

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

**A Report on the Quality of Education in**

**Darland High School  
Darland Lane  
Rossett  
Wrexham  
LL12 0EN**

**School Number: 6654034**

**Date of Inspection: 15/10/07**

**by**

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17193**

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Darland High School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Darland High School took place between 15/10/07 and 18/10/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Terence Andrew O'Marah undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	good with outstanding features
<b>Grade 2</b>	good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Grade 3</b>	good features outweigh shortcomings
<b>Grade 4</b>	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
<b>Grade 5</b>	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

**Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.**

This school received a **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

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## A glossary of terms used in this report

<b>Careers education and guidance</b>	A planned programme to teach pupils about career opportunities and to provide each pupil with individual career guidance.
<b>Core subject indicator</b>	For key stage 3: The percentage of pupils gaining at least level 5 in each of the core subjects.  For key stage 4: The percentage of pupils gaining grade 'C' or better in the GCSE examinations in each of the core subjects.
<b>Core Subjects</b>	English or Welsh, science and mathematics.
<b>Key skills</b>	Important common skills necessary for learning, such as communication skills, number skills, information and communication technology skills, and bilingual competence.
<b>Learning Pathways</b>	Developments in the curriculum for learners aged 14 to 19, which offer a range of courses and teaching methods appropriate for young people's varying needs. These courses may involve links with other schools, colleges and other providers.
<b>Learning support assistants</b>	Trained assistants, who work alongside qualified teachers in the classroom. They may work with an individual pupil or a group of pupils.
<b>National Curriculum</b>	The subjects, and subject content, that all maintained schools must provide for all pupils.
<b>National Curriculum assessment</b>	For secondary schools, this is the assessment of pupils at the end of key stage 3 in English or Welsh, science and mathematics. In key stage 4, this is provided through a range of approved qualifications, the most common of these being the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).
<b>Public examinations</b>	Nationally recognised examinations commonly taken at 16 years of age and 18 years of age (usually GCSE and Advanced level (A level)).
<b>Pupils with additional learning needs</b>	Pupils who, for a wide range of reasons, have been identified as needing additional or modified support to help them learn successfully.
<b>Pupils with special educational needs</b>	Those pupils, within the overall category of additional learning needs, who need specific support, which, for pupils with complex needs, may be recorded within a statement of special educational needs.
<b>Similar schools</b>	All those secondary schools in Wales that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. For this school that is between 0% and 10%.
<b>Statutory requirements</b>	All of those aspects of school provision that the Welsh Assembly Government requires schools to provide.

**Vocational studies (courses)**

Courses of study related to career or employment skills.

**Work related education**

Teaching pupils about the nature of life in the workplace.

## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 Darland School is an English-medium, 11 to 16 years, community comprehensive school, situated in the village of Rossett, close to the Cheshire border. The school serves several village communities to the north of Wrexham. For some years pupils have opted to travel to the school from other areas of the town.
- 2 In October 2007 there were 771 pupils on roll, compared with 967 pupils at the time of the previous inspection in November 2001.
- 3 Pupils are drawn from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds. There are distinct areas of both socio-economic advantage and disadvantage within the school's catchment. Currently, 6.4% of pupils are registered as eligible for free school meals, which is below both the local and national averages.
- 4 The full range of ability is represented in the school population and there is provision for pupils in need of learning support as well as opportunities to extend more able and talented pupils. In addition there are two resourced units, one caters for pupils with dyslexia and one for pupils on the autistic spectrum.
- 5 At present, the school has 93 pupils on the special educational needs register, 38 of whom have statements of special educational need. There are currently four pupils in the care of the local authority.
- 6 The school is proud of its Welsh heritage and works hard to promote both the language and culture. English is the predominant language spoken at home.
- 7 In addition to the formal curriculum, the school offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular visits and activities. Many of the visits are residential and some are outside Wales. The school makes extensive use of outdoor educational centres in North Wales.
- 8 The school is committed to full participation in the Wrexham 14-19 Network providing pupils with greater access to available support and curriculum opportunities.
- 9 There are relatively few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds attending the school. Darland has established and is developing a number of links with schools in other countries.
- 10 Sport and music are important elements of school life and Darland pupils enjoy considerable success, competing and participating at local and national level.
- 11 Darland is set in a pleasant rural location. However, the school's accommodation is old and in need of extensive modernisation. The Unitary Authority is formulating a phased rebuilding programme for the school, on the existing site.
- 12 The school has received a number of prestigious national awards in recent years, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Health Promoting Schools' Award and the

National Autistic Society – Centre of Excellence Award. In addition, the quality of the school's work with the NSPCC, Peer Educators and Peer Supporters has been recognised nationally.

### **The school's priorities and targets**

- 13 Darland aims to be an inclusive school and great emphasis is placed on supporting each individual pupil to maximise his/her academic potential. The school seeks to promote high aspirations and pupils are encouraged to make positive use of the opportunities the school provides.
- 14 School improvement is supported by continuing professional development and coaching of staff, focusing on the provision of quality learning and teaching experiences for pupils.

### **Summary**

- 15 In accordance with the Education Act 2005, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that this school is in need of significant improvement.
- 16 The school has many good features, and it provides a safe and mostly happy environment for its pupils. Pupils develop well socially and personally. However, whilst examination results broadly match and sometimes exceed national averages, the school consistently underachieves against its full potential, particularly in key stage 4.

### **Table of grades awarded**

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

## Standards

### Grades for standards in six subjects inspected

Welsh second language	2	2
Mathematics	3	4
Design and technology	2	2
Geography	2	3
Art	2	2
Drama	-	3

17 When compared with the judgments noted in the previous inspection report, Welsh and art have improved in key stage 4, and art has also improved in key stage 3. There has been a decline in standards in mathematics and design and technology in both key stages and in geography in key stage 4. Drama has maintained its standards.

18 The standards that pupils achieved, at the different stages, in the six subjects inspected were:

65 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	6%	75%	19%	0%	0%
Key stage 4	7%	48%	38%	7%	0%
Key stages 3 and 4	6%	63%	28%	3%	0%

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

- 19 These figures show a decline in reported standards from the previous inspection.
- 20 Standards are significantly better in key stage 3 than in key stage 4.
- 21 There are some good features in achievement in key stage 3. The proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above in National Curriculum assessments is consistently better than the average for Wales in all three core subjects and the core subject indicator (CSI).
- 22 There are a number of shortcomings. Compared with similar schools, for the four years ending in 2006, the school underperformed and was in the bottom half of such schools in all three core subjects and the CSI. In 2006, over half of the non-core subjects were also in the bottom half when compared with these schools.
- 23 In key stage 4, the good features of achievement are that the school's results for all the main indicators of GCSE performance, and for the three core subjects, are all consistently at or above local and national averages.
- 24 There are, however, shortcomings in important areas:
- standards in mathematics at key stage 4 have shortcomings in important areas;
  - provisional results for 2007 indicate 57% of pupils gained five or more GCSE grades A\* to C. This is only one percentage point above the figure gained at the time of the previous inspection, and lower than it was in 2004;

- the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C has shown no trend for improvement since the previous inspection;
- the standards seen in the six subjects which were inspected had shortcomings in 45% of the lessons seen; and
- the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\* to C, and the average points score per pupil, consistently place the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools. Most of the other indicators place the school in the bottom half.

- 25 In those lessons where pupils make good progress, they behave well and focus on their work throughout the lesson. Where there is underachievement, pupils often fail to concentrate for the whole of the lesson, and behaviour is sometimes unacceptable. In some subjects there is incomplete work in pupils' books.
- 26 Whilst many pupils are developing the capacity to work independently, there is a minority who lack the confidence to do so.
- 27 Pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are generally good. Their skills in numeracy are less good. Their level of skills in information and communication technology is good in key stage 3, but less well developed in key stage 4.
- 28 Levels of attendance in the school are good.
- 29 Many pupils are able to use their imagination and enterprise well to generate ideas. They co-operate productively in pairs and groups, and in many lessons they are able to review their own progress and decide what they need to do in order to improve
- 30 The bilingual skills of pupils develop well. The increasing use of Welsh around the school raises pupils' awareness of the benefits of becoming bilingual.

### **The quality of education and training**

- 31 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the key stage 3 and key stage 4 lessons observed during the inspection:

109 Lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	15%	59%	24%	2%	0%
Key Stage 4	6%	47%	36%	11%	0%
Key stages 3 & 4	11%	54%	29%	6%	0%

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

- 32 Since the previous inspection, the number of lessons awarded grades 1 and 2 has slightly increased in key stage 3, but there has been a decrease of 31% in the number of lessons gaining the same grades in key stage 4. The quality of teaching and assessment is significantly better in key stage 3 than in key stage 4.
- 33 Teachers' relationships with pupils are good overall. Teachers create a supportive and caring atmosphere in the majority of lessons.

