

**REPORT**

**on the**

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF  
THE SCHOOL INSPECTION ACT 1996**

**DANIEL JAMES COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
HEOL DDU  
TREBOETH  
SWANSEA  
SA5 7HP**

School Number: 670/4077

Date of Inspection: 17 – 20 May 2004

**By**

**Mr B W Medhurst**  
Registered Inspector W253/3508

Under Estyn contract number: T/39/03

**© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2004**

This report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of the full report are available from the school. Under the School Inspection Act 1996, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

## CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through school was introduced in 1989. This system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to age 18 is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "Reception" (R) is applied to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of 5 during the academic year "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on to Y13 the year group who attain the age of 18 during the academic year:

{PRI VAT E }	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Years	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 1 of the national curriculum consists of Y1 and Y2; KS2 of Y3 to Y6; KS3 of Y7 to Y9; KS4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

## GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The five-point grading scale used to represent the main judgements in this report is as follows:

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

# CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. CONTEXT</b>	
The school and its priorities	1
<b>2. MAIN FINDINGS</b>	
The main findings of the report	2
<b>3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	
3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	7
3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum	9
<b>4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	
4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	12
4.2 Behaviour and attitudes	13
4.3 Attendance	14
<b>5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION</b>	
5.1 Teaching	14
5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting	16
5.3 Curriculum	17
5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	19
5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)	20
5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions	22
5.7 Partnership with industry	23
<b>6. MANAGEMENT</b>	
6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement	24
6.2 Leadership and efficiency	25
6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	27

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

English	29
Mathematics	30
Science	31
Welsh (Second Language)	32
Design and Technology	33
Information Technology (IT)	34
History	35
Geography	37
Modern Foreign Languages	38
Art	39
Music	40
Physical Education	41
Religious Education	42
Personal and Social Education	43
Drama	44
Business studies	45
Child Development	46
Catering	46
Leisure and tourism	47

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

8.1	Progress since the previous inspection	47
8.2	Key issues for action	48

## **APPENDIX**

A.	Basic information about the school	49
B.	School data and indicators	49
C.	Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations	50
D.	The evidence base of the inspection	51
E.	Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	52

## 1. CONTEXT

### **The school and its priorities**

Daniel James Community School was established as an 11 – 16 co-educational school in September 2001, as a result of the amalgamation of Penlan Boys' Comprehensive and Mynyddbach Girls' Comprehensive Schools. In the first year the school was based on two sites Heol Gwrosydd (Penlan) and Heol Ddu (Mynyddbach), but from September 2002 onwards all pupils and staff have been based on the Heol Ddu campus.

The school is situated on the north eastern edge of the city and county of Swansea and serves communities that are marginalized, have 'Community First' status and suffer from significant levels of deprivation. Crime, anti-social behaviour and unemployment are amongst the highest in Wales and UK, with Penderry Ward the fourth most deprived in Wales. Forty-six percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

'Safer Swansea', the community safety partnership, quotes the ward as one that has extremely high records of reported crime. The Rowntree Trust 'Communities That Care' survey further demonstrates the high level of negative attitudes and the high level of anti-social behaviour amongst pupils and the community. Accompanying these are poor family and community attitudes toward education and learning, which are reflected in many pupils having negative traits toward themselves, others and property, and produces attendance and punctuality, as well as academic, problems.

A few pupils come from minority ethnic heritages or have a language other than English as their first language. Twenty-three pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. Welsh is taught and examined as a second language only.

The school's intake represents the full range of ability. There is a very high proportion of less able pupils and very few able pupils. Entry-level data confirms this. There are 36 pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN). (31 boys; 5 girls) There are an additional 276 pupils on the school's SEN register who have been identified as having particular needs.

The school aims to provide the opportunities for its young people to grow into citizens who value both themselves and others. The school also aims to make a difference to the lives of those who live and work in the local community. To achieve this the development of a team spirit is central to the school's planning for development.

The headteacher was appointed in April 2001 and all other members of staff have been appointed since that time.

The school has set challenging yet realistic targets for raising standards, and for improving attendance and behaviour.

## **2. MAIN FINDINGS**

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

Daniel James is a school that has improved considerably in a short time. It has the capacity and the determination to achieve higher standards than those exhibited in its current accomplishments.

Since its inception, the school has had to cope with establishing itself as a new school whilst coping with a deficit budget and an ongoing programme of refurbishment that has disrupted learning on many occasions. It has succeeded very well in such adverse conditions. The school provides pupils with a very caring and supportive environment in which they are encouraged to become educated and responsible young members of the local community and society at large.

The school is well led by the headteacher who has clear understanding of the needs of the school and a vision of how to achieve success. He is well supported by his senior managers, the teaching and support staff, and the governing body.

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

Pupils' standards of achievement on entry to the school are generally well below average.

In the National Curriculum (NC) tests at the end of KS3 in 2003, 20 percent of pupils gained at least level 5 in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, compared with the all Wales figure of around 53 percent. When the results are compared with those obtained in 23 other secondary schools in Wales having more than 30 percent of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school is below average. It must be noted: 1) that the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals in Daniel James School is well above 30 percent; and 2) that on entry to the school over half the pupils have a reading age below 9.

The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C in 2003 was 14 percent, as compared with the Welsh average of 51 percent and the UA average of 48 percent. When the pupils who achieved these GCSE or equivalent results in 2003 were in Y7, they were assessed using a well-known national standardised test. The results of these assessments indicated that 13 percent of the pupils were expected to achieve success in 5 or more GCSE subjects at grades A\* to C. In fact, the 14 percent who achieved such success was, therefore, just above expectations.

Inspectors' findings indicate that standards achieved currently by the vast majority of pupils who attend school regularly are better than those represented by recent external assessments. The tables below testify to these findings:

## Standards in subjects

Subject	KS3	KS4
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory
Science	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Welsh (Second Language)	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory ¶
Design and Technology	Satisfactory	Good
Information Technology (IT)	Good	Good
History	Satisfactory	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Good
Modern Foreign Languages	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art	Good	Good
Music	Satisfactory	Good
Physical Education	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Religious Education	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory §
Religious Studies	n/a	Good
Personal and Social Education (PSE)	Good	Good
Drama	Good	Very Good
Business Studies	n/a	Satisfactory
Child Development	n/a	Satisfactory
Catering	n/a	Satisfactory
Leisure and tourism	n/a	Good

¶ Standards in Welsh are unsatisfactory owing to insufficient time being available to teach the subject in KS4.

§ Standards in religious education in KS4 are, in part, adversely affected by lack of time.

## Standards in key skills across the curriculum

Key skill	KS3	KS4
Listening	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Speaking	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Reading	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Writing	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Numeracy	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information and communication technology (ICT)	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Working with others	Good	Good
Improving own learning	Good	Good
Creative and problem solving	Good	Good

177 lessons were observed during the inspection. Class evaluations for standards of achievement are indicated in the table below:

	% Very Good	% Good	% Satisfactory	% Unsatisfactory	% Poor
KS3	4	46	40	10	0
KS4	7	47	41	5	0
<b>Whole School</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## Good features

- Most pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well. They achieve very good standards in drama in KS4.
- The most able pupils are suitably challenged and achieve well in the majority of subjects.
- Most pupils listen attentively and respond accordingly, settling to work as required by their teachers.
- Pupils work well together in pairs and/or larger groups and learn to co-operate effectively.
- The achievement of pupils from ethnic minority heritages and those for whom English is an additional language is commensurate with that of their peers in most cases.
- Pupils who choose to take advantage of the school's alternative (appropriate) curriculum and attend regularly to do so often achieve good standards in a variety of non-academic areas.

## Shortcomings

- Too many pupils across the ability range fail to fulfil their potential by absenting themselves from school too often and/or for extended periods of time.
- The difference between boys' and girls' examination results is greater than the national difference in many subjects.

## Quality of Education

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. The school tries to ensure that all pupils are given every opportunity to achieve well. Teachers generally have at least good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They care about their pupils' welfare and progress, and work hard to help them achieve success. Often they provide extra help in their own time and make available a range of extra-curricular experiences to extend and/or broaden their pupils' education. Unfortunately, not all pupils attend regularly and this is why teaching that is good in most respects results in satisfactory standards in many instances.

177 lessons were observed during the inspection. Class evaluations for quality of teaching are indicated in the table below:

	% Very Good	% Good	% Satisfactory	% Unsatisfactory	% Poor
KS3	8	51	35	6	0
KS4	7	59	27	7	0
<b>Whole School</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cumulative</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

## Good features

- The figures above compare well with the national expectations of 95 percent of teaching being satisfactory or better with 50 percent good or better.
- Procedures for promoting the well-being, health and safety of pupils are good.
- Teachers and support staff provide sensitive support to help pupils with SEN to achieve well.

- Teaching is good overall in most subjects. It is very good in drama in KS4.
- The school's partnerships with its partner primary schools, other institutions and the community are good and positively influence standards achieved by pupils.
- An alternative curriculum is proving beneficial for many of those pupils for whom it was designed. Recent prestigious awards presented to the 'DJ Squad' for services to the community bear testimony to this.
- The curricular arrangements and provision for pupils in the Specialist Teaching Facility are very good.
- Extra-curricular provision is good overall. Pupils benefit from the range of activities available in the extra-curricular provision, which broaden their experiences and promote their personal and social development.

### **Shortcomings**

- In KS3, all pupils are timetabled for a learning skills lesson in the two-week timetable cycle, but this is not sufficient to cater for the needs of all the pupils who have low-level literacy and numeracy skills on entry to the school.
- Within the alternative curriculum, timetable clashes for some pupils, staff illness and the lack of rigorous monitoring has inhibited the full development of the programme.
- The setting, completion and marking of homework are too inconsistent across the curriculum.
- In a very small minority of subjects, there are occasions when teachers' subject knowledge is insecure.

### **The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. English and drama also make good contributions.
- School assemblies reinforce school values and celebrate pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' social development is fostered in the many lessons that make effective use of pair and group work, to which most pupils respond well.
- Relationships amongst the pupils who attend regularly and between teachers and pupils are generally at least good.
- In drama, PSE and religious education pupils discuss social and community issues surrounding family, relationships and the nature of prejudice.
- A local church makes a very significant contribution to the development of the alternative curriculum in Y10 and Y11.
- Most pupils feel confident that they can turn to their teachers with any problems.
- Many subjects study examples drawn from Wales in lessons so Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is satisfactorily developed.
- Visits to theatres, galleries and other areas of cultural significance enhance pupils' cultural awareness.

### **Shortcomings**

- Opportunities for spiritual development are not taken in all subjects.
- The school does not fully meet statutory requirements for religious education and a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

### **Leadership, Management and Efficiency**

The headteacher's leadership is successful and provides a clear direction for the school. The governing body and other members of the leadership team support him well. All members of staff share a common vision of higher academic and social standards, with an understanding of how these can be achieved.

#### **Good features**

- The school has good procedures for evaluating its performance and planning for improvement.
- The nature and range of objectives set for the school to improve are well considered and appropriate for current circumstances.
- Despite severe budgetary problems, the school manages its budget very well. It takes appropriate steps to ensure value for money. Financial decisions are taken in accordance with the school's educational priorities as identified in its school development plan (SDP). The few recommendations of the last auditors' report have been implemented.
- The governors play a very active and supportive role in the school. They are kept informed about the school's work and have a good awareness of its strengths and shortcomings. They are enthusiastically involved in preparing suitable plans for improvement.
- The quality of departmental leadership and management is at least good in the majority of curricular areas.
- Progress managers and form tutors contribute positively to pupils' pastoral and academic development.
- Teachers' qualifications and experience generally match the requirements of the national and wider curricula. In most subjects, members of staff are deployed to ensure that individual teachers' knowledge and skills are used most effectively.
- Expenditure per pupil on books and equipment is well in excess of the national figure.
- The quality of resources for ICT is satisfactory.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Despite the school's ongoing strenuous efforts to improve pupils' rates of attendance, too many pupils fail to attend regularly.
- Recent refurbishment of buildings has done much to improve the learning environment, but there is still much to be done.

#### **The effectiveness with which the issues identified in the previous report have been addressed**

The school has not been inspected on a previous occasion.

