

**Inspection under Section 10 of the  
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Elfed High School  
Mill Lane  
Buckley  
Flintshire  
CH7 3HQ**

**School Number: 664/4011**

**Date of Inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2004**

**by**

**Mr T O'Marah  
17193**

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2005**

**Under Estyn contract number: T/01/04**

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Elfed High School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Elfed High School took place between 29<sup>th</sup> November and 3<sup>rd</sup> December. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr. T. 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. This summary report may be reproduced for non-commercial educational purposes but only as a whole and provided it is reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

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                             |

## Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years 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 attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain 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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| English  | 33          |
| Mathematics  | 35          |
| Science  | 36          |
| Welsh second language  | 38          |
| Design technology  | 41          |
| Information technology   | 43          |
| History  | 44          |
| Geography  | 46          |
| Modern foreign language  | 48          |
| Art  | 49          |
| Music  | 51          |
| Physical education   | 52          |
| Religious education  | 45          |
| Religious studies  | 55          |
| Business studies   | 56          |
| Travel and tourism   | 58          |
| Drama  | 59          |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Economics   | 60        |
| Home economics  | 61        |
| Health and social care                                    | 62        |
| Media studies   | 63        |
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| Law   |           |
| Sociology   |           |
| Psychology  |           |
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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Elfed High School is an authority maintained, English medium 11-18 mixed comprehensive school. In January 2004 there were 870 pupils on roll compared with 770 at the time of the previous inspection in October 1998. The intake at Y7 has remained stable for the last five years at between 140-150 pupils annually. The quality of links with local schools in the Buckley and Mynydd Isa Consortium is a strong feature of school life.
2. There were 121 students in the sixth form in January 2004 which rose to 149 in September 2004, as the school expanded the range of subjects on offer to meet the needs of the learners. A number of students regularly enrol from other schools. Some 60% of the school's Y11 currently choose to continue their studies in the sixth form.
3. Pupils are from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds with approximately a quarter coming from a significantly economically disadvantaged ward. The traditional heavy industries that previously formed the mainstay of employment in the community have largely been replaced by other light industries. Some families commute to Chester as house prices in Buckley are lower than in surrounding areas.
4. Only a very small number of pupils are from families in which English is not the first language. Although the school is proud of its Welsh heritage there are very few pupils on roll who speak Welsh in the home as a first language.
5. All ability ranges are represented in school though evidence would suggest the overall profile is skewed more towards the less able. There are currently 34 pupils with a statement of special educational need and 87 on the special educational needs register. The school has a deserved reputation as a caring community.
6. The recent 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations show the extent to which the school is held in high regard within the community but also the challenge of maintaining a high standard of accommodation in an ageing building. The building of the new community swimming pool at the school will enhance facilities and add to the range of provision available.

### The school's priorities and targets

7. The central aim of the school is to promote the development of individual pupils so that they achieve their full potential as equally valued human beings. The school prides itself on being a caring community of high standards, both academic and social. All pupils are encouraged to strive for achievement in academic qualifications as well as other fields and to further their education in the sixth form where increased responsibility and professional work-place

mentality are developed. The school has identified numeric targets and clear strategies to further raise the standards of achievement of all pupils and departmental areas.

## Summary

### Table of grades awarded

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

### Standards

| Standards in subjects inspected    |     |     |            |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|------------|
| Subject                            | KS3 | KS4 | Sixth Form |
| English                            | 2   | 2   | 2          |
| Mathematics                        | 2   | 3   | 2          |
| Science                            | 2   | 2   | 2          |
| Welsh second language              | 3   | 3   | 3          |
| Design and technology              | 3   | 2   | 2          |
| Information technology             | 2   | 2   | 2          |
| History                            | 2   | 2   | 2          |
| Geography                          | 2   | 2   | 1          |
| Modern foreign languages           | 2   | 2   | 2          |
| Art                                | 3   | 3   | 2          |
| Music                              | 3   | 2   | 2          |
| Physical education                 | 3   | 3   | 3          |
| Religious education                | 2   | 2   | -          |
| Religious studies                  | -   | 2   | -          |
| Business studies                   | -   | 3   | -          |
| Business and Communication Systems | -   | 2   | -          |
| Business (Intermediate)            |     |     | 2          |

