identified:

- plans and activities which fail to challenge the full range of ability, particularly in the lower sets;
- a limited range of teaching techniques;
- poorly timed lessons which fail to maintain a suitable pace throughout and ensure a suitable conclusion;
- too much talk by teachers; and
- limited discussion and a lack of attention to developing pupils' listening skills.

## **5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting**

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting on pupils' attainment is good. The school meets statutory NC and Code of Practice assessment requirements.

The school has a comprehensive assessment policy, supported by useful guidelines for departments, parents and pupils. It includes good guidance with regard to assessment, marking, recording and reporting.

Pupils' work is marked regularly in most departments, except in mathematics. Marking is thorough and offers clear and constructive criticism on how pupils can improve the quality of their work. On the whole, teachers make detailed comments on pupils' strengths and weaknesses and set targets for them to achieve.

The school procedure for monitoring the progress of pupils is good. A variety of methods are used to gather evidence of pupils' attainment including homework, oral work, practical work, course work, tests and examinations. Assessment results are carefully recorded at the end of each term.

The school has strengthened the role of the class tutors in discussing assessments with pupils individually and setting targets to improve effort and attitude towards work as well as progress in the subjects themselves. They make good use of the weekly pastoral period to interview pupils individually and set personal targets. The senior management team also mentors pupils in years 9 and 11, as they prepare for SATS and GCSE examinations. These strategies have begun to have a positive effect on standards.

Reports for parents comply with statutory requirements. Most of them contain a good range of comments on pupils' progress, effort and presentation in all subjects, their progress in the key skills and comments on how to improve performance in the subject. There is also an opportunity for parents to visit the school to discuss their children's education after reports have been received.

Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in assessment, recording and reporting.

### 5.3 Curriculum

At key stages 3 and 4, the quality, range and balance of the curriculum is generally good. In general, subjects are allotted sufficient time.

At key stage 3, teaching groups are organised into 3 streams, according to pupils' linguistic ability. This ensures that satisfactory provision is made for teaching through the medium of one or other of the two languages. The English language group usually includes a fairly high proportion of pupils in the lower ability range. By careful timetabling, the school is able to organise some sets according to ability in order to meet the requirements of various pupils more fully. However, there is a broad range of ability in many of the classes. This presents a considerable challenge to teachers when planning work, and they do not always succeed in meeting the needs of all pupils.

At key stage 4, the school provides a satisfactory choice of courses, including a few subjects not learned at key stage 3, courses specifically for pupils of lower ability and a single GNVQ vocational course. The provision for ICT, which is taught in specific lessons and across the curriculum, is appropriate. Insufficient time is allotted to statutory religious education.

Arrangements for science are good and stretch the ablest pupils. More able students can study three science subjects separately in the time allotted for double science. However, this arrangement is a drain on staffing resources because of the need to provide a number of small groups.

The planning for key skills at key stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. Some departments, for example French and art, have planned their subject's contribution towards key skills thoroughly. Subject planning for literacy is good in Welsh, English, history and music. Planning for numeracy is at an early stage of development, following a full school audit provision and the formulation of a policy. Planning for ICT is very good in music and good in geography.

On the whole, there is effective planning for the Welsh dimension. It is good in a number of subjects, and very good in Welsh and music.

The school updated the work programme for personal and social education (PSE) this year. It is appropriate and fulfils the statutory requirements for sex education and careers education. There are enough PSE lessons in the curriculum. Some classes did not receive all the necessary elements of the PSE programme last year, mainly because of staffing problems, but the current programme deals with this situation appropriately.

The school has set a homework timetable for each class. In several classes, many of the pupils have enough homework; in a few classes, the contact books show that pupils do not receive enough, especially in mathematics.

Extracurricular provision is satisfactory. Pupils take part in a comparatively narrow range of activities, particularly drama, music and girls' sports. The work of the enterprise club is especially good. A number of beneficial departmental visits are arranged, for example in French, art and history. There is, however, little extracurricular provision at lunchtime, and there are not enough opportunities for boys to play team games against other schools.

On the whole, pupils have equal access to all curriculum subjects. Provision for SEN pupils is generally satisfactory, but some have only limited experience of a foreign language at key stage 3. In Year 8, five pupils are taken out of French in order to receive special Welsh and English lessons. They do a little French. In year 9, there are similar arrangements for five other pupils, but these pupils do not study any French at all. Some, but not all, of these pupils are disapplied from the NC.

The quality of schemes of work is satisfactory. The scheme of work is very good in music, and are good in several other subjects, for example English, science, design and technology, history, geography and physical education. Some schemes of work do not provide enough guidance on how to teach some of the activities prescribed in them. They also lack detail regarding how best to adapt the work for a broad range of ability in a number of classes. Schemes of work are unsatisfactory in mathematics.

#### **5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

The quality of support and guidance given to pupils is good. Pupils know whom to approach for personal support. The school also makes good use of the updated scheme of work for PSE to address personal and social issues facing young people.

Effective links between the assistant head responsible for pastoral care and heads of school ensure that relevant information about individual pupils is quickly passed on for the pupils' benefit. Fortnightly meetings are held to update information and respond to individual pupils' needs as they arise.

For the most part, pupils receive effective academic guidance from their subject teachers who identify which aspects of their work pupils need to improve. The Homework Club is an effective means of providing additional help for pupils who, in the view of the school, need it. A good number of pupils take advantage of this provision which is available three mornings a week.

The mentoring scheme by class tutors is a good way of keeping an eye on pupils' progress across subjects and of mapping out a definite plan for improvement and clear targets. The targets refer to aspects such as improving participation in class discussion, or broadening participation in extracurricular activities. These scheme also ensures that pupils' successes in extracurricular and other areas are, also, recognised and recorded.

There are regular links between the school and agencies such as the police, health workers, psychologists, welfare officers and the youth crime prevention team. These useful links ensure the availability of specialists to discuss any difficulties facing pupils.

Safety procedures for pupils are implemented effectively. The school also has a clear and detailed health and safety policy. Two of the teachers have first aid qualifications.

The recently established social inclusion unit has succeeded well, in a short period of time, in avoiding exclusions and helping to re-integrate individual pupils into their mainstream classes.

An officer employed by Careers Wales Powys is based at the school, and useful information for pupils is kept in a special section of the library. The regular availability of this officer is an asset to pupils, especially at key stage 4 and post-16, when they are making decisions regarding future careers. The careers officer also conducts small group sessions for pupils from Year 8 onwards. Pupils can attend special sessions with the officer during the years when they are expected to make important decisions.

#### **5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs**

Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and provision for them across the school is satisfactory.

The school's strategy is to teach pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes, wherever possible. This is appropriate. Specialist teachers use small group and one-to-one sessions well to help pupils on the SEN register to improve their basic skills. In mainstream classes, support assistants work effectively with these pupils to enable them to make good progress in their learning. The success of specialist teachers and support assistants is based, to a great extent, on their very good knowledge of the individuals in their care.

The co-ordinator works well with appropriate agencies and ensures that statements of educational needs are available when required and are updated according to the Code of Practice. She has written Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) for each pupil on the SEN register. In response, teachers in all departments have devised strategies to help pupils achieve the targets included in their IEPs. However, many of these targets are not precise enough and mainstream teachers rarely make good use of IEPs or specific subject plans. Only a few teachers have identified effective ways of helping SEN pupils realise their full potential. As a result, SEN pupils do not always make good progress in all curriculum subjects.

One of the school's priorities is to plan materials and tasks carefully so that they which correspond to their individual needs and abilities of these pupils. Some departments have made good progress in this direction. However, without a learning assistant, pupils have difficulty in making good progress in a number of subjects. Furthermore, in only a few lessons do teachers provide enough challenge for the more able pupils.

Many pupils with behavioural problems receive sensitive help in the social inclusion unit. In addition to helping these pupils to make progress, this arrangement also allows other pupils to work without unnecessary interruption. The social inclusion officer and SEN co-ordinator work well together to support pupils' learning.

The school has made progress since the last inspection. Significant funds have been allocated to increase the SEN provision. Enough good quality resources are available. Additional teachers and support staff have been appointed and the room which acts as an SEN base has been improved considerably. However, neither DDPs nor internal departmental performance assessments pay sufficient attention to SEN. In addition to this, school procedures do not allow the SEN co-ordinator to have enough influence on departmental developments across the school.

## **5.6 Partnerships with parents and the community, schools and other institutions**

Partnerships with parents and the community, schools and other institutions are good.

A high proportion of parents responded to pre-inspection questionnaires. Most said that they were satisfied with the quality of communication between home and school. They feel that there is a welcome for them at the school and that the school encourages them to take an interest in their children's education.

Parents regularly receive information from the school via letters and newsletters and also the home-school diary. Open evenings and parents meetings are organised and are well supported.

The school prospectus is well presented and complies with National Assembly for Wales recommendations. However, the annual report of the governing body does not include comparative data for SATs and public examinations. The home-school agreement complies with statutory requirements, although it has not been the subject of a review or parental consultation recently.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is supportive. It raises a considerable amount of money for the school and arranges social events for both parents and pupils. It is well supported by parents.