<h3><b>3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b></h3>
---

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

Pupils' standards of achievement on entry to the school are generally well below average. The proportion of less able pupils is much greater than the proportion of those of higher ability.

In the National Curriculum (NC) tests at the end of KS3 in 2003, 20 percent of pupils gained at least level 5 in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, compared with the all Wales figure of around 53 percent. Results in English and mathematics were closer to the national average for level 5 and above (43 percent compared with 61 percent for English, and 42 percent compared with 62 percent for mathematics) than were those achieved in science (27 percent compared with 67 percent). Girls outperformed boys in English, matching the overall national figure of 61 percent at level 5 or better. In mathematics, boys' results were better than those achieved by girls. In science, boys and girls achieved similar results.

When the results are compared with those obtained in 23 other secondary schools in Wales more than 30 percent of pupils entitled to free school meals, English is just above average, mathematics below average and science well below average. It must be noted: 1) that the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals in Daniel James School is well above 30 percent; and 2) that on entry to the school over half the pupils have a reading age below 9.

The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C in 2003 was 14 percent, as compared with the Welsh average of 51 percent and the UA average of 48 percent. Similarly, for 5 or more grades A\* to G, the school's result of 58 percent is below the national and local averages.

At this level, girls outperformed boys in 2003, in excess of the proportional national difference. Eleven percent of boys achieved five or more grades A\* to C, while 17 percent of girls did so. The corresponding national percentages were 46 percent (boys) and 57 percent (girls).

When the 2003 GCSE results are compared with those achieved in other schools with more than 30 percent of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school is well below the average on all counts.

When the pupils who achieved these GCSE or equivalent results in 2003 were in Y7, they were assessed using a well-known national standardised test. The results of these assessments indicated that the 13 percent of the pupils were expected to achieve success in 5 or more GCSE subjects at grades A\* to C. In fact, 14 percent achieved such success; just above expectations.

Standards as observed in lessons and seen in pupils' work are, overall, better than those indicated in these recent tests and examinations.

It is worth noting that the pupils who achieved these results had experienced the major unsettled period in the school. Many pupils objected to the joining together of the two single sex schools and they indicated as such through unsatisfactory attendance, behaviour and

attitudes to learning. To add further to the pupils' problems, the school buildings, undergoing a massive programme of refurbishment, failed to provide the best learning environment.

The major contributor to current underachievement is the high level of absenteeism. Too many pupils fail to take full advantage of the good opportunities provided for them to achieve.

In the majority of subjects, abler pupils make creditable progress and achieve good standards in both key stages. This is the case in English, mathematics, geography, history, modern foreign languages, art, IT, and PSE. In drama, they achieve very good standards. In other subjects, they achieve good standards in one key stage and satisfactory standards in the other. Only in physical education are standards unsatisfactory for these, and all other, pupils.

In drama, for example, abler, and other, pupils in KS3 listen attentively and respond readily to instructions. They also adopt and sustain roles well, and make perceptive comments when evaluating their peers' performances and interpretations. In KS4 lessons, they know the conventions of script writing and they have a very good understanding of a range of challenging texts, including setting, characters, plots and themes. In modern foreign languages, abler pupils make good progress in all language skills in KS3. In KS4, they produce good written coursework and speak well on prepared GCSE topics. In history, abler pupils are good at identifying and linking a series of factors leading to change. They also record their findings accurately, using subject-specific vocabulary in correct contexts. A good example of high standards occurs in IT, where the ablest pupils are working well on web page design. In Welsh, they speak well and expand on their arguments without referring to notes. They also read aloud with appropriate expression. On occasions, there are a few shortcomings in the standards achieved by abler pupils. For example, in religious education, pupils do not always have opportunities to realise their potential when non-specialist teachers teach them. In Welsh, too few pupils read Welsh books for pleasure. In music, pupils' mixed instrument skills are underdeveloped.

Pupils of average ability make good progress and achieve good standards in KS3 and KS4 in English, art, IT and PSE. In drama, they achieve good standards in KS3 and very good standards in KS4. In many other subjects, they achieve satisfactory standards in one key stage and good in the other. Standards achieved by average pupils are unsatisfactory in physical education in both key stages. Standards are unsatisfactory in KS3 in science. In KS4, standards are unsatisfactory in religious education, because of lack of provision and non-specialist teaching. Also in KS4 Welsh, standards are unsatisfactory owing to insufficient time being available. Where standards are good, as in English, many average pupils are articulate orally, and although some can be a little inhibited in formal speaking situations, many are eager to volunteer answers and read aloud. In music, average pupils in KS4 perform confidently with a good degree of accuracy and their compositions illustrate an awareness of structure. In geography, their knowledge and understanding of places, patterns and processes, and people and environmental relationships are good. In history, especially in KS4, average pupils can recognise the operation of bias in sources of evidence and they are aware of how differing interpretations of events can occur. They have a generally good ability to extract information from a variety of sources. Occasions occur across the curriculum when average pupils' work has some shortcomings. In design and technology, for instance, pupils' design drawing skills and idea development are underdeveloped. In science, many average pupils in KS3 have insecure recall of previous work and they are thus unable to apply the scientific

principles in current tasks and questions. In Welsh, pupils' writing is grammatically incorrect on many occasions.

Less able pupils make good progress and achieve well in both key stages in English, art, IT, PSE and drama, and in design and technology and music in KS4. These pupils achieve unsatisfactory standards in science and physical education in KS3 and KS4, and in religious education and Welsh in KS4. Otherwise, standards are satisfactory. In music, less able pupils enjoy singing, perform with a good degree of accuracy and they are aware of some elements when appraising. Conversely, some pupils – boys in particular – are reluctant participants; others' ensemble skills are underdeveloped. In geography, and leisure and tourism, pupils persevere well to complete tasks, but they often fail to apply previously acquired information to new and unfamiliar contexts. Within this group of pupils in particular, the incidence of poor attendance and unsatisfactory attitudes to learning is prevalent in hindering progress. Across the curriculum, many less able pupils have difficulty expressing themselves clearly both verbally and in writing.

Pupils with SEN achieve good standards in KS3 and KS4 in English, mathematics, history, art, IT and PSE. In drama, they achieve good standards in KS3 and very good standards in KS4. They achieve good standards in KS4 in geography, and design and technology. Otherwise, standards are satisfactory. The good learning environments provided by specialist staff, extra help with many aspects of learning all subscribe well to helping these pupils realise their potential. Pupils with SEN achieve unsatisfactory standards in physical education, and in KS4 in science, religious education and Welsh.

The achievement of pupils from ethnic minority heritages and those for whom English is an additional language is commensurate with that of their peers in most cases. All are integrated well and they have the same opportunities as all other pupils to access the learning opportunities offered by the school. Teachers and support staff from Ethnic Minority Language and Achievement Service (EMLAS) provide good support for pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Pupils who choose to take advantage of the school's alternative (appropriate) curriculum and attend regularly to do so often achieve good standards in a variety of non-academic areas. A most noteworthy example is the 'Community Garden Project', completed recently by a group of Y11 pupils (the DJ Squad), working with valuable support from personnel from the local youth service. The success of the project achieved recognition by being awarded one of the Lord Mayor's Community Regeneration Awards. The squad was awarded the Ian Spratling Award for outstanding youth contribution. Additionally, in competition with 111 other projects, the venture was awarded the title of 'Best Overall Project'. Such success means that the squad will travel to Phoenix, Arizona, USA, consequent to winning.

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

Across the curriculum, standards in literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT are satisfactory. Pupils are good at working with each other and solving problems. Pupils' ability to improve their own learning and performance is good. The school has prepared a good submission for, and is hoping to achieve, the Basic Skills Award.

Literacy standards on entry to the school are well below average and have consequently been the focus of staff training. There is an established whole-school policy, which is

supplemented by an agreed marking policy. A coordinator is in post to promote development, working with a cross curricular committee. An audit has identified many examples of good practice across the curriculum. There are good links with primary schools. This year the emphasis has been on the development and use of good transition work units in English and mathematics for Y6 and Y7 to ensure continuity.

### **Listening, speaking, reading and writing.**

Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory overall. Generally, pupils are willing and at times enthusiastic speakers. Many pupils, however, have difficulty in expressing ideas at length and answers can be brief. Good pupil management generally ensures attention in lessons though some pupils are inconsiderate listeners. The quality of oral work is good in some areas and very good in drama in KS4. It is, however, only satisfactory overall in mathematics, science, religious education, modern foreign languages, design and technology, music and physical education.

Standards in reading across the curriculum vary but are satisfactory overall. Pupils are generally able to respond to the wide range of material they are given and extract information to support their answers. Good use is made of the school library. Subjects promote the understanding and use of key vocabulary. In both key stages the quality of reading is good in English, religious education, information and communication technology and drama. It is good in KS4 in history and design and technology and very good in drama. It is satisfactory overall in science, modern foreign languages and design and technology.

Standards in writing are generally satisfactory. They are good overall in English, religious education, information and communication technology and drama. They are good in history and design and technology in KS4. Writing is unsatisfactory in Welsh and physical education in KS4. Pupils write for a range of purposes and produce increasingly extended pieces as they move up the school. Many pupils are not confident in writing at length and there are weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. Good use is made of frameworks to help pupils organise their writing, and of drafting and word processing to improve the quality.

### **Numeracy**

As with literacy, the school has worked hard to incorporate numeracy into and across the curriculum. A full audit of provision has been undertaken, and there is a clear whole school policy and advice for teachers on implementing best practice.

Pupils who attend regularly develop good skills of numeracy in their mathematics lessons. They benefit from the time devoted to teaching numeracy and from regular practice of mental mathematical skills. Most pupils use calculators sparingly and appropriately, but some use them too readily for simple calculations.

Standards are satisfactory overall. In modern foreign languages for example, pupils often use well-presented graphs and charts to present results of surveys. In geography, numerical aspects occur in almost every lesson. Pupils are involved in producing cross- and long-sections, bar and line graphs, and they construct and interpret a range of other statistical items. Pupils measuring and basic numerical skills are used advantageously in design and technology. In this area though, less able pupils lack confidence in calculating independently;

they rely heavily upon teachers for guidance and reassurance. In science, abler pupils handle numerical aspects of the subject well, but many others lack confidence to do so.

### **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

Standards across the curriculum in both KS3 and KS4 are satisfactory.

Applications of ICT are good in both KS3 and KS4 in English and religious education, where they are used well for research and presentation. In KS4 the use of ICT is good in leisure and tourism and business for an appropriate range of applications, and good in GCSE physical education for presentation and performance improvement in swimming. Standards are unsatisfactory in science and art. In all other subjects, standards are satisfactory. Overall, most subjects use ICT for communicating and researching information but handling and modelling information using databases and spreadsheets is underdeveloped.

Across the school, planning for the use of ICT varies between good and satisfactory, but in most subjects it is good. In most instances, teachers' skills are at least satisfactory. A minority of subjects have problems accessing IT equipment or have insufficient specialist IT equipment, as is the case in design and technology for computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM). There is good access to ICT facilities for pupils at lunch times and after school. Many pupils are enthusiastic users but they are insufficiently directed by most subjects to use the good skills they acquire.

### **Working with others**

Pupils' ability to work with others is good overall. In most classes, pupils are given opportunities to work with classmates, for example, engaging in group discussions, sharing ideas and preparing presentations. Most pupils respond well on these occasions. In many subjects, pupils across the ability range collaborate well, working in pairs and/or larger groups. In design and technology, for example, pupils often share ideas and resources to good effect. In drama and PSE, working together is a very good aspect of pupils' learning, both for the subject and for pupils' personal development.

### **Improving own learning and performance**

In many classes, teachers tell pupils what is expected of them, and what they should achieve in lessons and over time. Because of this and from information provided through good marking in a number of subjects, pupils are often able to gauge their own achievement and make decisions about what needs to be done to make progress. Pupils, especially the more able, respond well and take the initiative in this process, and standards are good overall for pupils who attend school regularly. Unfortunately, though, a sizeable minority of pupils do not take advantage of the opportunities afforded by teachers to improve their own learning through research and investigation. They either absent themselves too often or they fail to complete their research.

Good examples can be found across the curriculum. In drama, for instance, pupils evaluate each other's work, and in doing so they focus on the criteria for success and thus improve their own learning. In modern foreign languages, pupils are given extension work for independent learning and they use dictionaries well to enlarge their vocabularies. Across the curriculum, pupils are frequently involved in assessing their own attainment and progress.

