

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10
INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS ACT 1996**

**Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni
Heol Gelli Haf
Fleur de Lys
Blackwood
NP12 3JQ**

School number: 676 / 4103

Date of the Inspection: 26 - 30 April, 2004

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Registered Inspector: WO19 / 17166
Date: 30 June, 2004
under ESTYN contract number – T/34/03**

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CURRICULUM AND KEY STAGES NOMENCLATURE

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through the school was introduced in 1989. It is intended that this system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory education until the age of 18 should facilitate communication amongst schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of progression.

The term "Reception" (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) whose fifth birthday will occur during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is used for the year group of pupils whose sixth birthday will occur during the academic year and so on until Y13 - the year group whose 18th birthday will occur during the academic year:

{PRIV ATE }	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Age	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

Key stage (KS) 1 of the National Curriculum includes Y1 and Y2; KS2 includes Y3 to Y6; KS3 includes Y7 to Y9 and KS4 includes Y10 and Y11 (the last year of compulsory education).

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five point scale is used to represent the main opinions in the report as follows:

1. Very good: many good features, some particularly good.
2. Good: good features and no major shortcomings.
3. Satisfactory: good features that outweigh some shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

**Inspection Report
(V1.005)
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1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is a Welsh community comprehensive school for pupils age 11-18 maintained by the Local Education Authority [LEA] of the Caerphilly Unitary Authority [UA]. The school was opened in 1981 with a roll of 156 pupils. By today, it has increased to 1072 pupils including 127 in the sixth form (Y12 and Y13). There is an annual entry of between 190 and 200 pupils into the school and numbers are increasing. After a long campaign, a new school was opened in September 2002 under the Private Funding Initiative [PFI], which meant moving from old, unsuitable and scattered buildings to a brand new building on the outskirts of the village of Fleur de Lys, near Blackwood, about three miles from Bargoed. This is the only designated Welsh medium secondary school in the county of Caerphilly and serves the wide catchment area that includes the towns of Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed and Ystrad Mynach, together with a number of villages that were at one time industrial communities.

The school states that it has a mixture of able and less able pupils. Eighty five percent of the pupils come from underprivileged areas. Fifteen percent of the pupils are registered as eligible to receive free school meals, which is slightly lower than the county percentage.

Twenty pupils (about 2% of Y7-Y11 pupils) have a statement of special education needs [SEN]. In addition, 113 pupils (about 12% of Y7-Y11) are on one of the action stages of the SEN Code of Practice. No pupil is disapplied from the National Curriculum [NC] but the curriculum is modified for one pupil. There is no pupil under Local Authority care.

Almost every pupil belongs to the white ethnic group with only 0.2% from a mixture of other ethnic groups. Ninety nine percent of the pupils come from homes where English is the main language and only 1% from homes with Welsh as the main language. All pupils can speak Welsh to first language standard. Every pupil is educated through the medium of Welsh in all subjects except English.

The school's main priorities for 2003-2005 are to:

- 1) promote Welshness;
- 2) reinforce the school's pastoral and disciplinary system;
- 3) continue to develop the whole-school monitoring system;
- 4) improve pupil attendance;
- 5) raise the standard of homework;
- 6) continue to develop Welsh across the curriculum;
- 7) monitor the progress of departments and pupils;
- 8) improve the standards of pupils of all ability;
- 9) develop Personal and Social Education [PSE] in Y7-Y10;
- 10) promote teachers' professional development;
- 11) develop the use of ICT as a learning and teaching instrument;
- 12) improve the provision for pupils with SEN;
- 13) develop the school as a community;
- 14) improve the bridging link between KS2 and KS3;
- 15) develop key skills across the curriculum as a means of raising standards.

The school's quantitative targets for 2003-2004 are as follows:-

Key stage	Subject etc	School targets	County target (%)	Wales target (%)
KS3	Welsh % at level 5 or higher	70	66	80-85
	English % at level 5 or higher	70	59	80-85
	Mathematics % at level 5 or higher	61	62	80-85
	Science % at level 5 or higher	65	65.5	80-85
	Core subjects indicator	56	47	
KS4	5 GCSE subjects gaining grade A*-C	55	50	58
	5GCSE subjects gaining grade A*-G	85	87	95
	Key subjects indicator	46	32	50+
	% leaving without qualification	0	2	2.8
	% unauthorised absences	-	-	-

The school was previously inspected in March 1998.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

This school has made significant progress since the previous inspection. There are obvious strengths in the standards achieved and in the classroom teaching. The results of external examinations and tests compare favourably with those for the county, although there is room for more improvement, particularly at KS3. The school is very well led. The support and guidance provided for the pupils and the students are very good and the provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school is a very civilised, caring, and inclusive family community and, with specific exceptions, pupils' behaviour and their attitude to work are very good.

The standards achieved by pupils in their subjects and in the key skills

Standards are good although there is a considerable variation in their range. Standards were satisfactory or better in 98% of the lessons observed during the inspection; they were satisfactory in 22%, good in 60% and very good in 16% of them. In 2%, they were unsatisfactory.

The table below shows the achievement standards observed during the inspection.

Subject	KS3 Standards	KS4 Standards	Sixth form standards	Notes
Welsh	Good	Very good	Very good	
English	Good	Good	Good	
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good	
Science	Good	Good	Good	AS and A-level biology good, chemistry good, physics good
Design and technology	Good	Good	Good	Textiles = Very good
Information technology	Good	Good	Good	
History	Good	Very good	Very good	
Geography	Good	Good	Very good	
Modern Foreign languages	Good	Good	Good	French Y7-Y13, Spanish Y10 and Y11
Art	Satisfactory	Good	Good	
Music	Satisfactory	Good	Good	
Physical education	Good	Very good	Very good	
Religious education	Good	Good	Good	
PSE	Good	Good	Very good	
Drama	Good	Good	Very good	

Other subjects studied at KS4 and Y12 and Y13

Subject	KS4	The sixth form
Religious studies	Very good	Very good
Catering	Satisfactory	-
Business studies	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Art Design Textiles	Very good	Very good
Life skills	Good	
Vocational subjects		Good
Law		Good
Sociology		Very good

The standards achieved by pupils with SEN are good.

The school is successful to a significant degree in its objective of furthering pupils' Welshness; this is in a school where all pupils follow the Welsh first language course although almost all of them come from homes where no Welsh is spoken.

The school's formal arrangements for promoting the key skills across the curriculum are good. The tables below indicate the standards in the key skills and in the broader key skills.

The key skills

Key skill	KS3		KS4		Sixth form	
	Welsh	English	Welsh	English	Welsh	English
Speaking	Good	Good	Good	Good	Very good	Very good
Listening	Good	Good	Good	Good	Very good	Very good
Reading	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Writing	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Numeracy	Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Good	
ICT	Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Good	

The broader key skills

Problem solving	Good	Good	Good
Co-operation	Very good	Very good	Very good
Improving their own learning	Good	Good	Good

Examination results

At KS3, in 2002, 61% of the pupils reached level 5 or higher in Welsh and English. Fifty four percent of the pupils attained level 5 or higher in mathematics and 56% of the pupils the same level in science. Forty six percent reached the Core Subjects Indicator [CSI]¹. This places the school in the lowest quartile for 'Welsh' secondary schools. On the other hand, when the results are compared with schools where 16-20% of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals, the school is in the second quartile, above the median, in English, lower than the median for the CSI, and

¹ Gaining the NC level five or higher in a combination of either Welsh or English, mathematics and science

remains in the lowest quartile in mathematics and science.

At KS3, in 2003, 66% of the pupils attained level 5 or higher in Welsh and 72% the same level in English. Fifty three percent of the pupils attained level 5 or higher in mathematics and 53% of the pupils attained the same level in science. Forty six percent reached the CSI¹. This places the school in the lowest quartile for 'Welsh' secondary schools. On the other hand, when the results are compared with school where 15% of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals, the school is in the very highest quartile in English, in the lowest quartile for CSI and also remains in the lowest quartile in mathematics and science.

When results are compared over the years with those for 'Welsh' schools, they are usually seen to fall either in the lowest quartile or second quartile, below the median.

At KS4, in 2002, 50% of the pupils attained an A*-C grade in at least five GCSE subjects. This was the same percentage as Wales and 7% better than the county percentage. This shows an 8% increase over the average for the school between 1999 and 2001. The percentage of pupils gaining grade A*-G was as good as the Wales percentage and 3% better than the county figure. Thirty six percent of the pupils attained the CSI², 1% less than the Wales percentage, and 6% higher than the county percentage. This shows a 9% increase over the school average between 1999 and 2001. Pupils' average score in their GCSE or GNVQ examinations is also the same as that for Wales and four points higher than the average score for county candidates. In 2002, the percentage of all pupils gaining grade A*-C in either Welsh or English, mathematics and science was lower than the percentage for Wales but higher than the county percentage.

In 2003, at KS4, these results were surpassed; 54% of the pupils gained an A*-C grade in at least five GCSE subjects. This was 4% higher than the figure for Wales and 9% higher than the county percentage. The percentage of pupils gaining an A*-G grade was 2% higher than the percentage for Wales and 5% higher than the county percentage. 38% of pupils achieved the CSI, the same as the Wales percentage, and 5% higher than the county figure. Pupils' average score in their GCSE or GNVQ examinations was four points higher than that for Wales and eight higher than the average score for county candidates. In 2003, the percentage, of all pupils gaining an A*-C grade in English was higher than the percentage for Wales, while the percentages for mathematics and science were lower than the percentage for Wales but higher than those for the county. The gap between boys and girls' results reflects closely enough the national pattern, with girls performing better on the whole, especially in language, and boys slightly better in mathematics and science.

In 2002, 74% of the students entered for two or more A-level subjects gained A-C grades. This was 8% higher than percentage for Wales and 14% higher than the county figure. Ninety five percent of the students gained an A-E grade, which is a little higher than the percentage for Wales and the county in that year. The candidates' average score of 20 was as high as the score for Wales and two points higher than the county score.

In 2003, A-level results were not as good. Sixty two percent gained an A-C grade, which was 3% lower than the county percentage and 5% lower than the figure for Wales. The percentage of students gaining an A-E grade was as good as the percentage for Wales and 3% higher than the county percentage. The average score of 17 points was lower than the county (18) and Wales (20) and quite similar to the school's score between 2001-2003.

Quality of the teaching

At its best, the quality of the teaching is one of the school's strengths but the quality is uneven. Generally, it is good. Very good individual lessons were given by a number of teachers and the teaching of nine teachers was consistently very good. The quality of the teaching was satisfactory in 21% of lessons, good in 54% and very good in 23% of them. The quality of the teaching was unsatisfactory in of 2% - a very low figure. There is obvious strength in sixth form teaching. The

¹ Achieving the NC level five or higher in a combination of either Welsh or English, mathematics and science

² Achieving A*-C GCSE grades in a combination of either Welsh or English, mathematics and science

teaching is characterised by a very positive relationship with the pupils, teachers' very good subject knowledge and good planning of individual lessons. The range of learning and teaching techniques and the differentiated provision within individual classes are satisfactory.

Management, leadership and self-evaluation

Leadership and efficiency are very good at the school. The self-evaluation system and the quality of departmental self-evaluation are good.

A purposeful work ethos is successfully created and clear aims and objectives are set that guide the life and work of the school in a definite direction. The head manages the school very well.

The leadership is reinforced by the co-operative relationship that exists between the strong governing body and the head. The governing body is very supportive of the school. The individual members know the school very well and are interested in its life and work. They know about its strengths and its developmental needs.

The Central Committee (the school's senior management team) is effective as a team in carrying out its responsibilities. All members contribute substantially to the school's development. The middle management teams undertake their academic and pastoral duties very well. School systems try to ensure that the staff have ownership of school management and a commitment to its aims and objectives. This has begun to raise the awareness of middle managers of the needs of the whole school. The quality of middle managers varies from very good to unsatisfactory. In general, it is good. There is also a difference in head of departments' ability to evaluate their own work.

Link members of the Central Committee carry out their role of supporting and monitoring departments sensitively. The link between the Central Committee and the departments was recently strengthened following a request from the teachers. A good system of monitoring the provision and standards by direct observation of lessons has existed for many years, but it does not give sufficient attention to the evaluation of pupils' standards of work in the classroom. The school uses data from several sources; the ability to analyse them and interpret the implications continues to develop.

A number of whole-school strategies, such as SEN, literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum, have a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement.

The school development plan [SDP] notes the school's priorities and both teachers and governors have good ownership of it; there is quite a close relationship between the department development plans [DDP] and the SDP.

The school manages its budget effectively with a reasonable reserve. Governors make financial decisions that are in line with the school's aims. The school's administrative officer, who is answerable to the head, systematically administers the budget from day to day. Consideration of the pupils' standards of achievement and their classroom progress, the quality of the teaching, the special ethos created and the staff's commitment, indicates that the school ensures good value for money.

Response to the previous inspection

The school has responded well to key issues from the previous inspection. With very close co-operation with the LEA, good quality new buildings have been secured. This has raised the school's self-image and given the school a period of stability to re-define its main aims and objectives.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad curriculum that meets the statutory requirements. Good, inclusive choices of subjects are offered at KS4 and in the sixth form, while continuing to make appropriate core subject

provision. Pupils' curricular experiences are enhanced by a very good extra-curricular provision and they are provided with very good opportunities to participate in competitive games. However, the world of work and industry has little influence on the curricular provision and subject standards.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Pupils' spiritual development is good; their moral, social and cultural development is very good. The quality of the communal school assemblies arranged for pupils is good although the quality of registration class assemblies is not as good. The school's family ethos is promoted. Pupils and students show respect for each other, their teachers and visitors and for the building and the site. The pupils and students are ready to undertake responsibilities and they co-operate very well.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards are good although there is considerable variation in their range. Standards were satisfactory or better in 98% of the lessons observed during the inspection; they were satisfactory in 22%, good in 60% and very good in 16% of them. In 2%, they were unsatisfactory.

Standards are good at KS3 and very good at KS4 in Welsh, history, physical education and drama. Standards are good at KS3 and KS4 in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, IT, geography, modern languages, religious education and PSE. Standards are satisfactory at KS3 and good at KS4 in art and music.

In the optional subjects at KS4, standards are very good in religious studies, good in life skills and satisfactory in catering at KS4. Standards are unsatisfactory in business studies at KS4.

Examination results

At KS3, in 2002, 61% of the pupils reached level 5 or higher in Welsh and English. Fifty four percent of the pupils attained level 5 or higher in mathematics and 56% of the pupils the same level in science. Forty six percent reached the CSI². This places the school in the lowest quartile for 'Welsh' secondary schools. On the other hand, when the results are compared with schools where 16-20% of pupils are eligible to receive free school meals, the school is in the second quartile, above the median, in English, lower than the median for the CSI, and remains in the lowest quartile in mathematics and science.

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When results are compared, over the years, with those for 'Welsh' schools, they are usually seen to fall either in the lowest quartile or second quartile, below the median.