Pupils regularly participate in community events and religious celebrations. Guest speakers from the community make a good contribution to a number of aspects of school life, including drama workshops and subjects such as geography, history and business studies. Both the school and individual pupils are well supported by the nearby leisure centre and its staff.

In its self-assessment report and SDP, the school recognises the need to develop links with its feeder primary schools especially with non Welsh-speaking parents in these schools. Progress has been made in this direction. Strategies include regular visits to and from schools with the head, the deputy head and the junior school head all participating. There are also curricular initiatives in force to bridge key stages 2 and 3 in subjects such as Welsh, mathematics and geography. A temporary teacher has been appointed to direct the Welsh language learners' project during the transition period. An annual business enterprise event is organised in co-operation with the LEA for Years 6 and 7. Transfer and induction arrangements for Year 6 are good and there is considerable sharing of relevant information which supports teaching and learning at the start of the secondary phase.

There is a formal partnership between the school and University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and the school receives trainees. Both staff and pupils benefit from this partnership. The school is at present considering developing a joint vocational education programme with the nearby tertiary college.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

The school's partnership with industry is satisfactory.

Careers Wales are providing an effective and valuable link between the school and industry and business. An officer will also be appointed to promote links with the local business community. These links have a considerable influence on work experience programmes for pupils in Years 10 and 12 and the support provided for careers education and business studies.

The work experience programme is well structured and pupils benefit from being required to contact and search for placements initially, although Careers Wales ensures the suitability of each one. The school's Extended Vocational Programme provides suitable work experience programmes which target disadvantaged and disaffected pupils. Members of the local business community make an important contribution by visiting the school regularly to help with mentoring programmes for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

The business studies department has forged good links with local business in order to provide pupils with useful opportunities to conduct case studies. A member of staff from the local museum gives valuable support to the school by teaching business studies part-time. The school youth enterprise team has won the Mid Wales business enterprise competition and represents Wales in an international fair.

Some members of staff joined the school after earlier careers in business and industry and their experience often supports teaching and learning. One member of staff has benefited from a work-placement in the tourist industry.

However, links with business and industry do not extend beyond careers and business studies to other subject areas. The school has no structure to ensure the development of links in every department to support teaching and learning in other subjects, and opportunities are missed as a result. At present, staff development programmes do not include plans for work placements.

## **6. Management**

### **6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

School arrangements for self-evaluation and planning for improvement and their methods of implementation are satisfactory.

When the new head took up his post, he endeavoured to create an ethos of self-evaluation by taking the opportunity to ask governors, teachers and the PTA their views on the school and its needs. This led to the setting of agreed whole school priorities. These included the tightening of school discipline; raising academic standards and improving boys' attitude to work; offering more options at key stage 4; and more extracurricular activities. Although the school has taken steps to act on these, work still remains to be done in a number of areas.

The school has established suitable procedures for evaluating standards of work. The senior management team is linked with various departments for the purpose of monitoring their work. Methods include attending departmental meetings, observing teaching, looking at pupils' work and discussing with teachers. However, these procedures are not implemented regularly enough to make a significant impact across the school. In addition to this, almost every department was the subject of an audit by external consultants in the spring term of 2000. Senior management team members also monitor tutorials, mainly by studying pupils' files; this has a positive effect on the quality of work.

The senior management team analyse a good range of data, including the results of statutory tests and external GCSE examinations, particularly in order to identify underachievers. Senior staff, department and class tutors make appropriate and increasing use of the data to support the school's system and methods of monitoring pupils' progress and mentoring them.

The senior management team was also responsible for forming a core subject panel in September 2000 to share ideas and examination preparation exercises. This followed disappointing results at key stage 4, particularly in mathematics. To date, the initiative has had little influence on results in mathematics.

The school gives careful consideration to parents' comments during consultation evenings. Pupils have an opportunity to contribute to the self-evaluation process. In a number of subjects, they have regular opportunities to evaluate their own progress and consider methods of improvement. The School Council has been revived and pupils' opinions are given due consideration. However, pupils feel that they should have more say in setting the agenda for meetings.

## 6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The leadership and efficiency of the school are satisfactory.

The school has clear aims and objectives for giving definite direction to most aspects of its life and work.

The head, who has held the post since the summer term of 1999, manages the school satisfactorily. He has made it a priority to secure an effective school management structure. This has entailed developing the senior management team (the head, the deputy head and the assistant head) and a wider management team which also includes heads of school. The team meet on a regular basis and work well together. There is staff handbook and a cycle of meetings for school staff at all levels which promotes order and channels communication. School staff meetings are held two mornings a week to share and exchange information. These developments in the school management structure have promoted more effective communication.

During the same period, the head in co-operation with the staff and governing body, has revised the school's strategies, particularly with regard to primary-secondary links, curricular provision and the mentoring of pupils. To varying degrees, these developments have begun to have a positive impact, especially the procedures for mentoring.

The quality of departmental leadership is satisfactory. In a few cases it is good and sometimes very good. There are some aspects of management, however, which require further attention. The implementation of policies is not always sufficiently consistent across departments.

An appropriate range of school policies have been drawn up and developed. These are regularly reviewed by the senior management team. An example of this is the discipline policy which was streamlined as a result of the leadership provided by the school heads. However, initiatives of this kind are not monitored sufficiently thoroughly to judge their full effect. The school has also established working parties to consider and develop policies and strategies for numeracy across the school, for example, and a marking policy. These strategies are appropriate and have had some impact on the quality of the work, especially the marking policy.

The SDP for the three years from 2001 to 2004 has set out targets to be achieved, the method of operating, the cost and timescale and evaluation criteria. Although they are a useful management tool, the targets and proposed criteria are not sufficiently well defined to promote effective action. Departments are offered a general framework to ensure that departmental development plans (DDPs) reflect the SDP and help ensure that the whole school moves in the same direction. The quality of the plans is satisfactory, although some are good or very good. Where there are shortcomings, the plans are not sufficiently detailed and analytical to direct departmental work effectively.

The governing body is extremely supportive of the school. Its members are well acquainted with the school and take an interest in its life and work. They are fully aware of its strengths and shortcomings. They receive regular reports on the work of the school from the head, which the records of the plenary committee and other committees show are thoroughly considered and discussed. There is a close link between governing body members and school departments, which allows members to familiarise themselves with the needs of both teachers and pupils. Some governors also benefit from attending in-service training (INSET) days at the school.

Very few parents attend annual meetings of the governing body. The governing body also has difficulty at present in attracting parent-governor nominations.

The school manages its budget effectively. In the last four years, the school's position has changed from being approximately £30,000 in debt to having a substantial surplus. This is primarily due its having reduced the number of lessons in Years 12 and 13 and received additional National Assembly funding. It has been diligently attempting to cut the high costs of supporting the sixth form in order to free up additional resources for key stages 3 and 4. Despite this, it continues to subsidise the sixth form, chiefly at the expense of key stage 3. Funds are allocated to the various departments in accordance with all agreed formula. Departments also have an opportunity to apply for additional funding. The full implications of the school expenditure are considered by the governing body's financial committee before being presented to the full body. Governors make financial decisions that reflect to school objectives. At present, they are considering how best some of the surplus could be spent for the benefit of the school. The budget is managed on a day to day basis in an orderly fashion by the school's chief administration officer who presents regular reports to the full governing body's financial committee. The work is effectively supervised by the head. The school ensures value for money. However, the provision is expensive. Expenditure per pupil is £3635, compared with the Welsh average of £2719.

Day to day management of the school is good. On the whole, the school makes good use of staff, buildings and resources.

### **6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

#### **Staffing**

Most of the staff are appropriately qualified to teach their subjects. However, a great deal of use is made of part-time staff, as less than three-quarters of the staff work full-time. On the whole, the system is beneficial and enables the school to offer a broader range of courses at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.

In a few subjects such as French, English and physical education, there are too few specialised full-time staff. Also, the absence of members of staff over a lengthy period of time has limited pupils' progress in some subjects, especially boys' physical education, religious education and some Welsh, English and history classes.

Support staff generally provide good support, as for example, in science and English.

The majority of staff have received appropriate INSET in their subjects and through the New Opportunities Fund. The INSET needs identification system is satisfactory. Some staff have also benefited from visiting other departments or schools.

Not all staff were formally appraised last year. However, most have been observed teaching on at least one occasion. The comments on teaching quality in the lesson evaluations are rather superficial. Although the school has prepared a new structure for next year's appraisal process, the link between appraisal and meeting professional development requirements is not yet sufficiently clear.

### **Accommodation**

On the whole, most rooms are suitable, although there are a number of obvious shortcomings. One old building, which includes a refectory and classroom, is quite a distance from the other buildings and in very poor condition.

There are suitable rooms, with a good environment in departments such as SEN, Welsh and history, for example. Although there are some good quality classrooms in French and geography, these subjects also share the unsuitable room in the old building. In science, the quality of one laboratory and one learning room is poor. There is no specialist room for art, and the room that is used is not suitable for ceramics. Some English teaching takes place in non-specialised accommodation. Also, in some departments, rooms are quite a distance apart. This creates difficulties, especially with regard to sharing resources and creating a subject environment.