They set targets for future success at the end of each unit of work. History presents pupils with many opportunities that encourage independent learning, and pupils in most classes have a good understanding of what steps need to be taken to improve.

### **Creative and problem solving skills**

Pupils' creative and problem solving skills are good overall, particularly so in drama. Good examples include performing and composing in music, aspects of work in textiles, creative writing in English and much work in art. In modern foreign languages, pupils often solve problems by using grammatical rules to adapt language. Both history and geography offer many opportunities for pupils to solve problems, especially in assignments. Most pupils respond well to these challenges. A few subjects though, such as science, provide too few opportunities for pupils to develop such skills.

## **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' response to the provision is satisfactory. PSE sessions contribute well to many aspects of provision.

Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development through lessons in which pupils reflect on their own beliefs and values and learn to understand and respect the beliefs of others. English and drama also make good contributions: pupils discuss issues of life and death in relation, for instance, to drink driving; they learn to appreciate beauty through poetry and are encouraged to write poetry. In history pupils are encouraged to reflect on differences in attitudes and values of people in the past. Opportunities for spiritual development are not taken in other subjects.

School assemblies reinforce school values and celebrate pupils' achievement. In some assemblies pupils are actively involved through musical performance and music is used effectively to create atmosphere. Pupils join in prayers when invited or take part in silent reflection. However, in many assemblies and in almost all daily meetings with form tutors there are no opportunities for such reflection. The school does not fully meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

The school's behaviour policy provides a clear moral code. Pupils generally show respect for each other, their teachers and the school environment. They treat equipment with respect in design and technology and physical education. Moral concepts and values are actively promoted through consideration of contemporary moral dilemmas in religious education and in drama and through consideration of global environmental concerns in science and in geography. In geography and in business, pupils consider concepts of fair trade and unequal distribution of wealth. In English, pupils explore the concepts of good and evil and in history, they reflect upon the moral dimensions of such movements as the rise of Hitler.

Pupils' social development is fostered in the many lessons that make effective use of pair and group work, to which most pupils respond well. In practical lessons they generally share resources and help each other. The history curriculum makes fruitful links with such concepts

of citizenship as the electoral system and pupils' future responsibility to vote. In drama and religious education pupils discuss social and community issues surrounding family, relationships and the nature of prejudice. Some pupils have opportunities for participating in community life. Pupils studying child development visit local hospitals and benefit from visiting childcare practitioners. A group of pupils recently completed an award winning transformation of a derelict space into a garden for young people. A local church makes a very significant contribution to the development of the alternative curriculum in Y10 and Y11.

Visits to theatres and other areas of cultural significance, for example the Dylan Thomas Heritage site, enhance pupils' cultural awareness in general and the culture of Wales in particular. Visits abroad and lessons in Spanish and Italian after school are a valuable contribution to pupils' international understanding. Music, art, drama and religious education help pupils' understanding of multicultural issues. Many subjects study examples drawn from Wales in lessons so Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is well developed.

## **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

The overall quality of behaviour in school is good. The large majority of pupils are polite and courteous; respectful of one another and of their teachers. They move around the school sensibly, in an orderly fashion, and appreciate the standards expected.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. In lessons where a good pace and intellectual challenge are maintained, attitudes to learning are good or very good. In lessons that lack such content, pupils swiftly lose interest, their behaviour becomes disruptive and it interferes with progress made by themselves and others. Many pupils do not take a responsible attitude to homework and their abilities, as independent learners, are often underdeveloped.

Overall pupils' behaviour and attitudes make a satisfactory contribution to the good quality of life in school.

The school has effective arrangements for promoting good behaviour. There are clear and well-understood expectations, and appropriate rewards for good behaviour and sanctions for non-compliance. They are uniformly and equitably applied and regarded as fair. Appropriate strategies, including in-school isolation of disruptive pupils and access to an extensive alternative vocational curriculum, provide beneficial support to pupils at risk of exclusion. Exclusion is a last resort and only used after very careful consideration. There were no permanent exclusions in the last year.

No instances of bullying were recorded during the inspection and teachers and pupils acknowledge that it rarely occurs in school. Pupils affirm that when instances arise they are swiftly and effectively dealt with. School policies and procedures successfully eliminate sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination.

## **4.3 Attendance**

Attendance at school is poor: it currently averages around 80 percent. The level of unauthorised absence, particularly from Y9, Y10 and Y11, is also a matter of concern.

Childhood sickness and holidays taken in term-time contribute significantly to absence. Of greater concern is the high level of parentally condoned absenteeism. There is frequent and widespread intermittent absence of a substantial proportion of pupils. A day off here and there is a common occurrence. This severely compromises progress in education for absentees and, because of time devoted to catch-up, may interrupt the advance of classmates. The school makes good efforts to minimise the disruption to learning and often provides supported time outside lessons for pupils to catch up on missed work on their return from absence.

Punctuality at the start of the school day is unsatisfactory, with a sizeable minority wandering in late. Procedures for recording these late arrivals are good. Punctuality to lessons is generally good and pupils move from lesson to lesson with purpose.

Both attendance and punctuality are adversely affected by the poor transport facilities available in the catchment area. Many pupils are late because they do not manage the long walk to school efficiently and many do not make it to school at all when the weather is wet, as they do not possess adequate waterproof clothing.

The school has appropriate procedures in place to encourage regular attendance and to pursue absentees. For most pupils these are generally effective. Despite the substantial difficulties with local community attitudes, the school is making satisfactory progress in improving attendance. There is good and essential administrative support from several Learning Support Assistants. There is a productive working relationship with an Educational Welfare Officer, but the time allocated to the school for these services is totally inadequate to tackle the issues comprehensively.

Registration procedures on arrival at school are appropriate and pupils' presence at individual lessons is reliably recorded. The school fully complies with Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) statutory requirements.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

Predominantly good quality teaching is a major feature of the school. It has a positive influence on pupils' learning, behaviour and attitudes. It is the major contributory factor to the standards achieved by those pupils who attend school regularly. Most teachers work very hard to engage pupils in their work and to maintain their interest in lessons over time.

The figures shown previously, in the table within the main findings section of the report, compare favourably with national expectations for 2002. These were: 95 percent of teaching satisfactory or better, with 50 percent good or better. The school's figures are: 94 percent and 62 percent respectively.

Teaching is good in both key stages in English, mathematics, history, art, IT, music and PSE. In drama, teaching is good in KS3 and very good in KS4. Additionally, teaching is good in KS3 in Welsh, and in KS4 in geography, and design and technology. Otherwise, teaching is

satisfactory, except in some religious education lessons, where non-specialist teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge. In KS4 religious studies classes, teaching is good.

Monitoring of classroom climate, along with other self-evaluation practices, and reviews of teaching techniques and strategies, are having a positive impact on standards of teaching and learning in many areas of the curriculum.

Most teachers have at least good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This is particularly so in modern foreign languages and drama where they are often very good. Most teachers communicate this knowledge and understanding to their pupils effectively and this helps to promote higher standards. Often their enthusiasm for their subjects, and lively attitudes motivate and encourage pupils to enjoy their learning. There are some shortcomings, though, in religious education and physical education.

Planning to use the 60-minute lessons effectively is a good feature in most classes. Frequently, pupils are informed of the learning objectives at the beginning of a lesson and at the close they review the main features of the session, thus determining what they have learned and what progress they have made. This is good practice. Often pupils are given tight schedules to complete aspects of the work within a good variety of activities. This assists in moving learning forward at a good pace. Additionally, as in drama for example, there are good well-planned and regular opportunities for pupils to develop their problem solving and creative skills. In most subjects, highly able pupils are given many opportunities to succeed, through extension work and/or extra lessons after school and at other times.

In the vast majority of classes, relationships between teachers and pupils are good, allowing learning to occur in a purposeful environment. Expectations of good behaviour are made clear to pupils and the majority of them respond well. Most teachers organise and manage their classes well. They use an appropriate range of teaching methods and strategies that are usually successful in maintaining pupils' interest in their work and in ensuring that they make progress. In mathematics, for example, lessons often begin with a series of well-designed mental mathematical activities that help pupils consolidate previous learning and improve their basic skills.

Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement and progress are appropriately high in most classes. These expectations are often communicated to pupils and realised in suitably challenging tasks that are matched to pupils' abilities and prior attainment. Hence, most pupils who attend regularly receive many opportunities to achieve their full potential.

In many classes, teachers use well-designed probing questions to test pupils' knowledge and understanding, and to prompt them to think deeply about their answers before responding. Such practices do much to aid progress in lessons and extend pupils' learning.

Across the curriculum, teachers make appropriate use of some very good displays of pupils' work and other informative material on classroom walls and in corridors to motivate pupils to learn well.

In most subjects, teachers make every effort to match the learning activities to pupils' needs and prior attainment. They complement these with appropriate assessment procedures to measure progress and to provide feedback to pupils on how to improve.

Teachers have good knowledge of pupils with SEN and they provide good teaching, care and support for them. They use individual education plans (IEPs) effectively to provide work appropriate for their needs. Members of the learning support staff also provide good care for pupils with statements of SEN, and others with SEN, and help them to achieve well.

Many, but not all, teachers help pupils to consolidate and extend their learning by setting homework of appropriate challenge and interest. However, not all pupils respond as teachers would hope; a culture of setting and completing homework is not fully embedded in the school's practices. In many subjects, teachers help pupils to make progress through the use of constructive marking that shows them how to improve. However, not all homework is sufficiently challenging nor is it suitably well marked.

Many teachers give generously of their time outside lessons to help individuals and to offer extra-curricular activities to extend and broaden pupils' learning and to improve their social skills.

In many subjects, a proportion of the teaching, although being good in many respects, has a few shortcomings. For example, in physical education some activities are inappropriate, and teachers make insufficient use of questions about how standards could be improved. In science, there are occasions when teachers' subject knowledge is insecure. In a few lessons, some or all of the following shortcomings occur: the learning intentions are not communicated to pupils; there is a lack of pace in the lesson; tasks are insufficiently challenging; the lesson is finished without a summary of what should have been learned; little or no homework is set. Occasionally, in music, teachers appraise rather than allow the pupils to do so. Pupils in modern foreign language lessons are not encouraged frequently enough to use French when asking for information or when giving explanations. In geography, teachers occasionally spend too long speaking to pupils and allow them too little time to become involved in other activities.

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

Arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupils' achievements and progress are good. A whole school policy provides a clear framework and guidelines for subject departments. All subjects formally assess pupils annually in three course modules and an end of year examination. A standardised procedure produces assessments related to NC levels in KS3 and GCSE grades in KS4. This information is both reported to parents and recorded on the school database to inform monitoring of progress.

The school makes good use of the analysis of data to monitor progress and promote higher standards. A progress tracking system is in place, identifying both high and low achievement, for action by Progress Managers and heads of subjects. The process is well informed by analysis by external agencies to determine the value added by the school in public examinations. Data about pupils' achievement on entry to the school is supplemented by internal objective tests. This information, together with module and school examination assessments and the Y9 national tests, is used to set and monitor targets that are shared with pupils. Pupils identified with statements of SEN have individual education plans (IEPs) and their progress is regularly reviewed, in line with the Code of Practice.

Accuracy and consistency of assessment is satisfactory. Assessment is linked to NC and GCSE criteria and pupils understand how they are doing. There is good practice in giving

pupils opportunities for self assessment. There is, however, some inconsistency of practice across and within departments. Not all marking is diagnostic and pupils are not always advised as to how to improve. Consequently the extent to which assessment is used to promote higher standards is only satisfactory. There has not been an audit of practice, nor sufficiently rigorous monitoring to ensure accuracy, effectiveness and consistency.

The school meets statutory requirements for reporting and extends the formal annual reporting process by also providing an interim report. Reports follow a common format for all year groups and provide satisfactory information for parents, including attendance records. KS3 reports provide assessments of achievement, effort and progress in subjects. Assessments are related to NC levels, but pupils' target levels are not provided. The format of the reports allows only brief subject comments, which, generally, are unspecific about points for improvement. Form tutor comments are more helpful and show good knowledge of pupils but, understandably, are not subject specific. KS4 reports do provide target GCSE grades, however, and there is good practice in all reports in providing for pupils self-assessment. A programme of parents' evenings throughout the year provides parents with the opportunity to discuss their children's progress.