- 34 In the good lessons, teachers challenge and motivate pupils of all abilities to achieve at least good, and sometimes high standards of work and behaviour. In many of these lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils.
- 35 In many lessons, particularly in key stage 4, there are significant shortcomings. The pace is much slower with less variety in the strategies used, often resulting in pupils not focusing on the task set. In a majority of these lessons, teacher expectations are not high enough.
- 36 In a significant proportion of lessons, pupils chatter as the lesson is progressing which slows the pace of the learning. In a small number of lessons where the behaviour was unacceptable, this disrupted the learning for all pupils in the class.
- 37 Learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties.
- 38 Wherever appropriate, teachers take opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of race and gender, matters of equal opportunities, the environment and healthy lifestyle.
- 39 There is a whole school policy to inform departmental practice based on "Assessment for Learning." Practice is good in some subjects, but there are inconsistencies of practice in the day-to-day assessment of pupils' work.
- 40 Where there is good practice in assessment, under-performance is identified and appropriate action taken. Parents are appropriately informed of progress by letters, by the use of pupils' planners and in parents' evenings.
- 41 The school's pupil performance database is comprehensive, and is used to track pupils' progress. The quality and depth of the analysis of data at subject level varies, so that its full potential to help improve the quality of teaching and learning is not realised.
- 42 Parents and guardians receive three reports per year which include predicted end of key stage levels or grades for each subject and indicate if pupils are working towards achieving the predictions. The third report includes comments by form tutors on pupils' personal, social and learning skills and involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- 43 Subject leaders and the leadership team analyse examination results and targets for improvement are appropriately set and reviewed later in the year.
- 44 The curriculum, which has balance and breadth, meets learners' needs and allows access for all pupils including those taught in the two units at the school. There are some imbalances in the allocation of timetable time to some subjects at both key stages.
- 45 The school has made good progress in extending its learning pathways with the provision of additional courses both at school and at local colleges.
- 46 The personal and social education programme for pupils in the two key stages is fragmented, and does not meet the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) guidelines.

- 47 The school has been successful in gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark. In recent years a number of initiatives have been successful in raising the profile of key and wider skills in schemes of work and teaching strategies.
- 48 Many pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school.
- 49 The promotion of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has good features but some shortcomings. Many lessons and extra-curricular activities make the pupils aware of the culture of Wales and other places across the World.
- 50 Information provided for parents is clear, comprehensive and informative. There are good opportunities for parents to interact with and support school endeavours.
- 51 There are good links with Senior Citizens, with the Youth Club and the Rotary Club, but overall liaison with the community to support learning is under-developed.
- 52 There are strong partnerships with primary schools and Yale College.
- 53 The school does not meet the legal requirement of providing an act of collective worship for all learners.
- 54 All Y11 pupils undertake a useful work-experience placement. However, the poor allocation of time for work-related education and careers education and guidance results in inadequacies in the overall provision. There is a strong partnership with Careers Wales.
- 55 The provision for the development of bilingualism is good. The school has been successful in raising the profile of Welsh in the school.
- 56 There are a number of good features in the promotion of pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship.
- 57 The school is a caring and civilised community that is inclusive for pupils from difficult backgrounds.
- 58 The Student Assistance Programme provides a safe and supportive place where pupils can talk about the things that they find challenging.
- 59 The pupils who are 'looked after' by Social Services have good Individual Care Plans, and the school works closely with the relevant agencies.
- 60 The school has a well documented behavioural system. There were no permanent exclusions during the year preceding the inspection.
- 61 The Student Support Centre gives good support to pupils who are experiencing emotional or social problems.
- 62 Healthy lifestyles are well promoted across the school.
- 63 Effective procedures are in place for the protection of the pupils and there are clear documented procedures for assuring learners' well being and health.

- 64 The school has an effective system to identify pupils with a range of learning needs. The Learning Support Centre is very well organised and good progress is made by the pupils it works with. The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice is administered effectively and good links have been established with the pupils' parents.
- 65 Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties are effectively supported. They make very good progress and gain relevant outside accreditation at the end of key stage 4.
- 66 The Communication Centre provides high quality multi-sensory education for pupils who have been diagnosed as autistic. The integration of these pupils into mainstream classes and the progress they make in relation to their communication and social skills are outstanding.
- 67 Paired reading is successfully used to improve the reading skills of some Y7 pupils.
- 68 The school has very good success in supporting pupils with behavioural problems. All pupils referred to the Student Support Centre have relevant Behaviour Plans.

### **Leadership and management**

- 69 The headteacher and the leadership team have introduced many worthwhile initiatives and policies which have been developed at the school. The lack of detailed and precise planning of how these will be introduced, developed and monitored has reduced their effectiveness. All required policies are in place.
- 70 The school's promotion of equality for all is good.
- 71 The school has taken account of most national initiatives, particularly the 14 to 19 Learning Pathways.
- 72 Whole school targets are set annually in agreement with the UA. Given the underachievement reported earlier in this report, these targets do not represent the degree of challenge required to raise the school's achievements sufficiently.
- 73 In some subjects, pupils set or agree a range of targets for their own progress; this represents good practice.
- 74 Performance management is in place and monitors the quality of teachers and sets agreed objectives for improvement.
- 75 The school's self-evaluation process, whilst comprehensive in its coverage, is too descriptive and lacks rigour and precision. There is, however, good practice in some subject areas. The direct monitoring of teaching and learning is neither systematic nor consistent across the school.
- 76 Development plans, at all levels, lack the practical detail required to ensure that they actually deliver improvement.
- 77 Governors understand their roles in school management and are well informed by reports from the headteacher and other sources. Governors fulfil most of their

statutory responsibilities, but they have not ensured that all pupils are provided with the opportunity to participate in a daily act of collective worship.

- 78 There is a sufficient number of teachers and most are appropriately qualified, although a small amount of subject teaching is by non-specialists.
- 79 The range and supply of text books is limited. On many occasions pupils have to share. The provision of equipment for the teaching of discrete information technology lessons to all pupils is a good feature.
- 80 The library is small in size for the number of pupils on roll and its stock of books is below the recommended levels. However, it makes good use of the schools' library service.
- 81 Most rooms are fit for purpose and large enough to cater well for most class sizes. The school is, however, poorly served by its accommodation. The science department is short of one laboratory. A project to improve the quality of the school buildings has been agreed with the UA.
- 82 The indoor facilities for physical education are a good resource, shared with the community.
- 83 There are colourful and attractive displays in most classrooms and corridors which provide an effective and, on occasions, stimulating learning environment.
- 84 The development of teaching staff is a good feature. Training is linked to Performance Management, and the needs of the school, departments and individuals.
- 85 The financial management of the school is effective. The school does not provide value for money because of the underachievement identified in this report.

## **Recommendations**

- 86 In order to raise standards of achievement the school should:
- R1 improve standards of achievement in mathematics;
- R2 increase the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A\* to C;
- R3 improve the quality of teaching where:
- learning objectives are not clearly stated and pupils do not fully understand what they are doing;
  - expectations are not high enough, the pace is too slow and tasks lack challenge;
  - standards of pupils' behaviour are unacceptable; and
  - where standards are affected by the use of non-specialist teachers.

- R4 further develop the role of senior and middle managers in the systematic monitoring of both the quality of teaching and the quality of learning;
- R5 ensure that the self-evaluation process clearly identifies good features and shortcomings;
- R6 improve the effectiveness of development plans at school and subject level by including in them clear and precise intended outcomes, actions needed, resources and timescales; and
- R7 meet the requirements to provide all pupils with a daily act of collective worship and improve the provision for the teaching of personal and social education.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving this report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

## Standards

- 87 In accordance with the Education Act 2005, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that this school is in need of significant improvement.

### Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

**Grade: 4** Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

- 88 The school awarded itself a grade 3 for this key question in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team judged that standards in mathematics in key stage 4 and consistent underachievement, particularly in key stage 4, are important shortcomings.

### Key stage 3 and key stage 4

- 89 The following table shows the standards achieved in the six subjects of the curriculum inspected:

Subject	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Welsh second language	2	2
Mathematics	3	4
Design and technology	2	2
Geography	2	3
Art	2	2
Drama	-	3

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

- 90 When compared with the judgments made in the previous inspection report, Welsh and art have improved in key stage 4, and art has also improved in key stage 3. There has been a decline in standards in mathematics and design and technology in both key stages and in geography in key stage 4. Drama has maintained its standards.
- 91 The standards that pupils achieved, at the different stages, in the six subjects inspected were:

65 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	6%	75%	19%	0%	0%
Key stage 4	7%	48%	38%	7%	0%
Key stages 3 and 4	6%	63%	28%	3%	0%

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

- 92 The school just matches the national targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government for standards to be achieved by pupils in lessons by 2007. (65% of lessons to be graded 2 or better, and 98% of lessons to be graded 3 or better). These figures represent a decline in reported standards from the previous inspection. The standards observed in lessons are significantly better in key stage 3 than in key stage 4.