|                                     |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Business (AVCE)                     |   |   | 2 |
| Travel and tourism                  | - | 2 | - |
| Drama                               | - | 2 | 2 |
| Economics                           | - | - | 2 |
| Home economics – Food & nutrition   | - | 2 | - |
| Home economics - Child development  | - | 3 | - |
| Health & social care (Intermediate) | - | - | 3 |
| Health & social care (AVCE)         | - | - | 2 |
| Media studies                       | - | 2 | - |
| Politics and Government             | - | - | 2 |
| Law (Distance Learning)             | - | - | 2 |
| Sociology (Distance Learning)       | - | - | 2 |
| Psychology (Distance Learning)      | - | - | 2 |

### The quality of education and training

8. The following table shows the standards that pupils and students achieved in the 218 lessons where standards were graded. The school meets the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

|            | % grade 1 | % grade 2 | % grade 3 | % grade 4 | % grade 5 |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| KS3        | 4         | 49        | 43        | 4         | 0         |
| KS4        | 5         | 58        | 33        | 4         | 0         |
| Sixth form | 11        | 80        | 9         | 0         | 0         |
| Overall    | 6         | 58        | 33        | 3         | 0         |

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

9. The overall standards of attainment of pupils as they enter Elfed High School in Y7 are below the average for Wales.
10. At Key Stage 3 (KS3), in National Curriculum (NC) test results over the last 6 years, the school's results have matched the average performance across Wales. There have been steady improvements in mathematics and science, and, as for Wales, the results in English have maintained a constant level. Results for 2004 were just above the average for Wales.
11. At Key Stage 4 (KS4), the proportion of pupils gaining five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A\*-C has been close to, but just below, the Wales average over the last 6 years. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\*-G consistently exceeds the Wales and Unitary Authority (UA) averages.
12. Girls attained significantly better than boys in English, but boys did better than girls in mathematics and science. In 2004 there was some underachievement by higher ability pupils, particularly boys.
13. In the sixth form, the average points score for students taking two or more Advanced Level (A level) examinations has consistently been at or above the

average for Wales. For 2004 it was, however, one point below the Wales average and equal to the UA average. The proportion of candidates achieving A-C grades is just above the Wales and UA averages at 70%. There is good performance in vocational subjects.

14. Performances in NC tests and public examinations in KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form have improved since the previous inspection.
15. The school is successful in enabling all pupils with SEN full access to the curriculum. They are encouraged to gain success in each stage and to participate fully in the life of the school. Very good arrangements are made for pupils with visual impairment.
16. Provision for the development of key skills is effective and standards of communication, numeracy and information technology across the school are mostly good.
17. The following table shows the quality of teaching observed during the inspection. 221 lessons were observed.

|            | % grade 1 | % grade 2 | % grade 3 | % grade 4 | % grade 5 |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| KS3        | 6         | 50        | 41        | 3         | 0         |
| KS4        | 11        | 55        | 32        | 2         | 0         |
| Sixth form | 11        | 80        | 9         | 0         | 0         |
| Overall    | 9         | 58        | 31        | 2         | 0         |

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

18. Of the lessons observed, slightly under a tenth was good with outstanding features and a further three fifths had good features with no important shortcomings. A very small minority of lessons had shortcomings in important areas.
19. Both the proportion of classes with outstanding features and the proportion with no important shortcomings have increased since the previous inspection. The proportion of lessons with important shortcomings is less than in the previous inspection, and the school exceeds targets for the quality of teaching set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)
20. In all subjects teachers have established good relationships with pupils, which encourage a positive and constructive approach to learning.
21. The standard of behaviour of most pupils is good, and they are aware of the high standards expected of them, but their concentration is occasionally compromised by the distracting behaviour of a small minority of pupils.
22. The school takes appropriate measures to monitor and improve attendance, and there is very effective external support. However, attendance is unsatisfactory. Punctuality at the beginning of the day and to lessons is good.