The school is developing the review of pupil progress through the use of progress files, which are now established and replace the Record of Achievement (RoA) system. These files provide records of academic, social and personal progress, which are celebrated in the presentation of the document in Y11.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

The quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum for pupils of all abilities are satisfactory in KS3 and KS4. The provision in KS3 is good for abler pupils and those of average ability. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements for the NC and religious education in KS3. However, in KS4 there is insufficient time to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in religious education. In KS3, all pupils are timetabled for a learning skills lesson in the two-week timetable cycle, but this is not sufficient to cater for the needs of all the pupils who have low-level literacy and numeracy skills on entry to the school.

The curricular provision is effective and pupils of all abilities have access and opportunity to many good learning opportunities. Pupils recorded as having SEN have access to a curriculum more suited to their needs. The NC is modified for 36 pupils and it is disapplied for fourteen. The school's curriculum meets the recommended 25-hour teaching week.

In KS3, pupils follow a curriculum that includes all subjects of the NC, religious education and PSE. Classes are arranged in either mixed ability or groups according to ability, with all subjects except Welsh and French being allocated an appropriate number of lessons. Throughout the key stage, pupils study French as their modern foreign language. All pupils study information technology in the design and technology programme of study, and drama is taught as a discrete subject throughout the key stage. In addition to the learning skills programme mentioned above, many pupils in Y7 and Y8 are withdrawn from English, mathematics and part of the provision for Welsh, French and religious education, to follow a programme to improve basic skills. This provision is reduced to one hour per week in Y9.

In KS4, the vast majority of pupils follow a common core curriculum that ensures access to English, mathematics, science, Welsh, physical education and religious education. The time

allocations for the statutory provision of religious education and Welsh are unsatisfactory. Pupils can choose from a suite of subjects that includes subjects studied in KS3 in addition to courses in business studies, child development and leisure and tourism. Considerable effort is made to ensure that pupils' choices match into five option columns. In addition, pupils can study Spanish, Italian, sociology and psychology in twilight classes at the school.

The rest of the pupils in KS4 follow an alternative curriculum that operates on three levels, and is aimed to support disaffected pupils and raise levels of attendance. Through this provision both in school and at off-site centres, pupils can access a wide variety of accreditation pathways that include GCSE, Entry Level, Open College Network (OCN), Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Pupils are also able to access courses in motor vehicle maintenance, hairdressing and horticulture, be involved in Youth/Community work and have work placements at off-site venues. Two particularly successful areas of the alternative curriculum are the DJ Squad community project, and the 'The Gap' interactive educational package designed and delivered by the local Cornerstone church. Both have been very effective in improving pupils' self esteem and their ability to become useful members of adult society. Overall, the alternative curriculum is partially successful in improving attendance and combating disaffection. However, timetable clashes for some pupils, staff illnesses and insufficiently rigorous monitoring have inhibited the full development of the programme.

The arrangements for personal and social education are good. PSE is delivered on five separate days during the school year by a team of teachers supported by external providers. In addition, pupils have one timetabled lesson in the two-week cycle that is shared between an assembly and a careers education input. The programme of study is well constructed to deliver all aspects of personal, social, health education and careers education and closely follows the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) guidelines. The vast majority of pupils in Y10 have a two-week work experience placement near the end of the summer term. In addition many pupils following the alternative curriculum programme have placements as alternative provision.

Planning for the development of key skills is good overall. Progress in literacy and numeracy is good and has been monitored by working groups under the stewardship of co-ordinators; progress in the implementation of information technology across the curriculum is satisfactory. Planning for the development of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good in many subjects, and there are good features of multi-cultural education in a minority of curriculum areas.

In all subjects, schemes of work are suitably detailed, cover the requirements of the NC and provide good guidance for teaching and learning and continuity between key stages. Curricular links with primary schools are developing and are good in English and mathematics.

Homework of suitable quality and quantity is set regularly in a minority of subjects. In many other subjects, the work set often has insufficient challenge to extend learning, and in many cases homework is infrequently set especially for average and lower ability pupils. The school does not produce a homework timetable. All pupils have a personal organiser; only a small minority of pupils uses this effectively.

Extra-curricular provision is good overall. Pupils benefit from the range of activities available in the extra-curricular provision, which broaden their experiences and promote their personal and social development. A considerable number of pupils represent the school in musical and sporting activities and the design and technology department has had a number of outstanding national successes in building and racing environmentally friendly Karts. The curriculum is also enhanced by visits off-site to places of interest, to venues such as theatres and abroad for a range of curricular and social purposes.

Good quality vocal and instrumental tuition provided for one in eight of the pupils on roll, together with a range of extra curricular groups of good standard, complement the work of the music department. These, as well as regular successful musical productions, make a substantial contribution to the life of the school and the community.

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

Support, guidance and procedures for promoting the welfare of pupils are growing strengths of the school. The school's pastoral system is effective, playing an important role in socialising and helping pupils to take their place in the school community and society. The school is an inclusive community, where individual needs are appreciated and academic and personal development is carefully monitored.

The pastoral organisation is well led by two assistant headteachers, who each oversee a key stage. There are effective progress managers who, together with a team of form tutors, provide good support for pupils in each year group. Communication is good between other members of staff and the pastoral teams.

Liaison and transition arrangements with primary schools are good. Pupils are well supported in their change of school and are 'buddied' by pupils in Y8. On entry to the school, pupils are placed in mixed ability tutor groups and remain as far as possible with the same form tutor during their time in the school. Tutor periods are used to check attendance and personal organisers and to conduct routine monitoring. In the majority of instances this time is well used but the culture of using personal organisers effectively has not yet been established.

The school's Rules, Rewards and Consequences policy is becoming increasingly effective. Academic effort and achievement, good attendance and punctuality, good behaviour and community service are regularly recognised with awards and prizes. Major awards are reserved for the annual prize giving. Pupils say they appreciate the recognition. Pupils also know the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. Effective supervision takes place through monitoring 'BEHAUL' – behaviour, equipment, homework, attendance, uniform and lateness. Form tutors, subject teachers and progress managers play a key role in implementing the rewards and consequences policy.

Through the monitoring system from Y7 onwards, there are good arrangements for those pupils identified as in need. Members of staff and a very wide range of mentors from outside agencies provide valuable support. Pupils looked after by the local authority have appropriate care plans. The school's arrangements for child protection are thorough and fully meet statutory requirements.

The PSE programme is good. Schemes of work are detailed and the programme meets the requirements of the ACCAC framework. The programme is delivered during five days when

the timetable is suspended, during tutor periods and through appropriate subjects of the curriculum. The participation of a wide range of external agencies is very good, and pupils appreciate the programme. Bullying, though endemic in the community, is successfully dealt with, pupils saying they are confident that any instances of bullying are quickly resolved.

Careers education and guidance is effective. It is well planned to develop pupils' skills and understanding and to provide relevant information and advice. Beginning in Y7, it is well integrated into PSE and work experience. The programme includes activities that enhance self-awareness and personal development and increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of career planning and opportunities. Staff, the careers advisor and visitors from industry and commerce conduct mock interviews. Most pupils develop awareness of potential job opportunities, and of the availability of courses in further and higher education institutions. Pupils compile personal progress files beginning in Y7, which record their achievements and help increase self-awareness. The quality of the progress files varies widely and is currently targeted for further development.

The school, in association with the UA, has conducted an extensive review of the health and safety provision. Effective policies and procedures and a comprehensive development programme are in place. Qualified members of the teaching and support staff administer first aid. A small number of concerns were drawn to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection.

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

The school's provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory.

276 pupils, nearly one third of the roll of the school, are on the register for SEN. This proportion is well above the average for Wales. 36 of these pupils have statements of SEN, a proportion that is also above the national average. 14 pupils with statements are in the Specialist Teaching Facility (STF) for pupils with acute learning difficulties.

Extensive consultation with the primary schools by the SENCO and other staff enables pupils' needs to be clearly identified and provision planned before they join the school. Subsequently, the school assesses pupils' reading ages to help the process of identification, and to allow progress to be measured. Pupils, with their parents, are prepared very carefully to join the Specialist Teaching Facility.

Standards in lessons seen during the inspection are satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils' attendance at lessons with specialist teachers of SEN is good and their achievement is good. However, the attendance of many pupils with SEN in their other lessons is unsatisfactory and their standards suffer accordingly. At the end of Y11 in 2003 twenty percent of pupils, many of them pupils with SEN, left the school without any qualifications. This proportion is very much above that of the UA.

Pupils with SEN have access to the same full curriculum as other pupils. They are registered in mixed ability tutor groups so that they have good opportunities to mix socially with other pupils. Ability setting in most subjects allows them to be taught in smaller groups. Subject specialist teachers teach them well, overall. There is good provision for a small number of pupils in Y7 and Y8 who are taught well for English and maths by teachers with particular expertise in SEN. Teachers are aware of all pupils with SEN. Their learning is assisted by

well-developed individual education plans. In most subjects tasks and materials are modified to help ensure that pupils learn effectively. However, in many lessons there is not enough modification. In most subjects the development of extension activities for more able pupils, to ensure that they are sufficiently challenged, is in an early stage of development. There is a relatively large team of learning support assistants who work effectively with pupils in lessons, commonly helping more than those whom they are assigned to assist. In the light of the large numbers of pupils with SEN in the school, there are too few learning support assistants.

One third of the pupils on roll enter the school with reading ages three years below average. There is very little intensive provision to help these pupils improve their basic literacy or numeracy skills.

While not designed specifically for pupils with SEN, in practice the Alternative Curriculum in Y10 and Y11 is followed by many of them. Some of this provision is very effective and helps improve pupils' attendance as well as teaching them useful vocational skills. Other provision is less well appreciated by pupils and their attendance is unsatisfactory.

Individual education plans are in place for all pupils for whom they are required. Many teachers have added their own subject specific targets to these plans. All teachers contribute written comments to the twice-annual review of the plans. The progress of pupils with SEN is closely monitored by the SENCO.

The curricular arrangements and provision for pupils in the STF are very good. For most subjects they are taught in the STF by specialist staff and very capable learning support assistants. For other subjects they are integrated into mainstream lessons, with support from a learning support assistant. They are socially included in the life of the school as they are part of mainstream tutor groups and are encouraged to take part in school activities. The expertise and facilities of the STF are a valuable resource for the whole school.

All requirements of the Code of Practice are met. The governor for SEN takes an active interest in the department. Parents are successfully encouraged to maintain a close relationship with the school. A family learning group of four or five parents meets for an hour each week to help them improve the reading skills of their children who read with their parents for an hour after school. Parents of pupils in the STF maintain daily contact through pupils' organisers.

The very experienced SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) leads and manages well the area of provision within his remit. Although he has a substantial workload, he is able to undertake some direct monitoring of provision by visiting lessons.

## **5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions**

The overall quality of these partnerships is good, contributing significantly to the quality of life in school and to pupils' development.

Parents receive a clearly written prospectus that describes well the schools' organisation, curriculum and pastoral arrangements, and a lucid review of the schools' year in the annual report from the governors. The school provides occasional newsletters, and twilight courses

to help parents understand their child's education. There are useful reports on pupil progress, and parents enjoy good opportunities to discuss the progress of their children with teachers at well-organised and well-attended parents' evenings. Parents are involved with school organisation as parent governors. There is a small but active PTA which is an important and successful fund-raiser as well as providing good support for many school functions. In general parents are supportive of the school but a minority do not engage fully by failing to ensure that their children attend school.

There are extensive, mutually supportive links with the community. School facilities are well used for leisure and learning, and the community enjoy school concerts and other functions. Local businesses, art and sports organisations, and local service providers give good support for delivery of the curriculum and in provision of the alternative curriculum for less able pupils. They also assist with the substantial programme of extra-curricular activities. In a wider context, pupils' efforts make significant contribution to local, national and international charities. Pupils give support elsewhere in the community through the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

KS2 to KS3 transition is well organised. Senior members of staff visit all partner primary schools. Reciprocal visits by teachers ensure secure educational and pastoral knowledge of incoming pupils. Joint training, development of curriculum projects in mathematics and English that bridge Y6 and Y7, and supportive activities from other departments such as Welsh, design and technology and music, maintain good educational continuity. A helpful programme of induction days and open evenings further ease transition.