## **Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals**

- 93 On entry to the school, the overall ability of the current Y7 intake, as measured by their National Curriculum assessments in key stage 2, is above the national averages for all the core subjects.
- 94 In key stage 3, there are some good features in achievement. The proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above in National Curriculum assessments is consistently better than the average for Wales in all three core subjects and the CSI. All areas show small year on year improvements, which approximately match improvements for the whole of Wales. In 2007, girls outperformed boys in English by 11 percentage points, which is lower than the difference nationally. Performances were relatively even in the other two core subjects.
- 95 There are a number of shortcomings in the overall performance at this key stage. Compared with similar schools, for the four years ending in 2006, the school underperformed and was in the bottom half of such schools in all three core subjects and the CSI. In 2006, over half of the non-core subjects were also in the bottom half when compared with these schools.
- 96 In key stage 4, the good features in achievement are that the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C is above the average for the UA and matches the Wales average. The school also consistently exceeds the Wales and UA averages for both the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\* to G, and for those gaining the CSI. Over recent years the proportion of pupils gaining higher grades in the core subjects has been consistently just above the UA and Wales norms. Provisional data for 2007 indicates that girls did significantly better than boys in English, but that the gap between boys and girls was less in mathematics and science.
- 97 There are, however, shortcomings in important areas:
- standards in mathematics in key stage 4 have shortcomings in important areas;
  - the provisional results for 2007 indicate 57% of pupils gained five or more GCSE grades A\* to C. This is only one percentage point above the figure gained at the time of the previous inspection, and lower than it was in 2004;
  - the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C has shown no trend for improvement since the previous inspection;
  - the standards seen in the six subjects which were inspected had shortcomings in 45% of the lessons seen; and
  - the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\* to C, and the average points score per pupil, consistently place the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools. Most of the other indicators place the school in the bottom half.
- 98 Overall there is significant underachievement by pupils, particularly in key stage 4.
- 99 The school agrees targets for attainment annually with the UA. The school failed to reach the targets agreed for performance at GCSE in each of the last three years, and also failed to meet most of the targets agreed for key stage 3.

Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. They are making at least good progress in their literacy and organisational skills, and many of them achieve good GCSE grades in Y11.

### **Pupils' progress in learning**

- 100 The rate at which pupils acquire new skills and understanding varies across the school. Overall it is better in key stage 3 than in key stage 4. There are differences in the progress made by pupils in different subjects. The overall rate of progress made by pupils, particularly at key stage 4 is insufficient.
- 101 In key stage 4, some lessons had important shortcomings. Pupils made little or no progress through the lesson, and frequently failed to concentrate on the work they had been set. Often behaviour was poor.
- 102 Other shortcomings include lessons where pupils chat whilst the teacher is talking and call out answers in a manner that lacks courtesy and consideration for others. In some subjects there is incomplete work in the books of some pupils. In many of the lessons pupils often had periods of time when they were not fully engaged in learning, and so made only limited progress through the lesson.
- 103 There were a small number of lessons which were judged to have outstanding features. In these lessons pupils made excellent progress, and had very good understanding of the information and concepts they were studying. This included one lesson where the understanding demonstrated by lower ability pupils was judged to be outstanding.
- 104 Other good features include lessons where pupils showed good recall of previous work, responded accurately to the teacher's questions and where they showed a good understanding of the work being studied. In those lessons where there were no important shortcomings, pupils were able to maintain their concentration throughout the lesson.
- 105 The level of underachievement noted earlier in this section of the report means that the pupils are not as well prepared as they could be for the next stage of their education and learning.

### **The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills**

- 106 A majority of pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. They are usually well motivated and want to succeed. The values and expectations promoted by the school are understood and respected by most pupils.
- 107 There is good progress in personal, social and moral development. For example, pupils engage in charitable work, and adopt roles such as peer educators and school councillors. All show a good understanding of issues of equal opportunities and are sensitive towards diversity within society. Pupils with disabilities are well integrated and their needs are understood.
- 108 Pupils' skills in communication are good with no important shortcomings. Most listen attentively and respond readily to questions. Able pupils in particular, pose questions,

put forward opinions, justify decisions and extend responses. There is good use and understanding of subject vocabulary.

- 109 Reading skills are good. Pupils read aloud accurately and fluently. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. There is clear understanding of what is read and good development of skills of interpretation. Pupils engage in research and scan effectively to retrieve information. In key stage 3 pupils read for pleasure.
- 110 Writing skills are also good. Pupils write effectively in a range of forms and for different purposes. They write at length when required. Skills in presenting written work are good while skills in spelling, punctuation and structure are less secure in pupils of middle and lower abilities. Models are effectively used to support all pupils and writing frames support pupils with additional learning needs.
- 111 In 2005, the school achieved its qualification for the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the first time.
- 112 The numerical skills of pupils overall in both key stage 3 and key stage 4 have good features outweighing shortcomings. In both key stages there is evidence of good standards especially with the more able. Pupils with additional learning needs are identified and receive good support. Y7 pupils identified as needing support in numeracy are paired with Y10 pupils at registration to receive extra tuition on three mornings a week. A minority of pupils lack confidence in applying their numerical knowledge in varying situations.
- 113 The basic skills co-ordinator has produced subject booklets on the use of number. However, there is still no emphasis on consistency of terminology and practice.
- 114 Pupils' standards in using information and communication technology skills across the curriculum are good, particularly at key stage 3. They can use computers effectively to obtain information from a range of sources including the Internet. They show developing skills in analysing the information and presenting their findings effectively in many subjects. In design and technology and Welsh pupils' ICT skills are often very good. In key stage 4, too few subjects provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply and develop their skills, most notably, in the use of spreadsheets and database work.
- 115 Pupils achieve good standards in their wider key skills, such as working with others, problem solving and reviewing their own progress.
- 116 Pupils' bilingual skills develop well. Increasing numbers of pupils follow the Welsh GCSE full course at key stage 4. All other pupils follow the short course. Only a very small percentage of pupils do not sit the final examination. Results in both courses are considerably better than the national averages. The increasing use of Welsh around the school raises pupils' awareness of the benefits of becoming fully bilingual.
- 117 The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They relate well to one another and work well in groups. Most are courteous to staff and visitors. There is a minority, across both key stages, who do not adhere to these good practices. They are disruptive of lessons, particularly when teaching is un-stimulating,

where they may be disrespectful to teachers. Behaviour in corridors around school is sometimes unruly and disorderly.

- 118 Levels of attendance in school are good. Across Y7 to Y10 attendance has been around 93% over the last three years. Generous tolerance of study leave in Y11, which is recorded as authorised absence, brings attendance down, such that the whole school average in the last year was 91.6%. This is above local and National averages for all schools and level with similar schools in Wales. The school has maintained this level of attendance for at least the past three years. Unauthorised absence is generally low.
- 119 There are shortcomings in the preparation of pupils for participation in the workplace and community. Insufficient community links and shortcomings in work-related education mean that a full understanding of life after school cannot be assured.

## The quality of education and training

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

**Grade 3** Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 120 The grade awarded is one lower than the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report. The grade 3 was awarded because there were important shortcomings in a significant number of lessons, particularly in key stage 4. The grade was awarded on the evidence of the lesson observations in the inspection, whereas the grade 4 for key question 1 was confirmed with evidence from the inspection and other indicators.

#### Key stage 3 and key stage 4

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

- 121 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the key stage 3 and key stage 4 lessons observed during the inspection:

109 Lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	15%	59%	24%	2%	0%
Key Stage 4	6%	47%	36%	11%	0%
Key stages 3 & 4	11%	54%	29%	6%	0%

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

- 122 The grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment are just below the national profile that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector reported in her annual report for 2005-6. Nationally, teaching and assessment was awarded a grade 2 or better in 69% of lessons, and grade 3 or better in 95% of lessons.
- 123 Although the number of lessons gaining grades 1 and 2 has slightly increased in key stage 3, there has been a decrease of 31% in the number of lessons gaining the same grades in key stage 4 when compared with the previous inspection. Also, there has been a decrease in the number of lessons awarded the equivalent of grade 1, whereas the number of lessons awarded a grade 4 has increased from 2% to 6%.
- 124 The quality of teaching and assessment is significantly better in key stage 3 than in key stage 4.
- 125 Teachers' relationships with pupils are good overall. Teachers create a supportive and caring atmosphere in the majority of lessons.
- 126 Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and are familiar with new developments in their field. In lessons with good and outstanding features, teachers

show enthusiasm for their subject and make their lessons engaging and relevant to pupils.