Despite the shortcomings, teachers, on the whole, make good use of rooms. In many of them, interesting and appropriate displays reflect the subject well, as for example, in English, science, one French room and music. There are some interesting displays around the school reflecting school life and activities, although not all departments take advantage of the opportunity to display pupils' work in this manner.

Good and regular use is made of the library to extend the pupils' reading programme.

Very little of the school is open to pupils during the lunch hour. When the weather is bad, they are obliged to gather in the hall where there is very little to do.

The toilets are in an acceptable condition, although there is no soap available in some of the boys' toilets.

## Resources

The quality of resources is generally satisfactory.

Very good resources are available in music, where there is a good supply of equipment. Resources are good in geography, science and for vocational courses. In Welsh and French, resources are good on the whole although additional textbooks are required. In French, there is an insufficient number of textbooks or booklets per child at key stage 3 which means that they are obliged to copy a considerable amount of work into their exercise books. Resources are adequate in English where the department produces handouts of a high standard.

In most of the other subjects, the quantity and quality of resources are satisfactory. However, there is a lack of good quality resources in religious education, SEN and art. In business studies, which is a new subject at GCSE level this year, too much use is made of photocopies of printed material.

Resources for teaching ICT are good. Although there is only one computer in a number of departments, the information technology room provides satisfactory access to computers. Pupils use computers frequently in science. ICT resources are satisfactory in the majority of subjects. They are good in science and music, but unsatisfactory in art. ICT is used profitably by pupils in English to complete at least one extended assignment a year. Pupils make good use of the web in business studies. In French, some pupils have begun exchanging promising e-mail letters with a school in Quebec.

## 7. Subjects and areas of learning

### The standards achieved by the pupils

#### Welsh

Standards of work are good in oracy, reading and writing at key stages 3 and 4.

#### Good features

- At key stage 3, the majority of pupils listen well and respond to the teacher's questions and their peers' comments. They express their opinion readily, and provide reasons when discussing a range of subjects. There are good examples of oral expression including the Montgomeryshire dialect at its best. At key stage 4, when discussing contentious subjects, the pupils are able to express an opinion firmly and elaborate by offering reasons.
- At key stage 3, pupils read an appropriate range of texts. Many enjoy reading for pleasure and are able to discuss plot and characters in a meaningful way. The best pupils read challenging texts. By the end of the key stage, they have a well-developed ability to interpret and compare texts. At key stage 4, pupils respond maturely to literature. They are able to identify and discuss the content and stylistic features of poetry, supporting their opinion with relevant quotations.
- At key stage 3, pupils write in a range of forms and the presentation of their work is polished, in the majority of cases. There are examples of very good work, particularly descriptive writing and pupils' poetry contains striking comparisons. The ablest pupils are used to planning and drafting their work and improving its content and expression independently. Some produce articles that present information and explore issues in a comprehensive and detailed way.
- At key stage 4, pupils write to the best of their ability on subjects of interest to them and respond to contemporary issues. The ablest pupils can write imaginatively and creatively to a high standard and have a good grasp of syntax. There is evidence of independent research in assignments involving the gathering and presentation of information. Drafting is effective and pupils respond to the detailed and constructive comments they receive when their work is marked. The presentation of the work shows respect for the subject. By the end of the key stage, most of the pupils are producing work of a good standard.

- Pupils are aware of language registers and the needs of different audiences. The spelling standards of the majority of pupils are good. Deliberate planning to develop their language and additional language guidelines for individually targeted pupils serve to enrich their expression.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of pupils have limited language resources.
- At key stage 3, the extended oral skills of many pupils are underdeveloped.
- At key stage 4, a minority have difficulty discussing in groups, and although the majority can express an opinion with ease, their discussions are not always coherent and they not able to build an argument sufficiently well.
- The language resources of a minority of pupils in year 11 who are not sitting the literature examination are limited.
- At the end of key stage 4, the writing of a minority of pupils is weak.

## **English**

Standards of work are satisfactory at key stage 3 and good at key stage 4.

### **Good features**

- At key stage 3, pupils respond confidently orally in lessons, demonstrating a satisfactory understanding of the work in hand. They are able to offer reasons and express an opinion, make decisions, describe characters and participate satisfactorily in drama activities.
- In general, key stage 4 pupils express themselves well orally. They present theories, ideas and viewpoints clearly, confidently and at length. They are able to discuss literature from a variety of periods, including pre-twentieth century literature with sensitivity and enjoyment. Pupils of all abilities manage to respond at length to literature, offering various interpretations and interesting theories under the teachers' skilful direction.
- Pupils' reading standards are good at key stage 3. They read a good variety of books through their personal reading programmes. They keep a reading diary recording their reaction to the books they read. These diaries show that the majority read regularly. In general, pupils read aloud correctly, clearly and with expression.

- At key stage 4, pupils read and interpret literary and non-literary texts satisfactorily. The more able pupils can analyse ideologically and linguistically complex texts well. They also demonstrate an ability to respond to literature discerningly.
- At key stage 3, pupils are able to identify various forms and can talk about their main features well. They are also able to produce pieces of written work, which clearly demonstrate these different features. In general, the pupils' standard of writing is satisfactory. The more able pupils compose some extended pieces of work, such as stories and records of personal experiences, and achieve good standards.
- The more able pupils at key stage 4 write in a range of different forms demonstrating a good awareness of their linguistic and stylistic features. They make striking use of language in some compositions of a high standard. The pupils of average and below average ability write satisfactorily within the frameworks presented by their teachers, especially after participating in detailed discussions and hearing other pupils' ideas.

### **Shortcomings**

- At key stage 3, pupils do not listen well enough either to each other or their teachers. There is too much chattering in some of the lessons.
- The oral responses of pupils at key stage 3 are often too short. They do not elaborate sufficiently when offering reasons, opinions or descriptions.
- The written work of some pupils of average and below average ability is often short and unsatisfactory from the point of view of presentation, handwriting and the spelling of some common words. This is particularly true of the homework of a number of these pupils.
- Some poorly motivated pupils at key stage 4 fail to follow the teachers' useful guidelines when composing written responses to examination questions.

## Mathematics

The standard of work is unsatisfactory at key stages 3 and 4.

### Good features

- At key stage 3, the majority of pupils discuss whole numbers, decimals and simple percentages confidently.
- At key stage 4, pupils have a better understanding of the basic concepts of number and are able to simplify numerical expressions and use indexes and negative values.
- At both key stages, the shape, space and measure work of the abler pupils develops satisfactorily. The majority of pupils can calculate the areas and perimeters of simple shapes and measure correctly.
- At both key stages, the algebra work on the whole develops satisfactorily, with the majority of pupils being able to solve simple equations, use formulae and plot graphs.
- At both key stages, SEN pupils make satisfactory progress because of the individual attention and help afforded them by the classroom assistants.

### Shortcomings

- At key stages 3 and 4, number work was unsatisfactory across the entire range of ability. Pupils do not discover ways of surmounting difficulties arising in their number work or develop and use their own strategies. Pupils do not gain confidence by using relevant previous experience and knowledge, when considering mathematical problems. They do not become more responsible for planning and undertaking their own work without the constant guidance of the teacher.
- At key stage 3, although a good deal of time is spent reciting tables, pupils are not sufficiently confident to make rapid and accurate mental calculations.
- Pupils are also slow to remember lack of confidence number facts. This is particularly true of average ability band pupils; lack of confidence prevents them from broadening their understanding of a range of calculation strategies and using them to solve problems. Some pupils, particularly those of average and below average ability, depend too freely on calculators to solve simple sums.
- At key stage 4, pupils make limited use of mental calculation strategies and do not have the skill to estimate or assess whether or not their answers are correct.

- Some pupils of average and below average ability have difficulty with the permutation of negative numbers in algebraic expressions.
- At both key stages, the development of shape and space work with pupils of average or below average ability varies from satisfactory to unsatisfactory, but a number of pupils have difficulty using the correct units. Pupils also have difficulty using their knowledge to solve problems in areas which are new to them.
- A number of pupils have difficulty presenting their findings clearly and concisely. They lack confidence when expressing themselves orally and offering explanations which involve the use of correct mathematical terminology.
- Some pupils of average and below average ability are unwilling to work independently.

## Science

Standards of work are satisfactory in key stage 3 and good in key stage 4.

### Good features

- In some classes, pupils settle quickly and work well throughout the lesson. They pay close attention to what the teacher says and to the experiments that are demonstrated and they ask intelligent questions. When questioned about the work, including ideas they have studied some time ago, they usually answer correctly.
- Most pupils keep a neat and up-to-date record of the work of the class. They highlight the important words and formulae in the printed notes they are given and add brief notes of their own. In this way, they turn the notes into an effective revision aid. They answer the written questions well and are able to express scientific ideas clearly in their own words.
- Generally, pupils carry out experimental work thoughtfully and safely. They record their observations in suitable ways and think carefully about the implications of their findings.
- In some aspects of the work, pupils make good use of computers. They compile computer presentations to explain some aspect of science, finding information from a range of sources and adapting it thoughtfully in order to present their ideas concisely. At times, they use computers quite effectively to control an experiment or to collect, analyse or display the data they collect.