There are good supportive links with many further education colleges which, in addition to providing an extended range of option choices for school leavers, have been profitably utilised to provide an effective, more vocational, curriculum for a large number of the less academic pupils in Y10 and Y11.

The school has well-established links with initial teacher training institutes and several departments regularly provide training opportunities for students. These bring fresh perspectives to the classroom and effectively broaden experiences for school pupils.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

The school has an effective policy and good strategies for work-related education.

There is an emphasis on teamwork between staff with different responsibilities within the school's framework for support and guidance of pupils. This ensures that careers education and guidance, and work experience, are closely linked to pastoral and academic progress.

Pupils usefully explore personal characteristics and preferences in PSE during Y7 and Y8, relating these broadly to types of work through the 'Real Game'. Thereafter careers education is delivered in a separate programme of fortnightly half-hour lessons. This usefully removes possible timetable conflicts between work related education and other aspects of PSE. It enables secure and progressive exploration of the work place. Pupils learn about careers and how to use careers information software, they consider the association between curriculum option choice and potential careers, and study the requirements for and the objectives of work experience. In general these aspects are well covered but insufficient use is made of the

careers advisor to support classroom activities, and the nature of the timetable limits opportunities for discussion and reinforcement of learning.

The formal careers education and guidance programme is supplemented in a number of ways. There are visits to local enterprises such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA), and the Botanical Gardens, links with Swansea City Football Club, Engineering Days and team building events with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). In Y11 a structured full day visit to a local further education college enables pupils to explore both further and higher educational opportunities. Pupils also have individual interviews with a career adviser. Members of the armed services regularly visit the school with information on careers. The school encourages enterprise schemes but there are none running at the time of the inspection (the last was in Y9 in 2003).

A satisfactory work-experience is arranged for Y10 pupils towards the end of the summer term. Some pupils arrange their own work-experience, but the school manages most placements, with helpful collaboration from a career advice company. The briefing received beforehand is of good standard, but some components are delivered in the PSE programme as early as February, too far distant from the placements to be of full value. Pupils are expected to keep a diary of their week at work and to contribute to a classroom de-briefing that shares experiences. Members of the school staff monitor each placement.

Staff placements in industry are encouraged where positive benefit to school is perceived: two recent placements have strengthened curriculum delivery in design and technology.

There are good links with an Education Business Partnership (EBP), through which many of the extra-curricular activities are brokered, and a satisfactory liaison with a Career Advice Company. A newly appointed careers adviser is available in school four days each week, but the school has not made full use of the services the Careers Company might provide.

Overall the programme of work-related education in school provides a satisfactory link between employment and the curriculum and acts as a beneficial stimulus to learning and personal development.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

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

The school operates good procedures for evaluating its performance and planning for improvement. Best practice is to be found in many areas, but it is not totally consistent across the whole school. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of current practice is good overall. The school works closely and successfully with the UA's support services in its quest to focus upon improving standards, teaching and learning.

The school operates a line-management system, where members of the leadership team are associated and work closely with certain curricular areas and progress managers. Through this structure and from a range of other sources of information, the headteacher, governors and senior managers have a good awareness of the school's strengths and shortcomings. The

governors are also actively involved in keeping the school's performance under regular review through receiving regular reports.

Owing to its systems, the school is successful in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, and pupils' achievement. The systems also encourage the sharing of good practice and enable the school to identify areas of future development. The school's current development plan for 2004/2005 is suitably based on the analysis of the school's good features and shortcomings.

One of the features that is proving successful in moving the school forwards is the pupil pursuit programme undertaken by members of the leadership team. The focus is upon observation of lessons to assess classroom climate, to ensure that pupils are taught in an appropriate environment. Observations during the inspection testify in many cases to the effectiveness of the arrangements. Observations are recorded during the process and the teachers concerned are involved in reviewing these with the senior members of staff.

Additionally, curricular areas write regular half-termly reports on a range of issues and these are considered and discussed with senior managers as appropriate. The school also operates a 'milestone' review system where progress is discussed with curricular managers and others, and targets set for future success.

The headteacher and senior staff carefully analyse pupils' test and examination results, and a wealth of other data, making comparisons with UA, similar schools and national figures. They discuss their findings with curricular managers, and use the results of NC tests and other data to discuss challenging but achievable targets for subjects and for pupils. A good range of data is made available to curricular managers and many of them use it advantageously to evaluate the provision within their areas of responsibility. However, not all such managers make best use of all the information that is available.

Consequent to all the above practices, the school's development plan (SDP) is realistic in its intentions and challenges, and provides a good basis for progress. The nature and range of objectives set for improvement are appropriate for this school. Likewise, the plans for development in curricular and other areas of the school's provision are good.

All curricular areas of the school have procedures in place for reviewing standards of teaching, learning and achievement in their subjects. The quality of practice is good overall. Many areas take advantage of the help and support available from the UA, to obtain a broader perspective when evaluating their provision. For example, in modern foreign languages, teaching is monitored regularly, all pupils' books are monitored termly, appropriate targets are set and the evaluation processes clearly identifies strengths and areas for development. In geography, similar practices occur and a portfolio of assessed and levelled (NC levels) pupil's work is maintained to ensure consistency of practice within the subject. In mathematics, all teachers are involved in monitoring the work in pupils' books. There are, however, a few areas where practice is not sufficiently rigorous. For instance, in religious education, the non-specialist teachers' lessons are not observed enough and exercise books are not scrutinised sufficiently well.

Through providing informative documents and in-depth discussions, the leadership team is successful in making teachers aware of the need to share good practice, improve teaching and learning styles and to set suitably challenging targets for improvement.

The school uses in-service education and training (INSET) days and other occasions effectively to review aspects of its work and the priorities in the SDP and curricular area improvement plans.

## **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The school is led well by the headteacher, governors and senior staff.

The school's aim, 'to provide the opportunities for our young people to grow into citizens who value both themselves and others' is central to the school's philosophy and practices. The school has a clear vision and sense of direction. All concerned work hard to provide for all pupils' academic and personal development in a challenging and supportive atmosphere.

The headteacher provides good leadership and this has been a major factor in establishing the school, in difficult conditions, as a cohesive unit in which pupils are valued and cared for well. He has a thorough understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of the school and he has very clear ideas of how the school can continue to improve the quality of education it provides. He receives good support from the other senior members of staff, who join with him to form an active and effective leadership team.

There are clearly defined management roles for all senior staff and individuals' strengths are used to best effect in running the school. The school is an orderly community for the most part. Members of staff are aware of the school's policies and organisational systems, and regular and frequent briefings for staff are effective in maintaining good channels of communication.

The governors are very supportive of the school. They know the school well and carry out their duties effectively and efficiently. They have valuable expertise, which they use to the school's advantage. They are involved in aspects of planning and evaluating the school's performance, especially through the work of a range of appropriate committees. Consequently they are fully aware of the school's strengths and shortcomings, and the strategies to be employed for improvement, as seen within the school's development plan. The governors carry out all their statutory responsibilities with the exception of failing to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to attend a daily act of collective worship.

Notwithstanding the severe constraints imposed by a deficit budget since its inception, the school's financial planning and management are good. Governors and senior staff work well together to achieve this. The school handles its income of around £3.5 million prudently and efficiently. The budget is set by correct reference to the planned curricular and the consequent staffing, accommodation and learning resource requirements. The governing body also exercises careful oversight of the school's finances, staffing provision and appointments. Daily management of finances is very efficient, and spending decisions are taken only after proper consideration of the school's agreed priorities for development, and then the personnel concerned take particular care to ensure that best value for money is

obtained. The latest auditors' report received by the school contained a few recommendations. The school responded positively to these. A five year plan highlights likely steps to be taken to address fully the remaining deficit, whilst attempting to maintain a good quality of provision for pupils.

The quality of leadership and management in curricular and other areas is good overall. In the best areas, delegation of responsibilities is good, monitoring of standards, teaching and learning is effective, good use is made of assessment data to inform curricular planning and financial management is good. In most departments, many of these good qualities of leadership and management are to be found. Often there is good liaison between teachers in subject areas, and a willingness to share good practice with a view to raising pupils' standards of achievement further. Planning for progress and continuity within the curriculum is good in most areas. Nevertheless, there are a few shortcomings that occur in a minority of subjects. These include: lack of unity of purpose; spending more time at meetings on administrative matters than on issues of teaching and learning; and ineffective use of available data.

The school's pupil to teacher ratio is slightly above the Welsh average and its average class size is greater than the national figure. Expenditure per pupil on books and equipment is well in excess of the national figure. Capitation is awarded to departments by an equitable formulaic system with an opportunity to bid for extra necessary funds, but in most cases the allowances are just adequate because of budgetary constraints.

Day-to-day organisation and administration are efficient and effective. Administrative and support staff in all areas make a positive and valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school.

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

### **Staffing**

The level of staffing is appropriate for the curriculum that the school provides. There are 54 full-time teachers including the headteacher and 3 part-time teachers, giving a full-time equivalent of 56.8. This results in a pupil to teacher ratio of 16.7 to 1, which is above the all Wales average of 16.4 to 1, but matches the UA average exactly. The average class size is 22.4 pupils, which is above the Welsh average of 21.2. However, the circumstances in which the school operates and the high proportion of pupils with SEN impose extra burdens on teachers and other members of staff. Despite this, teachers cope well in oftentimes-difficult situations.

Virtually all teachers have graduate qualifications, and 10 have experience of working in industry. In most cases, teachers are deployed to best advantage. Specialist members of staff teach the majority of lessons; non-specialists teach only a few. The teaching staff has a good range of experience and the appointment of some new members has ensured a beneficial flow of new ideas and practices into the school.

Teachers and support staff from Ethnic Minority Language and Achievement Service (EMLAS) provide good support for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Foreign languages assistants are used to good effect in French lessons.

The allocation of additional salary points is appropriate for a school of this size and this helps maintain staffing costs around the national average. Women teachers are equitably represented in posts carrying responsibilities. The distribution of non-teaching time, although limited, is appropriate to the level of responsibility in most cases.

The school is committed to the continuous professional development of all staff. It is organised and managed very well and has a positive impact on standards and quality of education. The school realises the importance of progression and positive career development, not only for the individual, but also for the school's overall development. This commitment has been recognised by the school achieving the 'Investor in People' award. Through various activities, teachers keep in touch with current educational thinking, maintain and develop good practice, and promote necessary change. The school provides teachers new to the school with a good induction and support programme. Likewise, trainee teachers benefit from the arrangements and support provided for them.

The school benefits from the support it receives from a good range of committed administrative and ancillary staff. They provide effective support across a wide range of duties and responsibilities, and are appreciated by those with whom they work.

### **Accommodation**

Following a massive programme of refurbishment, the accommodation is just about adequate for the number of pupils on roll and the curriculum provided. The quality of specialist accommodation is generally good, not least because of the efforts made by teachers to create attractive and informative displays in rooms and corridors. Overall, it provides a satisfactory environment for learning. Despite the recent programme of refurbishment that has improved

the external façade, many areas of the school are still in need of redecoration and/or more severe treatment.

It is most noteworthy that drama, the most successful subject in the school, succeeds so well in adverse conditions. There is no drama studio, rooms are far removed from the school hall and there is a consequent lack of access to stage and lighting equipment.

The school has been able to arrange most subjects in suites of rooms. All science lessons are appropriately taught in laboratories. Such arrangements enable effective communication and effective use of resources to occur. As mentioned above, many classrooms and corridors in the school are enhanced by interesting displays that create a subject identity and provide a pleasant environment for learning. Problems do exist though. For example, in religious education, two teaching rooms are two floors apart – not the best arrangement for communication and sharing of resources. In music, lack of soundproofing is problematic. In a number of subjects, rooms are occasionally too small to cope with large numbers of pupils needing to use them. In science, the preparation area used by the two technicians is inadequate.

The internal fabric of the accommodation is cleaned and maintained well. There is little evidence of graffiti, and there is a noticeable lack of litter around the school.

A small number of health and safety issues were detected during the week of the inspection. These were communicated to the headteacher.

### **Learning resources**

The adequacy of learning resources is satisfactory overall.