- 127 Generally, teachers plan their lessons well. In about two-thirds of lessons, they share their lesson objectives with pupils so that pupils know the standard of work that the teacher expects. Teachers also clearly identify the key skills they expect pupils to apply and practise.
- 128 In lessons which were graded 1 or 2, teachers challenge and motivate pupils of all abilities to achieve at least good, and sometimes high standards of work and behaviour. In many of these lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils. Their teaching is stimulating and varied and is effective in keeping pupils focused on their work. In many of these lessons, teachers make pupils fully aware of the progress they are making and of how they can further improve their performance. Generally in these lessons, teachers provide good quality learning resources.
- 129 Some of these good features are also present in grade 3 and 4 lessons. However, in 35% of lessons overall, and 47% in key stage 4, there were shortcomings, some of which were important. In a number of lessons, the objectives for learning and the quality of work teachers expect are not made as clear. The pace is much slower with less variety in the strategies used, often resulting in pupils not focusing on the task set. In a majority of these lessons, teacher expectations are not high enough, with the tasks set being too predictable and lacking sufficient challenge. Pupils are often not entirely clear about what they have achieved or how they might have done something better.
- 130 In a significant proportion of lessons, teachers allow pupils to chatter as the lesson is progressing. In a number of grade 3 lessons, this slowed the pace of the learning, and in a small number of lessons where the behaviour was unacceptable, disrupted the lesson.
- 131 Learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. The majority of teachers have a good understanding of the learning needs of these pupils, ensuring they understand the lesson, and take part fully and make appropriate progress.
- 132 Wherever appropriate, teachers take opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of race and gender, matters of equal opportunities, the environment and healthy lifestyle.

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

- 133 Procedures and practices for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements have good features which outweigh shortcomings.
- 134 There is an appropriate whole school policy to inform departmental practice based on "Assessment for Learning." Practice is good in subjects such as drama, design and technology, English and history.
- 135 All subjects are involved in the development of assessment systems and strategies, but inconsistencies of practice in the day-to-day assessment of pupils' work in both key stages are evident, particularly in science and mathematics.

- 136 For example, in both key stages, not all teachers:
- explain the assessment criteria to pupils and give them models of successful day-to-day work;
  - write comments on day-to-day work which identify how far pupils have met the criteria and how they might improve; and
  - involve pupils in self and peer assessment so that they fully understand the criteria, their own strengths and areas where they might need to improve.
- 137 The school's database is comprehensive. It is accessible to all teachers and is used to track progress. The quality and depth of the analysis of data at subject level vary, so that its full potential to help improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not realised.
- 138 All subject teachers are required to summarise the achievements of pupils each term and compare them with predicted achievements. Where there is good practice, under-performance is identified and action taken. Learning co-ordinators also usefully access the data and compare pupils' current achievements in all subjects against those predicted, to identify underachievement.
- 139 A range of appropriate strategies is used to support pupils who are under-performing. For example, learning co-ordinators negotiate progress plans with the pupils. The learning coach and form tutors are also used to mentor and support pupils. In addition, all key stage 4 pupils are involved in annual target setting interviews with members of the leadership team. Parents are appropriately informed of progress by letter, by the use of pupils' planners and in parents' evenings.
- 140 Members of the leadership team monitor marking in books as part of the process of performance management. This monitoring process is insufficiently regular and frequent in all subjects to be rigorous and to drive up standards. The quality of departmental moderation, standardisation and monitoring also varies across the curriculum.
- 141 Organisation of assessment events is good. There is a schedule for assessments, external examinations and annual meetings for parents/guardians. There are three reports for parents of each pupil each year. The reports include predicted end of key stage levels or grades for each subject and indicate if pupils are working towards achieving the predictions. In addition, there are effort grades and assessment of achievements in key skills. The third report includes additional comments by form tutors on pupils' personal, social and learning skills and pupils' involvement in extra – curricular activities. Subject teachers are not required to comment on pupils' strengths and weaknesses and reports do not include subject targets for improvement. This does not support the development of target setting in subjects. There are opportunities for parents to respond to the reports on pupils' planners.
- 142 Subject leaders ensure that the requirements of examination boards, the National Curriculum and Code of Practice are met. Pupils with individual educational plans are involved in regular target setting and reviews.

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

**Grade 3**      Good features outweigh shortcomings

143 The grade awarded is one lower than the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report. The grade 3 was awarded because the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all learners. This is a breach of a statutory requirement and is thus an important shortcoming.

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

144 The curriculum overall meets learners' needs and allows access for all pupils including those taught in the two units based at the school.

145 Broadly, the curriculum offers balance, breadth and progression in most areas of study.

146 In key stage 3, most subjects are given sufficient curriculum time to cover the programmes of study. However, geography, history and religious education in Y7 and Y8 are given less teaching time than a number of subjects.

147 In key stage 4, the provision is extended through links with a number of other establishments. The school has made good progress in extending its learning pathways with the provision of other GCSE courses and introducing vocational courses both at school and at local colleges.

148 There is a shortcoming in the provision at key stage 4. Due to an imbalance in the allocation of time, some subjects have less time to complete courses.

149 The personal and social education programme for pupils in the two key stages is fragmented, and does not meet the WAG guidelines. Pupils in Y7 and Y8 have timetabled lessons; in the other three years provision is through three days focusing mainly on health issues. The narrow coverage in these days limits the opportunities for pupils to discuss important issues linked with their personal and social development.

150 The school has been successful in gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark. In recent years a number of initiatives have been successful in raising the profile of key and wider skills in schemes of work and teaching strategies. All pupils are assessed each term to judge their progress in all skills; this is now assessed against agreed criteria in each subject.

151 Many pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school. The programme of sporting activities is a strength with many pupils gaining success. Some clubs meet during the lunch-hour and a number of classes are held after school and at various times throughout the year. Many pupils have opportunities to visit outdoor education centres, theatres, field visits and a variety of visits abroad.

- 152 The school's provision to promote learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has good features that outweigh shortcomings.
- 153 The vast majority of pupils show respect to each other, adults, and visitors to the school. They work well together and behave responsibly in lessons. A minority of pupils show a lack of respect to teachers and prevent other pupils experiencing fully all the learning opportunities planned in some lessons.
- 154 Pupils are encouraged to express opinions and voice concerns through the School Council. They show concern towards others by fund raising for charities and good causes. However, there is a lack of respect for their own environment in the amount of litter dropped on the school site.
- 155 Pupils' awareness of spiritual issues is developed in a small number of subjects. The main focus is in religious education, where pupils are given opportunities to understand that there are some situations in life that do not have one clear answer, and to discover answers to questions for themselves. However, there has been no audit to identify or promote spiritual development across the curriculum. Pupils in some tutor periods do not have the opportunity to participate in a daily act of collective worship.
- 156 Many lessons and extra-curricular activities make the pupils aware of the culture of Wales and other places across the world. Pupils are gaining a good knowledge of the diversity of cultures within their own community and further afield.
- 157 There are several good features and only minor weaknesses in the partnership with parents, community and other education providers.
- 158 The literature for parents is clear, comprehensive and informative. It enables them to understand what the school provides and is seeking to achieve. The PTA and a range of parent and open evenings offer good opportunities for parents to interact with and support school endeavours.
- 159 There are good links with Senior Citizens, with the Youth Club and the Rotary Club, but overall liaison with the community to support learning is under-developed.
- 160 There are strong partnerships with primary schools and Yale College for Further Education. Recently there were good curricular links in a range of subjects between key stage 2 and key stage 3, but those in mathematics and science have been discontinued in order to implement a local authority literacy scheme. Although this initiative is successful, the breadth and quality of the school's transition programme has been reduced.
- 161 There are strong links with Initial Teacher Training institutes, including the involvement of some foreign students. Many departments benefit from the fresh thinking and innovation these students provide.
- 162 The school fails to meet the legal requirement of providing an act of collective worship for all learners. There are also shortcomings in the coverage of the Personal and Social Framework prepared by the Welsh Assembly Government.

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

- 163 Work-related education has good features but shortcomings in several areas.
- 164 All Y11 pupils undertake a useful work-experience placement that is well matched to their career aspirations. The Rotary Club help by providing mock-interviews. Pupils' diaries of the experience provide material that benefits coursework in English. However, a shortage of time in the personal and social education timetable results in scant coverage of important aspects of these placements, such as letters of application, the preparation of CVs, and the important feedback during de-briefing sessions.
- 165 The low allocation of time for work-related education and careers education and guidance results in inadequacies in other areas. Pupils in Y11 attend a Careers Convention at Yale College, and an occasional enterprise activity day provides an irregular opportunity for some pupils to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Careers Wales advisers provide useful interviews to guide pupils' career choices. However, there is no planned programme in which work-related matters are systematically addressed, and pupils miss out on opportunities to experience a range of enterprise and entrepreneurial activities.
- 166 The provision for the development of bilingualism is good. The Welsh department, with the support of the leadership team, has been successful in raising the profile of the language in the school. At the time of the previous inspection Welsh was not available as a full GCSE course in key stage 4 and only a small number of pupils sat the short course. Now, due to increasing demand, the full course is offered in two option columns at key stage 4 and, with a few exceptions, all other pupils sit the short course examination.
- 167 The Welsh department organises activities for pupils to develop their bilingual skills further, such as the annual school eisteddfod, educational trips to Cardiff and residential courses at Glanllyn. In support of the department's work, the use of Welsh is prominent in some subjects, for example, the development of bilingual worksheets in design and technology and bilingual comments on pupils' work in art.
- 168 Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is addressed effectively in the majority of subjects. An audit has not been carried out to ensure that it is embedded into the schemes of work of all subjects across the curriculum.
- 169 There are a number of good features in the promotion of pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include:
- An appropriate policy statement;
  - input in the teaching programmes of a number of subjects;
  - the work of the Darland International Group with links to schools in Lesotho, Sweden and Uganda;
  - the Fair Trade forum and the Fair Trade stall initiative; and
  - the success in gaining a number of Healthy School awards.