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GCSE or GNVQ examinations is also the same as that for Wales and four points higher than the average score for county candidates. In that year, the percentage of all pupils gaining grade A*-C in either Welsh or English, mathematics and science was lower than the percentage for Wales but higher than the county percentage.

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3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum

a) Language skills

Standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing in Welsh and English are good at KS3 and KS4.

Since Welsh is the school's main teaching medium, evidence of pupils' ability to express themselves in English was gathered mainly from English lessons but also from other lessons, e.g. PSE where the pupils were responding to printed or audio-visual materials in English.

Pupils' listening standards are good. Pupils usually listen intently and with interest. On occasion, the interest of small groups of pupils falters as they listen to the teachers and the listening is passive.

The standard of pupils' oral language, Welsh and English, is good across the subjects at KS3 and KS4. Pupils have a good understanding of subject specialist terms in Welsh. Pupils discuss their work naturally and confidently in both languages. When they have the opportunity, they respond at length, asking questions and offering appropriate comments. However, on occasion, pupils are less ready to question and engage in extended discussion.

Pupils' standards of reading aloud are satisfactory in both Welsh and English. Usually, pupils read meaningfully; a good number of them are also aware of the requirements of reading to an audience. A small number read mechanically. Standards of reading for pleasure and classroom reading of texts are good among pupils of all ability in both languages. Pupils use higher reading skills effectively, such as skimming and scanning and selection from text. In subjects such as science, religious education, history, geography and drama, their ability to read texts for information and to transfer from one language to another is also good.

Standards in writing are good in the substantial majority of subjects throughout the school. In subjects such as history, geography and religious education, KS3 and KS4 pupils write correctly, at

some length, using appropriate expression. The standard of re-drafting work is satisfactory in both languages. The standard of paragraphing is generally good across the subjects. On occasion, however, the highest standards are impaired in Welsh by linguistic errors, such as incorrect mutation and spelling. In English, the highest standards are not achieved because of spelling errors.

b) Numeracy

Standards in numeracy across the curriculum at KS3 and KS4 are satisfactory. In mathematics, pupils apply the rules of numbers effectively. The use of numeracy across the school is inconsistent. In design and technology, substantial use of number guidelines was seen within lessons, which is good practice. A number of subjects, including history, geography, business studies and art refer to the development of numeracy within their schemes of work and a natural and comprehensive contribution to numeracy skills was seen in these subjects. Pupils' skills and ability in measuring and calculating accurately and estimating are good and they use appropriate measuring units.

No development was seen at KS3 in pupils' skills in using calculators but they use them confidently at KS4. Pupils show the ability to interpret data well in ICT and the most able KS4 pupils also reach a good standard of data interpretation in science. The skills shown in business studies are basic. Within some subjects, such as science, pupils select suitable methods of data representation.

c) ICT

While pupils' computer skills are good in IT as a subject at KS3 and KS4, standards in ICT across the curriculum are satisfactory, reflecting, to a significant degree, the lack of opportunities to apply the skills in the subjects. The standards of information presentation are good; pupils of all abilities can produce publications that combine picture and text in a form that appeals to audiences. Standards of data handling are satisfactory in subjects such as geography. The use of sensors to log data in science is satisfactory. Pupils' computer control skills, and CAD/CAM in design and technology, are a strength. Pupils gather information well from the Internet and other electronic sources. Pupils' modelling skills are satisfactory.

d) The broader key skills

Pupils' problem-solving ability is good, reflecting the opportunities given to do so in a good number of subjects. Pupils co-operate very well in pairs and groups in a good range of subjects. The school's self-assessment system ensures that pupils' ability to improve their own learning is also good.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

This school is a happy and caring community where emphasis is placed on effective partnership between teachers and pupils. Pupils' spiritual development is good and their moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Pupils' spiritual awareness is well developed in religious education by encouraging the pupils to discuss religion's "major issues" and also discussion of the pupils' own experiences of the world. In a good number of NC subjects, such as English, Welsh, music and textiles, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of curiosity when reflecting on the creative work of others. Creative displays about the school also make a good contribution to the spiritual dimension.

Communal worship sessions contribute well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Suitable themes are identified for the week. Services have a Christian ethos; respect and responsibility for others are featured in them, and good opportunities are given for pupils to take an active part in the presentations. At times, music and communal singing enhance the occasion. At the end of the worship in the year groups or in *llysoedd*(houses), effective use is made of the time to reinforce the school's values and to celebrate pupils' success. The quality of the opportunities for reflection in the communal services held in the classrooms is uneven. In general, it is satisfactory.

Pupils have a very clear sense of right and wrong. They show respect for each other, their teachers, visitors to the school and towards the environment and the resources of the new school. In a range of subjects, such as religious education, PSE, geography, English and Welsh, pupils reflect on wider moral and ethical considerations related to economics, racism and prejudice. They express their knowledge and opinion sensitively and honestly. The school's emphasis on fostering respect, consideration for others and responsible behaviour is evident in its life and daily organisation. Through the charities' committee, pupils support a substantial number of local and national charities and good causes, and this shows their awareness of children and people less fortunate than themselves and their care for them.

The pupils co-operate and inter-relate very well in lessons and activities across the age range. Pupils are confident and self-disciplined. They co-operate effectively in their *llysoedd* and as a school in preparation for concerts, sports and the school eisteddfod. Pupils show pride in representing the school in local and national events, competitions and games. Pupils from each year contribute to the School Council and this creates good opportunities to develop responsible attitudes; there are examples where pupils have taken action to improve provision at the school. A significant number of pupils participate in extra-curricular activities such as concerts and residential experiences in Wales and in foreign countries, providing opportunities to mature socially.

The school ethos promotes pupils' awareness of Wales and its heritage very well. The school is successful in ensuring daily use of the Welsh language through courses and activities it arranges in the school and nationally. An orchestra, good choirs and a number of instrumental and vocal groups contribute towards the school's ethos. Pupils take part in public performances, including a musical and the school and national eisteddfodau. The school takes a leading role in Urdd activities, including its camps. Pupils' European and international awareness is very well developed through specific aspects in the curriculum and through numerous opportunities to visit different countries outside Wales. The school's multicultural policy is reflected in aspects of the work of a substantial number of subjects such as art, religious education, history, English and textiles, where pupils have the opportunity to study cultures that differ from their own culture. Every pupil is integrated naturally into the life and work of the school.

4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.

They respond enthusiastically in their lessons and they co-operate and concentrate well. They have disciplined attitudes in practical situations. The pupils are very polite towards staff and very

welcoming towards visitors. They respect the environment of their new school, appreciating the complete contrast between their present beautiful building and the poor buildings they vacated.

Behaviour is very good when entering and leaving assemblies in the school hall, and during the services themselves, similarly, on informal occasions such as during dinner hour and break-time. The standards of pupils' behaviour during visits are praised by parents, together with the careful staff supervision that promotes the very good behaviour.

Moving to the new building has helped to reinforce the high expectations. On the two "streets" that form the spine of the school, pupils move in an orderly fashion and enjoy socialising with each other and with the staff.

Many pupils attend the numerous voluntary clubs arranged for them during the dinner hour and after school hours. They throw themselves energetically into these activities, showing commitment.

The very caring and supportive ethos promotes these high standards of behaviour. Individual instances of serious misbehaviour are discussed with understanding and sympathy among the Central Committee, year heads and form tutors as part of the school management system. When necessary, support is received from external agencies, such as the Education Welfare Service. The promotion of good behaviour and attitudes is part of the improving standards agenda.

During the past twelve months, one pupil was permanently excluded and 27 temporarily excluded. The number of exclusions has increased since the previous inspection but figures for the school are lower than the county averages. Much effort is made to avoid pupil exclusion through the mentoring and monitoring system. Internal sanctions, such as loss of privileges, are first tried. Parents are contacted when this is necessary and school governors have an active role as the process continues, including helping with pastoral support in two instances. A panel of governors acts on rota to consider exclusions and there is a separate appeal process. In all cases of exclusion, the appropriate guidelines were followed.

Through proactive and thorough procedures, every effort is made to counteract bullying. An Anti-bullying Policy is implemented which includes measures such as pupil questionnaires, a practical role for the School Council, forms to report incidents – confidentially if desired - and training associated with a 'Chips-Childline' for pupils of all ages to help fellow pupils who worry about bullying. Pupils and parents testify to the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying measures.

To counteract sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination, there is an emphasis in class assemblies on fostering tolerance, mutual understanding, self-respect and respect for others. As part of the PSE programme under the theme "Roots", the differences from country to country are celebrated and the contribution of people from other countries to the traditions of Wales noted. Each pupil has full access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities and the disabled can reach all parts of the building.

4.3 Attendance

School attendance percentages over the past two terms were satisfactory, with an average of 90.5%. Every effort has been made to improve attendance, resulting in definite progress since the previous inspection. However, percentages continue to fall below 90% in some year groups and at certain times of the year.

In every class, the register is called correctly at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Also, attendance is recorded in every lesson and every class using an appropriate

computer program. This good practice enables individual teachers and the school office to monitor attendance throughout the day and to detect any internal truanting.

Certificates are presented to celebrate an attendance between 90% and 100%. As a result of a generous gift from one of the school governors, every pupil with 100% attendance has the opportunity to win prizes such as a mountain bicycle and sound systems at the end of the year. The desire to win prizes has a positive effect on attendance. During the recent snow, some pupils fought their way to school so as not to lose the opportunity to win a prize!

Attendance is discussed in morning staff meetings and a member of the Central Committee has specific responsibility for attendance aspects. Attendance is considered in the context of wider factors, such as behaviour and motivation, and attendance is an item on the agenda of heads of year meetings.

Unauthorised absence varies between 0.6% and 1.4% and a core of about 2% of pupils arrive late, partly because school buses arrive after the appointed time. Pupils arriving after the morning registration period register their attendance in a file kept at reception.

The school office has a key role in the task of recording attendance. The detailed information provided by the computer system is used to detect which pupils are absent and the school contacts the homes of these pupils by phone during the morning. As the day progresses, the information gathered on absences and late arrivals is placed on the computer system so that form teachers have the most recent picture.

Education welfare officers give regular and effective support by visiting the homes of individuals whose attendance is a matter of concern. Home circumstances, often the cause of regular absence, are handled sensitively. As a last resort, where there is no home support to ensure acceptable attendance and where there are no other mitigating circumstances, cases are referred to the court.

The need to explain absences is made clear in the parents' handbook – a written note is required on the first morning of a child's return to school after an absence. The form teacher keeps letters and relevant information on each individual's attendance in an appropriate folder. Attendance totals are recorded in the homework diary of each individual pupil and pupils are asked to complete a form self-evaluating their effort to attend school.

In their attendance policy, the governors have set the ambitious long-term target of raising whole-school attendance to 95%. As a result of determined efforts, the percentage of pupils whose attendance falls below 80% has decreased from 22.3% to 11%. Also, there has been a substantial fall in the numbers with more than 100 authorised or unauthorised absences in a year.

Whole-school attendance percentages are increasing gradually. In the 2003 autumn term, the school was near the top of the county league with a percentage of 91.4%, and the attendance of every school year group was over 90%. Instances of pupils taking holidays during the term are few.

Despite the progress made, the percentages for the whole school remained below 90% in two out of the three past terms, with figures of 89.3% in spring 2004 and 87.5% in summer 2003. In Y9, Y12 and Y13, attendance was below 90% in two of the three past terms. In the 2003 summer term, attendance was below 90% in 6 of the 7 years, and as low as 77.2% in Y12. Figures lower than 90% are contrary to the expectations of the National Assembly for Wales.

The requirement to report to parents on whole-school attendance in the school handbook is not met.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Teaching

At its best, the quality of the teaching is one of the school's strengths but the quality is uneven. Generally, it is good. Very good individual lessons were given by a number of teachers and the teaching of nine teachers was consistently very good. The quality of the teaching was satisfactory in 21% of lessons, good in 54% and very good in 23% of them. The quality of the teaching was unsatisfactory in of 2% - a very low figure.

Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is consistently good or very good. Departments plan individual lessons well. Long-term planning varies from the very good to the satisfactory; in general, it is good. Class management is good; expectations, challenge and pace are good. Relationships with pupils are very good, with mutual respect between teacher and pupil and between the pupils themselves, creating a friendly, purposeful atmosphere in the lessons. Teachers are successful in preparing satisfactorily, at least, for pupils of different abilities organised into sets or bands.

When the teaching is good, teachers plan and structure their lessons to allow pupils to work at the appropriate pace. There is continuity from one lesson to the next with a sense of purpose and progression. Teachers make the aims of each lesson clear to the pupils at the beginning of the session. Expectations for all pupils are high and the work is arranged so that pupils of all abilities are included and are able to make appropriate progress. Teachers use pair, group and class work, giving lesson variety and permitting the pupils to discuss and internalise the work, making them active rather than passive learners. Teachers set relevant homework, ensure that tasks are completed and marked with constructive comments so that pupils can make further progress. Assessment is used to raise standards.

When the teaching is very good, as well as the above, teacher questioning leads pupils to reflect more deeply on the topics studied. Teachers are very aware of the needs of individual pupils who are challenged to achieve beyond their own expectations at all ability levels. Pace is very good. Teachers create opportunities for pupils, and give them methods of constructive criticism of their own performances and that of others. They lead the pupils to become independent learners.

Satisfactory teaching includes some of the good features noted above, but also some shortcomings. These lessons were deficient in the range of teaching techniques used and in matching activities to pupils' abilities within the class.

In the little unsatisfactory teaching observed in individual lessons across the subjects and also in business studies at KS4, lack of pace, insufficient provision for pupils of different abilities, and insufficient challenge were obvious weaknesses.

5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment, recording and reporting to parents are good. Nevertheless, some annual reports do not meet the statutory requirements for reporting to parents outlined in circular 35/98, as they do not give comments on every individual subject.

There is a very good assessment policy, which sets out clearly the principles, the purpose and the implementation of the assessment system. It gives good guidance to departments, and in general teachers follow these guidelines, making regular and accurate assessments of pupils' progress.

Marking of the pupils' work by departments is generally regular and thorough. There is consistency across departments in the assessment of pupils' work. There are very good examples of teacher comments on work and targets for further progress in Welsh, English and religious education. These help to promote higher standards of work by pupils. However, this level of marking is not evident in all departments. Departmental recording of pupils' progress is very good in science, mathematics, English and religious education. All departments assess the progress of pupils every half term, and a record, open to all staff, is kept centrally, which is good practice.

The school shows its commitment to raising standards by its appointment of two teachers as officers for raising standards. The records are used to identify any underachievement early; this is then dealt with very well by the officers for raising standards, who work with pupils, pupils' mentors, subject teachers and heads of year, who inform parents. The officer then reviews the progress that has been made. There are also other assessment routes to raising standards; targets are set for the end of KS3 and KS4, and progress is carefully monitored against these. The homework diary is very well used by staff to record particular success or lack of effort in both classwork and homework. Those who do well are rewarded with certificates in the morning assembly, while those who fail to perform as they should are seen, as appropriate, by their mentor, the head of year or the officer for raising standards.