23. The quality of assessment across the school is mostly good. Pupils understand how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. The quality of some levelling and grading is inconsistent and needs to be further developed. Parents receive a detailed annual report although some comments by teachers are too general in nature.
24. There is a new assessment policy which will include the central collection of information on pupils' achievement and targets, which will allow closer monitoring of progress and improved decision making. As yet information that is collected is not used fully to inform planning and teaching.
25. The curriculum in KS3 meets the requirements of the NC and religious education with all pupils studying German as a second modern foreign language in Y9. Pupils in KS4 continue to study the statutory core subjects in addition to a good programme of optional subjects.
26. In the sixth form students are able to choose from a wide range of Advanced Subsidiary (AS), Advanced Level (A2) and vocational courses. The programme is enriched by twilight distance learning courses in law, sociology and psychology and the after-school Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) course in information technology.
27. The school is successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
28. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and there is a mutually beneficial partnership with the community.
29. Well established constructive links with primary schools facilitate easy transition from KS2 to KS3.
30. The school has a policy for the promotion of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. Pupils further experience Welsh culture through a range of extra-curricular activities arranged by the school. The bilingual competence of pupils is underdeveloped because of the shortage of curriculum time in KS3 and KS4.
31. The quality of care and support is outstanding. The school has a strong and well structured pastoral system. Parents appreciate the high quality of care that their children receive. Pupils trust teachers to deal with their concerns quickly and effectively.
32. The school has a well planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Careers Wales is fully involved in an extensive programme of counselling and guidance for pupils from Y9 onwards. Pupils are well prepared for their transition to work or continuing education.
33. Overall provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. They have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and are supported by a large number of learning support assistants.

34. The school does not formally identify pupils who are of potentially very high attainment. They are insufficiently challenged in a number of subjects.
35. There are well documented and effective procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety. Child protection procedures are good.
36. Pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is developed in several subject areas

### **Leadership and management**

37. The school has clearly stated and published aims that are focused on the development of individual pupils so that they achieve their full potential as equally valued human beings.
38. The head and senior managers share a clear view of the direction in which the school needs to move; this view is shared with colleagues, parents and pupils clearly, continuously and consistently.
39. National and local priorities are reflected appropriately in both the curriculum and the life of the school. Good links, which benefit pupils, exist with the local community, business organisations, supporting agencies and other schools and colleges.
40. The head, who was appointed to the school in April 2003, well supported by his senior colleagues, is successfully challenging the governors, staff and pupils to improve in all aspects of the life and work of the school. It is clear that the strategies and policies that they have introduced have the full support of staff and that these are being effective in promoting change and improvement.
41. Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to the development of the school. They understand their roles and fulfil their legal requirements.
42. The school manages its finances well.
43. In 2004 the school exceeded all but one of its agreed KS3 targets, and has already exceeded four targets agreed for 2005. At KS4, the school narrowly failed to achieve any of its targets; the result for the CSI was significantly short of the agreed target. Targets for 2005/6 at KS3 need to be revised.
44. Overall the school's self-evaluation report is an accurate and detailed analysis of its good features and shortcomings, and of the actions taken to address shortcomings.
45. The school has enough well qualified, experienced teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum in almost all areas. There are, however, insufficient specialist teachers of religious education and information communications technology (ICT) to extend courses into the sixth form.
46. Teaching assistants provide good support on a day-to-day basis.

47. Overall the provision of learning resources is good.
48. The accommodation is sufficient for the number of pupils on role and meets most of the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum.