- 170 The strong partnership with Careers Wales and the local knowledge of governors ensure that the school takes account of employers' needs.
- 171 Overall, the school has planned a curriculum that is addressing national priorities in the development of bilingualism, key skills and extending learning pathways for pupils. There are shortcomings in some aspects of the present curriculum, in that there are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, and the personal and social education and work related programmes are underdeveloped.

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

##### **Grade 3**      Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 172 This grade is lower than the Grade 2 awarded by the school for this key question in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team reflects a number of shortcomings identified, including the quality of the impact of the monitoring of pupils' progress.
- 173 This grade is higher than the grade awarded to Key Question 1 because the pastoral care, the inclusion of all pupils and the provision for additional needs are good strengths of the school.
- 174 The quality of care, support and guidance for learners has good features that outweigh shortcomings. The school is a caring and civilised community that is inclusive for pupils from difficult backgrounds.
- 175 The role and responsibilities of the learning co-ordinators is well supported and guided by an assistant headteacher. There are very good links between the learning co-ordinators and the class tutors. However, the follow-up to the tracking of pupils' progress is not yet fully effective in tackling under-achievement.
- 176 The information handbooks and the guidance given for transition periods within the school are comprehensive and helpful.
- 177 Induction arrangements for Y7 pupils are good and members of staff have effective links with a large number of primary schools.
- 178 In the personal and social education programme there are limited opportunities for pupils to talk about current issues and topics that are important to young people. The time allocation restricts the knowledge and understanding pupils have of some topics.
- 179 The Student Assistance Programme provides a safe and supportive place where pupils can talk about the things that they find challenging.
- 180 The pupils who are 'looked after' by Social Services have good Individual Care Plans, and the school works closely with the relevant agencies. They are supported sensitively if they experience difficulty in school.

- 181 Teachers keep a close watch on pupils' attendance and punctuality and there are effective systems to promote good attendance. The Education Welfare Officer provides very good support to a number of Y11 pupils who are poor attenders.
- 182 The school has a well documented behavioural system. There were no permanent exclusions during the year preceding the inspection. The school internal exclusion unit has successfully reduced the temporary exclusions of pupils.
- 183 The Student Support Centre is a valued resource to support pupils who are experiencing emotional or social problems. It is successful in enabling pupils to develop strategies to cope with their problems that affect their learning.
- 184 Healthy lifestyles are well promoted across the school. The school has revised the menus in its canteen and has gained the Welsh Healthy Schools Award for the last three years. It also has a good record of sporting involvement and achievement which is being successfully expanded under the physical education and School Sport and 5 x 60 national initiatives.
- 185 Effective procedures are in place for the protection of pupils, and members of staff have received appropriate training.
- 186 There are clear, documented procedures for assuring learners' well being and health and an appropriate number of staff have recognised First Aid qualifications.

#### **The quality of provision for additional learning needs**

- 187 The quality of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs has good features and no important shortcomings.
- 188 The school has an effective system to identify pupils with a range of learning needs. All these pupils take part fully in the life of the school.
- 189 The Learning Support Centre provides good educational support for pupils in developing their numeracy and literacy skills. Good progress is made by these pupils. The Centre also provides good support and guidance for pupils, learning support assistants and teachers in the mainstream classes. Pupils with special educational needs are appreciative of the room as a place to meet and receive encouragement and support from committed staff who know them well. The teacher in charge of the Centre is experienced and enthusiastic and this is reflected in the activities and programmes offered to the pupils.
- 190 Pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties are effectively supported in the specialist Centre and in mainstream. They make very good progress and gain relevant outside accreditation at the end of key stage 4.
- 191 The Communication Centre provides high quality multi-sensory education for fifteen pupils who have been diagnosed as autistic. The integration of these pupils into mainstream classes and the progress they make in relation to their communication and social skills is outstanding.
- 192 Paired reading is successfully used to improve the reading skills and fluency of 24, Y7 pupils. Good training and guidance is provided for Year 10 pupils.

- 193 Learning support assistants make a good contribution to the quality of the provision and provide effective support across a range of activities, including in-class support, paired reading and preparation of materials.
- 194 The school has a record of very good success in supporting pupils with behavioural problems. Good use is made of the Student Support Centre to offer counselling and support. All pupils referred have relevant Individual Education Plans with short-term targets to encourage success. Pupils who disrupt class work are withdrawn under individual supervision to a separate room for specific periods of time. Proper procedures are followed. This provision has significantly reduced the number of temporary exclusions of pupils.
- 195 The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice is administered effectively and good links have been established with the pupils' parents. The good Individual Education Plans and the Progress Tracking Sheet successfully monitor individual pupils' academic, social and emotional progress in mainstream classes.

### **The quality of provision for equal opportunities**

- 196 The equal opportunities policy was written with inclusion in mind to ensure that there would be no discrimination against any member of the school community. The school is successful in meeting its objective.
- 197 The school gives all boys and girls equal attention and opportunity to study every subject and to participate in all extra-curricular activities. Pupils with additional educational and emotional needs are included naturally in all aspects.
- 198 In religious education pupils study examples of inequality, racism and prejudice. Teachers successfully use these studies to promote good race relations and respect for different cultures, religions and social groups. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups integrate naturally with their peers.
- 199 The school is vigilant in dealing with bullying. A recent review included a number of outside agencies which helped the school to refine its policy further. A number of pupils have been trained, by an outside agency, as points of contact for younger pupils if they experience any problems. Pupils indicated that any incident is dealt with quickly by staff.
- 200 An appropriate plan has been prepared to ensure that all pupils have full access to all parts of the school buildings.

## Leadership and management

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

**Grade 3**      Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 201 The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 202 This grade does match the grade given for key question 1 because of the good practice to be found in some areas of the school.

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

- 203 There is a published set of appropriate school aims, of which the primary one is "To realise the potential and maximize the achievement of all pupils in our care". Whilst it is a happy and caring school, where pupils are safe and where they develop well personally and socially, many pupils are under-achieving and so the school does not meet fully its own aims.
- 204 The head and the leadership team have introduced many worthwhile initiatives and policies which have been developed at the school. Lack of detailed and precise planning of how these will be introduced, developed and monitored has reduced their effectiveness. All required policies are in place.
- 205 The day-to-day organisation and running of the school are good. The management of the use and integration of the various special units at the school is successful and contributes significantly to the progress made by the pupils they serve. Leadership and support for the development of such issues as bilingualism and inclusion have been good.
- 206 The school's promotion of equality for all is good. All pupils receive equal treatment and their actions and attitudes demonstrate that they have absorbed these values. A particularly good example is the way in which pupils from the Autistic Unit work successfully in the main-stream school.
- 207 The school has taken account of some new national initiatives, particularly the 14 to 19 Learning Pathways. The provision for personal and social education and work related education does not fully meet the standards laid out in national guidance.
- 208 Whole school targets are set annually in agreement with the UA. Given the under-achievement noted earlier in this report, these targets do not represent the degree of challenge required to raise the school's achievements sufficiently. Targets are set using analysis of performance data and the use of predictive data. In some subjects pupils set or agree a range of targets for their own progress; this represents good practice.

- 209 There are three main processes in the school for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Performance management is in place and monitors the quality of teachers and sets agreed objectives for improvement.
- 210 The school then uses the local education authority model of self-evaluation which requires subjects and other areas to look at their performance against set criteria. This work, whilst comprehensive in its coverage, is too descriptive and lacks rigour and precision in identifying good features and areas for improvement. There is, however, good practice in some subject areas.
- 211 Finally, there is a process of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through the first hand collection of evidence by classroom observation and by scrutiny of pupils' work. This process is neither systematic nor consistent across the school, so that the impact of changes cannot be evaluated effectively.
- 212 The school is developing the use of data and data analysis. This is used very well in some departments but poorly in a minority of others.
- 213 Many decisions about the work of the school are discussed directly between individual learning managers and the leadership team. These are detailed and helpful discussions, but there is no forum at which these middle managers can collectively discuss issues and agree, with the leadership team, corporate approaches to school improvement.

#### **How well governors meet their responsibilities**

- 214 Governors understand their roles in school management and have an appropriate committee structure. Issues are discussed fully and detailed minutes recorded. As individuals, governors apply a good level of expertise and local knowledge to decision making and thus contribute effectively to strategic planning.
- 215 Governors' meetings are well informed by reports from the headteacher and when necessary from other sources such as the LEA, education support workers and pupil support groups. Link governors, e.g. with the School Council provide good direct evidence but these liaisons do not have an agreed agenda and operate inconsistently. Direct monitoring of processes and performance in school is insufficient, and governors have not successfully addressed several years of under-achievement.
- 216 Governors fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities. They provide a sense of direction for the school and, to a large extent, support it as a critical friend. They keep parents well informed of procedures, processes and performance.
- 217 They have not ensured that all pupils are provided with the opportunity to participate in a daily act of collective worship or that appropriate time is allocated to all subjects on the curriculum.