- Pupils undertake a satisfactory range of scientific investigations. They often give a good account of the underlying scientific ideas. They gain a good understanding of how to change just one variable while taking care to keep others constant. They generally display their findings appropriately in a table of results, a diagram, a chart or a graph.
- Pupils in key stage 4 who study the three sciences work at a good pace. They are quick to understand new scientific ideas and they apply them effectively to answer questions and solve problems. These pupils gain high grades in their examinations.

### **Shortcomings**

- In a few classes, many pupils chatter constantly or behave badly in other ways. Their behaviour interrupts the flow of the lesson and makes it difficult for other pupils to concentrate. In these classes, pupils' written work is often unsatisfactory. Carelessly written or incomplete sentences show how poorly some pupils concentrate on their work.
- For some pupils, the quality of their investigation work is undermined by the weakness of their hypotheses and the rather superficial nature of their evaluations. A few pupils do not properly understand the idea of a fair test.
- Pupils too often answer questions in single words or short phrases, rather than offer a reasoned response in the form of a sentence.
- The numerical work of some pupils is weak. They make simple arithmetic mistakes and have not developed checking strategies that would bring their errors to light. Too often, pupils are content to do the calculation and do not go on to relate their answer back to the scientific idea to which it applies.

## Welsh second language

Standards of work are satisfactory across key stages 3 and 4.

### Good features

- In Year 7, pupils can imitate the standard patterns introduced to them. They have sufficient vocabulary to discuss the subject in hand and their pronunciation is satisfactory.
- By the end of key stage 3, the best learners make satisfactory progress in listening and responding to questions about basic and familiar subjects such as what they do in their leisure time. Pupils use the constructions and patterns introduced in the lesson confidently and the majority are able to use them correctly. Some late arrivals make good progress.
- Key stage 3 pupils read meaningfully with appropriate intonation showing understanding. They respond well to comprehension assignments.
- At key stage 3, pupils write simple paragraphs to a good standard of accuracy and complete structured exercises. The more able pupils use a good variety of phrases and sentence patterns and vary the tense of the verb according to the assignment. At key stage 4, they are able to fulfil simple reading and writing requirements using a limited range of vocabulary and patterns.
- A small minority of pupils succeed in crossing over to the Welsh language programme.

### Shortcomings

- At key stage 3, a minority of pupils do not listen well and as a result have uncertain pronunciation, a more limited vocabulary and a poor grasp of syntax. They are unable to adapt the patterns they have learned to new situations.
- At key stage 4, pupils are unable to give extended answers and have difficulty asking questions and holding a conversation. Their response in lessons and when questioning each other on an elementary level is limited.
- There is little reading for pleasure in the second language, even among the best learners.
- There are few examples of pupils responding to narrative material and lengthy creative writing even among the best pupils at key stage 4.
- The work of pupils of average and below average ability contains basic grammatical errors.

## Design and technology

Standards of work are good at key stages 3 and 4.

### Good features

- Key stage 3 pupils become used to working on a variety of contrasting materials, such as metals, wood and plastics, as well as food and textiles. At key stage 4, pupils demonstrate a willingness to experiment with materials.
- Pupils develop good graphical skills and use them to present their folders effectively. At key stage 4, isometric and orthographic drawing aids the presentation of folder work.
- The majority of pupils at key stage 3 have an understanding of design principles and demonstrate a disciplined aptitude for planning. The folder work at key stage 4 shows effective research and information analysis skills.
- Some pupils at key stage 3 make good use of both a word processor and digital photography. They have an opportunity to use Computer Aided Design and Production equipment. At key stage 4, some pupils make use of computers when presenting reports and graphs.
- At key stage 3, pupils understand basic management mechanisms and systems.
- At key stage 4, pupils gather data and develop a good understanding of construction techniques via notes and practical application in finished samples.
- Both able pupils and those with SEN make good progress, as each work unit includes assignments which are appropriate for them.

### Shortcomings

- Pupils do not relate the appraisal process sufficiently closely to the original brief and specification.
- Although pupils are able to use computers confidently during information technology lessons, they are not used regularly by all pupils in design and technology.

## Information and communications technology

In key stage four, pupils achieve good standards.

### Good features

- Most pupils conscientiously compile notes that summarise the essential information and ideas they need to understand. They undertake a range of homework assignments in which they competently apply their knowledge in new situations. In the best cases, the work reflects pupils' conscientious resolve to master every aspect of the course.
- Pupils build up folios of a range of aspects of computer use. They build quite complex databases and have a good mental map of how the computer organises the information. They effectively use some of the more advanced features of spreadsheets and can competently use computers to monitor a scientific experiment and to control an industrial machine.
- Some pupils' design work for leaflets and posters is of a very high quality.
- In class, pupils work diligently at their projects and show resolve in overcoming problems as they arise.

### Shortcomings

- A small number of pupils do not keep their notes up to date or complete all the homework assignments. As a result, their understanding of how a computer organises instructions and information is not as secure as it should be.
- The quality of the language that many pupils include on leaflets and posters does not match that of the design work.

## Modern foreign languages - French

Standards of work are unsatisfactory in key stage 3 and satisfactory in key stage 4.

### Good features

- In key stage 3, standards are satisfactory in Year 7. Able pupils in Year 8 and Year 9 also reach satisfactory standards overall.
- Able pupils in key stage 3, and all pupils in key stage 4, respond well to the teacher's careful and appropriate use of the language, listening attentively and showing understanding of what they hear. Some are able to reply to questions in full sentences.
- Pupils in key stage 4, and the higher set in key stage 3, read and understand a range of texts.
- In both key stages, able pupils write fluent sentences, particularly when they have support from a writing frame or a model. Many present their work well. In key stage 4, some pupils produce good extended writing.

### Shortcomings

- In key stage 3, standards are unsatisfactory among a significant proportion of pupils of average or below average ability. This is to some extent due to poor behaviour or negative attitudes among pupils in the lower sets.
- Pupils in the lower sets do not listen attentively, and have only limited understanding of the spoken language. Many pupils cannot re-use well, either orally or in writing, the language that they hear.
- In both key stages, many pupils lack confidence in their oral work. Replies to questions are usually very short, and they have difficulty in expressing themselves in full sentences.
- Average and less able pupils in both key stages read hesitantly and make many basic errors in pronunciation.
- Many pupils in key stage 3, and some in key stage 4, struggle to communicate effectively and accurately in writing in their own words. Too much of their written work consists of copying.

## History

Standards of work are satisfactory at both key stages.

### Good features

- Pupils at key stage 3 increase their understanding of the subject by researching the usefulness and reliability of evidence in a worthwhile fashion which they then present well to the rest of the class.
- At key stage 4, individuals are able to see and understand prejudice and bias in evidence, see its virtues and weaknesses and reach a conclusion.
- Some ask pertinent questions and answer elaborate questions at times. They are able to share ideas, discuss opinions and present their findings clearly.
- One or two individuals are willing to respond at length both orally and in their written work.
- Research work shows order and understanding and an ability to locate and recover information and evidence, for example, from the website.

### Shortcomings

- Pupils at key stage 3 are not sufficiently familiar with key subject elements such as chronology and their understanding is poor. Pupils do not often comment at length.
- At key stage 3, the work of some pupils is incomplete and its content scanty.
- Some pupils, especially those of average or below average ability, tend to be satisfied describing and relating a story and do not attempt to analyse and use evidence to assess whether or not it is reliable.
- Some pupils' oral answers are meaningless and unconsidered. Their historical vocabulary in Welsh is limited.
- A minority of pupils fail to concentrate appropriately, have an inappropriate attitude and therefore underachieve.

## Geography

Standards of work are good in both key stages.

### Good features

- In key stage 3, pupils show a secure knowledge and understanding of both physical and human geography, and how their interaction can affect local populations. In key stage 4, they develop a growing awareness that contrasting interests in areas of natural beauty can lead to conflict; they appreciate that tourism both in this country and in Europe can have positive and negative effects on the local population.
- Pupils in key stage 3 have an increasing knowledge of location and of places, and make good use of their personal awareness of the local area to extend their understanding of places further afield. This appropriately extends their grasp of the Welsh Curriculum
- Pupils in key stage 3 can describe and explain environmental change and attempts to manage it. In key stage 4, they use appropriate methods of enquiry to investigate a range of environmental issues, and develop an understanding of the concepts associated with sustainable development, such as in the increasing use of wind farms.
- In key stage 3, pupils demonstrate their familiarity with maps, diagrams and photographs, and recall and use appropriate geographical terminology. By key stage 4 they speak and write with increasing accuracy and can represent and interpret data in maps and graphs.
- In key stage 4, they undertake fieldwork well in a range of locations and carry out investigations and enquiries, often working co-operatively on group tasks.

### Shortcomings

- The progress of a minority of pupils in key stage 3 is limited by their weak recall of information, a lack of concentration in class, a misunderstanding of more complex terms and occasionally by disruptive behaviour.
- A number of pupils are less confident in writing than they are orally, whilst others are sometimes reluctant to contribute and to volunteer answers in class.