There are good examples of self-assessment and self target-setting by pupils, as for example in English; this is good practice and contributes to the raising of expectations and thereby the standards of pupils. Some departments have portfolios of standardised pupils' work, which aid the work of assessment. This is good practice.

Pupils with SEN are assessed according to the requirements of the Code of Practice. The special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCO] and individual departments monitor their progress very well, and pupils are a part of this process.

Reports, issued twice a year to parents, include grades for achievement, effort and also examinations as appropriate. The written report on the pupil's achievements in lessons and extra-curricular activities varies from the very good, as for example reports on pupils with SEN and on the sixth form, to some where not every subject is referred to in sufficient detail. When there are no specific comments on all individual subjects, reports do not fulfil the statutory requirements for annual reporting to parents.

Included in the report is a detailed account of the pupils' attendance, and there are personal letters to parents of pupils who have either achieved very well, or under-performed. These letters are based on the assessment data measured against individual targets for pupils. Pupils write their own self-assessment and this is included in the report. There is space for parents to respond to the reports, which many parents use, and an invitation to discuss any aspect of the report. The reports are very well produced and easy to read. The quality of the national record of achievement, presented at the end of Y11, is good.

A deputy head analyses data, both internal assessment and examination results, for the whole school. The Central Committee and heads of department are aware of the implications of these analyses; the school looks at the achievement of various groups, and responds to the findings.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good at KS3 and KS4.

In accordance with the school's aims, the curriculum provided is broad and balanced and provides appropriate experiences for learners. The curriculum is presented through the medium of Welsh apart from English lessons and each pupil's Welshness is developed to its full potential within lessons and through extra-curricular provision.

Most departments' schemes of work are comprehensive and of good quality; in a number of departments, their quality is satisfactory.

The time allocated to the different subjects is generally appropriate with clear logic behind the decisions to allocate more time to the core subjects. This means that some foundation subjects are given less time at KS3 than that recommended by ACCAC.

Very careful consideration has been given to the school's banding system and there is a specific rationale behind the decisions made. At KS3, classes are banded according to pupils' average ability in the core subjects, with three ability bands in Y7 and five in Y8 and Y9. Special attention has been given to ensuring that pupils are not labelled according to the class in which they are taught. There is a detailed plan for assessment and monitoring of progress to ensure that the banding and grouping system is effective. The provision at KS3 is appropriate across the subjects. A class is arranged for a small number of pupils with SEN throughout KS3 and this provision is appropriate.

As an experiment, music classes were combined and re-arranged according to gender. In this instance, it resulted in an imbalance in the numbers in groups.

At KS4, every pupil follows a curriculum that meets statutory requirements. All pupils study science, either as a single subject or as physics, chemistry, and biology separately. Nearly half of the pupils follow courses in the three sciences. Pupils also choose four additional subjects from the different appropriate options. Thorough attention is given to offering choices that meet pupils' needs and to providing balance across the areas of study. Currently, there is no choice of vocational subjects within the options at KS4 but there is an entry-level course in each option column. All classes receive the statutory provision of religious education with a specific arrangement in place for students studying the three sciences.

PSE experiences are good and are provided by the teachers of drama, Welsh and English considered to have expertise in promoting discussions. The programme includes health education and sex education. The package is carefully planned and systematically presented. Every pupil receives appropriate career guidance and advice at specific times, and the quality of this provision is good.

IT lessons are arranged within the KS3 curriculum for every pupil. This is followed in KS4 by further IT provision for each pupil and the arrangement allows a significant number of pupils to sit the GCSE short course examination in the subject.

A cross-school homework timetable is prepared and pupils record all work in their homework diaries. Form tutors check the diaries regularly. The amount of homework set for pupils is uneven with some subjects being rather reluctant to set any. In other subjects, homework is set regularly, and this supplements well the work done in class.

The quality of planning for the development of key skills at KS3 and KS4 is good with the majority of departments noting the development in their schemes of work.

The school offers pupils a very good number of extra-curricular activities which contribute substantially to the development of their Welshness. There are various sports teams, dinner hour and after school clubs, vocal and instrumental instruction, choirs, musicals, school eisteddfod, theatre, museum and gallery visits, local and continental excursions and preparations for, and links with, the Urdd. All of these activities are means of enriching pupils' education and experiences and contribute to the life of the school and the community.

The curricular provision is socially inclusive and provides equal access and opportunity to all pupils. The provision for the one pupil disapplying from the NC and the one pupil with a modified curriculum is very good.

5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

The quality of support and guidance provided for pupils is very good and is a strength at the school.

As a result of the previous inspection, pastoral work and strategies for improving standards were merged and form the basis of mentoring at the school; by now, there is an effective pastoral system.

The extensive documentation shows that there are effective procedures in place for promoting pupils' personal and educational welfare. There is a range of policies – some recently designed or modified – on equal opportunity, behaviour, attendance, pastoral work, sex education, careers and anti-bullying; they are detailed and provide valuable guidance.

The school is an industrious, caring and congenial community, which promotes a very good relationship between pupils and staff, with respect for others at the centre of its thinking. The strategies that exist for holding regular meetings, reporting and providing extra-curricular activities, are clearly a means of promoting effective communication between the school and parents and of fostering a supportive and orderly environment where pupils can fulfil their potential. Recent developments have been a means of raising standards of behaviour and discipline in the whole school.

The school's pastoral policy emphasises that pastoral care is essential to maintain standards of learning and teaching. The policy is realised and the leadership provided by the pastoral team is very effective. The system provides an opportunity to monitor academic standards and progress and to tackle underachievement. Positive aspects are promoted by fostering pupils' personal and social development.

Form tutors and heads of year know their pupils very well, and progression is ensured from year to year since every head of year, except Y7, moves on with his year through KS3 to KS4. The head of Y7 remains with pupils of that year in order to ensure settling in KS2 pupils.

The pastoral system is based on the crucial role of the form tutor. The form tutor monitors his or her pupils' social and academic development and urges them to integrate into the life of the school. There is emphasis on the pastoral interview arranged for each pupil, and the focus of the interview is the pupil's report and personal targets that will form a basis for the personal action plan. This is very good practice.

There is an effective “pastoral support programme” for pupils in danger of being permanently excluded, and the school will co-operate with external agencies to formulate a strategy for dealing with the pupil’s future. Members of the governing body are invited to take part in the process from the very beginning.

The school makes very effective use of a system of praise and reward. Certificates of Excellence are also awarded for attendance, effort, and good behaviour and gold, silver and bronze awards are also presented. Also, close contact is maintained with the parents and the educational psychologist lends support when necessary.

The school’s arrangements for delivering PSE are very good, and follow ACCAC guidelines for the subject. The provision is enhanced by blending the programme with the Welsh, English and drama departmental provision, and detailed programmes of work have been prepared for each year to reflect pupils’ age, ability and needs. Lessons have been carefully structured and elements of health education and statutory sex education are included; specialists are invited to school to give presentations. The menu provided forms a co-ordinated programme that enhances pupils’ experiences.

Careers’ education is promoted as part of each pupil’s personal development. The opportunities provided by the school are effective, and careers guidance and personal advice of good quality is provided for each pupil through the Compact process and the Progress File. The school works closely with local agencies. A wide support programme is provided. In Y11, every pupil has at least one interview with the careers officer and receives a personal careers action plan. Careers lessons are arranged through the PSE programme and the programme raises career awareness and sets targets. An options day is held, including discussion with the careers officer, and a booklet ‘Which Way Now’, prepared for work experience in Y10, is presented.

Appropriate steps are taken to ensure pupils’ health and safety in the school, during work experience and school visits, with guidelines for recording activities, and adequate risk assessment. Any doubts concerning pupils’ safety are passed on to social services, and child protection arrangements are known to staff and are operative. Appropriate attention is paid to sex education and health education in the PSE programme with good contributions from some departments. The school’s equal opportunity policy is implemented fairly. This is an inclusive school.

5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN

The provision for pupils with SEN is good and the school’s response to the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice is good.

The school’s main provision is to place pupils with SEN in small groups for the majority of curricular subjects. The remaining pupils with SEN receive support through different methods arranged by the support department’s SENCO. A number of effective strategies are targeted to develop skills. The pupils are supported by the sixth form through the morning Reading Club and this is good practice; commercial schemes are used to support pupils’ individual targets and progress was seen in their basic skills. Various clubs are held during the dinner hour and pupils with SEN attending the Art and Craft Club have developed their fine motor skills. At KS3 and KS4, pupils are withdrawn from lessons for short periods to receive attention from the support department and assistance is given in the class. The reading age of these pupils has increased significantly. In the majority of NC subjects, religious education and PSE, pupils make good progress. At the end of KS4, they have access to entry-level or GCSE examinations, according to the pupil’s ability, and these courses are suitable for them.

Six learning support assistants give good support to the pupils. They support individuals and groups of pupils with SEN in classes at KS3 and KS4. Their knowledge of the pupils is very good and they co-operate closely with subject teachers. Daily meetings, led by the co-ordinator, are held. This is very good practice. The SENCO and assistants work effectively as a team.

Twenty pupils have a statement of SEN. These statements are reviewed effectively and parents and external agencies are consulted during the reviews. The relationship with parents is good and the quality of the information to parents is also good.

Some of the statemented pupils receive the support of the experienced LEA teacher; pupils achieve well and make good progress in these lessons. One pupil follows a relevant individual programme of work, reflecting his need and building on his strengths, instead of studying a modern foreign language.

Another 113 pupils have been identified as pupils with SEN, 24 on the school action plus stage and 89 on the school action stage. The school has thorough arrangements for the screening and assessment of pupils so that they receive additional attention. There is close co-operation with the language departments. There is also a close relationship with the LEA, other secondary schools and primary schools. The individual education plans [IEP] are good and relevant and subject teachers are fully aware of the pupils' problems. The targets for individual pupils are regularly reviewed. A computerised system has been developed to become a central feature of the action for SEN.

Subject departments are responsible for providing suitable differentiated work for pupils with SEN within their curricular area and subject specialists teach the pupils. This differentiated provision varies from subject to subject, and from the satisfactory to the very good. In general, it is good. The co-ordinator gives guidance to the SEN contact in each department. This is good practice. The co-ordinator distributes relevant information to staff about the pupils, and resources to assist them in the planning of work, and good co-operation exists in the setting of targets for individuals. Recently, there has been close collaboration between the core subjects and the SEN department in targeting SEN pupils and the school was successful in gaining the Standard Mark of the Basic Skills Agency.

The co-ordinator provides good leadership. The Central Committee and the designated governor are supportive of the work. There are suitable facilities for disabled pupils at the school.

5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions

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

Parents showed very good support for the school both at the meeting before the inspection and through their completed questionnaires. Parents receive a very attractive prospectus that gives very good information about many aspects of the school, although some information required by circular 14/01 is omitted. The governing body reports to parents annually in a well-produced document; this also has a few omissions. The school sends out circular letters as they are needed. There is a suitable home-school agreement. The school reports to parents twice a year about the behaviour and progress of their child. These reports are well produced, and most parents find them very helpful. Parents receive pupils' targets for improvement which are then discussed at well-attended parents' evenings. In addition, heads of year consult parents immediately should any problem arise, either by phone or by letter. Parents find the homework diary a good means of daily contact with the school, and staff use the diaries well to ensure that information about success or failure is reported without delay. There is an active Parent Teachers' Association that has strong

staff support. Parents not only raise useful sums of money for the school but also help with extra-curricular activities, such as the *eisteddfod* and discos.

There are good links with the local community. “Menter Iaith Caerffili” and the local paper “Tua’r Goleuni” strengthen these links. The school is very active in the Urdd, and has been successful in public speaking competitions. There are good links with local businesses through the work experience programme, and pupils work in the community to complete projects set by the religious education department; this department also takes pupils to visit local churches and chapels. Parents and governors come into school to take part in the school’s reading scheme.

Partnerships with other schools are very good. School staff work with other secondary schools on creating units of work, on teaching methods and on moderating assessment. There are very good sporting links. The links with local primary schools make the transition easy for the pupils. During visits by both staff and pupils they are shown a video of the secondary school, and Y7 and Y12 are able to answer questions about the school; these pupils become familiar and comforting faces in a strange place. A member of staff, usually a former pupil of the primary school, is assigned as the link person with that school. This teacher makes official visits and is also invited to attend special events in the primary school. The SENCO and the head of year also make visits. Y6 pupils spend a day at the school in the summer term, and come to school in September, with the sixth form, a day before the rest of the pupils. The first days of Y7 are very carefully organised. Pupils also write to their former primary school; these letters show that they are happy at their new school. The residential week which Y7 pupils spend at Llangrannog is very useful and is much appreciated by the pupils.

Curricular links are very good. Subjects are linked with the primary schools on a rota system to avoid pupils repeating work and to examine the moderation of assessment between KS2 and KS3. Y6 and Y7 pupils perform a joint Christmas concert. After the statutory tests in Y6, a teacher of French visits the local primary schools to give French lessons. Teachers in both sectors have created an imaginative cross-curricular workbook, which is begun in the primary school, brought to the secondary school, and used in the first term of Y7. This is very good practice, and leads to a smooth transition between primary and secondary school.

Links with institutions of further and higher education are very good. Pupils and students benefit from the help they receive at school when making applications to these colleges. They attend lectures and open days provided by university staff. The school has links with three colleges for initial teacher training; these partnerships have a positive effect on pupils’ standards of achievement. There are very helpful links with the advisory service and with the education psychology service. Good contact with the education welfare officer begins in Y6. This is good: should there be any problems, these can be addressed quickly.

5.7 Partnership with Industry

The school’s partnership with industry and the world of work is satisfactory. It relies on the efforts and interests of individual members of staff rather than a whole-school purposeful strategy.

With the effective co-operation of the Careers Company, a careers’ education and work experience programme is provided for Y10 pupils and Y12 students. A careers officer visits the school regularly to discuss careers from Y7 on.

The Careers Company has developed a network of work experience placements, discussing requirements such as health and safety in detail with students and providers. The reports received from employers praise the effort and behaviour of the pupils during their work experience programme; these experiences provide valuable evidence for the Record of Achievement files.

The numerous links with institutions such as the Army and Airforce, the Fire Service, the Police and the Local Council, give pupils the opportunity to consider careers in these fields and opportunities to attend adventure courses. GNVQ courses sustain the interest and motivation of the pupils attending them and equip them with useful information.

In a number of departments contacts with the world of work are used to enhance the curriculum, but the pattern is uneven. Recently, the good practice of mapping the partnership with industry across the curriculum and in every subject has begun.

An awareness of the industrial tradition of the valley has been created through work and displays on the Senghennydd mining explosion in the history and Welsh departments and by naming the school library after Idris Davies, the most well known Anglo-Welsh poet from the Rhumney Valley. In the geography department, the area's industries and the changes in them are studied. The English department took part in a project with a local evening paper. The science department has a notice board showing careers in science. The religious education department gives attention to moral aspects of the world of work, such as discrimination, equal opportunity, rights and respect.