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

### **Grade 3**      Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 218 In its self-evaluation, the school awarded itself a grade 2 for this question. The inspection team has awarded a grade 3 because there is a lack of rigour and detail in evaluation and in the use of the outcomes for planning.
- 219 This grade does not match the grade given for key question 1. The school has identified most of the main strengths and shortcomings, and there is good practice in some areas of the school. However the quality of self-evaluation is inconsistent across the school, and the subsequent planning for improvement lacks the necessary practical detail.

### **How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated**

- 220 Many learning managers have a good understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of their areas of responsibility. This knowledge is not always a direct product of the school's self-evaluation scheme. The regularity and frequency of classroom observation, and the scrutiny of pupils' work, by both middle and senior managers vary across the curriculum so that current, accurate first hand evidence is not always available.
- 221 The school's self-evaluation scheme ensures that all the required aspects of its work is evaluated and there is a published schedule of activities. The ensuing documentation often contains much accurate detail that is, however, often descriptive rather than evaluative. Strengths and areas needing improvement are not always clearly indicated.
- 222 Too many evaluations do not lead to actions for improvement. Given that compared with similar schools, there is significant under-achievement, the process of self-evaluation does not focus sufficiently on monitoring pupils' progress and standards.
- 223 The self-evaluation process does involve all staff through their contributions to subject or area evaluation. A senior member of staff collects and collates these outcomes to produce the whole school evaluation report.
- 224 Individual learning managers report annually to the leadership team on the performance of their areas in the yearly cycle of public examinations and assessments. At this time they agree targets for the coming year and in general terms what needs to be done to realise these improvements. There is a follow up discussion later in the year. The quality and depth of the analysis of data at subject level vary, so that its full potential to help improve the quality of teaching and learning is not realised.
- 225 The views of pupils are regularly sought through the activities of the School Council. Parents have opportunities to respond to the termly school reports or on the pupils' planners. At the meeting inspectors had with parents, most present felt that they received constructive response if they contacted the school with any worries or concerns.

## **The effectiveness of planning for improvement**

- 226 The action plans that arise out of the self-evaluation process mostly identify appropriate priorities, particularly within subject areas. However, most of these plans, at all levels, lack the practical detail required to ensure that they actually deliver improvement. The identification of clear and precise intended outcomes is not found in most development plans. They often also lack the detail of how the desired improvements will be brought about, or the resources and time required to achieve change effectively.
- 227 The lack of practical detail in the development plans means that it is difficult to monitor improvement effectively or to hold colleagues to account for progress or lack of it.
- 228 The previous inspection reported health and safety issues related to the lack of space for the safe parking of the many buses that visit the school. This has been rectified. Issues still remain relating to the quality and range of accommodation, but a phased building programme has been agreed which is planned to start in the near future.
- 229 Since the previous inspection, standards in Welsh second language and art have improved. The improvement in the range of teaching techniques used has been variable, but there is good and occasionally very good work in some areas of the school. As yet, the provision of more challenging tasks for pupils, including the extending of the more able pupils is inconsistently applied across the school; as underachievement is identified in this report as an important shortcoming. Further development is needed to the monitoring of the quality of both teaching and learning if it is to become embedded in the school's practices and more consistent and effective in action. The school still fails to meet the requirement to provide a daily act of corporate worship for all pupils.

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

**Grade 3**      Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 230 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one lower than the grade 2 awarded in the school's self-evaluation report. The findings of the inspection team did not match a number of judgements made by the school. In particular, the school does not provide value for money.

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

- 231 The number of staff is sufficient for the school to run competently. The experience profile shows that about 47% of the teaching staff has 25 or more years experience and 28% with 10 years or less including two newly qualified teachers.
- 232 Most teaching staff are appropriately qualified and trained to meet all aspects, subjects, and the wider needs of the curriculum. However, there are non-specialists teaching mathematics, religious education and science. In mathematics this has had an adverse effect on standards and this is a shortcoming.

- 233 The 20 learning support assistants work well with subject teachers and the learning support co-ordinator. A good feature of their work is the weekly recording of the work individual pupils have completed. They provide good support and encouragement to a limited number of pupils with learning and behavioural problems. Their work is effective.
- 234 The bursar and administrative staff ensure that the office, reception, reprographic area and the library run competently. The caretaker is responsible for the day to day maintenance of the site and contributes well to the daily routines of the school.
- 235 Two cover assistants look after classes for absent staff, otherwise they are deployed beneficially to other support roles.
- 236 Technician support in science, information technology, and design and technology is very good overall. However, at present, the design and technology area is managing the situation despite the long term absence of their technician.
- 237 The quality and quantity of learning resources have good features outweighing shortcomings. Low capitation allocations to departments mean that the range and supply of text books are limited. On many occasions, pupils have to share.
- 238 The provision of equipment for the teaching of discrete IT lessons to all pupils is a good feature. Although access is limited on occasions, many subjects across the curriculum use ICT effectively in their teaching.
- 239 There is an increasing number of interactive white boards and projectors. They are well used to enhance teaching in a number of subject areas using suitable software and Power Point presentations.
- 240 There is effective use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum. These include visits to museums, theatres and abroad. On occasions, visiting speakers enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- 241 The library is small in size for the number of pupils on roll and its stock of books is below recommended levels. However, it makes good use of the schools' library service. It is used both by subjects across the curriculum and by pupils for independent learning. It is open for longer than the school day and is well run by the librarian. It also houses ten computers which are used for small classes, and by individual pupils to improve the presentation of their work and for research on the Internet.
- 242 Overall, the school is poorly served by its accommodation. It is basically sufficient for the numbers of pupils currently on roll and meets the pastoral and academic needs of the curriculum.
- 243 For the number of pupils in the school, the permanent accommodation is insufficient and inadequate. The teachers in mobile classrooms try hard to make the most of their environment to overcome the difficulties caused by varying weather conditions. Parts of the permanent buildings have structural defects and have been poorly maintained. LEA projects to improve the buildings are in hand and a start is imminent.

- 244 Most rooms are fit for purpose and large enough to cater well for most class sizes. There are colourful and attractive displays in most classrooms and corridors, which provide an effective and, on occasions, stimulating learning environment.
- 245 The indoor facilities for physical education including a sports hall and a separate gymnasium are a good resource. This is shared with the community. The range and quality of outdoor facilities are insufficient for the school.
- 246 Other shortcomings include:
- the science department is short of one laboratory;
  - the lack of effective sound proofing of walls between language and other subject rooms; and
  - the partition between two classrooms does not muffle any sound.
- 247 Other deficiencies include the one hall being able to accommodate only one year group at a time, and insufficient room in the drama studio for two time-tabled drama classes to be taught at the same time.

**How effectively and efficiently resources are managed to provide value for money**

- 248 The deployment and management of nearly all staff is adequate. For most staff, there is good and effective use of their time, expertise and experience. However, the employment of ten part-time staff creates some imbalance in the timetable for a small number of classes.
- 249 A good feature is the continuing professional development of the teaching staff. Training is linked to performance management, the school development plan and the needs of departments and individuals. It is well co-ordinated and courses attended by staff are evaluated and used to the benefit of the school. Teaching staff have benefited from the leadership and middle management courses arranged by the school.
- 250 The programmes and support for newly qualified teachers, for the extended professional development of recently qualified teachers, and for initial teacher training students are comprehensive.
- 251 The school has implemented its strategy for the workload agreement and has implemented the school's structure for the new teaching and learning responsibilities.
- 252 The financial management of the school is effective. The school conscientiously pursues all grants and sponsorship that are available.
- 253 Salary costs for the school are relatively high due to 47% of staff having 25 years or more experience. This, along with other priorities and commitments, has meant that a deficit budget has had to be set for this year. This deficit has been increased due to inaccurate pupil numbers being initially financed. The LEA has approved the deficit.
- 254 The total amount of capitation is low for a school of this size. The distribution to subject areas is formula based.

- 255 The finance committee meets regularly and it receives detailed up to date reports from the bursar and headteacher. Financial decisions are well focused on the curriculum needs and the educational priorities identified in the school development plan. The school reviews and uses its resources and finances competently.
- 256 The bursar is responsible for the competent day-to-day running of the school's finances. The headteacher and learning managers are provided with immediate breakdowns and current balances. School spending is closely and carefully monitored.
- 257 The very minor recommendations of the recent auditors' report have been addressed.
- 258 The school does not, however, provide value for money. This is because of the underachievement identified in this report.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Welsh second language

**Key stage 3 Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings

**Key stage 4 Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings

259 Increasing numbers of pupils follow the GCSE full course at key stage 4. All other pupils, including those with special educational needs follow the GCSE short course. Very few pupils do not sit the final examination. Results on both courses are significantly better than the national averages.

#### Good features

##### Key stage 3

260 Pupils make good progress in all language skills over the key stage. Their attitude to learning Welsh is very positive. In lessons pupils focus on improving their standard. During individual writing tasks they work diligently. When they complete one task they move quickly onto the next.