## Recommendations

49. In order to improve further, the school needs to:
  - R1 develop and refine assessment practice and procedures in order to ensure consistently high standards in assessment, recording and reporting;
  - R2 develop and refine the new monitoring of pupil progress procedures;
  - R3 increase the challenge to more able pupils;
  - R4 improve levels of attendance across the school;
  - R5 improve the standards of achievement in those subjects where there are identified shortcomings in teaching and achievement.
50. The following Key Issue from the previous inspection has not been met fully and so continues to be a key issue to be addressed.
51. “Strengthen the links between the SEN co-ordinator and subject departments, in order to improve the quality of work for pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms, and thereby the standards they achieve.”
52. The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving this report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

## Standards

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

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

53. In its self-evaluation, the school awarded itself a Grade 3 for this question (Good features outweigh shortcomings)

#### KS3 and KS4

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

54. The overall standards of attainment of pupils as they enter Elfed High School, as measured by NC test results in KS2 and by standardised tests taken early in Y7, are below the average for Wales. At KS3, in 2004 the school exceeded national averages for pupils attaining level 5 or above in NC tests; at KS4 overall results were just below national norms.
55. At KS3, in NC tests over the last 6 years, the school's results have matched the average performance across Wales. There have been steady improvements in mathematics and science, and, as for Wales, the results in English have maintained a constant level. In 2004, for the first time, for pupils achieving level 5 and above, school results are just above the averages for Wales in all 3 of these core subjects. The performance in the Core Subject Indicator (CSI), which shows the proportion of pupils who obtain a level 5 or above in each of the core subjects, has also mirrored the Wales performance over recent years, and for 2004, exceeded the average for Wales. For the CSI, girls (at 68%) achieved far better than boys (at 49%)
56. At KS4, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C has been close to, but just below, the Wales average over the last 6 years. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A\*-G consistently exceeds the Wales and UA averages. The proportion of pupils gaining A\*-C grades in the CSI is significantly below the national average. In the core subjects in 2004, higher grade pass rates in English and science were above the Wales average but mathematics was significantly below it. Girls attained significantly better than boys in English, but boys did better than girls in science and mathematics. Boys and girls attained identical results for the CSI.
57. At GCSE, pupils in 2004 were entered for examination in a total of 23 subjects, and in about half of these the school attained higher grade pass rates above the average for Wales. The highest levels of attainment – gaining grades 'A\*' and 'A', was gained for almost a quarter of entries by girls, and for less than a tenth of those for boys. Attainment at this level was uneven across the curriculum and was below the average for Wales in just under two thirds of subjects. There was therefore some underachievement by higher ability pupils, particularly boys.

58. Performances in NC tests and public examinations in KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form have improved since the previous inspection.
59. In 2004, the school exceeded targets agreed with the UA for NC test results at KS3, and came close to meeting KS4 targets in all indicators except the CSI. The results in the CSI were significantly below the target. Overall the agreed targets for GCSE offer a real challenge to the school, but those for KS3 need to be revised.
60. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) produces annual 'benchmark' tables that compare similar schools (schools are placed in bands based on similar free school meal entitlement). The 2004 indicators for KS3 place the school around the mid point of the tables, which is an improvement over recent years. For KS4, higher grade pass rates for English and science are also around the mid point of the tables, as is the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE grades at A\*-G. These are also an improvement over recent years. Other indicators, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C, higher grade pass rates in mathematics, and the proportion of pupils attaining the CSI are in the bottom quarter of the table. If recently introduced initiatives continue to lead to improvements, the better performance at KS3 should be reflected at KS4 in the next few years.
61. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) generally achieve well for their ability at the end of both key stages, and most achieve some GCSE qualifications in a range of subjects.
62. Overall, for the two key stages, in just under 5% of lessons seen, the standards achieved were good with outstanding features; 53% had good features and no important shortcomings, and 39% had good features that outweighed shortcomings. Only in 4% of lessons did standards have some good features but with shortcomings in important areas. These figures are better than the targets set by the WAG.
63. Standards of achievement in lessons (judgements on standards were made in 93 KS3 lessons, and in 80 KS4 lessons).