The level of funding for textbooks, materials and educational resources per pupil, at around £267, is well above the average for schools in Wales

Most departments' capitation allowances are at least adequate for their needs. In drama though, the allowance is low and this means that there are insufficient textbooks available and too few consumables for pupils to use. In music, keyboards are showing signs of age, the range of classroom instruments is limited and there is a shortage of drum kits and guitars. In other areas, such as history, resources are good. New texts and other materials have been purchased to provide for the range of pupils' needs and abilities.

In many subjects, although textbooks are available, pupils are often not allowed to take them home for fear of damage or loss. To compensate for this, teachers often produce good in-house materials for pupils to use at home and/or in class.

The ratio of pupils to computers is just about satisfactory at 7.2 to 1 and all of these computers are less than five years old. However, there is a shortage of ICT resources in many curricular areas. There are also difficulties in gaining access to some computer rooms, which limits the development of ICT across the curriculum.

The number of books in the school's library is modest and below the number expected per pupil for a school of this size. Nevertheless, the library is well used for lessons and for

independent learning. It is pleasantly decorated, carpeted and furnished. A full-time librarian, sometimes assisted by teachers and Y11 pupils, ensures the smooth operation of the facility.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **English**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Most pupils are attentive to teachers and their classmates and respond to questions willingly.
- Generally pupils are happy to read aloud, even if some find difficulty with unfamiliar words.
- Through the Key Stage pupils develop skills to respond to a good variety of progressively more challenging reading. They can scan texts to find information to support both oral and written answers.
- Pupils undertake a good range of writing for different purposes, showing the capacity to write both imaginatively and factually. Some writing, particularly poetry, shows considerable sensitivity.
- Pupils with SEN make similar good progress to that of their peers by following a suitably modified programme of study.
- Pupils generally take pride in the presentation of their work and make good use of ICT for a variety of tasks.

##### **KS4**

- Results in GCSE English literature in 2003 were good, with three quarters of the candidates entered gaining grades A\* to C, although the proportion of pupils entered was considerably smaller than the national proportion.
- Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and their classmates.
- Many pupils make good contributions to class discussions. Pupils of higher ability in particular present prepared talks and readings with confidence.
- Pupils respond perceptively to set texts and lesson materials, showing good recall of previous work.
- Pupils build up a body of extended writing, mostly correctly expressed and carefully presented as a result of conscientious redrafting.
- Many pupils make good use of ICT to word-process coursework pieces.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3**

- In the national tests in 2003, boys did significantly less well than girls.
- In writing, many pupils show uncertainty in spelling and the use of punctuation.

#### KS4

- Girls made less progress than boys in redressing the difference between school and national standards in the GCSE examinations in 2003.
- The achievement of many pupils is adversely affected by irregular attendance.
- Many pupils find it difficult to plan and sustain extended essays and are heavily dependent upon the frameworks provided by teachers.

## Mathematics

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

### Good features

#### KS3

- In the national test results in 2003, the overall progress was good for these pupils. The boys' achievement was better than the girls.
- Most pupils answer questions with clarity, understanding and accuracy.
- They have a good understanding of whole numbers, vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages, and the relationship between them.
- They have a sound knowledge of angles on straight lines, about a point, in triangles and in quadrilaterals. They can apply this knowledge to calculate angles in appropriate diagrams.
- They have a basic awareness of axes in coordinate geometry, can plot points and can recognise shapes.
- They confidently go to the electronic white board to work out their answers in front of the rest of the class.
- Pupils are able to carry out practical work to verify mathematical concepts.
- Pupils with SEN receive good support and make sound progress.

#### KS4

- Most pupils have a sound knowledge of algebraic expressions and can solve linear equations.
- Lower ability pupils can apply their spatial awareness to plane composite figures and use appropriate units.
- Higher ability pupils can solve pairs of simultaneous equations using both algebraic and graphical methods.
- Pupils can benefit from the readily available help of teachers during breaks, at lunchtimes and after school.
- Most pupils use calculators appropriately.
- Pupils with SEN receive good support and make sound progress

### Shortcomings

#### KS3 and KS4

- The erratic and longer-term absence from lessons of a number of lower ability pupils has a detrimental effect on achievement.
- Lower ability pupils have adverse attitudes to homework and this restricts progress.
- Less able pupils do not always present their work in a logical way.

- They do not always finish their work.

#### KS4

- In 2003, the GCSE results represented satisfactory progress. These results were below both the UA and Welsh averages

## Science

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

### Good features

#### KS3

- A small minority of pupils achieve good standards in the key stage. They have a good recall of key concepts and ideas and can apply them to a range of problems many related to the applications of science in everyday life.
- More able and a small minority of average ability pupils have a satisfactory understanding of a wide range of topics covering all aspects of the NC.
- The majority of pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress relative to their abilities. They can on occasions use scientific terminology well to explain basic principles.
- Pupils develop satisfactory practical skills. They work safely and collaborate well when sharing equipment and collecting results.

#### KS4

- More able and a small majority of average ability pupils have a good understanding of the more complex principles developed in the key stage in life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes.
- These pupils can recall many scientific principles and apply them to a range of problems, many related to the applications of science in health issues, the environment and industrial processes.
- The quality of investigations is satisfactory overall. With more able and a minority of average ability pupils good standards are achieved with pupils accessing some of the higher marks in the four skill areas.

### Shortcomings

#### KS3

- A majority of average and lower ability pupils have a less secure recall and understanding of current and previous work. They often have difficulty in applying scientific principles to a range of applications.
- The behaviour of a significant number of pupils is unacceptable, and seriously hinders the progress of other pupils in the class.
- With a significant number of pupils, there is evidence of incomplete work in class and homework tasks.
- Although pupils have the opportunity of completing an investigation by the end of the key stage, some skill areas are not sufficiently developed, and pupils are unaware of their progress in this element of the programme of study.
- The level of unsatisfactory teaching in the key stage affects standards.

#### KS4

- A significant number of pupils in the double award groups do not have a secure recall of key principles and knowledge and understanding of many topics
- The progress of many pupils in the single award classes, especially in Y10 is hindered by unsatisfactory attendance.
- The quality of a minority of investigations is unsatisfactory.

#### KS3 and KS4

- Homework is not set regularly, therefore pupils do not have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and understanding to consolidate and extend their learning.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use ICT in their work.

### **Welsh second language**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and on the whole, unsatisfactory in KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### KS3

- On the whole pupils have a positive attitude to Welsh. They listen well to their teachers and understand simple instructions and general comments in Welsh by their teachers.
- Pupils follow short simple items on cassettes well and respond by completing verbal and non-verbal tasks confidently.
- Pupils generally enjoy oral work and the vast majority are keen to volunteer answers.
- They co-operate well in pair and group work, asking and answering basic questions with developing confidence and accuracy.
- Pupils read aloud to a good standard and this feature is one of the strengths of the department.
- Pupils generally pronounce most words correctly and pupils in the top sets use appropriate expression and intonation.
- Most pupils understand short passages on familiar topics and respond quite well referring to key items in the text.
- Pupils write short paragraphs and dialogues with developing accuracy and express likes and dislikes using simple set reasons well.

##### KS4

- Pupils, who opt for Welsh, are generally enthusiastic, support each other's learning and enjoy their Welsh lessons.
- Most pupils across the key stage respond quite well orally in the structured situations in classes, using language presented in the lessons reasonably accurately on the whole.
- More able pupils in the option sets speak with increasing fluency when discussing GCSE topics. They use a range of vocabulary, constructions and verb forms accurately in set situations.
- Most pupils across the key stage read work sheets and other short passages well. They pronounce most words correctly. More able pupils in the option sets use appropriate expression and intonation.

- More able pupils write well producing extended course work that is interesting to read and has a good degree of accuracy.
- They express opinions well using evidence from their own experience and other sources to back up their standpoint.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Middle and lower ability pupils lack the confidence to expand on short answers when speaking to the teacher and each other.
- Most pupils do not read independently from a sufficiently wide range of suitable material.
- Middle and lower ability pupils make basic grammatical and punctuation errors when writing extended tasks.

#### **KS4**

- In pair and group work, middle and lower ability core pupils concentrate almost exclusively on constructions and vocabulary presented in the lessons. They do not vary and expand on their responses.
- The written work of most core pupils contains a number of basic grammatical and spelling errors.
- Pupils in the core classes do not listen well in extended formal tasks. They do not respond sufficiently well to the content, through oral or written discussion.
- Progress, in relation to National Curriculum levels, are unsatisfactory in the core classes because of lack of curriculum time for the subject and high levels of absenteeism.

### **Design and technology**

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

#### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils apply a design process in their work and most pupils understand its purpose.
- Pupils are able to construct a design specification to guide their designing.
- Making skills are good and sometimes very good. Pupils plan well for making, usually work with accuracy and finish their work well in all material areas.
- Pupils have a basic understanding of electronic, microprocessor and mechanical control principles.
- Pupils understand structural principles such as triangulation, stress and strain and are able to apply them in project work.
- Knowledge and understanding of materials, their properties and applications is good.
- Less able pupils and those with SEN make good progress.

#### **KS4**

- Standards in GCSE resistant materials and food technology are good.

- Pupils make good use of a design process to guide their project work.
- Most pupils research well, particularly in food technology.
- Pupils develop specifications to guide their designing, and the link between design specifications and product evaluation is understood and applied by most pupils.
- Making skills are good and sometimes very good. Pupils plan well for making, work accurately and produce a good finish to their products.
- Understanding of materials, their properties and working characteristics is good overall.
- ICT is well used for presentation.

### **Shortcomings**

#### KS3

- Pupils' understanding and implementation of systems and control and the application of CAD/CAM is underdeveloped in project work.
- Pupils' design drawing skills, particularly those for generating ideas, are weaker than other elements of designing.
- Most pupils do not understand the link between a design specification and product evaluation.

#### KS4

- Graphic skills, particularly those used to explore ideas, are weaker than other elements of pupils' designing.
- The design folios of some lower ability pupils are sometimes superficial and untidy.

### **Information technology**

Standards of achievement in KS3 and KS4 are good.

#### **Good features**

#### KS3

- In Y7, Y8 and Y9 pupils make good progress in their development of IT competencies.
- In Y7, pupils manage computers effectively. They confidently conduct fundamental computer operations such as logging on, calling up and saving their work, and accessing appropriate applications and the Internet.
- Standards of communicating information are good. Pupils confidently combine text and images, and change and arrange fonts and layouts in appropriate combinations according to their designs.
- Design work is good, resulting from the use of a wide range of communicating information techniques including PowerPoint presentations and website construction.
- Pupils are able to set up databases, understand terminology and carry out interrogations.

- Pupils understand the function of a spreadsheet and are able to set up basic spreadsheets, conduct calculations and model number using appropriate formulae.

#### KS4

- Pupils develop a comprehensive range of IT skills in the portfolio component of the GCSE course. They confidently communicate, handle and model information for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Pupils' project work displays evidence of handling and modelling information in problem solving contexts.
- Research, analysis and problem solving skills are often well developed. Pupils make good use of the Internet to support their research.
- Pupils present their work well and are able to explain clearly why they have chosen specific IT applications.
- Pupils have a good understanding of theory.

### **Shortcomings**

#### KS3

- Pupils insufficiently discuss social, economic, ethical and moral issues related to the use of IT.

#### KS4

- User documentation and dataflow is underdeveloped in some project work.
- Projects developed from imagination lack the in-depth analysis and evaluation possible in real life contexts.

### **History**

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

### **Good features**

#### KS3

- Pupils have sound levels of knowledge and understanding. Most of them recall their previous learning successfully and they have secure chronological awareness.
- Above average and many average ability pupils have sound oral skills, providing extended responses in class discussions and using subject-specific vocabulary accurately.
- Pupils have good listening skills. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other when they work in groups and pairs. By Y9, pupils recognise the importance of listening to views other than their own as they consider a series of political beliefs, linked to their lessons in citizenship.
- Pupils have a secure ability to identify changes that occur over time. Most provide valid explanations for the causes of change and they trace its effects successfully. By Y9, most pupils recognise the differences between long-term and short-term causes of historical change.