## Religious education

Standards of work are satisfactory at key stage 3 and unsatisfactory at key stage 4.

### Good features

- Pupils develop a wide knowledge of the beliefs and practices of a number of religions, especially Christianity.
- Able pupils understand diversity among people of the same religion.
- To a certain extent, pupils understand the significance of important concepts which appear in many of the world religions.
- Many of the pupils are able to offer reasonable interpretations of religious symbols and relate them to the key elements of beliefs.
- By key stage 4, pupils' confidence in discussing moral and religious issues has grown considerably.
- In the context of such discussions, pupils are increasingly willing to give their own responses.

### Shortcomings

- Many pupils have difficulty seeing the connections between different beliefs and between beliefs and religious practices.
- Not many pupils understand the relevance of religious beliefs to the kind of experiences many ordinary people have in their everyday lives.
- Only towards the end of key stage 3 do pupils begin to develop sufficient confidence to discuss the great moral questions facing everyone in the world. In doing, so most fail to develop and express their own responses.
- Pupils make limited progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and practices because of the limited time available across key stage 4.
- Pupils do not have a good understanding of the way in which beliefs and practices relate to each other in specific religions.

## Religious studies

Standards of work are satisfactory.

### Good features

- Pupils learn how to research for information about religions and, in doing so, build a reasonable foundation of facts about the aspects they are studying.
- Pupils begin to make fuller comments on religious issues.

### Shortcomings

- Pupils do not often produce extended written work on moral questions.
- Pupils are not confident about making connections between their everyday experiences and the beliefs of religious people.

## Music

Standards of work are good at key stage 3 and very good at key stage 4.

### Good features

- At key stage 3, pupils perform very well using keyboards, percussion instruments and voice. They are confident, sing in tune and have the appropriate skills to play either in a group or individually. At key stage 4, they have a good performance technique.
- The quality of composition is very good. At key stage 3, pupils compose spontaneously and demonstrate an understanding of technique. They have developed their style further by Year 9 and are laying firm foundations for their GCSE work. At key stage 4, they develop creative skills well in practical lessons. They are confident using computers and suitable software to compose and perfect their work.
- Appraisal standards are good when pupils appraise work which they have recorded and arranged themselves. At key stage 4, appropriate musical language is used and there is a good awareness of musical elements.
- Pupils' standards of performance and composition are good throughout the school and the training provided by peripatetic teachers contributes considerably towards this.

## Shortcomings

- At key stage 3, the standard of the pupils' appraisal language is not sufficiently high as they lack an appropriate musical vocabulary.
- Pupils of below and above average ability do not always reach their full potential.

## Art

Standards of work are satisfactory in key stages 3 and 4.

## Good features

- During key stage 3, pupils develop growing control over a range of two-dimensional media and show a growing understanding of the visual elements of art. For example, Year 7 pupils experiment effectively with colour, tone and shape, and Year 8 pupils investigate the properties of line in their string prints.
- In key stage 3, many pupils use their knowledge of other artists imaginatively to influence their own work. Year 8 pupils, for instance, produce colourful, creative designs linked with the paintings of Hundertwasser and Year 9 pupils apply their understanding of positive and negative shapes in collaborative collages based on the work of Escher.
- In key stage 4, the more conscientious pupils explore and use a range of secondary reference material and resources appropriately to develop ideas and themes, showing a growing appreciation of the need for investigation and research to support their making.
- Key stage 4 pupils use the local environment effectively to inspire them, for instance in using photographs taken in the town on market day. In this way, they successfully re-create the atmosphere of the occasion.
- In key stage 4, the more enthusiastic pupils achieve good standards of creative, expressive work from observation, memory and imagination. They use a variety of media and techniques, and show good progress in their drawing skills.
- In key stage 4, there are one or two examples of good quality three-dimensional work, such as a large-scale imaginative sculpture based on the theme of a mythical creature. This shows capable construction skills as well as a mature appreciation of form and proportion.

## Shortcomings

- Pupils do not develop their painting skills sufficiently.
- Most pupils do not develop the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to produce good quality three-dimensional work.
- Pupils make little use of recording from first-hand experience to develop ideas or themes.
- Many pupils do not take individual responsibility for gathering appropriate resources to inform their work. The quality of pupils' understanding and investigating is restricted because of the lack of sufficient accessible visual resources.
- Although there is some use of computers for research work on artists, and also some use of the digital camera, on the whole pupils do not make enough use of ICT.

## Physical education

Standards of work at key stage 3 are unsatisfactory, although satisfactory among girls. Standards of achievement are satisfactory at key stage 4.

## Good features

- A number of pupils are well motivated, listen carefully to instructions, are eager to learn, understand the importance of preparing for exercise and the effects of exercise on the body.
- Girls in Year 8, without much previous experience, develop basic skills in hockey and an awareness of the rules of the game.
- Rugby skills are developed in Year 9 and the response is enthusiastic and the standard satisfactory.
- In Year 9 and at key stage 4, girls' netball standards are good. They understand the rules, the individual's role in the game and the importance of supportive playing. They are able to transfer their skills successfully from exercises to a full game.
- At key stage 4, pupils are able to repeat and perfect skills with greater control and accuracy. They make progress in physical skills, knowledge and understanding of elements related to the subject.

- They are capable of sustained effort in their performance and able to observe and appraise performance using accurate technical language and terminology and appropriate vocabulary.
- In swimming in Year 10, lifesaving skills and technique are developing and the standards are satisfactory.
- In the GCSE gymnastic group, a series of movements are planned both on the group and on equipment and pupils are aware of the aspects which need to be reinforced and developed.
- Within the fitness unit, circuit exercises are planned by pupils and undertaken enthusiastically; pupils have a sound understanding of the principles of exercise.

### **Shortcomings**

- At key stage 3, boys have not completely mastered ball-handling skills in rugby. There are obvious shortcomings with regard to hand and eye co-ordination, recycling skills and reorganising a line of attack.
- In Years 8 and 9 in football, boys do not participate sufficiently in assignments and commitment is weak and movements ineffective.
- At key stage 3, there are shortcomings in the concentration and commitment of a considerable percentage of boys; they do not always work together effectively and respond appropriately to tasks.
- At key stages 3 and 4, the ability of boys to adapt and respond to various situations is limited; there are weaknesses in foreseeing other players' reactions in a match situation.
- At key stage 4, in the GCSE gymnastics course, physical control skills are poor. The ability to sustain shape and flow within a chain of movements has not been fully developed and much of the work is unfinished and untidy. Previous experiences have not provided pupils with sound foundations upon which to work, and there is an obvious lack of confidence and neatness about the work.

## Media studies

Standards of work are good.

### Good features

- Good standards are achieved by pupils of all abilities. A number of extended assignments have been completed since the beginning of the course in September last year. Pupils' folders are well organised.
- Pupils are able to analyse media material precisely and effectively. They demonstrate a good awareness of how different newspapers treat material differently for example.
- Pupils' composition work is developing well. Able pupils show imagination and considerable originality when producing advertisements.
- Pupils of all abilities participate well in group discussions, offering ideas and evaluations when designing and creating and solving problems together.

### Shortcomings

- Pupils' responses in their folders do not always include all the elements required of them in the assignments.

## Business studies

Standards of work are satisfactory.

### Good features

- Pupils develop a clear understanding of business terminology.
- Oral work in class shows that the majority of pupils are beginning to understand economic concepts and can discuss concepts in relation to various businesses.
- They develop a satisfactory understanding of finance and administration and a variety of businesses.
- The project work shows that they understand how small and large companies work.
- Pupils make good use of ICT to produce project work of a high standard, prepare notes and research on the web.

### **Shortcomings**

- A number of pupils are unsure when expressing themselves orally. They are not confident giving detailed descriptions, discussing economic concepts, reasoning or explaining business terms.
- Not all pupils are able to relate theory work to their research on local companies.

### **Health and social care**

Standards of work are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- Pupils respond positively to every aspect of the course and manifest research and data analysis skills of an appropriate standard.
- The majority of pupils are able to use a word processor skilfully, primarily to enhance the presentation of folder work.
- Pupils' skills in the subject have been considerably enhanced by their experiences in nursery schools and homes for the elderly during work experience.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some pupils show an immature attitude when discussing principles and ideas in class.
- Spelling and syntax errors detract from the standards of much of the written work.

## Key skills

Standards of work are good.

### Good features

- Pupils develop key skills in practical contexts and are able to use them to solve everyday problems.

### Shortcomings

- There are no important shortcomings.

## Life skills

Standards of work are satisfactory.

### Good features

- Pupils develop practical skills and are able to use them in everyday situations.

### Shortcomings

- Pupils' skill levels are very basic and pupils do not always respond positively to reasonable challenges from the teacher.

## Personal and social education

Standards of work are satisfactory at both key stages.

### Good features

- At key stage 3, pupils are able to draw conclusions from an experiment to discover the effect of alcohol on the body. At key stage 4, they are able to discuss drugs intelligently and sensibly.
- At both key stages, the majority of pupils listen carefully and develop oral communication skills. They respond thoughtfully and are able to express their opinions satisfactorily. They work purposefully in pairs or groups.