|     | grade 1 | grade 2 | grade 3 | grade 4 | grade 5 |
|-----|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| KS3 | 4%      | 49%     | 43%     | 4%      | 0%      |
| KS4 | 5%      | 58%     | 33%     | 4%      | 0%      |

64. Since the previous inspection, in KS3, standards of achievement have improved in English, geography, information technology, mathematics, modern foreign languages, religious education and science. In KS4 standards have improved in modern foreign languages, religious education and religious studies, and science. Standards have declined in art at both key stages.
65. Standards in most other subjects have been maintained at a level where there are good features with no important shortcomings. Art, physical education and Welsh have, overall, maintained standards where good features outweigh shortcomings, and have shown least relative improvement.

66. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are good throughout the school. Most listen well to the teachers and to each other. They show respect for each other's views in class discussions and in pair and group work. Most are responsive and fluent, but in KS3 and KS4, girls are less confident in putting forward a point of view. There is good use and understanding of subject terminology in all the key stages. Most explain their work effectively and able pupils and students give extended answers when required.
67. Reading skills are good. Those with reading difficulties have effective specialist support and make good progress. Most pupils and students read with fluency and accuracy. The most able pupils read with expression. There is good understanding of a range of texts, film, CD ROMs and the Internet. Pupils demonstrate good standards in retrieving information. The English department promotes reading for pleasure in KS3 with effective use of the library.
68. Writing is good in all key stages. Written work is well presented and planned. There is good use of writing frames in many subjects so that less able pupils are supported. Most pupils and students produce well structured extended work. Standards in spelling and punctuation are in line with abilities but not all pupils in KS3 and KS4 revise and redraft so that in a few cases, errors persist.
69. Overall, the standards of pupils' numerical skills are good throughout the school. There is evidence of the use of a range of mathematical techniques in calculations, measurement and drawing, chronology and graphs to analyse and illustrate data. The solution of equations and the use of formulae in spreadsheets are examples of the effective use of algebra in a small number of subjects. Many subjects apply mathematics to situations in every day life. The cross-curricular numeracy committee is in the initial stages of addressing the existing subject difficulties and using uniform methods.
70. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are good across the curriculum at both KS3 and KS4. Pupils gain good skills in taught lessons at both key stages and confidently apply them in most subjects across the curriculum. Applications of ICT are good at both key stages in English, mathematics, design and technology, history, geography and art. They are good at KS3 in religious education and at KS4 in home economics and business. A wide range of communicating applications is used effectively in pupils' work including desktop publishing, PowerPoint presentations and word processing. Handling information using databases and spreadsheets is less evident in a number of appropriate subjects, though spreadsheets are used well in mathematics to model number. In art there is good use of digitising and image manipulation and in design and technology, design applications are evident. The Internet is used well for research across the curriculum. Standards are unsatisfactory in music at KS3. In all other subjects standards are satisfactory.
71. Across the school, planning for the use of ICT is good other than in music and physical education. A small minority of subjects have problems accessing IT equipment as a result of timetabled IT lessons.

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

72. In accord with the school's policy of valuing each pupil equally, all pupils, regardless of social, ethnic or linguistic background make good progress and achieve well. They are all prepared well for the next stage in their education.
73. The school's policies on teaching and behaviour ensure that the majority of pupils understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. Self assessment by pupils is established in some subjects and is developing across the school. Pupils are aware of their progress and of targets set for their improvement. They are involved in discussions on school decisions that affect them.
74. In most subjects pupils successfully acquire new skills and make appropriate and often good progress. They are often able to transfer skills into new and different situations. They are well prepared to progress to the next stage of their learning.