- Most pupils are confident in recognising bias in sources of evidence and they are successful in testing their sources for reliability and utility. Most can recognise and explain the limitations of individual sources.
- Most pupils are confident in adopting investigative approaches when presented with historical problems; they develop a sound ability to read and evaluate sources of evidence, applying their background knowledge effectively to reach a satisfying conclusion. Above average and most average ability pupils are successful in linking a series of factors to explain their conclusions.
- Most pupils recognise the reasons of the differences in historical interpretations, for instance in their work on the causes of the First World War.
- Written work is generally well presented; above average and most average ability pupils expand upon the points that they make to provide convincing explanations.
- They record their learning in a variety of styles and there is good development of extended writing skills; pupils select and organise the relevant material effectively.
- Pupils have good knowledge of the history and culture of Wales; the history of the locality is well used to increase pupils' awareness of the Welsh dimension.

#### KS4

- There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils opting to study history in KS4 in the last two years; these pupils achieve good standards.
- Pupils successfully build upon the skills which they acquired in KS3. The depth of their response to tasks and challenges reflects their growing maturity and ability to interrogate and evaluate the sources of evidence critically.
- Pupils develop good oral skills when working together in groups. They advance articulate and well-informed oral arguments to explain their points of view.
- Pupils' work shows a growing understanding of the motivation and attitudes of people in the past as they ask more complex questions of the sources and learn to compare life in the past with their own experiences.
- Pupils continue to develop their investigative approaches when examining historical problems. They analyse and evaluate the sources of evidence with increasing confidence and accuracy, using them well to form logical and convincing arguments.
- Pupils achieve good standards in selecting, organising and communicating information through a wide variety of written tasks. Note-taking skills are well developed and pupils make good progress in summarising their learning.
- Pupils effectively apply their knowledge and understanding from other curricular areas, such as literacy and numeracy, to extend their research and problem-solving skills.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### KS3

- The oral contributions to discussions made by a significant minority of pupils in KS3 are too brief and infrequent to enable them to display their knowledge and understanding.
- Standards of written work vary widely; the writing of some average and many below average ability pupils in both key stages lacks adequate detail and there is evidence of incomplete work in books. Spelling, presentation and depth of evaluation and response are areas requiring further development.

KS3 and KS4

- Although many pupils make good use of ICT tools to enhance the presentation of their written work and to develop their enquiry skills, the use of ICT in lessons is limited by lack of regular access to hardware and software.

## **Geography**

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

### **Good features**

KS3

- Pupils undertake beneficial field visits in a range of locations and carry out enquiries and investigations effectively.
- They acquire knowledge and understanding of the physical, human and economic characteristics of the local area and of Wales.
- Able pupils are able to apply their knowledge to the cultural and economic diversities of countries and their populations.
- Pupils become increasingly aware of how the interaction of physical and human factors can bring both positive and negative effects in countries such as Italy and Brazil.
- Across the key stage, they acquire an increasing vocabulary of subject terms and use key words precisely.

KS4

- Pupils' oral and written work shows a growing maturity in the depth of their responses.
- The theoretical aspects of their work are enhanced by the study of actual named studies and situations.
- Individuals can describe and explain current urban land use, why the pattern has changed over the decades and how regeneration is undertaken to counter urban decay.
- Pupils conduct effective independent research and produce coursework assignments that are often of a high and occasionally of a very high standard.

### **Shortcomings**

KS3

- Whilst achieving standards commensurate with their abilities, certain pupils' weak recall of information and their misunderstanding of terminology restrain their progress.
- Lack of concentration in class and occasional uncooperative attitudes also hinder positive progress.
- A number of pupils are less confident in writing than they are orally.

KS4

- The work of some pupils lacks detail, with salient points not developed fully.
- Individual pupils fail to apply previously acquired information to new or unfamiliar contexts.

## **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Most pupils listen well and understand French spoken by their teacher or heard on cassette.
- They are keen to answer questions.
- They work well together to practise and perform dialogues.
- They identify the main points in texts.
- By the end of Y9 most pupils use past, present and future tenses..
- Most write more complex sentences with increasing accuracy.
- Many use ICT to produce colourful displays of extended written French.
- Pupils with SEN make progress throughout KS3.

#### **KS4**

- Most pupils understand main points and relevant details in recorded language.
- More able pupils speak well on topics prepared for GCSE examinations.
- Pupils read a range of written material with increasing understanding.
- They access the Internet for information.
- More able pupils write accurate letters and descriptions and produce written course - work of a good standard.
- Results achieved in mock examinations suggest that standards in Y11 have improved this year.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- A small number of pupils in middle and lower ability classes do not remain on task and hinder their own progress and that of others.
- Pupils restrict themselves to short answers and have to be encouraged to speak at length.
- Most do not use French in normal classroom exchanges with the teacher.
- Many pupils have difficulty in pronouncing French correctly.

#### **KS4**

- Many pupils in Y10 lack confidence in speaking tasks.
- Some pupils continue to make basic grammatical errors in written French at Foundation level GCSE.
- For a small number of pupils, poor attendance prohibits progress in lessons and has an adverse effect on results in GCSE examinations.

## **Art**

Standards of achievement are good in both KS3 and KS4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils make rapid progress in acquiring and using the essential elements of line, tone, colour, texture, shape and pattern.
- They make good progress in learning how to draw accurately.
- Pupils gain an insight into the historical art of Wales by study and practice of Celtic art. When exploring Aboriginal art, pupils show an appreciation of the art of other cultures.
- They show three-dimensional skill and understanding in delightful paper and wire sculptures.
- They are able to paint expressively, interpreting music in shape and colour when studying the paintings of Kandinsky.
- They work hard and show craft skill and an appreciation of colour in imaginative pastel self-portraits.
- Pupils are beginning to acquire and use an art vocabulary.
- Boys and girls from ethnic minority groups achieve as well in art as their peers.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in craft activity.
- When working with artists-in-residence, pupils develop an understanding of contemporary Welsh art and craft.
- Standards improve because pupils are extremely well informed of what they have to do.

#### **KS4**

- In the recent GCSE examination, boys' results are better than the national average. This represents very good progress for these pupils.
- Pupils entered early for examinations perform very well.
- Pupils take more responsibility for their work and this leads to greater individual creative responses.
- Pupils improve their drawing and painting by studying the work of well-known artists.
- Pupils understand how to use shape and texture to express their imagination in clay.
- Most pupils' sketchbook work is productive and creative.
- More able pupils extend their experiences by screen-printing their designs on fabric in voluntary lunchtime sessions.
- Pupils use computers to enrich their typographic designs and to research art.
- Pupils improve their knowledge of historical and contemporary art by visiting a gallery.

### **Shortcomings**

- In KS3, pupils do not know how to use computers to research or to create art.
- In KS3, pupils' understanding of art is limited by their not visiting an art gallery.
- In KS3 and KS4, pupils do not express sufficiently their own thoughts or opinions in their writings about art which are also often let down by poor spelling.
- Many pupils do not do as well in examinations as they could because their absence from school limits the quantity and quality of work that they produce.

## **Music**

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

### **Good features**

#### KS3

- Pupils sing in unison and two parts with enthusiasm and a pleasing tone. They give suitable attention to clear diction and expression.
- Pupils perform a number of pieces confidently, including their own compositions, on classroom instruments and keyboards. Most perform melodies together in unison with a good degree of accuracy.
- In many rhythmic and “descriptive music” compositions pupils explore and combine different sounds and motifs effectively and imaginatively. A few melodic improvisations and variations on “Frere Jacques” are rhythmically interesting.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the elements of music. They can identify instruments and basic features in recorded extracts. A few make pertinent comments when appraising their own music making.

#### KS4

- Pupils make good progress across the key stage in vocal and instrumental performance and achieve good, and, a few, very good standards.
- Pupils in Y10 make good progress in the other elements of the course.
- Many compositions by Y11 pupils reflect the personal interests of the pupils in the choice of idioms. They often display interesting treatment of ideas and good understanding of style, structure and the medium chosen.
- A few more able pupils can identify features well when appraising music from the different areas of study.

### **Shortcomings**

#### KS3

- Pupils’ keyboard and group performing skills (combining different melodic and rhythmic parts) are underdeveloped.
- A few pupils, in a small number of classes, have difficulty in making progress in composing without the support of the teacher. Pupils’ melodic composing skills are limited.
- A significant minority of pupils, in certain classes, are reluctant to express opinions or only make brief comments when appraising their own practical work.

#### KS4

- GCSE results, in recent years, have been well below the national average.
- A few Y11 compositions are rather limited in scope. Due to inadequate resourcing, the use of ICT to enhance work in composing is limited.
- The appraising skills of a few able and of middle and lower ability pupils are uneven. They are good in certain tasks but insecure in others.

### **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory in both KS3 and KS4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Most pupils are attentive and they respond positively in lessons.
- Some pupils can explain the effects of exercise on the body and the need to warm up correctly.
- Some pupils are able to make brief comments on the work of others and suggest simple improvements.
- Most pupils can work with others co-operatively in order to develop their level of skill.
- Pupils in Year 8 are showing good basketball skills and are beginning to develop tactical awareness

#### **KS4**

- In core physical education boys are able to practice and repeat actions, for example in putting the shot, and they show some improvements in performance as a result.
- Girls understand terms like ‘aerobic exercise’ and several undertake this form of activity enthusiastically.
- Although standards are below average at GCSE level they are improving, particularly in the practical elements of the course, including swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities.
- The majority of pupils following the GCSE course are confident when using ICT for research purposes.
- A minority of pupils achieve above average standards in football, rugby, netball and cross-country running.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils’ practical ability in most athletic events is very limited.
- Some pupils find control and co-ordination difficult.
- Standards of physical fitness are very low particularly among girls in Year 9.
- Pupils’ evaluative skills are generally underdeveloped. Many pupils lack self-confidence and they are not comfortable in using the correct technical language.
- Owing to a lack of basic social skills, some of pupils do not concentrate well. This has a negative impact on the standards that they achieve.

#### **KS4**

- In core physical education, non-participation rates are high and this has a negative impact on standards achieved.
- Many pupils lack interest and motivation and they have only a limited understanding about the positive effects of regular exercise.
- Pupils are not always capable of sustained physical activity.
- The rate of absence is far too high in many lessons.
- At GCSE level the achievement of some pupils is constrained by poor literacy skills.

### **Religious education**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and unsatisfactory in KS4. The school has not allocated sufficient time to the subject in KS4 to allow the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus to be met.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- By the end of KS3 many pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.
- Pupils develop tolerance and respect for the beliefs of other people. They know that their own beliefs and opinions will be treated with respect in lessons so are not afraid to share them.
- Many pupils respond with empathy and insight to the religious practices and beliefs of others. They write good, imaginative accounts, as if from their own experience, of such religious events as a Baptism, a visit to a mosque, or how the life of Nicky Cruz was changed by his religious conversion.
- Many pupils explore their own religious beliefs and experiences of life and relate them well to such religious concepts as that of pilgrimage. They understand how pilgrimages draw people closer to God. More able pupils wrote very personal and moving prayers that they would make if they were pilgrims visiting Lourdes.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils are familiar with the origins of Christianity and its continuing impact upon contemporary society. They are aware of key events in the life of Jesus.
- Pupils consider such fundamental questions as whether God exists and whether there is life after death. They can present simple arguments for different answers to such questions and explain their own beliefs.
- Pupils reflect well both individually and in groups on their personal beliefs, values and attitudes in response to such moral and ethical issues as abortion, divorce and euthanasia.
- They understand and can identify the distinctive responses of different Christian traditions to these issues and make a reasonably argued case for their own views.
- Pupils' views on ethical matters are based upon sensitivity to the complexity of life and death issues. They generally adopt a sound moral position.
- In their written work and in class discussion many pupils use a good subject vocabulary.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils with SEN have poor recall of previous learning so do not have a solid base of knowledge or understanding of religious belief or practice.
- Many pupils of lower ability do not think hard in response to questions in class. They prefer to guess at answers and frequently confuse the terminology, beliefs and practices of different religious traditions.
- Many pupils have large and significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding as a result of their erratic or poor attendance record.

#### **KS4**

- Not all areas of study are covered as a result of the short time allocated to religious education. Pupils do not meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in either the depth or breadth of study required.
- The poor attendance record of many pupils further diminishes their standards of achievement.