261 Standards in speaking are good. Pupils respond to questions accurately and enthusiastically. They vary their responses. They work effectively in pairs and small groups to create dialogue. They show initiative in adapting language to move the discussion forward. More able learners in Y8 are sufficiently confident to participate in a "hot seat" activity where they answer a range of quick-fire questions from their peers without prior preparation.

262 Without exception, pupils listen carefully to each other and to their teacher. They record facts promptly and accurately from taped conversations.

263 Pupils read to a good standard. They extract the information they need from a range of reading materials to complete related tasks.

264 Pupils, relative to ability, are competent writers. They write in extended format from Y7. By Y9 the highest achievers make good use of a wide vocabulary and show a sound grasp of tenses.

265 Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress in all language skills over the key stage.

##### Key stage 4

266 Pupils' attitude to learning the language is equally positive in key stage 4. They build on the progress made in key stage 3 to achieve good standards. Pupils discuss a range of topics in groups and pairs as they are all attentive listeners. They support each other well to engage in lively dialogue. There is also a good rapport between peers during class discussion.

- 267 Standards in reading are good. When reading in groups or pairs, pupils translate quickly to demonstrate their understanding of the text. They research a range of sources for use in their oral or written work.
- 268 Standards in writing are good. Pupils structure their extended documents well. They express opinions on a range of social and moral issues. They use figures of speech effectively. The highest achievers, on both courses, produce accurate, interesting documents and show a sound grasp of grammar and spelling.
- 269 Pupils with additional learning needs achieve good results in the GCSE examination.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stage 3**

- 270 A small number of pupils are reticent to tackle less familiar words when responding to questions or reading aloud.

#### **Key stage 4**

- 271 A small number of pupils check their worksheets before engaging in conversation although they have the language skills to speak freely.

<b>Mathematics</b>
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**Key stage 3: Grade 3** Good features outweigh shortcomings

**Key stage 4: Grade 4** Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

- 272 Results in the GCSE for A\* to C grades have fluctuated over the last three years. In 2006, the results reached a high of 59%. This result was well above both the national and local averages. Overall, the girls achieved higher grades than the boys. For A\* and A grades, the boys achieved a greater number of higher grades than the girls. However, the unconfirmed results for A\* to C grades in 2007 have dropped by eight percentage points to 51%.

### **Good features**

#### **Key stage 3 and Key stage 4**

- 273 Across the age and ability ranges:
- a majority of pupils answer questions orally with clarity, understanding and accuracy; and
  - a minority of pupils are well focused, enthusiastic and have good achievement.
- 274 Their knowledge of number is being further developed and includes the use of vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and the relationship between them.
- 275 They have spatial awareness and understand the concepts of the area of plane figures and volumes of regular solids using the appropriate units.
- 276 Calculators are used accurately and appropriately by most pupils.

277 Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress with support.

### **Key stage 3**

278 Y7 pupils are gaining the sound skills of basic data handling techniques. They are using their knowledge of axes and co-ordinates to construct plane geometric figures.

279 Most pupils are developing a sound understanding of the basic rules of algebra.

280 The more able pupils in Y9 are able to solve quadratic equations using the trial and improvement method.

### **Key stage 4**

281 The more able students in Y11 have good skills and can sketch the graphs of curves using equations. They can apply translations to the curves appropriately. They make good use of graphical calculators in this work.

282 Most pupils have a good knowledge of basic geometric constructions.

283 They have a sound knowledge of the simplification of algebraic expressions.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stage 3 and key stage 4**

284 A minority of pupils lack confidence in their mathematical abilities.

285 Across the age and ability ranges, a small number of pupils are content to do as little work as possible.

#### **Key stage 4**

286 Incomplete and sub-standard coursework has had an adverse affect on GCSE grades.

287 Lower ability pupils do not always complete and present their work in a neat, logical way. They do not always correct work that is wrong.

288 Pupils' progress is hindered by a lack of challenge and pace in many lessons.

289 A small number of pupils have difficulty in concentrating and listening during lessons. As a result, they are unable to attempt the task set without additional help from the teacher.

### **Design and technology**

**Key stage 3: Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings

**Key stage 4: Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings

290 Standards attained in external examinations have fluctuated from above to just below LEA and Wales averages over the past few years. In 2006 they were just below the average in systems and control and resistant materials. They were above in graphics products. The 2007 provisional data show results are again in line with the averages for all design and technology subjects.

## **Good features**

### **Key stage 3**

- 291 Most pupils are developing a good understanding of the design process and principles and can apply these skills well in their project work.
- 292 Almost all pupils plan effectively for the making stage of their work and can work accurately and methodically when using tools to shape and process materials.
- 293 Well over two thirds of pupils produce well-crafted and finished products across the material areas and show a good understanding of the materials or ingredients used.
- 294 At least two thirds of pupils make good use of computers for some aspects of their design work. Their knowledge, understanding and use of computer aided design and manufacturing software are well established.
- 295 In textiles, most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of fibres and fabrics. They develop good skills in technical processes. They can adorn their products well using a broad range of processes including computer aided manufacturing techniques.
- 296 Lower ability pupils and those with additional learning needs are well supported in lessons enabling them to make good progress in designing and making their products. The outcomes produced by almost all of them are good indicating that they achieve to their potential.

### **Key stage 4**

- 297 Well over two thirds of pupils understand the design process well and make good use of a design process to guide their project work.
- 298 Almost all pupils' use the computer well to research their projects and to collect the relevant material that helps them finalise their design decisions. Most pupils also use computer aided design software well to enhance their presentations.
- 299 Overall, in graphics products, presentation skills are good. The most able pupils have very good graphical communication skills and produce imaginative and innovative solutions to design briefs.
- 300 In resistant materials, most pupils have good practical making skills in a range of materials. The most able have very good skills, as seen for example, in their innovative storage design solutions. Most pupils combine multi-materials well in their projects.
- 301 In systems and control, almost all pupils have a good understanding of electronic circuitry and a broad range of components. They can use specialist computer software well in designing and testing their circuits and systems.
- 302 In lessons, the support and guidance given to lower ability pupils and those with additional learning needs in all groups, enables them to make good progress and to achieve well in relation to their capabilities.

## Shortcomings

### Key stage 3

- 303 In a small number of pupils' design folios there is not always a clear link between their original design ideas and the final design chosen.
- 304 Pupils' presentation skills vary widely and are generally too low in a very small number of design folders.

### Key stage 4

- 305 Pupils' skills in making quick developmental design drawings are underdeveloped. The graphical communication skills of a very small number of pupils are weak.
- 306 Sporadic attendance by a minority, mostly boys, impedes their progress and the completion of their course-work.

## Geography

**Key stage 3: Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings

**Key stage 4: Grade 3** Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 307 GCSE Examination results have been consistently below national averages for A\* to C grades.

### Good features

#### Key stage 3

- 308 Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of lines of longitude and latitude.
- 309 Almost all pupils develop good geographical skills. They use maps, graphs, atlases, textbooks, information and task sheets with confidence. Their use of ICT for enquiry and recording purposes is good, particularly with reference to the 'key pieces' assignments.
- 310 Two thirds of pupils display a thorough understanding of the term 'development'. They apply this knowledge to explain the differences between More Economically Developed Countries (MEDC's) and Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDC's). They construct good quality mind maps to illustrate the major economic differences.
- 311 Almost all pupils can name the different types of rainfall and explain accurately the factors leading to the formation of relief, convectional and frontal rainfall.
- 312 Pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of the location of place. They use the atlas with confidence to plot selected cities on a world map using latitude and longitude lines as reference points.

313 Most pupils display a sound understanding of the types of migration accurately describing each type. They have a good understanding of why people move and categorise these correctly into 'push and pull' factors.

314 Pupils with additional learning needs produce work of a good standard. They display a good level of competency in the application of geographical skills.

#### **Key stage 4**

315 Over three quarters of the pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the processes at work in the formation of glacial landscapes. They use the appropriate terminology confidently to describe and explain specific glacial features.

316 Pupils have a sound grasp of the reasons for the introduction of China's 'one child' policy in 1978. They show a good understanding of both the positive and negative consequences of the policy's implementation on the social fabric of China.

317 The skills of enquiry and observation of two thirds of the pupils are developed and strengthened to a good standard by fieldwork activities. They complete detailed coursework assignments on beach processes in the Llandudno area using a range of geographical techniques with good, and sometimes very good, outcomes.

318 Two thirds of the pupils achieve good standards in their mapping and graphical skills. Their ability to analyse and interpret geographical data, particularly in their population studies, is good.

319 Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards in relation to their ability. They demonstrate a sound understanding of many aspects of population growth, movement and control.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **Key stage 3**

320 A significant minority of pupils are insecure in their understanding and use of geographical terminology, particularly with reference to their weather and climate studies.

321 A similar proportion of pupils' exercise books contain missing and incomplete work. Some of the work is untidily presented.