- In self-appraisal, they are able to conduct sensible and useful interviews with each other to verify progress.
- In careers discussions, pupils develop their understanding of employment and begin making intelligent choices for the future.

### **Shortcomings**

- A considerable minority of pupils fail to broaden their knowledge during full class discussions. Some are unable to concentrate and co-operate sufficiently well. As a result, they do not always understand the main concepts of the lesson.
- In their written activities, they are unable to interpret the main points of the subject they are studying. At times, they fail to complete the assignment and sometimes waste too much time.
- There are too many grammatical errors in the written work of many of the pupils.

## 8. School improvement

### 8.1 Progress since the last inspection

Following the last inspection, an action plan was prepared. The school's response to the key issues raised was, on the whole, good. The issue regarding old buildings still requires further attention.

#### Key issue 1

*Adapting the curriculum to include art and design as a separate subject in Year 7 and ensure an equally broad choice at key stage 4 for academic and non-academic pupils alike.*

The school has succeeded in adapting the curriculum to include art and craft as a separate subject in Year 7 and broadened the choice for less able pupils in Year 10.

#### Key issue 2

*Revising the timetable, the general use of staff time and the contact time between tutors and students particularly in the Sixth Form, so that full advantage can be taken of the expertise of individual subject teachers*

The school has revised the timetable, the general use of staff time and the contact time between tutors and students in the sixth form. This has enabled the school to reduce class sizes at key stage 3.

#### Key issue 3

*There should be formal appraisal of teachers.*

Although the formal appraisal plan is no longer in existence the school is developing a suitable performance management plan with which to replace it.

#### Key issue 4

*A suitable programme of professional training should be specifically agreed for the entire school to ensure fuller integration of information technology into the learning programmes of all pupils across the curriculum.*

The school has succeeded to a great extent in raising staff awareness of the importance of ICT. This is manifested in both schemes of work and class work.

### **Key issue 5**

*The school's plans for rehousing the art, design and technology departments should be fulfilled as soon as possible.*

The art department has been rehoused and the food technology room upgraded. The need to upgrade the wood and metal technology rooms is in hand.

### **Key issue 6**

*A full report should be prepared on all accommodation and a programme agreed to adapt available space and create a more flexible range of workrooms for languages, the humanities and special needs.*

There has been improvement in the creation of a more flexible range of workrooms for languages, the humanities and special needs.

### **Key issue 7**

*The school and local authority should jointly address the remaining issues which compromise the health or safety not only of pupils and staff working at the site but also members of the public who attend the school occasionally.*

Although the school has addressed issues which endanger health or safety, the old building which houses the kitchen and dining room is still in an unsatisfactory condition. However, the LEA has definite plans to address this shortcoming.

## **8.2 Key issues for action**

### **The school needs to:**

- raise standards in mathematics and other subjects where they are either unsatisfactory or satisfactory;
- pay particular attention to broadening oracy skills in both languages at key stage 3;
- ensure consistently high standards of behaviour, especially in some classes at key stage 3, so that all pupils develop healthy attitudes to work and lessons are interrupted less frequently;
- improve teaching strategies, with a particular view to meeting the individual needs of pupils according to their ability;
- build on the management strategies at school and departmental level in order to ensure that agreed actions are consistently implemented and effectively monitored;

- consider further how best to develop pupils' bilingualism more effectively, particularly in bilingual classes;
- achieve its aim of addressing the problems caused by the poor condition of the old building which houses the refectory and a classroom; and
- draw up a development plan for the sixth form and address the other recommendations set out in the sixth form annex.

## Annex

### Sixth-form annex

#### Background

The sixth form is small. There are 19 students in Year 12 and 10 in Year 13. There are slightly more female students than male. In Year 12, the great majority of students follow four courses selected from 13 Advanced Subsidiary (AS) subjects and four Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) courses. In Year 13, they nearly all study three Advanced level courses. There are no partnership arrangements with other schools or colleges. Classes are small. On average, there are about 3.5 students in each examination class and about 5 to 10 students in general studies and key-skills lessons.

The courses offered cater mainly for the abler pupils coming from Year 11. Generally, therefore, the students have gained good grades in their GCSE courses and are well able to cope with advanced level courses.

Most students speak both Welsh and English fluently. A few speak only English. Some courses are taught only in English and others bilingually.

## 1. Standards

The standards students are currently achieving in their courses are listed below:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Standard</b>
GCE Welsh	Good
GCE English	Good
GCE Mathematics	Satisfactory
GCE Biology	Good
GCE Chemistry	Good
GCE Physics	Good
GCE Welsh second language	Satisfactory
GCE Design technology	Good
AVCE Information and communication technology (ICT)	Satisfactory
GCE French	Good
GCE History	Good
GCE Geography	Good
Religious education (statutory)	Satisfactory
GCE Art	Satisfactory
GCE Music	Very good
AVCE Business studies	Good
AVCE Recreation and leisure	Satisfactory
AVCE Travel and tourism	Good

Overall, students achieve good standards. On average, in the 2001 examinations, students attained about half a grade higher than other students in Wales who had reached similar standards at GCSE level. Of the students who sat two or more A level examinations, 100% of the grades obtained were in the range A to C. In the schools in Powys, the equivalent figure was 70% and for all students in Wales it was 62%. The average points score per candidate was 28 (equivalent to grades A, A, B), compared with a score of 19 for students in Powys and 18 (equivalent to three C grades) for students throughout Wales. This achievement was much better than in the previous year, when many students sat only two A levels and the average points score for all students was under 13.

Students' achievements in the key skills of communication, application of number and ICT are good. All students attend classes in each of the key skills. At the start of Year 12, they assess, with their teachers, their competence in each skill, and work towards a qualification at level 2 or level 3, as appropriate. The great majority of students undertake the work diligently and gain the qualifications which they aim to achieve.

The proportion of students who complete their course once they have started it (the retention rate) is normally 100%. A few students choose to drop one AS course, if they are finding that four courses are too demanding, but it is rare for a student to leave the school. More commonly, student numbers increase a little, early in Year 12, as one or two students join the school after leaving their course in another school or college. Students' destinations are generally in line with their aspirations.

Generally, students display positive attitudes towards their study and to their life in the sixth form. They arrive punctually for lessons and settle quickly to work. Most of them complete their homework assignments on time and to a good standard. Their attendance is satisfactory. A small number of students who are absent quite frequently are regularly challenged about their attendance and their tutors discuss any difficulties they may be having. There is good liaison with parents and the school works with them to encourage the students to attend more regularly.

Students behave maturely. Too many of them are reluctant to take part in discussions and to express an opinion in lessons. In informal settings, in contrast, many students have plenty of confidence and have strong views that they express effectively. Most take their responsibilities seriously and show initiative. For example, they plan and organise fund-raising events, take part in school productions and eisteddfods, and help younger pupils with their work in the homework club. A member of the sixth form chairs the school council.

## 2. Quality of education

### Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons inspected. It was very good in 4%, good in 60%, and satisfactory in 34% of lessons. Generally, the quality of teaching is very good in music and good in English, Welsh, biology, chemistry, physics, history, French, geography and ICT. In design and technology also, the teaching has many good aspects. In AVCE courses, the quality of teaching is generally good. In the great majority of lessons, teachers maintain good relationships with the students. Generally, the students respond positively to a broad range of interesting activities. In many classes, however, the small number of students makes it difficult to maintain lively discussion and, in some lessons, students spend too much time listening to the teacher and are not sufficiently engaged in learning. Teachers set an appropriate amount and variety of homework so that students can work gainfully during the many lessons each week when they are not in class. This independent work, required of all students, fits them well for the style of learning they will encounter in college or university.

Generally, teachers assess students' work thoroughly. They mark their written work promptly and in helpful detail. They discuss the assessments regularly with the students and set them targets to build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. In some departments, students regularly write an evaluation of their own performance and discuss it with their teacher. In mathematics, however, students' work is not marked regularly enough.

### Learning experiences

Overall, the quality of the curriculum is good.

Students' choice of subjects for academic or vocational study is narrower than in most schools. Students can choose from 13 AS and A level courses and four AVCE courses. There are no distance-learning courses and the school has no partnerships with other schools or colleges to extend the choice of studies. The AVCE courses, in business studies, travel and tourism, ICT and recreation and leisure, appropriately reflect some of the main vocational opportunities in the locality and the needs of local employers. However, the curriculum does not attract large numbers of students and only about 40% of the pupils who leave Year 11 return to the sixth form. Most of these wish to follow an academic course in higher education.

Despite the limited choice of subjects for their main study, students' total curriculum is appropriately broad. Typically, they study four courses in Year 12 and three in Year 13, and receive valuable learning experiences. In addition, they all attend classes and prepare portfolios of work to gain three key skills qualifications in communication, application of number and information technology. Much of the work for portfolios comes from their A level or AVCE courses and they often use the same piece of work for two of their portfolios, where appropriate. However, few schemes of work identify many opportunities for students to develop key skills. For the most part, students select suitable pieces of work themselves.