## **Religious studies**

Standards of achievement in this KS4 subject are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the main features of Christianity and Judaism.
- Many pupils in Y10, particularly those who are more able, can confidently and capably research a topic such as the celebration of the Passover and make a presentation of their research to their fellow pupils.
- The religious vocabulary of many pupils includes some difficult words and concepts that they use accurately and with understanding in their written work and in class discussions.
- The small groups of pupils who attended the voluntary revision lessons in Y11 have a purposeful approach to answering exam questions, writing thoughtfully and quickly.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some less able pupils in the revision classes in Y11 have significant gaps in their knowledge of Judaism.
- Less able pupils in Y10 are reluctant to think for themselves and depend too much on the teacher to direct their work.
- Many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding as a result of their unsatisfactory attendance.

## **Personal and social education**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils work cooperatively in pairs and groups.
- They gain good knowledge and understanding of personal safety matters and hazards to health, such as smoking, alcohol and drug abuse. They appreciate the value of exercise and good dietary habits.
- They learn about personal relationships, develop understanding of the physical facts of growing up and sexuality, and put them in the context of relationships and values.
- Pupils have a good awareness of their own physical and emotional development and of the influences and pressures upon them, including the nature of relationships and the changes that take place. They recognise, to some extent, moral dilemmas.

- Pupils learn about the problems in society such as racism, bullying and other aspects of anti-social behaviour, and begin to understand cultural differences and the place of the individual in society.
- Pupils develop an understanding of the world of work and explore their own aptitudes and interests.

#### KS4

- Pupils develop a mature understanding of health education and explore in more detail the dangers of drug use, the risks involved in sexual behaviour, and learn where to get help and advice.
- Pupils learn about the structure of multi-racial society and the various issues and problems facing it. Many pupils' comments and actions indicate that they value cultural diversity and that they respect others' views and beliefs.
- They identify a set of values and principles by which to live.
- Many pupils appreciate that sustainable development is essential for the good of global development.
- Pupils are prepared for the world of work, identifying their own inclinations and ambitions, making career choices.
- Good contributions are made in whole-class discussion and in group work – pupils often make good progress in speaking and listening, and work cooperatively.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### KS3 and KS4

- Very occasionally individuals can have difficulty taking discussion activities seriously and can make irrelevant contributions.
- Some pupils are unwilling to contribute to general discussion unless directly questioned.
- Those who choose to absent themselves from PSE sessions fail to learn valuable lessons.

#### **Drama**

Standards of achievement in KS3 are good and in KS4 standards are very good.

#### **Good features**

##### KS3

- Most pupils listen attentively and respond readily to instructions with enthusiasm.
- They collaborate well in pairs and groups to negotiate plans for presentations.
- There is good development of skills in adopting and sustaining roles. In tableaux, standards are often good with appropriate use of movement, gesture and facial expressions.
- There are perceptive comments made on the work of classmates, which include the use of technical terms such as spot lighting, impromptu improvisation and thought tracking.
- Most pupils understand the conventions of script writing, which include appropriate layout and stage directions.

##### KS4

- In GCSE examinations in 2003, 74 percent of pupils gained A\* - C grade passes. This represents very good progress and is better than the average grade achieved within the UA and nationally.
- There is very good understanding and knowledge of scripts including setting, characters, plot and themes.
- There is clear development in evaluations of plays seen. Pupils show a good critical understanding of set design and technical effects.
- They collaborate very well in groups to produce devised and rehearsed scenes of a very good standard. They demonstrate effective use of voice, tone, gesture, movement and facial expressions. Many create mood and atmosphere.
- Most pupils know how to action a play. They have ideas on the interpretation of characters as well as the design of sets, costumes and the use of effects.
- There are very good standards of self and peer evaluations which include use of technical terms such as multiple characters and cross cutting.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Written work is often flawed by technical errors. There is insufficient drafting to improve writing.
- In a few cases, pupils do not concentrate fully.

#### **KS4**

- There are no significant shortcomings

### **Business studies**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory overall in this KS4 subject.

#### **Good features**

- A small majority of pupils in Y10 have a good understanding of business terminology and can apply business principles to a range of tasks.
- A small majority of pupils have a good understanding of the difference between fixed and variable costs.
- A minority of pupils had completed coursework to a good standard.
- ICT skills are used effectively by a majority of pupils to enhance the presentation of their work.

#### **Shortcomings**

- A significant number of pupils has a less secure recall of key concepts, and has difficulty applying them to a range of tasks.
- The coursework submitted by a majority of pupils in Y10 is of a satisfactory standard. At present, there is insufficient depth in the application of business principles when considering how a business organisation functions.

## **Child development**

Standards of achievement in this KS4 subject are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- Whilst recent GCSE results are below national averages, pupils often achieve grades that exceed expectation.
- Pupils demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of the care, development and safety of babies and young children.
- They study a range of issues relating to parenting and make good use of learning experiences gained from visiting childcare practitioners and visits to local baby-care units.
- Y10 pupils focus well in class and are able to extract relevant information from resource material.
- Pupils carry out a number of perceptive observations of individual children. Many record their results well and make appropriate comparisons to developmental norms.
- Y11 pupils are able to plan and prepare useful educational items to benefit their study child.

### **Shortcomings**

- A significant proportion of Y11 pupils have not completed important elements of coursework.
- A minority of child studies are descriptive rather than analytical.
- Some Y10 project work and information leaflets lack careful presentation.
- Irregular attendance affects progress and achievement of a minority of pupils.

## **Catering**

Standards of achievement in this KS4 subject are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- Y10 pupils are developing a sound understanding of the structure, practices and technical language relating to the catering industry.
- They demonstrate appropriate knowledge of nutrition and food commodities and usually make healthy choices when they plan for practical sessions.
- Pupils show good awareness of related hygiene and safety rules and procedures, and most follow these in lesson activities.
- Making skills are generally good. Pupils prepare useful work plans and handle tools and equipment confidently and competently. Completed food products are well finished.

### **Shortcomings**

- A few pupils do not prepare well for practical sessions and this inhibits the development of their practical skills.
- A minority of pupils have gaps in their work, often accompanied by poorly organised and presented class files.
- Erratic attendance hinders the progress and achievement of a small number of pupils.

## **Leisure and tourism**

This is a recently introduced GCSE vocational course and is followed by small groups of pupils in KS4.

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge of the vocational area and demonstrate a good understanding of past and current work.
- They make very good use of the local community as a first-hand source of evidence with beneficial visits to facilities such as hotels, leisure and recreation centres.
- They work productively as individuals and in small groups.
- They access relevant information from a wide range of sources and show maintained progress in communication, numeracy and the use of computers.
- Individuals appreciate the importance of marketing and customer service to the success of an organisation; they use their own experiences to consolidate their findings.

### **Shortcomings**

- In a small minority of cases, the completed assignments lack sufficient detail to achieve the higher grades but for the individual pupils, reflect positive progress since the start of the course.

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **8.1 Progress since the previous inspection**

There is no previous inspection report for this school.

## **8.2 Key issues for action**

- 1.** Continue to raise standards in **all** subjects, but particularly in those where standards of achievement are currently assessed as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
- 2.** Continue and extend efforts to combat pupils' absenteeism.
- 3.** Ensure that there is consistent practice with respect to the setting, completion and marking of homework. Also ensure that pupils' personal organisers are used effectively.
- 4.** Comply with the statutory requirements for the provision of religious education and acts of collective worship for all pupils.
- 5.** Working together with the UA, continue to improve the condition of the learning environment.
- 6.** Monitor closely and further evaluate the provisions made for pupils with SEN, and similarly for those involved in the alternative curriculum.

### ***Acknowledgement***

*The registered inspector and team wish to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy before and during the inspection.*

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Daniel James Community School
School type	Comprehensive/Community
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Address of school	Heol Ddu Treboeth Swansea
Post-Code	SA5 7HP
Telephone Number	01792 771935

Headteacher	Mr P Thomas
Date of appointment	April 2001
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Clr Ceinwen Thomas
Registered Inspector	Mr B Medhurst
Dates of inspection	17 – 20 May 2004

### B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Y14	Total
Number of pupils	172	210	204	182	180				948

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	54	2	56.8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio	16.7 to 1
Average teaching group size	22.4
Overall contact ratio	74.4%

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	86.8	84.2	77.8	73.4	69.9			78.6
Term 2	82.6	78.2	70.6	79.5	80.8			78.2
Term 3	89.0	86.5	81.3	79.4	88.9			84.9

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	46.0
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	113 temporary 0 permanent

## C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

<b>National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2003</b>														
Total number of pupils in Y9: 184														
<b>Percentage of pupils at each level</b>														
			D	A	N	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	EP
EN	Teacher assessment	School	0.5	11.9	1.1	0	0	1.1	14.6	18.9	37.3	9.2	5.4	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	2	9	22	34	21	9	0
	Test	School	0	12.8	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	14.4	23.9	25.0	12.8	5.3	n/a
		National	0	4	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	23	31	21	9	n/a
MA	Teacher assessment	School	0.5	12.4	1.1	0	0	0	13.5	22.2	33.5	14.6	2.2	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	9	22	26	27	13	1
	Test	School	0.5	14.9	5.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	11.2	25.5	27.7	12.8	1.6	n/a
		National	0	6	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	22	23	27	12	n/a
SC	Teacher assessment	School	0.5	7.0	0.5	0	0	1.6	23.7	36.0	18.8	11.8	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	9	22	32	24	10	0
	Test	School	1.1	14.4	5.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.6	34.0	21.3	7.8	0.5	n/a
		National	0	4	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	20	32	24	11	n/a

<b>Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and English</b>			
<b>by Teacher Assessment</b>		<b>by Test</b>	
In the school:	25	In the school:	20
In Wales:	54	In Wales:	53

D - Pupils exempted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum  
A - Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence  
N - Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence  
W - Pupils who are working towards level 1  
EP - Exceptional Performance, where pupils in Key Stage 3 perform above level 7.

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, ELQ and Equivalent Achievements</b>			
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2003: 198			
<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2003:</b>			
	School	UA	Wales
were entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	62	84	87
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent	14	48	51
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-G or equivalent	58	82	85
achieved GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science and English or Welsh first language	10	36	38
entered at least one ELQ, GCSE short course or GCSE equivalent	92	95	97
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-C	44	71	74
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-G	80	91	93
achieved no graded GCSE	20	9	7
achieved one or more ELQ only	6	2	3

## **D. The evidence base of the inspection**

- 18 inspectors spent the equivalent of 53 days at the school.
- 177 lessons, including full and part time sessions were observed covering all curricular areas and PSE.
- Inspectors attended assemblies, tutorial sessions, registrations, and observed a range of extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors attended a PSE Focus Day prior to the inspection week.
- Inspectors held many discussions with the headteacher, members of the school's leadership team, curriculum leaders, staff with whole-school and/or year group responsibilities, and members of support staff.
- The registered inspector met the staff and some pupils prior to the inspection.
- The registered inspector and a colleague met with the governing body prior to the inspection week and reported the main findings to them following the inspection.
- Work across the curriculum, from representative pupils from each year group was examined. Pupils' work was also scrutinised during lesson observations.
- Fourteen parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. Twenty-four replies to the questionnaire were received and analysed.
- Comprehensive documentation provided by the school was scrutinised before and during the inspection.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

{PRIVATE }Team member	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr B W Medhurst Registered Inspector	Personal and Social Education	Context, Main findings, Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning, Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum, Numeracy, Teaching, Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement, Leadership and efficiency, Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning, Key issues for action
Dr M H L Snow Lay Inspector		Behaviour and attitudes, Attendance, Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions, Partnership with industry
Mr S G Davies	Science (Chemistry), Business studies	Curriculum
Mr G W Leech	English	Assessment, recording and reporting, Literacy
Miss P Rourke	Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
Mr S Gale	Design and technology, Information technology	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare, Information and communication technology
Mr A Edwards	Mathematics	
Mr E Bowyer	Geography, Leisure and tourism	
Mrs L Bithell	Drama	
Mrs G Holland	Modern foreign languages	
Mr T Lewis	Welsh	
Mrs M Herbert	Design & technology, Catering, Child development	
Mr D Jones	Biology	
Dr K Davies	Physics	
Mr E Forster	Art	
Mrs A Newman	History, Sociology, Psychology	
Mr A W Jones	Music	
Mr B McCann	Physical education	