##### **Key stage 4**

322 The standards achieved by a significant minority of pupils are restricted by their failure to complete tasks in sufficient detail and depth. Responses both orally and written display a lack of detail in terms of both understanding and knowledge.

323 The exercise books of many pupils contain missing and incomplete work which has an adverse effect on outcomes.

324 A minority of the pupils are insecure in their understanding of the formation and location of glacial features and in applying the relevant geographical terminology to explain and describe the processes at work.

<b>Art</b>
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**Key stage 3: Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings

**Key stage 4: Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings

325 In the GCSE examination, pupils attain close to the national average at grades A\* to C. Boys' results are better than local but below the national average. Girls' results are better than local and close to the national average. Results are improving. Provisional data for 2007 indicates that standards overall now match the national average.

### **Good features**

#### **Key stage 3**

326 Pupils make good progress in acquiring essential craft skills in both two- and three-dimensional elements. They observe and record in line and tone with growing accuracy.

327 Most demonstrate creativity and imagination when working with new methods and processes.

328 They confidently use computers to research art.

329 When discussing art they are beginning to use an art vocabulary accurately, in both English and Welsh. Pupils are becoming aware of a range of Welsh artists and are able to apply their learning to their own paintings.

330 They develop an appreciation and understanding of the art of other cultures. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. Boys are beginning to catch up with girls in achieving the higher standards.

#### **Key stage 4**

331 Pupils make progress in developing as independent artists. They know how to research, reflect, select and develop their own personal creative artworks.

332 The majority take care in their work, develop a complete body of study and present their work in an exemplary way. They regularly support their practical work with useful factual annotation.

333 They use their art to explore and express their feelings on social and moral issues. They exploit a varied range of media.

334 Most often show a delicate use of colour when painting in wash, and an appreciation of rich colour in pastel. Girls continue to out-perform boys.

335 Higher ability pupils are now achieving more of the higher grades. Lower ability pupils achieve well by working to deadlines for completion of work.

## Shortcomings

### Key stage 3 and Key stage 4

- 336 Pupils lack skill and understanding in the creative use of computers.
- 337 Their knowledge of art is limited by the lack of opportunity to visit art galleries.
- 338 Pupils lack confidence in expressing their personal thoughts when writing about the art they have studied.
- 339 They do not understand the assessment process well enough to enable them to achieve higher standards.

<b>Drama</b>
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### Key stage 4: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 340 Results in GCSE drama examinations fluctuate from year to year. In 2006, results were above the national average.

### Good features

- 341 About three quarters of pupils listen attentively and respond readily to instructions with purpose. They collaborate well in groups to plan improvised scenes and tableaux. They negotiate decisions for improvement.
- 342 Pupils are developing skills in adopting and sustaining roles. There is clear empathy with characters and a good understanding of their feelings. About half of Y11 pupils are able to convey deep emotions to an audience.
- 343 Pupils of all abilities, including those with additional learning needs, achieve well in practical work. They make good progress so that by the end of the course they achieve good grades for a range of practical skills.
- 344 Almost all are developing understanding and use of technical terms such as 'tableaux' and 'cross-cutting'.
- 345 Pupils are appropriately involved in assessing their own work and that of others. Y10 pupils are developing knowledge and understanding of the criteria. Pupils in Y11 often justify the evaluative comments that they make.
- 346 Written work reflects a range of abilities. All pupils in Y11 have a good knowledge and understanding of plots, characters and themes in set plays. Able pupils in particular, write good critical evaluations of performances that they have attended and their own work. They include critical comments relevant to theatre design, positioning of actors and the use of scenery, costume, lighting and sound.

### Shortcomings

- 347 Almost half of the pupils in Y10 lack confidence in performance. They have difficulty in sustaining roles and are insufficiently aware of audience.

- 348 In about one quarter of lessons, the pace of work is slowed by off task chatting. Y10 pupils in particular have difficulty in maintaining concentration and self discipline.
- 349 Pupils of lower and middle abilities include insufficient evaluative comments in reviews of plays seen and their own work. In all cases, there is too little emphasis on comparing productions.

### **School's response to the inspection**

The Governing Body and staff welcome the report and acknowledge the contribution that the Common Inspection Framework makes to school improvement. We acknowledge and appreciate the observations and judgements within the report and will make full use of these in our school improvement process. It is recognised that the inspection process has afforded the school a valuable external audit, highlighting important matters to be addressed urgently.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations in the report. Our current school development plan already incorporates many of these recommendations but this will be amended in line with the observations made by the inspector. Whilst all recommendations will feature, particular emphasis will be placed on improving standards of achievement in mathematics and increasing the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A\* to C.

We acknowledge the inspectors' judgement that 'The school is a caring and civilised community that is inclusive for pupils from difficult backgrounds.' We are pleased that in coming to this judgement the inspector determined that aspects of the work done in our Communications Centre, supporting pupils diagnosed as autistic, are outstanding.

We are pleased to note that 'The provision for the development of bilingualism is good' and that 'The school has been successful in raising the profile of Welsh in the school'. This, we believe, has contributed to the significantly better than national average GCSE results in Welsh at the school.

References in the report to a number of other good features of the provision within the school are very welcome.

Our long held concerns about accommodation were confirmed in the report which indicates that the inspector judges the school to be 'poorly served by its accommodation' and that 'The science department is short of one laboratory.' We trust that existing proposals to rebuild the school will address these shortcomings.

The Governing Body, staff and pupils recognise the professionalism with which the inspection was conducted and appreciate the developmental feedback which was provided throughout the inspection process. The school recognises the significant benefits arising from the involvement of the school's nominee in the inspection process.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Darland School
School type	Community
Age range of pupils	11 - 16
Address of school	Darland Lane, Rossett, Wrexham.
Postcode	LL12 OEN
Telephone number	01244 571053

Headteacher	Mr. J.C. Hughes
Date of appointment	01/01/97
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority	Mrs. M. Buirski
Reporting inspector	T.A. O'Marah
Dates of inspection	15 – 18 Oct. 2007

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators (2007/2008)

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	126	136	167	154	188	-	-	771

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	44	10	49.72

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.50:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	21.9
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	80.29

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	95.3	91.8	91.9	91.6	85.5			91.1
Term 2	95.3	95.0	92.2	93.4	92.6			93.5
Term 3	93.8	94.3	92.5	90.9	90.5			91.9

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	6
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	67

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006														
Total number of pupils in Y9: 177														
Percentage of pupils at each level														
			N	D	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
English	Teacher assessment	School	1	2	0	0	0	4	17	37	25	15	0	
		National	1	0	0	0	2	8	21	35	24	8	0	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	1	2	0	0	0	6	15	39	21	14	2	
		National	1	0	0	0	1	6	18	24	32	15	0	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	1	2	0	0	0	2	14	23	40	18	0	
		National	1	0	0	0	0	6	19	33	27	12	0	

- D Pupils who have been disapplied, or pupils for whom teachers were unable to provide an assessment  
 N Pupils not awarded a level for reasons other than disapplication  
 W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)	
by Teacher Assessment	
In the school	68
In Wales	58

## Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	198
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	43

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	93	88	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	57	50	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	92	87	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	50	36	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	99	100	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	80	72	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	96	94	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	4	6	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	1	5	3

## Appendix 4

### **Evidence base of the inspection**

Prior to the inspection, full discussions were held at the school, between the registered inspector and the headteacher based on the school's self evaluation report.

The registered inspector held meetings with staff, governors and parents (27 parents attended) prior to the inspection.

109 lessons were observed, covering six subjects in detail and all teachers. Two assemblies and 22 registration periods were seen.

Inspectors interviewed members of the leadership team, learning managers, progress managers and other staff with whole school responsibilities, including members of the support staff.

Pupils' work was scrutinised, both as part of a structured cross-curricular book review, and within lessons.

Inspectors held formal discussions with groups of pupils from each year group and with the School Council. They also talked to many pupils informally.

172 parents returned a questionnaire sent out by the school prior to the inspection.

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
Terry O'Marah	Registered inspector;; key questions 1, 5 and 6
Mike Snow	Lay inspector; Behaviour; attendance; community; work related education; governors
Glyn Davies	Core Team: key questions 2 and 3; <b>g</b> eneral observation
Lyn Bithell	Drama: Core Team; key question 2B; Literacy; personal and social education; general observation
Alan Edwards	Mathematics; Core Team; key question 7: Numeracy
Heddwyn Evans	Core Team; key question 4; Spiritual development; general observation;
Mary Crandon	Welsh; Bilingualism
Margaret Herbert	Support in design and technology: Wider key skills
Anne Newman	General observation
Eric Forster	Art
Keith Hopkins	Design and technology; ICT.
Huw Llewelyn	Geography; global citizenship/sustainability
John Growcott	Peer assessor; general observation; promotion of healthy lifestyles.

**Contractor**           Atlantes Educational Services  
Technology House  
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Salford M6 6AP

### Acknowledgement

The registered inspector and his team wish to thank the governors, teachers and pupils of the school for their co-operation, tolerance and help during the inspection.

Report by Terence Andrew O'Marah  
Darland High School, 15/10/07