Students also follow an A-level general studies course, which encourages them to explore a range of social and cultural issues. However, few sit the final examination. All of them take part in a sporting or other physical activity each week and engage in a good range of extra-curricular activities. Religious education forms a part of the general studies course. The course reflects the requirements of the local agreed syllabus, and provides opportunities for lively debate and a chance for students to reflect on their philosophy of life.

Students explore multicultural and racial issues as part of their general studies course. They show a good awareness of the issues of Welsh culture as it is lived and experienced locally by both Welsh and English speakers. However, the school does not have a structured programme to encourage students to have positive attitudes towards people of other races and cultures.

Every student is strongly encouraged to undertake a week's 'work shadowing', during which they accompany someone working in the type of career they hope to follow. Many students also take part in the Young Enterprise Scheme and several recent enterprise groups have had success in regional, national and international competitions.

Students enjoy their courses and make good progress in the subjects they study. The broader aspects of the curriculum help them to mature as responsible citizens and prepare them well for further and higher education and for employment.

### **Support and guidance**

Students are well supported in their study. They have good opportunities to discuss their choice of courses in the light of the careers in which they are interested. An induction course at the start of Year 12 makes students aware of how much work will be expected of them. They have regular interviews with their tutor to review their progress and are challenged immediately by their class teachers if they do not submit work on time or if it is below the standard expected.

Every student has a personal careers interview and all are encouraged to take part in an aptitude test that suggests the careers for which they are best suited. The careers library offers useful information in both paper and electronic formats.

### 3. Leadership and management

The previous inspection report identified the high cost of the sixth form and the transfer of resources to the sixth form that was taking place from pupils and courses in key stages 3 and 4. Senior managers and governors have recently taken some effective action to remedy this. They have reduced the number of courses offered and cut the amount of teaching time for each course to just under three hours per week. These changes are appropriate. The good results gained last year show that the small group tuition provided in every subject, together with close supervision to encourage students to make good use of non-class time, has ensured that teaching and learning are effective.

Powys LEA has recently reduced the funds allocated to the school for each sixth-form student in comparison with funding for pupils in key stages 3 and 4. Even so, the school continues to subsidise the sixth form, mainly at the expense of key stage 3.

The school development plan does not set out a development strategy for the sixth form. There has been some exploration of the possibility of the school sharing courses with a nearby college, but no action has yet been taken. In the absence of specific plans, managers are unable to set relevant targets for the sixth form. The quality of the day-to-day management of the sixth form is good.

Sixth-form students generally have good facilities. There are enough quiet areas for private study, and good access to the books and equipment they need, including computers. The common room is in a demountable hut and several pieces of furniture are broken. Nevertheless, students have made some effort to make the room attractive and create a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere.

#### 4. Subjects and areas of learning

##### Welsh

Standards of work are good.

##### Good features

- The best pupils achieve very good standards in creative writing in a range of forms.
- When discussing literary texts, students make pertinent comments and respond at length crystallising their ideas effectively and demonstrating good analytical skills. Their expression is polished.
- They manifest a good understanding of the texts studied. They are able to analyse and discuss language and style, themes and characters clearly and support their opinion with relevant references.

##### Shortcomings

- There is a tendency to depend too readily on the guidance of the teacher when discussing texts.
- Students do not display sufficient initiative in discussions.

##### English

Standards of work are good.

##### Good features

- Students are able to study well independently. They prepare texts for discussion in class, and personally research the background and period of literary figures in a suitable manner.
- Students display increasing maturity in their response to literature and, by year 13, demonstrate a keenness and confidence in both their oral and written work. The compositions of the ablest pupils are of a high standard.
- They read fluently and confidently. They are able to read linguistically complex texts easily without previous preparation.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some students are careless when writing. Their spelling errors include elementary and common words.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of work are good.

### **Good features**

- The students develop a good understanding of the mathematical principles related to their courses.
- They apply their knowledge effectively when solving problems on paper.

### **Shortcomings**

- Students are not confident discussing and reasoning orally.
- Students are not sufficiently aware of their weaknesses and of how to improve them.

## **Biology**

Standards of work are good.

### **Good features**

- Students rise to the challenge of the work and complete a range of tasks successfully. They respond accurately and with enthusiasm to scientific questions and are willing to explore issues that relate specifically to the local context.
- Students complete a good range of experimental work. They observe accurately, analyse data and present their findings effectively. They respond well to the helpful comments of their teacher.
- Students are able to work independently. In their essay writing, they use a variety of sources to gather information and some produce work of high quality.

### **Shortcomings**

- In their essays, some students rely too heavily on only one source of information and therefore do not learn to synthesise different ideas. In some cases, their analysis of data is superficial. None of the students provides a bibliography or cites references, when producing written work.
- The quality of some students' annotated drawings of specimens is unsatisfactory.

<b>Chemistry</b>
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Standards of work are good.

### **Good features**

- Students understand scientific ideas and apply them effectively to answer questions and solve problems. They are able to present findings from their investigations simply and effectively to the rest of the class.
- Students develop confidence in their newfound skills. They are able to articulate scientific ideas and recall earlier information.
- Students complete a good range of practical work that supports their theoretical studies. They record their results systematically and analyse their data in appropriate ways. They respond well to the teacher's helpful comments and maintain good standards in their practical work.

### **Shortcomings**

- The recording of experimental work is sometimes too sketchy to provide an effective record of what the students have done. Sometimes, students have difficulty with numerical questions.

## Physics

Standards of work are good.

### Good features

- Students take part thoughtfully in lessons. They add their own annotations and highlights to the printed notes they are given, turning them into useful revision aids. They ask intelligent questions about the scientific ideas they are learning and the wide range of interesting everyday applications that are used to illustrate the ideas.
- Students undertake a good range of homework assignments that help them to learn the work and prepare them well to answer examination questions. Most of them complete this work diligently.
- Students undertake an appropriate amount of experimental work, learning how to use apparatus safely and effectively and how to collect and analyse data and present their findings.

### Shortcomings

- Not every student completes homework assignments on time or keeps fully up to date with the work.
- When faced with a difficulty, students sometimes give up too easily rather than struggle to find a solution.

## Welsh second language

Standards of work are satisfactory.

### Good features

- Students have well-developed listening and reading skills.
- The standard of expression in their work is good at times.

### Shortcomings

- They do not show sufficient initiative when discussing and responding to texts.
- Their oral progress is slow because of a lack of confidence.
- They do not produce a sufficient amount of extended written work.

## Design and technology

Standards of work are good.

### Good features

- Students' design and planning skills are well developed.
- They conduct thorough research and experiment confidently with a variety of materials.
- The practical work output is of a high standard.
- Students display mature behaviour in relation to their course and accept responsibility for their work.

### Shortcomings

- Students are unwilling to discuss and debate relevant subjects in class.

## Information and communication technology

Standards of work are satisfactory.

### Good features

- The students who are making most progress work through the textbook thoroughly, making sure they understand every step. They discuss their work thoughtfully, complete assignments diligently and submit them on time.
- They gain a good understanding of how the computer handles the instructions and information that they give it.
- They have a good understanding of some of the ways that computers are used in business and industry.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some students do not do enough work. They do not spend enough time working systematically through the exercises and have little understanding, at the level required, of what the computer can do.
- These students use their time in class poorly, undertaking trivial tasks that would be better done in their own time. They do not think about the questions they need to ask to help them through their difficulties.

## **French**

Standards of work are good.

### **Good features**

- Students show a good understanding of written French. They write good essays on a variety of appropriate topics, and are able to express a point of view.
- Students listen attentively to a wide range of French on tape, on video or spoken by the teacher. In all these contexts, they understand the language well.

### **Shortcomings**

- In oral work, students are able to communicate messages satisfactorily, but they lack fluency and confidence.

## **History**

Standards of work are good.

### **Good features**

- Students read widely and study a number of sources thoroughly. They have a detailed knowledge of subjects and understand the viewpoints of a variety of historians.
- They are able to analyse and compare and contrast evidence. They place interpretations in their contexts and appreciate the usefulness and reliability of evidence.
- Students are able to express and support their individual ideas fluently in both Welsh and English.

### **Shortcomings**

- Although willing to discuss individually, students are reticent as a group and unwilling to challenge some statements.

## **Geography**

Standards of work are good.

### **Good features**

- Students possess good learning skills. They respond to the high expectations of their teacher and work productively as individuals and as a group. Their writing is mostly coherent and fluent.
- They have a good grasp of patterns and processes in the physical and human aspects of the subject. They accurately link theory to specific case studies.
- They have a good understanding of the unequal global distribution of fresh water and of the increasing demand in certain regions of the world.
- They are able to use statistical and numerical data accurately.

### **Shortcomings**

- No major shortcomings were noted.

## **Religious education**

Standards of work are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- Students discuss moral issues reasonably and are willing to debate among themselves in order to reach conclusions about important questions in life.
- Students use their understanding of a number of faiths to understand the attitudes of religious people.

## Shortcomings

- There is very little growth in students' religious knowledge and understanding.
- Students' ability to research moral and religious issues is not sufficiently developed.

<b>Art</b>
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Standards of work are satisfactory.