The physics department has enjoyed great success over a number of years in competitions arranged by the research establishments of commercial companies. Exciting prizes have been won, which enhanced the experiences of pupils over a wide range of ages and scientific background. On the catering course there are useful links with a commercial hotel and a member of staff from a local bakery came to school to discuss their production processes. At the invitation of the Guild of Manufacturers, Wales, the textiles department arranged a very successful public exhibition in Cardiff Bay.

Visitors from local businesses come to discuss their work with Y9 pupils during an exciting week of cross-curricular activities. Last year, they visited tourist attractions, analysing their appeal and planning a visitors' journey. Back in school, a competition in running an imaginary company was arranged and pupils' skills and confidence were refined by designing products and giving multi-media presentations in front of their fellow pupils and external adjudicators.

Recently, with the help of outside specialists, a Business Project was presented to all Y10 pupils under the Young Enterprise Wales programme. Pupils' understanding of the UK economy, the essentials of business and wealth creation, the rights and responsibilities of consumers and their team-working, communication and presentation skills, were increased.

There is a good working relationship with the commercial company that owns the building under the private funding initiative. Occasional sponsorship is received from local companies. A substantial grant was awarded by the Arts Council to prepare a public work of art near the previous site and to acknowledge the school's formative years.

Almost a third of the staff have spent a period in other posts before becoming teachers. Between them, they have 110 years of experience in work outside education. It is the school's intention to design a whole-school strategy to harness this expertise and guide the partnership with industry and the world of work. At the time of the inspection, however, the work was in its infancy and the mapping and co-ordinating measures have not yet had time to become established.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good.

Following re-location to a new building, the school has evaluated important whole school aspects of specific areas, including the use of ICT and the school's ethos. These evaluations are thorough and show a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

There is a clear link between the Central Committee and departments for monitoring and evaluation and also for performance management. Whole-school aspects are also evaluated within departmental evaluations. There are five evaluations, including departmental evaluations, in a year. Recently, there has been a focus on the evaluation of departmental assessment. The system is thorough and effective on the whole, but there are some superficial evaluations; they are not sufficiently incisive since they do not identify the next stages nor do they set suitable and more challenging targets for the departments.

Examinations and statutory test results are analysed and discussed annually by the head of department, the link manager and the head, and the head of department prepares a report following this meeting. Departmental evaluations gather evidence through lesson observation, selecting pupils' work, examining documentation, questioning pupils and discussion with teachers. There is an effective system of monitoring the minutes of departmental meetings. Departmental targets are set and there is a link between these targets, the DDP and the SDP. This system has ensured good training and development for the link managers and heads of department, setting sound bases for evaluation and has developed it as a part of the culture of the school, but, at present, it takes up to six years to evaluate every department.

Some departments are more mature in their methods of evaluation and ensure opportunities in departmental meetings to moderate and jointly assess pupils' work but there are departments where the self-evaluation system is less developed.

There is careful pastoral monitoring by well-established pastoral teams, which supports pupils' work and attitudes. The system for monitoring progress also ensures that pupils fulfil their potential by noting performance in internal tests and examinations. Effective use is made of this information to place pupils in their classes. However, not every department makes maximum use of these analyses for forward planning and to raise standards further.

The implementation of the SDP is formally evaluated annually. The evaluation is a basis for formulation of the future SDP.

The school fully implements the Performance Management system and there is a clear link between the system and the teacher development programme.

There is a clear link between the school and the governing body and there is an annual report on the progress made against the agreed priorities of the SDP together with the school's performance in external tests and examinations. The governors have very good knowledge of the school.

6.2 Leadership and Efficiency

Leadership and efficiency are very good.

A good, purposeful work ethos is successfully created and the school has clear aims and objectives to guide its life and work.

The Central Committee is very effective, co-operates closely, and the strengths of individual members blend together well. Each member undertakes his or her responsibilities effectively. All members contribute significantly to school management at academic and pastoral level. Similarly,

the middle management teams carry out their academic and pastoral duties well. The staff's commitment to Welsh-medium education is a means of strengthening their commitment to the school's aims and objectives and the close co-operation at personal level has promoted the development of middle management in most departments.

The leadership is reinforced by the co-operative relationship that exists between the very strong governing body and the head. The governing body is very supportive of the school. Members know the school well and interest themselves and take pride in its life and work. They have a thorough knowledge about its strengths and developmental needs. There is a close relationship between members of the body and individual departments and members thereby become familiar with teachers and pupils' needs.

There are good managerial links between the Central Committee and heads of departments. Expectations are set for the members of the committee as they monitor and support a department, and the school has begun to respond to the teachers' request to regularise and strengthen this link. However, insufficient attention is given to reporting on subject standards during lesson observation. With specific exceptions, the quality of departmental leadership is good, and very good at times. However, the management of business studies is unsatisfactory.

An appropriate range of very detailed school policies has been prepared and their implementation is monitored so as to measure their effect fully. A number of whole-school strategies, such as the development of literacy and ICT across the curriculum, have a positive influence on pupils' standards of achievement. The strategy for the development of numeracy across the curriculum has yet to be fully developed.

The SDP is a summary of the school's aspirations. It includes 14 priorities – some of them relating to the ethos of the school and to raising standards but there is scant specific reference to improving the quality of teaching. The outcomes, expectations and strategies to be followed to attain the aims, and who is responsible for action, are noted clearly. The SDP is evaluated and updated annually and staff contribute to it through their DDP.

The quality of the DDP varies between the satisfactory and good; many are good since they reflect departmental and school priorities, and are often more than a list of requests for resources. There is a good link between the DDP and SDP as regards content and priorities.

The school manages its budget very effectively. Good advantage was taken of useful financial arrangements made by the UA as the school was being built. There was intensive negotiation before reaching an agreement on prices with the commercial company responsible for maintaining the building and resources. The school can estimate very closely the sum required to fulfil the agreement that ensures buildings and resources for the school and provides services such as repair of equipment, cleaning and mid-day meals. Since pupil numbers are increasing, the agreed sums are within the school's reach.

The governors make financial decisions that match the school's aims. The school lives within its budget and it is expected that there will be a reasonable sum of about £290,000 (about 9%) in reserve at the end of the 2003/2004 financial year. The percentage is higher than that recommended by the Audit Commission (5%) but the savings can be justified because of the need to spend up to £200,000 during 2004-2005 on computer equipment, which is not part of the agreement with the financial company. The governors show very good ability in forward planning and in modelling financial scenarios. Expenditure is closely monitored. The cost-effectiveness of special projects, such as the agreement with the commercial company, is evaluated very carefully and of the quality of the outcome as well as the cost is considered.

Money is allocated to departments this year according to formula rather than historical allocation, the practice when the school was on the old sites. Departments have also the opportunity to apply for additional money. The new method of allocating money to departments gives senior managers greater flexibility to channel resources according to current need and the school's agreed priorities. The budget is administered very well on a daily basis by an administrative officer, responsible to the head and deputy. When recommendations are made to improve the school's financial arrangements, such as the county audit in 2003, the school responds appropriately to them and there has recently been a tightening of the financial system. Regular reports are presented to the governing body's finance committee. Finance is very effectively supervised by the deputy head. Taking into account pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of the teaching, the inclusive ethos created, the rich extra-curricular programme and staff commitment, the school provides good value for money.

Day-to-day administration of the school is very good. On the whole, the school makes good use of staff, buildings and resources and apart from the need to conform to the requirements on reporting to parents and including governors' reports to parents, the school conforms to the statutory requirements and the Welsh Assembly government's guidelines.

6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

The quality of staffing and resources is good, and the quality of the buildings is very good.

a) staffing

The school has suitable staff to meet the curriculum requirements and the qualifications of the great majority of them match the areas they teach. The pupil/teacher ratio is good and matches the national average. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a substantial number of teachers and there is very good balance between experienced teachers and teachers relatively new to the profession.

Every member of staff has a detailed job-description that notes his curricular, pastoral and managerial responsibilities. Their non-contact time corresponds well to their responsibilities. Three quarters of the staff have crossed the "threshold" related to salary.

The five newly qualified teachers receive very good support. There is an appropriate information booklet for supply teachers and the classroom assistants receive good guidelines.

Very good INSET provision is arranged. INSET needs are identified appropriately through performance management, whole school plans and subject plans. The effect of INSET is good in a number of subjects and in cross-curricular aspects such as special education, ICT and assessment. There are appropriate means of disseminating information following individual courses.

In 2002, the school was successful for the second time in being accredited under the 'Investors in People' scheme.

The administrative and technical staff, and the SEN assistants, make a good contribution to the life of the school. Although there is no librarian, the library is well-ordered and good use is made of the resource during the dinner hour and during lessons. The work is well co-ordinated by a teacher with the assistance of a Y11 pupil and a team of pupils who have received effective training on arranging and running the library. Good use is made of the French language assistant.

b) building

The school has profited substantially from the move to the brand new building in 2002. By now, the school enjoys very good buildings, rooms and resources that reinforce its quality of life and ethos.

Among the excellent resources there is a large hall, very substantial sports facilities, specialist rooms for departments such as music and design and technology, and modern laboratories for the science departments.

Effective use is made of colourful displays in classrooms and corridors to promote learning and to show regard for pupils' work.

The commercial company keeps the whole building and surrounding outside areas clean and tidy.

At times, many of the rooms are too warm and this impairs effective study. There are suitable facilities for disabled pupils at the school.

The school entrance and parking area was designed specifically to cope with over a thousand pupils arriving and leaving at about the same time, most of them travelling by bus. During the inspection, careful staff supervision and very good behaviour of the pupils ensured that there were no unnecessary hazards at these busy times.

Sockets in the biology laboratory were faulty during the inspection, limiting pupils' ability to use specialist equipment such as microscopes.

There are more than sufficient rooms for the number of pupils at the school. The classrooms are of sufficient size with appropriate storage space. The teaching rooms for the same subject are contiguous, which helps the convenient sharing of resources.

The school has a good quality library and has suitable arrangements for issuing books and resources.

It has a large hall, which allows for communal activities, and it is also used as a refectory.

The quality of the fields and the facilities for sports are very good.

c) resources

Apart from the computers, the commercial company owns the building and they are also responsible for provision of resources. The majority of them are good.

Under the private finance system, the commercial company is responsible for inspecting equipment and conducting regular fire drills. They carry these out appropriately in consultation with the school.

In some classrooms, electrical equipment cables cross areas of passage, creating a possible hazard.

The generous allocation of money to departments means that every department has a good provision of books, and sufficient equipment for teaching its subject. In a number of classrooms, interactive whiteboards are located. These are used effectively by teachers and pupils as tools to promote learning and teaching.

A good number of computers are located in specialist rooms. In addition, one room has five computers and an interactive whiteboard for the use of groups of pupils with SEN.

The provision of books and textbooks is good and extensive use is made of photocopying to ensure a good supply of worksheets for pupils. Usually, these are of good quality. There is a good stock of Welsh and English books, either in the central library or in the departments.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

7.1 Standards achieved by pupils

Welsh

Standards are good at KS3 and very good at KS4.

Good features

- At KS3 and KS4, pupils' listening skills are good, and they are very ready to respond to teachers' and to each other's questions.
- Throughout KS3 and KS4, pupils take advantage of regular opportunities to participate in a variety of oral activities, and they show the ability to co-operate successfully, in pairs and in groups, in role-play situations and when expressing their opinions. They benefit greatly from the range of oral exercises and games that are provided for them as a means of correcting and improving their language, including the use of modern technology.
- At KS4, they show confidence and maturity across the ability range and the most able succeed in discussing challenging topics perceptively, with initiative and with considerable maturity. At their best, in Y10 and Y11, a good grasp of language and syntax is shown and pupils use a wide vocabulary confidently, when presenting information, expressing an opinion and responding to the opinions of others. In the same manner, they succeed in discussing literature, in terms of content and style, using appropriate terminology.
- At both key stages, standards of reading are variable according to age and ability, but are generally good. They take advantage of opportunities to develop the skills further by the use

they make of the books and resources that are available in the department and the library, and younger pupils receive support from sixth form students to improve their skills of reading aloud.

- In addition, pupils show the ability to handle texts in the two languages when they have an opportunity to transfer from one language to another, for example, when discussing similar poems, and in particular when searching for specific subjects on websites.
- Across both key stages, a number of pupils tackle challenging reading texts showing increasing understanding and the ability to respond with understanding to literary and factual texts, as well as visual literature.
- The standard of writing varies from satisfactory to good at KS3 and some examples of very good work are found, including work presented using the word processor. Good progress is seen by KS4, and as a result of having benefited from regular exercises throughout KS3, and attention to content, language and presentation in the supportive comments of teachers, an increasingly sound grasp of language is seen at KS4.
- The majority of pupils make good efforts to write in extended mode across the range of ability at both key stages, and they show confidence in writing in a variety of forms and for different purposes and audiences.
- There are some examples of pieces of writing that are re-drafted and sometimes produced on a computer. Pupils take advantage of some opportunities to evaluate their own written and oral work and that of others.
- The standard of work of pupils who have SEN is generally good, and they show the desire to do their best, achieving according to their ability in various oral, reading and writing activities.
- At each key stage, pupils show their readiness to use Welsh consistently.

Shortcomings

- At KS3, where standards are good, language weaknesses and errors are found where pupils have not yet mastered them sufficiently, which impairs the fluency of expression and lowers the standard of achievement. The work is characterised by mutation errors, some mis-spelling and mixing up some letters, though syntax on the whole is fairly sound.

Since the last inspection, standards have risen at both key stages but more so at KS4.

English

Standards are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- In group work, pupils at both key stages talk to each other using appropriate language as they explore the topic under discussion. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other, showing an ability to support their own point of view with examples, while attending to and respecting the view points of other pupils. Pupils use IT well when presenting work to the whole class.

- By Y8, pupils read aloud well, with good expression; they are able to convey character, atmosphere, mood and emotions. When acting scenes from a play, they show perception in their delineation of character.
- Pupils at both key stages and all levels of ability are able to analyse both prose text and pictures very well, demonstrating and understanding the importance of images as well as words in communicating and persuading. They can evaluate the effect of passages from the media, analysing video clips very well, showing a good understanding of visual imagery.
- Creative work is good at both key stages. Pupils write with imagination, showing an understanding of the structure of narrative and the use of language to create particular effects. Pupils can respond with sensitivity to poetry, and the more able can analyse the effect of the poet's choice of language and use of imagery. They recognise and understand how rhetorical devices are used, and the more able pupils employ these to good effect in their own work.
- At KS4, pupils respond well to the study of Shakespeare, showing a willingness to explore theme and character as well as plot. In coursework, pupils support their views with apt quotations, and the more able use these very well to sustain an argument.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress through both key stages.

Shortcomings

- There are weaknesses of spelling, syntax and punctuation in the written work of a significant minority of Y7 pupils. These weaknesses remain through both key stages in the work of the less able.
- A significant minority of Y7 pupils finds difficulty in reading English with fluency.

Standards have improved from satisfactory to good since the last inspection.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- Pupils at both key stages can handle numbers well. They understand place value and are confident in handling fractions, decimals, percentages and negative numbers.
- They are confident in explaining the steps they take in calculation and they can solve money problems well.
- Pupils can handle data well, calculating averages as well as producing frequency diagrams.
- Pupils understand probability work.
- They can recognise two dimensional [2D] and 3D shapes; they use a ruler and a protractor accurately and they can measure area and volume according to their level of ability. They can note co-ordinates effectively in the four quadrants.
- Pupils can use Pythagoras' Theorem and rules of Trigonometry to solve problems.

- Pupils can handle algebraic equations and solve them according to their ability including quadratic equations, simultaneous equations and fractional equations.
- The most able pupils can apply their knowledge effectively and can develop their ideas appropriately using suitable methods to solve problems. They verify their work after solving it.
- Pupils listen well to their teachers, concentrate well and work quietly at their work. They complete their tasks and on the whole their work is presented in a well-ordered manner.

Shortcomings

- At times at KS3, some pupils miss the opportunity to carry out work at the expected level, and which is challenging for them.
- Some pupils were not as fluent as others in their mental calculations
- Middle and lower ability pupils cannot always recall every part of their previous work.
- Pupils do not show the curiosity to research and investigate into the mathematics that they do.

Some aspects have improved since the previous inspection but some areas, such as developing investigative curiosity, still require attention.

Science

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- Pupils in the higher sets have a sound knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and concepts relating to life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes.
- These pupils are able to recall previous work and apply it to solve problems, offer explanations and relate scientific ideas to the information world about them.
- They use scientific terminology correctly and appropriately in both oral and written work.
- The standard of oral work is good across the ability range and pupils are eager to show and share their knowledge.
- More able pupils present their work well and the quality of the written work is good in extended writing tasks.
- Pupils use their ICT skills effectively to promote their learning and understanding. This is better developed at KS4 where the ICT short course is integrated into the science curriculum.
- Listening skills are good.
- Pupils carry out practical work safely and with confidence.

- They are able to plan investigations at a level appropriate to their ability and by the end of KS4 the most able plan investigations of a very high standard.
- Pupils' understanding of fair testing is variable but is generally good. They are able to identify and control the relevant factors.
- The majority use measuring instruments with accuracy and record measurements in tables using the correct units.
- The ability to present information in charts and line graphs is at least satisfactory and often good.
- The majority are able to recognise patterns in data and can draw conclusions by evaluating these patterns. They correctly describe the relationship between the factors under consideration.
- By the end of KS4, most pupils in the higher sets can offer an appropriate scientific explanation for the results collected.
- The skill of evaluating the method used and the data collected is of a satisfactory standard.
- At both key stages, pupils display a good awareness of the contribution of science to everyday life and its effect on the environment and the economy.
- Standards of achievement in the classes of the least able pupils are good.

Shortcomings

- A number of average and lower-average ability pupils at both KS3 and KS4 do not achieve their full potential.
- Their knowledge and understanding is limited because they fail to interact with the materials and techniques used to present a topic.
- They have difficulty in concentrating when they are required to sit for extended periods of time.

Since the previous inspection, standards have improved in KS3 and KS4.

Design and technology

At KS3, and in the GCSE design and technology resistant materials and graphic products course, and in the CoEA design and technology course, standards are good.

In the GCSE design and technology and art design textile courses standards are very good.

Good features

- Pupils have good knowledge and understanding about design and make processes across the projects and key stages.

- They enjoy these experiences; they can relate confidently with the contexts and accept the challenge set for them in some projects.
- The most able possess a good knowledge about materials and processes and succeed in applying them to their practical work.
- The majority take responsibility for their work and work with interest.
- They work methodically when constructing and finishing useful items that meet specific needs by combining different materials and components.
- They handle equipment and machines correctly and give due attention to health and safety requirements.
- The quality of the finished products is very good in textiles good in resistant materials and satisfactory in food at KS3.
- Some creativity reveals itself in the work of the most able.
- Effective use is made of ICT to collect and present information, including use of the Internet, desk-top publishing software and extensive use of CAD/CAM, including ProDesktop and the laser cutter in the resistant materials and in textiles.
- In general, the course work folios, particularly towards the end of the key stages, are comprehensive and show definite development in standards.
- A wide variety of techniques for recording the work in the folios is used at KS4, and the records show a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved.
- They research into contexts, collect information from several sources and produce a range of ideas.
- They analyse this information before coming to conclusions, and the most able justify their decisions in detail, and then make effective use of their conclusions to develop realistic and appropriate ideas.
- The inspiration boards, investigation and evaluation of ready-made products, testing of materials and modelling of ideas are central to the work.
- Briefs are produced, the making is planned and the opinion of others is sought when evaluating and testing the products.
- The drawing and annotation work is generally good and the fashion drawing is particularly good.
- The great majority of the folios are well organised and tidy.
- Good use is made of specialist terms and of number skills as a natural part of the work.
- In the textile courses, pupils produce and use interesting and extremely useful sketchbooks to develop their project work.
- The finished products are often unique and very creative.
- Artistic use is made of ICT including CAD/CAM.

- The design work is well organised, colourful and full of information. They make effective use of colour, texture and pattern, and they accomplish and present tasteful work.
- The research work is thorough, often deals with spiritual and moral aspects as well as with world cultures.
- They produce striking, original ideas. Fashion drawing is particularly good and the image boards are very successful.
- They can apply their knowledge about fibres, fabrics and techniques effectively to their practical work.
- They plan the making, evaluation and quality control in detail.
- Good use is made of specialist terminology together with the use of literature to inspire the project work very successfully.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings in the textile courses.
- Some pupils do not make sufficient use of their research work or their knowledge about materials and processes to develop their work further.
- Pupils do not make enough use of ICT in the food units.
- Some work is incomplete in some folios, and because of this there is not enough information in the content and the work tends to be superficial.

Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Information technology

Standards are good at KS3 and KS4

Good features

- At KS3 and KS4, pupils learn a wide variety of skills by using a number of different software packages. They do this confidently and to a good standard.
- At KS3, pupils can combine information, such as text, pictures and sound from different sources and present it for different audiences, and they do this well.
- At KS3, pupils can respond well to the type of questions found in the key skills test.
- In the GCSE groups, pupils plan thoroughly, design a solution logically and choose appropriate software for the course work, and they take advantage of regular and constructive feedback to produce good quality course work and portfolios.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' modelling and data handling is not improved and polished sufficiently in Y9.
- Pupils are not fully aware of their progress across KS3 and as a result they are not certain enough about their level of achievement in the subject.
- At KS3, all pupils do not have the opportunity to learn about the effect of IT in society.

Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection.

Modern Foreign languages

Standards of French are good at KS3, and French and Spanish are good at KS4.

Good features

- Often at both key stages, pupils can use language content that they have read or heard as the basis for oral or written work of good standard. The most able pupils have a good grasp of the grammar of the foreign language.
- A good number of Y7 pupils respond orally with enthusiasm and enjoy practising their French. The most able respond very extensively to stimuli.
- In their oral work, KS3 and KS4 pupils can ask and answer questions, express their opinions simply and according to their age and ability, can use an appropriate variety of verb tenses in doing so.
- The same pupils understand the details of the authentic reading and listening pieces in the foreign language. Standards of reading aloud and for pleasure are satisfactory.
- KS3 pupils write at some length on a variety of themes in French, following prepared patterns. The standard of written course work in Y11 in French and Spanish is good. Pupils of all abilities accomplish the tasks in detail with an appropriate element of accuracy.
- Pupils who follow the express course in Spanish at KS4 achieve good standards in the four language skills.

Shortcomings

- A small but significant number of pupils, mainly boys, have lost interest in the subject by Y9 and this affects their commitment and their desire to learn French and to complete their work.
- Grammatical errors impair the best standards in written work at both key stages.

Since the previous inspection, standards have become more consistent; by now they are good.

History

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and very good at KS4.

KS3 and KS4

Good features

- The subject is a very popular one in the school and external examination results are very good.
- The majority of pupils have a good understanding of chronology, and they can apply this to a broader understanding of the subject.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the main events, characters and movements studied in the lessons.
- The majority of pupils use historical evidence, judging its value and coming to a conclusion on its basis. They can connect events and compare and contrast different developments. They discuss the reliability of sources and they can discuss prejudice and bias.
- The majority of pupils present their work correctly and clearly, including good independent research work.
- The majority of pupils plan their work carefully, using this as the basis to create considered and relevant finished work.
- As pupils become older, they question and evaluate, discuss in depth and understand cause and effect. They interpret and present logical arguments of a good standard. These skills are presented in a variety of ways including articles, notes, diagrams, graphs and different projects.
- Pupils' skills, their knowledge and their ability to handle problems reflect clear organisation and structure, enlightened leadership and confident, knowledgeable teaching.

Shortcomings

- Lack of time at KS3 prevents pupils from receiving the necessary overview of a period in its entirety. Individual topics are discussed in a disconnected way, piecemeal and in isolation at times.
- Some pupils are uncommunicative and a minority are unready to contribute and respond orally.

Progress has been made since the previous inspection.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- At KS3, pupils develop a wide range of skills and practical techniques and they use an extensive vocabulary of appropriate terms with detail and accuracy.

- They show an increasing understanding of maps and plans on different scales. They link their mapping skills with theoretical aspect, of physical geography when studying mountain areas.
- They have a secure knowledge of the local area and of Wales. Their grasp of the *Curriculum Cymreig* [Welsh curriculum] is very good.
- They acknowledge that Wales is part of the worldwide context and compare features and development with patterns within other countries, such as Italy and Brazil.
- They use atlases effectively to locate the tropical rain forest regions. They link temperature and rainfall with prolific vegetation growth and make good use of ICT to produce graphical representations.
- At KS4, they make good use of knowledge that they have learnt earlier and they apply it constructively to their GCSE assignments. They develop the ability to investigate and to resolve problems.
- They have an enthusiastic understanding of the inter-relationship between people and the environment. Pupils come to recognise the importance of different attitudes and how they can lead to conflict over the siting of a wind farm.
- There are rational explanations when making connections between places by means of common patterns and processes.
- Their understanding is developed further by studying topics such as the quality of life of people in countries that are less economically developed than others.
- Across the key stages, their key skills are improved by undertaking fieldwork in a variety of locations, undertaking investigations and co-operating in groups on tasks.

Shortcomings

- There are individuals, generally of lower ability, who are more confident orally than on paper, and others who are less ready to contribute to class discussion.
- The progress of some pupils is affected by uncertainty in their use and understanding of geographical terms. At times, faulty spelling and grammar is seen.
- The work of a small minority of individuals is limited in its original knowledge but there is no evidence of underachievement across the range of ability.

The department has made good progress since the last inspection. The good standards have been maintained and matters such as developing pair and group work that are mentioned in the report have been successfully tackled.

Art

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4.

KS3 and KS4

Good features

- Pupils make effective use of their sketchbooks and folders to gather information and develop ideas, in preparation for making their final composition.
- They develop an understanding of cubism in conjunction with the *Curriculum Cymreig* while undertaking a study of the local community
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to achieve various effects by combining primary and secondary colour, and this is particularly evident when pupils undertake a study of other cultures.
- They use etching tools with confidence to achieve increasingly sophisticated effects of texture and tone within their compositions.
- Pupils make good use of the freedom to experiment with techniques and materials in order to enhance their repertoire of approaches. and examples include incorporating fine dust to improve texture.
- They use appropriate vocabulary when discussing the work of other artists such as Matisse.
- Drawing techniques are used effectively to record images and ideas from direct observation, memory and the imagination.

Shortcomings

- KS3 pupils do not use ITC sufficiently.
- At KS3 pupils do not focus sufficiently on activities or respond to challenge.

Standards have improved in KS4 and are approximately the same in KS3.

Music

Standards of achievement are satisfactory at KS3 and good at KS4.

Good features

- Y7 pupils sing in unison with a warm tone, secure pitch and clear diction.
- Pupils across KS3 can play a number of short melodies and individual parts of arrangements on keyboards and classroom instruments with a good degree of accuracy.
- Some rhythmic compositions, sound pictures, fanfares and pop songs show imagination in the way that different patterns, sounds and melodic phrases are combined. SEN class pupils in Y8 and Y9 work conscientiously to create a lively and stimulating sound picture of a storm at sea.
- When they appraise, pupils can recognise instruments and some basic features in different recorded musical extracts.

- By KS4, the majority of pupils achieve good standards of performance.
- A few of the Y11 compositions and a substantial number of initial ideas at Y10 show interesting treatment of basic ideas and a good understanding of style and structure.
- A good number of able and middle ability pupils can recognise features well when they appraise pieces of music from their different areas of study.

Shortcomings

- Though standards of achievement in performing, composing and appraising are satisfactory at KS3, many of the pupils are under-achieving.
- In occasional classes the quality of singing is unconvincing and not adequately refined. A high number of the pupils are not secure when performing with others in a group or as a classroom orchestra.
- Some of the compositions are restricted in their musical interest. In general, pupils' improvisation and melodic composition skills are not as well developed.
- Comments by a substantial number of the pupils when appraising their own practical work are short and superficial.
- Many of the Y11 compositions are limited in their musical interest. There is very little use of ICT as a resource to enhance the process of composition.
- The appraisal skills of a few middle and lower ability pupils are uneven. They perform some tasks well but they are insecure in their response to other tasks.

There has been no significant improvement in standards since the last inspection.

Physical education

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and very good at KS4. The department provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities of a very good standard that are open to all to take part. The school takes pride in the continuous success of a large number of pupils who gain county and national success and honours.

Good features

- At both key stages pupils listen intently and respond with enthusiasm. Their dress is always of a high standard.
- The percentage of pupils who take part in lessons is excellent.
- Across the ability range, pupils work physically hard throughout the lesson and understand the importance of preparing the body for exercise.

- The majority of pupils can maintain effort, observe and evaluate accurately when performing, using correct language and technical terms.
- KS3 pupils see the benefit of exercise and regularly show their willingness to improve their level of fitness and skills.
- In Y8 girls' triple jump lessons, and Y7 boys' high jump, there are excellent examples of pupils performing, repeating and improving their skills and their techniques so as to improve their performance.
- At KS3, there are examples of very good standards by individuals across the activities.
- In Y11 girls' rugby, pupils handle the ball confidently and they succeed in making correct decisions under pressure.
- GCSE course pupils demonstrate a mature attitude to their work. The written work is completed with varying degrees of success and achievement corresponds to individual ability.
- Teacher and pupil expectation in the subject are high. Pupils across a wide range of ability are challenged sensitively and supported to achieve their potential and to reach high standards.

Shortcomings

- Some Y11 GCSE pupils do not always provide extended answers.

Since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in standards from satisfactory to good at KS3 and satisfactory to very good at KS4.

Religious education

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

KS3

Good features

- Pupils across the ability range show good knowledge and understanding of the units of work, which reflect the Agreed Syllabus.
- They have a good knowledge of why believers of different faiths worship, reflect and celebrate their faith.
- They recognise the main symbols and values expressed in the traditional festivals and religious rites of Christianity and Judaism.
- Pupils extend their knowledge well through developing research skills in group work, and by co-operating very well to present information.

- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the importance of artefacts and symbolism in religion. Their knowledge is extended through visits to religious buildings.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in their knowledge of different methods of worship and how religion influences the believers' way of life.

Shortcomings

- At times, pupils are uncommunicative in class discussions and there is no regular opportunity to extend knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- The most able do not always work on sufficiently challenging tasks to extend their understanding and their knowledge.

KS4

Good features

- Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of how people's religious creeds affect their ways of responding to current moral issues.
- In group work, they extend their knowledge and understanding of religious and social issues well by discussing their own values and comparing them with the values of others.
- When they are faced with questions that they and others find problematic, they suggest answers, referring to the philosophies of religions where appropriate.

Shortcomings

- At times, the most able do not work in a group that is challenging enough to extend their understanding and to increase their knowledge.

There has been an improvement in standards at KS4 since the previous inspection.

Religious studies

Standards of achievement are very good at KS4. The subject is becoming increasingly popular as an option choice at KS4.

Good features

- Pupils have very good factual knowledge and understanding of the course.
- By developing a range of investigation skills, they extend their knowledge of the religions that they study.
- In lively discussions in the classroom, they show very good understanding of the importance of stories and historical events for the beliefs and life of the modern day Jew .

- Pupils produce very good written work that reflects their knowledge and where a clear connection is displayed between their experience of the world and the creeds and religious practices that they study.

Shortcomings

- In a few instances, a small number of pupils are reluctant to offer ideas and opinions in group discussion.

There has been an improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

Personal and Social Education

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- Pupils have a good understanding of the need to help others and to show respect for the feelings, beliefs and values of other people.
- Through work in drama, Y7 and Y8 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the dangers of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco.
- Pupils' personal and social capabilities and skills are good including the ability to formulate a moral judgement on contemporary social matters.
- In Y10, pupils have the social skills and understanding that permit them to discuss, at an appropriate level, sensitive matters that are relevant to them.
- They are developing well the skills that will be of benefit to them in revision.
- By the end of KS4, pupils demonstrate maturity when handling current moral and personal issues and they undertake cross-school responsibilities.
- They are aware of the main implications of leaving school for the world of work or further education and the importance of elements such as punctuality, co-operation and being self-reliant.

Shortcomings

- In some lessons, pupils do not convey and discuss their own feelings and personal opinions on current social affairs.
- A small cohort of less able pupils in Y7 and Y8 show immaturity in presenting their personal points of view in the form of drama

There was no report on PSE during the previous inspection.

Business Studies (KS4)

Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory.

Good features

- A significant group of pupils can offer good oral answers when discussing the practical problems of running a business, succeeding in relating the information to their coursework and to their own experiences of the world of work.
- Numeracy skills in general are satisfactory and the ability to produce a cash flow forecast and graphs varies from good to satisfactory.
- Good use is made of ICT to carry out research, to improve presentation and to analyse data. They can also justify their methods.
- Some pupils show a good understanding of the different methods of conducting a market research study discussing confidently how to plan a purposeful campaign and how to price goods.

Shortcomings

- More able pupils do not always achieve to the full extent of their ability in some aspects of their work and the level of challenge in the tasks that are set is too low.
- There is a substantial minority of middle ability and less able pupils, mainly boys, who are in general less committed to their work. They work in too leisurely a fashion and as a result, they accomplish too little work in the set period.
- Written work and course work of some middle ability and less able pupils is inconsistent. Often the work produced is disorganised, less developed and incomplete.
- The research work of a number of middle and less able pupils for course work is superficial.
- Some pupils follow the teacher's directions with insufficient understanding of the purpose of the task within the wider context.
- Some middle ability and less able pupils do not understand enough about the requirements of tasks to enable them to work independently and purposefully.
- Some pupils' progress is affected by their lack of use and understanding of the key terminology of the subject.

Standards in business studies were also unsatisfactory in the previous inspection.

Drama

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- The most able pupils respond enthusiastically to the tasks that are set for them, listening well to each other in a variety of situations.

- They excel when involved in practical work, when planning, creating and performing.
- Their confidence in communicating orally and physically increases, and they work together effectively when discussing and presenting different scenes.
- In evaluating their own work and that of others, they show a good understanding of the importance of the use of voice and location, of movement and of physical expression in improving their performance.
- By KS4, they show increasing confidence in communication and co-operation, showing respect for each other, offering ideas to improve their performance, and they succeed in representing their characters quite well.
- At KS4, when working towards the examination and the course work, pupils prepare pieces of more extended written work and the most able succeed in discussing the different aspects and the plays effectively.
- Pupils with SEN are integrated into the subject and they benefit from the experiences that they receive.
- The pupils' ability to write critically and creatively shows that they derive benefit from frequent extra curricular activities.

Shortcomings

- The written work tends to be bitty and superficial at times at KS3, and they do not always succeed in scripting enough. When they write at greater length, some pupils are hampered from communicating freely by errors of expression, but they take advantage of the supportive comments of their teachers as they develop.
- Some pupils tend to be uncommunicative and lacking in confidence during presentations and initial discussions, and they make less of a contribution to scenes that they have created. At other times, some pupils' self-discipline has not developed sufficiently to deal with situations confidently and purposefully.

The department has succeeded in making good progress since the last inspection.

Catering

Standards in the GCSE catering course and in the CoEA food skills course are satisfactory.

Good features

- Pupils prepare well for practical lessons.
- In these lessons they work in a well-organised way, use correct techniques and obtain good quality results.
- Due attention is given to health and safety requirements.
- There is evidence of good standard work on food preparation in the practical tests.

- Assignments are interpreted and choices are justified satisfactorily.
- They make good use of specialist terms when analysing and evaluating food.

Shortcomings

- The planning work to support the practical tests is not detailed enough and does not give sufficient attention to quality control.
- The content and nature of the course work projects is restricted. There is no clear action plan in them, and the links with the catering world are superficial.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to analyse nutrition and to develop a greater understanding of the requirements of the brief.

There was no separate report on this subject during the previous inspection.

Life skills

This course is offered at KS4 at entry level.

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Pupils succeed in developing their skills to understand and gather information about themselves, their families and the community.
- The written work is well-organised and fulfils the course requirements.
- Pupils take advantage of the experiences and varied activities to develop their key skills. Standards are good and in accordance with their ability.
- They make a list of the important points accomplished before going on work experience in Y11, which leads to opportunities to prepare for work and life.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

There was no report on this subject during the previous inspection.

8. School Improvement

8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

The school has responded well to the key issues identified in the previous inspection report in March 1998. A comprehensive and appropriate action plan was formulated and a number of actions noted for each key issue. Its implementation has been monitored regularly throughout the period since the previous inspection.

Eight key issues were noted in the previous report.

1. Maintain the present standards and plan to raise standards further, especially:

- *in business studies at KS4, and IT at both key stages;*
- *the achievement of middle and lower ability pupils;*
- *spelling and the presentation of pupils' work.*

Standards in IT at both KS3 and KS4 are now good. Standards in business studies at KS4 remain unsatisfactory. In all other subjects, apart from music and art at KS3 where standards remain satisfactory, standards have either been improved or maintained and are good or very good.

In an attempt to improve attainment of middle ability and less able pupils, the school has reviewed its timetabling arrangements. More time is now allocated to the core subjects and the number of single lessons has been reduced to allow more opportunities for practical work. A banding and setting policy has been established based on the principle that pupils succeed better when work is focused at levels appropriate to their ability. The system allows for some flexibility in that pupils are not confined to a particular set for all their subjects. An effective system for monitoring pupil progress has been developed which includes assessing achievement and effort and the setting of targets. Improvement in standards in the great majority of subjects suggests that these strategies have been effective although some middle and middle/low ability pupils continue to underperform, particularly when the style of teaching does not meet their learning needs.

Under the guidance of the language departments, subject teachers across the curriculum have developed useful strategies for improving spelling and presentation of work. The marking focuses attention on content, language, neatness and presentation and pupils are required to correct spelling and grammatical errors by rewriting them correctly three times.

2. *Attend immediately to the current state of the buildings and external facilities by:*

- *collaborating with the LEA to improve deficiencies in the external and internal structure, especially the health and safety aspects noted;*
- *taking action to improve the inner state of the buildings in order to ensure a worthy work milieu for every subject and class;*
- *improving the state of the netball courts.*

Whilst the post-inspection action plan indicates that attention was given to these issues following the previous inspection, the move to the new school in September 2002 results in this key issue now being irrelevant.

3. Develop further the system of auditing departments by ensuring appropriate progression towards the targets noted by the SMT.

In the past six years, departmental monitoring by the Central Committee has been extended to take into account both subject and cross-curricular skills and dimensions. Targets are identified for each department and these are regularly reviewed with heads of departments. The targets chosen are appropriately reflected in departmental development plans. Progress in this area is good.

4. *Continue to develop the use of data on pupil achievement by using the information to set a focus when reviewing the performance of departments and individual teachers.*

Both at departmental and individual teacher level, satisfactory progress has been made in analysing the large amounts of data available. Quantitative targets are set for departments and individuals use the data as evidence for showing how pupils progress in their classes.

5. *Ensure the efficient use of staff by evaluating the effectiveness of the combined teaching arrangement for pupils with SEN, the curricular provision for Latin at KS3 and KS4, and the contribution of some co-ordinators' roles to improving the quality of pupils' classroom experiences.*

The banding and setting policy means that pupils with SEN are now taught together in small groups. They progress well at both key stages and standards of achievement are good. Latin is no longer a subject on the school's curriculum. Co-ordinators of whole school initiatives make an effective contribution to standards in the classroom.

6. *Ensure regular supervision of the lower school by a member of the SMT.*

The school is now located on one site and this key issue is no longer relevant.

7. *Continue the efforts to improve attendance by reviewing the school's pastoral systems and structures.*

A number of strategies has been put in place and these have been successful in improving attendance figures. Attendance is now satisfactory.

8. *Continue the good work of developing the Welsh language across the curriculum by sharing and developing further the effective practices already established in some departments.*

Each department receives valuable guidance from a nominated link person in the Welsh department. 'Language Corners' in each classroom provide useful visual guidance on grammar and spelling. Very good progress has been made in this area and Welsh is a natural means of communication between teachers and pupils in all subjects apart from English as a subject.

8.2 Key Issues for Action

The school needs to:

- raise standards in business studies at KS4;
- raise the satisfactory standards to good while maintaining the good and very good standards in the subjects and areas of study and continue to attend to improving the results of external tests and examinations, specifically at KS3; *
- continue to raise standards in key skills and specifically in numeracy and ICT across the curriculum; *
- continue to develop learning and teaching strategies, attending to the range of techniques used, and to differentiation within classes, sharing the good and very good practices seen at the school;
- continue to develop managerial and self-evaluation skills as a means of improving standards of work;
- build on the few good practices of useful links with industry seen at the school as a means of strengthening the curriculum and raising subject standards;
- conform to the requirements on reporting to parents, and the requirements on the information given to them in the annual governors' report and in the school prospectus;
- attend appropriately to the recommendations noted in the sixth form appendix.

* The school has already noted the matters with an * as ones receiving attention in the SDP.

APPENDIX

School Data

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni
Type	Maintained by the LEA / community
Pupils' age range	11 – 18
Address of the school	Heol Gelli Haf Fleur de Lys Blackwood
Post code	NP12 3JQ
Telephone number	01443 875 227

Name of the Headteacher	Mr Hefin Mathias
Date of Appointment	September, 1995
Chairman of Governors	Cllr. Phil Bevan
Registered Inspector	Gareth Wyn Roberts
Date of the Inspection	26 – 30 April, 2004

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	206	188	183	183	173	74	46	1053

<i>Number of teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part time	Full time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	63	3	64.8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil: teacher ratio, except special classes	16.54 :1
Average class size	21.69
General contact ratio	75.62%

<i>Attendance percentages during the three full terms before the inspection</i>								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	The whole school
Summer 2003	88.1	87.4	87.4	83.8	95.5	77.2	88.7	87.5
Autumn 2003	93.5	90.6	90.6	90.7	90.2	93.5	92.4	91.3
Spring 2004	92.9	90.5	90.0	90.0	90.1	91.0	87.5	90.6

<i>Number of pupils excluded during the previous 12 months</i>	
27 temporarily, 1 permanent, none from ethnic minority	

C. Results of NC assessments and public examinations

Results of National Curriculum KS3 Assessment: 2003																
Total Y9 pupils: 185																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8/EP	
EN	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	1.6	0	0.5	6.5	22.3	38.6	23.4	7.1	0.0	
		National	0	1	1	-	0	0	2	9	22	34	21	8	0	
	Test	School	0	2.2	0.5	1.6	-	-	-	-	4.3	18.5	40.8	2.5	7.1	-
		National	0	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	8	23	31	21	9	0
WE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	0.5	0	1.6	7.1	29.3	44.6	13.6	3.3	0	
		National	0	0	2	-	0	0	1	6	19	33	28	10	0	
	Test	School	0	2.7	1.1	1.6	-	-	-	-	5.4	23.4	47.3	15.2	3.3	-
		National	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	20	33	27	10	0
MA	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	0.5	0	1.6	8.7	26.6	24.5	31.5	6.5	0	
		National	0	1	1	-	0	0	1	9	21	26	27	13	1	
	Test	School	0	4.9	1.6	1.1	-	-	-	-	6.5	33.2	15.8	3.1	6	-
		National	0	6	1	1	-	-	-	-	8	22	23	27	12	-
SC	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0.5	0	-	0.5	0.5	0.5	9.8	32.1	3.7	13	6	0	
		National	0	1	1	-	0	0	1	9	22	32	24	10	0	
	Test	School	0	3.3	0.5	1.6	-	-	-	-	12	29.3	36.4	10.9	6.0	-

	National	0	4	0	1	-	-	-	7	20	32	24	11	-
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Percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either Welsh or English			
According to teacher assessment		By test	
In the school:	46.2%	In the school:	40.2%
In Wales:	52%	In Wales:	50%

D – Disapplied

A – Failed to register a level due to absence

N – Failed to register a level for reasons other than absence

B – Not entered for the tests because they are working outside the level of the tests

W – Working towards level 1

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni
Summary Report of achievements of pupils
aged 15 2002/03.