## Good features

- A minority of students achieves good standards. They are self-motivated and demonstrate a mature ability to reflect on their own life experiences through their artwork.
- They show good observational skills in their drawing, and develop their technical skills in using a range of media and materials, in both two and three dimensions.
- Most students have a developing knowledge and understanding of Welsh artists and the more able apply these creatively to their own work.
- In their investigations, students make good use of the local environment and its culture to develop ideas for their own work.
- Sketchbooks in Year 13 are of a high quality. They are full of visual and written notes, which vividly demonstrate the creative thought processes involved in exploring ideas.

## Shortcomings

- Not all students in Y12 are confident technically. In some instances, for example, their painting is rather tentative.
- The majority of students tend to copy the work of artists rather than to apply their understanding of the artists' work in a more imaginative and personal way.
- The quality of students' understanding and investigating is inhibited because they do not have access to enough visual resources.
- Students make some use of computers and digital cameras for research, but they do not fully exploit ICT for creative image making.

## Music

Standards of work are very good.

### Good features

- Students achieve very good standards in performing, composing and appraising the work of composers, their own work and a variety of recorded music.
- Their compositions, in a wide variety of different styles, are imaginative and of a high standard.
- Students make good and regular use of CDs, keyboards and recording equipment. They frequently use computers very effectively.

### Shortcomings

There are no significant shortcomings.

## Physical education

As no lessons in this subject were seen during the inspection, it is not possible to express an opinion on standards.

## Business studies

Standards of work are good.

### Good features

- Students are highly motivated and make a considerable effort to understand the concepts of business in practice, a competitive environment and marketing.
- They respond well orally and relate theory and practical work well.
- Students are able to give detailed descriptions of companies' pricing and profit making techniques.
- The majority of students can produce graphs on economic subjects to support business analysis practices.

- Many of the pupils reinforce their theory work by establishing and running enterprise companies under the Youth Enterprise scheme. Good use is made of these experiences to encourage company strategy discussion on production and profit making.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no apparent shortcomings

## **Leisure and recreation**

Standards are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- Students are broadening their knowledge.

### **Shortcomings**

- Students are rather reluctant to discuss and share experiences.

## **Travel and tourism**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students have a secure knowledge and understanding. They draw on their personal experiences and visits to relate their work to a realistic commercial setting.
- Students work productively as individuals and as a group. They accept responsibility for their own learning and are developing self-confidence and maturity. They can explain what they are doing and why.
- Students understand the strengths and weaknesses of a range of establishments and have a growing awareness of the importance of marketing.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no major shortcomings.

## 5. Recommendations

- The school should draw up a development plan for the sixth form. It should investigate joint working with other schools or colleges with the aim of ensuring that all pupils leaving Year 11 have ready access to courses that match their aspirations and abilities.
- Schemes of work in each subject should identify more opportunities for students to develop the full range of key skills.
- Senior staff should monitor students' learning experiences across their courses to ensure that, despite working in small classes, students have a wide range of learning experiences.
- Students and teachers should discuss together how the general studies course might be modified so that students would see more value in the course and contribute to lessons with greater commitment and enthusiasm.

## A . Basic information about the school

Name of School	Bro Ddyfi School
Type	Comprehensive
Age range of pupils	11-18
School address	Greenfield Terrace Machynlleth
Post Code	SY20 8DR
Telephone number	01654 702012

Name of head	J Wyn Thomas
Date of appointment	April 1999
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr D B Evans
Recording Inspector	R A Charles
Date of inspection	08-12 April 2002

Title and address of LEA (if it is a maintained school or owner (if it is an independent school): Powys Education Authority, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5LG
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## B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>								
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	50	58	50	50	47	19	10	284

<i>Number of teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part-time	Part-time equivalent (PTE)
Number of teachers	23	7	25.35

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher ratio	11.3 :1
Overall contact ratio	80.7%

<i>Attendance percentages for three full terms prior to the inspection</i>								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Entire school
Term 1	91	89	93	88	84	81	93	88.4
Term 2	91	91	92	90	92	68	96	88.6
Term 3	94	91	90	94	87	90	85	90.1

<i>Number of pupils excluded during previous 12 months</i>	16
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### C. NC assessment and public examination results

<b>National Curriculum Assessment Results KS3 :2001</b>															
Total pupils Y9: 53															
<b>Percentage of pupils at each level</b>															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	OP
SA EN	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	21	43	26	2	4	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	3	1	22	34	21	8	0	0
	Test	School	2	0	2	0	0	0	4	21	42	15	15	0	0
		National	0	3	2	n	n	n	9	22	33	19	10	n	n
CY	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	34	26	29	0	0	
		National	0	0	1	0	0	1	6	22	32	28	10	0	0
	Test	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	9	31	26	29	0	0
		National	0	2	1	n	n	0	4	21	32	28	11	n	n
MA	Teacher Assessment	School	2	0	0	0	0	8	19	40	19	13	0	0	
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	23	25	26	13	1	1
	Test	School	0	2	2	0	0	0	6	19	36	26	9	0	0
		National	0	6	1	n	n	n	8	22	22	27	13	n	n
SC	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	4	25	45	21	6	0	0	
		National	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	24	31	23	9	0	0
	Test	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	19	45	25	9	0	0
		National	0	4	1	n	n	n	9	22	29	24	10	n	n

<b>Percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either Welsh or English</b>			
<b>via teacher assessment</b>		<b>via test</b>	
<b>In the school:</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>In the school:</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>In Wales:</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>In Wales:</b>	<b>46</b>

D – Pupil exempt under statutory arrangements from a part or all of the National Curriculum  
A – Pupils prevented from registering a level because of absence  
F - Pupils prevented from registering a level for reasons apart from absence  
W – Pupils working towards level 1  
OP – Outstanding Performance, where pupils at Key Stage 3 perform above level 8

<b>GCSE, CE, GNVQ and NVQ results for 15 year olds</b>			
Number of 15 year olds on school register in January 2001:			
<b>Percentage of 15 year olds in 2001 who:</b>			
	School	LEA	Wales
registered for five GCSEs or more	86	90	86
achieved 5 GCSEs or more grades A*-C	49	59	50
achieved 5 GCSEs or more grades A*-G	86	89	85
achieved GCSEs grades A*-C in mathematics, science, Welsh (first language) or English	20	43	37
registered for at least one CE, GCSE short course or GCSE	96	97	96
achieved one or more GCSEs A*-C	71	82	73
achieved one or more GCSEs A*-G	94	95	92
failed to achieve any GCSEs with a grade	6	5	8
achieved one or more CEs only	2	2	3
achieved GNVQ Part 1, GNVQ Basic level or NVQ level 1	0		
achieved GNVQ Part 1, GNVQ Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0		
achieved at least 5 GCSEs grades A*-C, equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	49		
achieved at least 5 GCSEs grades A*-G, equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	86		

<b>GCE A level, GNVQ and NVQ results for pupils aged 16, 17 and 18</b>			
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 on school register in January 2001 28			
Number of pupils registered for 2 or more GCE A levels or equivalent qualification in 1997: 15			
Number of pupils registered for less than 2 CSE A levels or equivalent qualification in 1997: 6			
	School	LEA	Wales
Percentage of pupils registered achieving 2 or more grades A-C	55	70	62
Percentage of pupils registered achieving 2 or more grades A-E	93	95	93
Average points score per candidate	16	19	18
Number of pupils achieving GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ level 2	2		
Number of pupils achieving a Higher GNVQ or NVQ level 3	2		

## D. Basis of inspection evidence

15 inspectors spent a total of 58 days inspecting the school and 171 lessons were totally or partially observed. In addition, registration periods, pastoral lessons, morning assemblies and extra-curricular activities were observed. Interviews were conducted with members of the higher and senior management teams heads of departments and faculties and with members of staff.

Pupils work was examined throughout the school. Formal interviews were conducted with pupils representing different years.

All school documentation was analysed. Pre-inspection meetings were conducted with staff, the governing body and parents. 23 people attended the parents' meeting and 142 parents' questionnaires and nine letters were returned.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Inspector	Type	Aspects of Responsibility	Subject Responsibilities
R A Charles	Core	1, 2, 3.1, 4.1, 6.1, 6.2, 8.1, 8.2	Welsh, Welsh Second Language
M E R Lloyd	Core	3.2 (literacy), 5.4	English, Media Studies
S James	Core	5.1,5.3,6.3	Modern Foreign Languages
H Collins	Core	3.2 (numeracy)	Mathematics, Business Studies
I G Higginbotham	Core	3.2(ICT), Sixth Form Annex	Science, IT
P Morgan	Core	5.5	Religious Education, Religious Studies, Life Skills, Key Skills
E James	Lay	4.2, 4.3, 5.6,5.7	
J A Roberts	Team		History
M Thomas	Team		Welsh, Welsh Second Language
G Williams	Team		Physical Education, Leisure and Recreation
E Jones	Team		Design and Technology, Health and Social Care
E Bowyer	Team		Geography, Travel and Tourism
G Figg	Team		Art
B Gregson-Allcott	Team		Science
D Thompson	Team		Music
D Hughes	School Nominee		