LEA/School No.
676/4103

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
National Assembly for Wales

RE2

GCSE, ELQ (1) and Equivalent Achievements

Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2003: 157

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who:

	Entered 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	Achieved GCSE and vocational qualifications equivalent to five or more GCSE grades		Core Subjects Indicator (2)	Average GCSE/GNVQ points score per pupil
		A* to C	A* to G		
School 2002/03	89	54	87	38	43
LEA Area 2002/03	84	45	82	33	35
Wales 2002/03	87	51	85	38	39
School 01/02/03	86	49	84	33	38
School 00/01/02	86	46	84	31	37

Entered at least one short course, ELQ (1), GCSE short course, GCSE or equivalent	Entered one or more GCSE or equivalent	Achieved GCSE and vocational qualifications equivalent to		Achieved at least 1 GCSE short course - grades A* to G or equivalent	Achieved no graded GCSE or equivalent	Did not achieve a GCSE, GCSE short course or ELQ (1) or equivalent	
		One or more GCSEs at grades A* to C	A* to G				
Entered at least one short course, ELQ (1), GCSE short course, GCSE or equivalent	Entered one or more GCSE or equivalent	Achieved GCSE and vocational qualifications equivalent to	A* to C	A* to G	Achieved at least 1 GCSE short course - grades A* to G or equivalent	Achieved no graded GCSE or equivalent	Did not achieve a GCSE, GCSE short course or ELQ (1) or equivalent

School 2002/03	98	95	74	94	20	6	4	2
LEA Area 2002/03	94	92	68	90	55	10	3	7
Wales 2002/03	97	95	74	93	45	7	3	5
School 01/02/03	97	93	71	92	15	8	4	3
School 00/01/02	96	93	72	93	11	8	4	4

GCSE results in selected subjects

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who:

	Entered any GCSE in			Achieved a GCSE grade		
	A* to C in	A* to G in		A* to C in	A* to G in	
	English (2)			Welsh (2)		
School 2002/03	94	59	93	94	66	94
LEA Area 2002/03	86	50	85	46	26	45
Wales 2002/03	90	56	88	63	35	61
School 01/02/03	90	53	89	90	60	90
School 00/01/02	88	52	88	89	58	89

	Entered any GCSE in			Achieved a GCSE grade		
	A* to C in	A* to G in		A* to C in	A* to G in	
	Mathematics (2)			Science (2)		
School 2002/03	92	43	89	91	45	90
LEA Area 2002/03	88	39	83	86	44	84
Wales 2002/03	90	45	86	90	48	87
School 01/02/03	89	41	87	90	40	89
School 00/01/02	88	39	84	90	39	88

Figures include pupils on Youth Access courses and similar schemes

(1) Entry Level Qualification

(2) For information about which syllabuses are included in each subject area see Notes for Guidance.

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

18 inspectors spent a total of 60 inspector days at the school and 222 lessons or part lessons were observed. In addition, a cross-section of registration periods, morning services, departmental meetings and extra-curricular activities were visited. Interviews were arranged with members of

the Central Committee, heads of departments and form tutors, together with members of staff, including ancillary staff with specific responsibilities.

The work of a cross-section of able, middle and lower ability pupils from Y7 to Y13 was inspected. In addition, further examples of pupils' work were seen when visiting classrooms, workshops and laboratories. Their work was discussed regularly with the pupils and formal interviews were conducted with pupils chosen to represent the different years.

All documentation submitted by the school before and during the inspection was analysed. Pre-inspection meetings were held with members of the Central Committee, the staff, with representatives of PFI (Private Funding Initiative), governing body and parents. Thirty attended the parents' meeting and 136 questionnaires were returned, together with 13 letters and five comments on the questionnaire from parents.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

NAME	ROLE	Sections of the report	SUBJECTS (section 7)
Gareth W. Roberts	Registered Inspector	1, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 6.2, 8.2 Appendix	Modern Foreign Languages
John Roberts	Lay Inspector	4.2, 4.3, 5.7, 6.3	
Gloria Davies	Core team	5.4	Welsh, Drama
Heddwyn Evans	Core team	4.1, 5.5, 6.3	Religious education, Personal and social education
Margaret Robertson	Core team	8.1 Sixth form appendix	Science
Catherine James	Core team	5.2, 5.6	English
Bethan Cartwright	Core team	5.3, 6.1	Mathematics
Annette Evans	Core team	5.5	Life skills
Beryl Portlock	Team member		Design and technology, Catering
Dafydd Charles	Team member		Information technology, Computing

Alan Roberts	Team member		History, Sociology, Law
Elwyn Bowyer	Team member		Geography
Graham Edwards	Team member		Art
Alan W. Jones	Team member		Music
Paula Thomas	Team member		Physical education
Martin Davies	Team member		Business studies, Leisure and tourism, Vocational
Gareth Jones	Team member		Contribution to science (physics)
Gwilym Williams	Team member		Contribution to science (chemistry)

SIXTH FORM APPENDIX

Introduction

There are 127 students in the sixth form, 68 boys and 59 girls, out of a total of 1072 pupils in the whole school. All students speak Welsh fluently. They mainly study either A-level or AS courses through the medium of Welsh. A very small number study vocational courses. Ysgol Cwm Rhymni is the only designated Welsh medium secondary school in the Caerphilly Authority and it serves Caerphilly and the surrounding towns in this post-industrial area.

The school offers 19 A-level or AS courses, one subject at AS level only (Law), four GNVQ courses (three intermediate and one advanced) and a BTEC First Diploma course in Public Services. There is no formal key skills course. It is recommended that potential sixth form students gain A*-C grades in at least five subjects in the GCSE examinations if they intend to pursue A or AS courses.

An AS course in Law has been introduced to broaden the curriculum. This is delivered through distance learning. The school does not have any established partnership arrangements to deliver

courses with other schools or colleges but there are links with other Welsh medium secondary schools in south east Wales. There are very good links with higher education establishments.

The SDP makes very little reference to the sixth form and neither is there a sixth form development plan. The sixth form management team however has identified four priorities for this year's sixth form to ensure that standards continue to rise. They are:

- to broaden the curriculum by introducing an AS course in law;
- to further develop the Welsh ethos;
- to further develop partnerships with Welsh medium schools in south east Wales;
- to continue to develop both the academic and social progress of students.

1. How good are the learners' achievements?

a) Standards in the subjects

Overall, students achieve good standards.

Standards were very good in 33% of the lessons observed, good in 59%, satisfactory in 5% and unsatisfactory in 3%. In the examination subjects, standards are very good in Welsh, history, geography, religious studies, physical education, sociology and art and design - textiles. Standards are good in English, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, design and technology, French, art, music, drama, law, leisure and tourism and health and social care. In business studies, standards are satisfactory. In addition, the standards achieved are very good in the PSE course followed by students and they are good in religious education.

b) External examination results

In the 2003 A-level examinations, 62% of the students gained A-C grades. This is 6% lower than the national percentage and 3% lower than the county percentage. 94% of the students gained A-E grades. This is 3% higher than the county percentage and the same as the national percentage. The students' average score was 17 points, which is one lower than the county figure and three less than the national average. In 2002, 74% of the students gained A-C grades, which is 14% higher than the county percentage and 8% higher than the national percentage. In the same year, 95% gained A-E grades, which is higher than the county and national percentages. The students' average score was 20, two points higher than the county average and the same as the national average.

c) Standards in the key skills

Almost without exception, standards are very good in speaking and listening, and good in reading and writing. In business studies, the quality of written work is unsatisfactory. Students' numeracy and ICT standards are good. In the wider key skills, standards in both problem solving and

students' improvement of their own learning are good. The quality of research work is good. Students work together very well.

d) The role of the sixth form in promoting standards

Y12 and Y13 students make a very good contribution to raising standards of academic work, pastoral care and behaviour within the school. As prefects, students undertake many responsibilities within the school and carry them out enthusiastically and with confidence. A successful annual school *eisteddfod* is held and students train younger pupils for this occasion and also for competitive sporting activities arranged between *llysoedd* (houses). They also make a valuable contribution to the arrangements for the Christmas Fair which raises funds for good causes. They collaborate with teachers and support younger pupils effectively through the reading scheme (*Clwb Darllen*). Students responsibly carry out duties before school, during the interval and in the dinner hour. Sixth formers act as mentors and attend registration periods in Y7 and Y8 once or twice a week. They work closely with small groups of pupils in a pastoral capacity. To support them in this role, a significant number of students have been trained by Childline. Y12 students also contribute effectively to the transition arrangements of pupils from Y6 to Y7. The sixth form also hold the Urdd 'Clwb CIC' meetings.

The head prefects represent the sixth form on the School's Council; they make an active contribution and provide good leadership and encouragement to younger representatives. The separate Sixth Form Council allows students to share and present ideas through which students develop their wider key skills.

Retention and course completion rates are good. In 2003, the percentage of Y11 that stayed in school was 52%. Over the past two years, the majority of Y12 students completed their examination courses. The 'dropping' of a subject after commencement is rare.

Students' attendance levels have improved and are now satisfactory. Absences are monitored closely and there are good links established between the school and students' homes.

2. How effective are the teaching, the training and the assessment?

a) Teaching and training

The quality of the teaching and training is good. During the inspection week, 61 lessons were observed in Y12 and Y13. Of these, the teaching was deemed to be very good in 30% of them, good in 59% with 8% satisfactory and 3% unsatisfactory.

The features of the good and very good teaching are:

- very good subject knowledge;
- well planned lessons with clear aims, using a good range of teaching techniques and with continuity from one lesson to the next;
- high expectations where students are challenged consistently to achieve higher levels;
- lessons have good pace;
- activities match students' abilities well;
- students are well prepared for external examinations;
- very good relationship between teachers and students;

- students are led to a deeper reflection on the topics studied;
- opportunities for constructive criticism of their own performance and that of others;
- opportunities for students to become independent learners.

In business studies, where the teaching is unsatisfactory, lessons are not well planned, the pace is slow, expectations are low and students are not encouraged to become independent learners.

b) Assessment

The quality of assessment is generally good with some very good examples (Welsh, IT, history, religious studies, drama). In business studies and design and technology it is satisfactory. In the majority of subjects, assessments are consistent and accurate. They are recorded regularly and are used by teachers to indicate the progress of their students and identify underachievement early. The information is shared with students in regular reviews of their progress. Targets for improvement are agreed with their mentors and are recorded as an individual action plan in their sixth form planning handbook. In Y12 and Y13, students receive half termly interim reports. A full report is prepared for Y12 students in February. Y13 students receive a full report in September so as to include the results of the June external examinations and a further full report in February. Reports provide detailed information on subject progress, use of 'free' time, responsibilities outside school, attendance and punctuality.

Day-to-day assessment is good. In most cases detailed feedback, identifying strengths and weaknesses, is given.

3. How well do the learning experiences satisfy the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

The learners' needs and interests are well satisfied. The scope and design of the curriculum is good with a wide range of A-level and AS courses offering a good progression from KS4. A small number of vocational courses are also offered. Together, these meet the varying needs, abilities and interests of students. The number of students choosing the subjects is reasonable and there has been an increase in the number returning to the sixth form over recent years.

There are no regular key skills classes although key skills are included in the sixth form induction programme. Approximately 30% of students prepare portfolios, mainly in communication.

The school conforms fully to the statutory requirements on the teaching of religious education. All students follow a PSE course of very good quality. This is part of the 'discussion lessons', a weekly lesson over two years. The same aspects are studied as in the PSE framework of earlier key stages but at a level appropriate to older students. The 'Sixth Form Agreement also expects students to take part in activities of a community and charitable nature and they do this willingly and with confidence.

The curriculum is characterised by broad extra-curricular provision, which includes visits in this country and abroad. Students' experiences are also enriched by a wide range of sporting activities. The school recently reached the quarter-finals of the Schools' Debating Championship organised by the Council for Education in World citizenship – Cymru (CEWC Cymru). This is evidence of the students' appreciation of the wider community.

In partnership with the Careers Service, a useful work experience programme is planned for students. They benefit from their placements.

4. How good are the care, guidance and support for learners?

The quality of the support and guidance is very good and a very high priority is given to students' welfare. The mentoring arrangement ensures that students are sustained pastorally and receive support with their work. In addition, teachers know the students very well and the relationship in the classroom is very good. Students know that they are valued and respected.

As they make their subject choices before coming to the sixth form, students receive very good advice from teachers and from the careers service. The induction arrangements for sixth form students are very good and strengthen the relationship between teachers and students. The preparation for higher education is good and students commend the guidance they receive.

5. How effective are the leadership and strategic management?

The leadership given to the sixth form is very good. Strategic management is good. The two heads of year lead a strong team of tutors effectively. The team is well informed and meets daily to discuss matters relating to the sixth form. They maintain a close liaison with the Central Committee, of which two of the team are members.

The link between the students, tutors and subject teachers is very good and this ensures that the students' aspirations, together with any concerns about the standard of their work and other aspects, such as attendance, receive detailed attention. The students believe that the advice they receive from the school is effective and useful in dealing with their academic and pastoral concerns.

Sixth form developments do not receive high priority in the SDP although the 'sixth form team' is clear in its vision of developing students for their future life, both academically and socially.

6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve the quality and standards?

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is good.

Data are analysed to measure progress. Consideration is given to 'value-added' from GCSE results and students' total points score in their final examinations. Students' success in gaining employment or achieving the college/university places for which they are aiming is also used as a measure of progress.

Each head of department reviews performance and sets targets in an annual interview with the head. Effective processes are in place for heads of department and sixth form tutors to review underachievement at regular periods during the year. Students play an increasing part in this evaluation of their progress and set targets for improvement. Tutors and subject teachers provide supportive strategies and parents are fully informed.

At present, sixth form provision is not consistently included in the school's monitoring arrangements.

The sixth form council provides an effective means of evaluating the school's provision for sixth form students and students' opinions are valued, considered and acted upon if deemed necessary.

7. How effective do leaders use resources?

Leaders use the available resources effectively and efficiently.

Teachers' qualifications for teaching courses provided in the sixth form are very good. Good use is made of subject-specific INSET provided by examination boards to prepare students for examinations. Teachers apply their ICT skills gained by following a course sponsored by the New Opportunities Fund to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

The number and range of classrooms for the sixth form are good. There is no sixth form library but students use the school library, which is well resourced. A sixth form workroom is available for private study. The sixth form lounge provides an informal meeting place. All these rooms are of good quality and are well used.

There are excellent sporting facilities, which are appreciated and well used by the students.

The resources for courses are good. Students make very good use of the computer sites, particularly to research material. Those studying French and law make good use of the satellite equipment.

Welsh

In Y2 and Y13, standards are very good.

Good features

- In Y12 and Y13, the majority of students can discuss works of literature with facility and express an extended opinion, justifying their views and standpoint. The most able show depth and perceptiveness together with a sure grasp of language.
- All students show a readiness to respond at length orally and in writing using vocabulary and terminology appropriate for the work.

- The ablest students in both years display a talent for criticism and an obvious understanding of a variety of prose and poetry texts of different periods, and students across the ability range respond with understanding to the requirements of recent film and fiction.
- The most able also show a particular critical ability and the capability to analyse challenging works thoroughly and with understanding.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

The department has succeeded in making good progress since the last inspection.

English

Standards are good in Y12 and Y13.

Good features

- Students' oral work is good in Y12 and very good in Y13, where they discuss set works in a mature, intelligent way, showing an ability to support a point of view with close reference to the text, using a wide vocabulary and technical terms with certainty.
- Students in Y13 can analyse poetry very well, showing understanding of the sub-text and drawing comparisons between the poetry they are studying and other works with which they are familiar.
- The most able students in Y13 produce written work which is very good, offering mature and perceptive comments that reflect a depth of understanding of the set text; they write in a fluent style, using pertinent quotations to support their opinions. They understand the context in which the literature was written, and use sources of literary criticism well to inform their understanding of the set text.

Shortcomings

- Weaker candidates write rather superficially, with concentration on narrative rather than analysis. Their written English is less certain in style and contains some errors.

Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in Y13 and have improved in Y12.

Mathematics

Standards are good.

Good features

- Students follow courses in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics and make good progress.
- In statistics, students are confident in explaining the steps of a solution using the Poisson distribution.

- Students can tackle simple problems to do with the momentum of an object effectively and their ability to model is developing.
- Very sound understanding was seen in solving trigonometric equations with an accurate and confident manipulation of algebra.
- They can discuss processes, methods and solutions using correct mathematical language.
- They listen carefully and follow instructions asking specific appropriate questions.

Shortcomings

- Some students' skills in manipulating algebra are uncertain and have an effect on their ability to apply their knowledge to solve more complex problems.
- Some uncertainty was seen when setting a direction for speed in solutions.
- They do not have full understanding of statistical distributions and tend to work through solutions in a mechanical manner.

There was no separate report on standards in mathematics in the sixth form in the previous inspection.

Science

The standards of achievement are good in biology, chemistry and physics.

Good features

- The great majority of students can recall previous work effectively.
- They develop good knowledge and understanding over a wide range of topics in biology, chemistry and physics and they are able to apply this knowledge to new situations.
- They communicate well, both orally and in writing, with good use of correct scientific terminology in their descriptions and explanations.
- Numeracy and mathematical skills are good and applied correctly.
- Practical skills are well developed. Their investigative work is of a good standard and scientific knowledge and understanding is used to support hypotheses and conclusions.
- Students use IT effectively to support the work. Their skills are good.

Shortcomings

- Some students are over-dependent on the teacher and do not develop independent learning skills.

Standards continue to be good since the last inspection.

Design and technology

Standards are good in the AS/A Level design and technology courses.

Good features

- Students have a mature attitude and act responsibly towards their work.
- They discuss their work with understanding, enjoy the experiences and respond to the challenge that is set for them in the projects.
- They possess a good understanding of the requirements of design and make processes, and creativity is shown in the work.
- Good use is made of ICT to produce and present images, together with CAD/CAM, including ProDesktop.
- Practical techniques are accomplished confidently and deftly.
- Students produce useful products of a high standard, that meet specific needs.
- The modelling work using a variety of materials and techniques contributes a great deal to the standards.
- The design work is generally good, with individual very good examples. The recording is detailed.
- They investigate sensibly, accomplish purposeful research work and as a result produce a number of relevant ideas, which are developed in depth. Planning of the making and evaluation are thorough.
- Graphic skills and the use of colour are a strength in some of the work.
- The case studies are a record of the connection with the work-place.
- Students respond positively to the written work.

Shortcomings

- The case studies have not been developed sufficiently and do not have an influence on the course work back at the school.
- The students do not pre-plan their work sufficiently when working through projects and their own commitment is insufficient.

Standards have improved since the last inspection.

Information technology

Standards are good in the sixth form.

Good features

- Students show a good understanding of concepts and a thorough knowledge of a variety of applications and can use them to solve real and unfamiliar problems.
- Students respond well to the needs of the course and show readiness and maturity to work effectively.
- When tackling problem-solving, students show the ability to plan and produce effective solutions to realistic problems.
- Students can plan, implement and justify appropriate testing strategies, can express solutions to problems effectively and can demonstrate the skills to evaluate their work.
- Students take advantage of regular and constructive feedback to produce coursework of a high quality.

Shortcomings

- There are no substantial shortcomings.

Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Modern languages

Standards are good.

Good features

- Students can discuss orally at some length. They express an opinion and defend their viewpoints using a good range of constructions.
- Y13 students have a satisfactory knowledge about France and Y12 students have also started to gain the same level of knowledge.
- Students understand to a good standard the facts and concepts about France and about current affairs that they read and hear about on cassette or on satellite television.
- Students have a good understanding of the main characteristics of the literary texts that they study.
- Students write extensively on A Level and AS Level topics and on literary topics, structuring their work well.

Shortcomings

- Grammatical errors impair standards of accuracy of written work in their language and literature work and to a less significant degree their oral work.

- At times, students do not remember the appropriate vocabulary for the discussion.

Since the previous inspection good standards have been maintained.

History

Standards of achievement are very good.

Good features

- Students demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding. They present it to their fellow-students competently, analysing and making them think further.
- They understand reliability and bias in evidence and they extend the arguments setting them in the wider context of the subject.
- They are very aware of the features of the society of the period they study. They interweave societal features dealing with the topic maturely and observing change over a period of time. They are aware of the work of authors and the content of their work, their strengths and their weaknesses.
- Essays and research work reflect interaction between the students and the teachers and show discussion, questioning, reasoning and challenge.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were seen.

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

Geography

Standards of achievement are very good.

Good features

- In the lessons they show a sound grasp of the relevant information and use it purposefully and with detail.
- They make use of their knowledge of the physical, human and industrial aspects and relate them very accurately to unfamiliar situations and to case studies.
- They make very good use of current events to explain common concepts. They understand and explain the effect that the process of inward migration has upon patterns and places in the Welsh hinterland and how this can lead to changes.
- They possess the ability to research into a wide variety of sources and to collect relevant information and they apply this with detailed accuracy to their class studies.

- The benefit derived from structured fieldwork is applied to their class studies. Their extended coursework reflects their extremely well-developed learning skills.

Shortcomings

- No substantial weakness was noted in the classes, but individuals appear reluctant at times to contribute to class discussions though they can make an extremely effective input when they are asked directly.

Since the previous inspection, the department has succeeded in maintaining and improving the high standards.

Art

Standards are good.

Good features

- Students work independently, selecting and making skilful use of a range of resources and materials to develop a deepening understanding of the visual language of art.
- They are confident in their approach to their art work and freely explore a range of techniques including video and photography, which are applied effectively in order to communicate their ideas and creations.
- They draw effectively upon the local environment and the work of known and local artists to inspire their compositions;
- They use ICT creatively to manipulate and compose images of a high standard.

Shortcomings

- Their 3D work is underdeveloped.

Standards have improved since the last inspection.

Music

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Students are able and experienced performers and achieve very good standards.
- The Y12 free compositions show a good understanding of the styles and of the medium chosen. Y13 students, have, in general, good knowledge of the different techniques of 'style' composition required in the syllabus.

- Essays and background notes show that students have good knowledge and understanding, on the whole, of the music in their different areas of study.
- Aural skills are variable but are good on the whole.

Shortcomings

- The ability to express themselves in their essays of the occasional student is satisfactory. Occasionally, a lack of knowledge of the appropriate technical terms causes uncertainty in certain aural tasks.

Standards have been consolidated since the previous inspection.

Physical education

Standards of achievement in the sixth form are very good.

Good features

- Students who study for the AS and A Level demonstrate a mature attitude to their work and make very good progress.
- A Level students show very good knowledge of aspects of fitness and health and they can refer to previous AS knowledge when analysing.
- The students respond very readily to the very good support and guidance given by the department and the students are very ready to respond by discussing and analysing concepts. The standard of the activities are very good.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings in the sixth form.

Since the previous inspection the very good standards in the sixth form examination group have been maintained.

Religious education

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Through discussion, students enhance their knowledge and understanding of current spiritual, moral and social issues.
- They show a good understanding of the text when they evaluate their own beliefs and values with those of others.

Shortcomings

- No significant weaknesses were noted.

Since the last inspection an appropriate course has been provided.

Religious studies

Standards of achievement are very good.

Good features

- Students have good knowledge and understanding of the syllabus
- They make effective use of a wide range of resources including ICT to gather information about the subject and to present it capably and to a high standard orally and on paper.
- Their essays show very good evidence of independent research that reinforces the content and raises the standard of the work.
- In their oral and written work, students reveal the skill of expressing a balanced judgement when presenting personal and philosophical points of view on religious matters.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were seen.

There was no report on standards in religious studies during the previous inspection.

Personal and social education

Standards of achievement are very good.

Good features

- Pupils manifest very good social attitudes; they show respect, care and concern for others and they are loyal, responsible and honest.
- They apply their knowledge very well to resolve current moral and social problems.
- They develop the ability to discuss complex ideas at an appropriate level. They respond honestly and thoughtfully to the opinion and credos of others in expressing their personal ideas and feelings.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were noted.

There was no report on PSE during the previous inspection.

Business Studies

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Students make satisfactory progress in their understanding of business theories and the basic concepts of the subject.
- They show good knowledge and understanding in using ratios to interpret accounts.
- They make use of appropriate sources and collect information well.
- They can apply business theories in a satisfactory manner to situations in the real world.

Shortcomings

- A minority of students list arguments instead of interpreting them.
- Some students are uncertain of the correct business terms.
- There are not many examples of extended written work and they do not succeed regularly in completing a critical analysis of their research for their course work.

Standards in business studies were also satisfactory in the previous inspection.

Drama

In Y12 and Y13, standards are very good.

Good features

- In Y12 and Y13, students show clear understanding and knowledge of their topics when preparing for a practical and written examination and very mature analysis skills are seen from the most able.
- They succeed in getting under the skin of the character as they discuss and re-live various scenes from their set plays and show initiative and the ability to identify with them successfully.
- The written work of the most able shows mature and perceptive analytical ability, and they respond critically and creatively when examining various presentations, in discussing various theatre techniques and when evaluating each other's performances.
- Students take advantage of a number of extra-curricular opportunities that are a method of extending their horizons as well as their experience in the field.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were seen.

The department has succeeded in making very good progress since the last inspection.

Art and Design – textiles

Standards are very good in this course.

Good features

- Students enjoy the experiences and achieve very good standards by using a wide range of different media.
- They possess a sound knowledge and understanding of the work of other designers and craftpersons. They make effective use of the information to inspire their research work.
- Visits to galleries, museums and colleges promote further understanding.
- Their investigations lead to a range of good results, which research spiritual and moral aspects and different cultures.
- They can create images and models in a range of different media. The work is mature and in good taste.
- They place a strong emphasis on investigation and experimentation with a wide range of creative materials and techniques.
- The sketchbooks, which are often very decorative and full of samples of different media, are extremely stimulating and useful resources. Effective use is made of them.
- They can discuss their work maturely using the appropriate terminology.
- ICT, including CAD/CAM is used creatively to handle and develop images of a high standard.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

This subject was not reported on in the previous inspection.

Sociology

Standards of achievement are very good.

Good features

- Students have knowledge and understanding of the topics that are being studied. They present their ideas to their fellow-students as the basis for further work and discussion. The standard of these presentations are very good.
- They discuss the work of a number of authors and their theories giving criticisms and relating their contributions to aspects of the subject.
- The written and research work is presented and planned carefully and the content is very good.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were seen.

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

Vocational

In Y12 and Y13 GNVQ intermediate courses in Information and Communication Technology, and BTEC (first diploma) in Public Services are offered, together with a higher level vocational course in Health and Care.

Standards of achievement are good in the three courses.

Good features

- During work experience and visits, students benefit from valuable direct experience and there is an improvement in their self-confidence and their communication skills. They also succeed in linking theory with practical situations.
- The motivation of the majority of students is very good, and they show good problem-solving skills and work well as a team and independently.
- Their ability to evaluate their work and to justify the changes that they make is good.
- The thorough assessment, the sensible advice given and the system of setting challenging targets foster good standards.
- In the health and care course, students make good progress. They show an interest in the work and good understanding of the problems connected with racism.
- They can discover, organise and utilise information well from different sources interpreting the information and drawing rational conclusions from it.
- The majority of students discuss burning issues maturely, such as the morality of medical treatment, using accurate technical language in Welsh and in English.
- In the Public Services course, students have a good knowledge and understanding of vitamins and the way they are dealt with by body, together with the elements of healthy eating.
- The students show good planning skills as they organise a Duke of Edinburgh expedition and good understanding of all the health and care requirements.
- They use ICT skills to present information and data and to improve assignments well, and purposeful use is made of Powerpoint and Publisher.
- In the ICT course, students show good skills as they use a number of different software packages. They are also aware of their particular advantages.
- Students show confidence and good understanding when planning a multi-media presentation that is suitable for a specific audience.

- Students take advantage of opportunities outside formal lessons to practise and develop their skills and to improve and polish their coursework, which is of good quality.

Shortcomings

- The ICT and Public Services students are reluctant to respond in class discussions.
- There is a minority who list arguments rather than interpreting them.
- The occasional assignment is superficial in standard.

Standards are consistently good in all vocational courses compared with the previous inspection.

2. Recommendations

In order to improve standards and the quality of the provision further, the school should:

- raise standards in business studies;
- maintain the good and very good standards;
- continue to develop the process of self-evaluation through extending monitoring to include sixth form provision in all subjects;
- note its priorities for the sixth form in the SDP.

**Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni
Summary Report of achievements of
pupils Aged 15 and 17; 2002/03**

LEA/School
No.
676/4103

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
National Assembly for Wales

RE2

Vocational qualifications (1)

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who were awarded a GNVQ or NVQ between 1 September 2002 and 31 August 2003

	Part 1 GNVQ Foundation	GNVQ Foundation or NVQ Level 1	Part 1 GNVQ Intermediate	GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ Level 2
School 2002/03	1	0	6	0

Number of pupils aged 17 who were awarded a GNVQ or NVQ between 1 September 2002 and 31 August 2003

	GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ Level 2	GNVQ Advanced or NVQ Level 3
School 2002/03	0	0

(1) Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and Advanced Subsidiary Vocational Certificate of Education (ASVCE) are included with A/AS level examination results.

**Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni
Summary Report of achievements of
pupils aged 17 2002/03**

LEA/School
No.
676/4103

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
National Assembly for Wales

RE2

GCE A level/AVCE or AS level ASVCE equivalent achievements (1)(2)

Number of pupils aged 17 who were entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent: 34

Percentage of pupils aged 17 entered for 2 or more A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent who achieved a points score of:

	0	1 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 or more
School 2002/03	0	6	12	21	24	29	3	6
LEA Area 2002/03	0	4	14	17	18	24	9	14
Wales 2002/03	1	3	10	18	16	18	13	20
School 01/02/03	0	4	9	24	19	26	9	8

Percentage of pupils aged 17 entered for 2 or more A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent who achieved 2 or more A level examinations or equivalent at grades:

	A-C	A-E	Average score per candidate Entering 2 or more A levels/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent
School 2002/03	62	94	17
LEA Area 2002/03	65	91	18
Wales 2002/03	68	94	20
School 01/02/03	67	95	18

Number of pupils aged 17 who were entered for fewer than 2 GCE A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent: 12

Percentage of the pupils aged 17 entered for fewer than 2 A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent who achieved a points score of:

	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 15	Average score per candidate
School 2002/03	83	0	17	3
LEA Area 2002/03	78	18	3	3
Wales 2002/03	74	22	4	3
School 01/02/03	79	11	11	3

- (1) Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and Advanced Subsidiary Vocational Certificate of Education (ASVCE).
 (2) Figures do not include BTEC National Certificates and Diplomas

The inspectors wish to express their thanks to the school's governors, head, staff, pupils and parents for their willing co-operation during the inspection.