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

75. Most pupils show interest in their work, and have a positive attitude towards learning. They are keen to engage with lesson activities and work in a sustained fashion; their concentration is occasionally compromised by the distracting behaviour of a small minority of pupils.
76. The standard of behaviour of most pupils is good, and they are aware of the high standards expected of them. They move around the school in a sensible and orderly manner, are polite, courteous and respectful to one another, their teachers and other adults.
77. Overall attendance for the last three terms was 88.5%, which is unsatisfactory. For the first half of the current term attendance had improved and was recorded as being over 90%. The unauthorised absence figure for the school, 0.8%, compares well with the Wales figure of 1.7% and the LEA figure of 0.7%. The school has a small hard-core of non-attendeers. A number of parents take pupils out of school for holidays. The school has a number of appropriate strategies in place both to monitor and improve attendance and to reduce truancy. School registers are maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.
78. Punctuality throughout the school is good at the beginning of the school day and little time is wasted between lessons.
79. The school places a strong emphasis on developing self-discipline, honesty and responsibility. The majority of pupils respond well and have a clear sense of right and wrong and show respect for each other and adults. The very effective 'U Choose' behaviour and motivation policy is fully understood and appreciated by parents, pupils and staff.
80. There is a strong community ethos within the school with an extensive range of links with the local community, which enhances pupil's educational experiences.

Pupils have a good knowledge of the world at work through the good range of careers advice and opportunities for work related education provided via the school.

81. Pupils' problem solving skills are well developed in many subjects and in whole school initiatives. They have worthwhile problem solving experiences in activities such as mathematical investigations, geographical enquiries and design and technology electronic circuit design. In other subjects across the curriculum effective problem solving challenges are built into the teaching programme. Pupils also experience problem solving in the Yale Challenge and in the very successful Duke of Edinburgh Award and Young Enterprise initiatives higher up the school.
82. Pupils regularly experience good creative opportunities in a number of subjects, and examples are to be seen across the curriculum. In art many creative responses are to be found, particularly in the 3D modelling of clay. In drama work, pupils improvise well and in English they write descriptively and create poetry. In music they compose and play musical instruments, and in D&T they have the opportunity to produce original products in KS4.
83. Across the school most pupils work together well and co-operate with each other both in pairs and in small groups. Overall they manage and organise their work effectively, although not all use their school diaries properly.
84. Pupils have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues and racial equality.

## **Sixth form**

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

85. The average points score for students taking two or more Advanced Level (A level) examinations has consistently been at or above the average for Wales. For 2004 it was, however, one point below the Wales average and equal to the UA average. The proportion of candidates who achieved A-C grades was just above the Wales and UA averages at 70%. There is good performance in vocational subjects.
86. There is open access to the sixth form and students of all abilities achieve well relative to their ability. Almost all complete their courses successfully and in 2004 over 60% of Y13 went on to higher education.
87. Performances in public examinations, which were good at the time of the last inspection, have continued to improve.
88. Standards seen in lessons were good with outstanding features in 11% of lessons, there were good features and no important shortcomings in a further 80% and there were no lessons where good features were outweighed by shortcomings.

89. Standards of achievement in lessons (judgements were made in 45 lessons).

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11%     | 80%     | 9%      | 0%      | 0%      |

90. Most subjects have maintained the high standards judged at the previous inspection and have good features and no important shortcomings. Geography is good with outstanding features.
91. Approximately 60% of pupils in Y11 progress to study in the sixth form, and the completion rates for Y12 and Y13 are in excess of 90%. Of those who leave at the end of Y13 around two thirds go into higher education, and most of the remainder take a 'gap' year or move into employment.
92. There are well attended lessons in key skills which are held outside the normal timetable; a small number of students are planning to complete accreditation at Level 3.
93. Students' key skills are generally good. They listen attentively, and the majority of are prepared to participate fully in discussions. Reading and writing skills are good with good examples of research, organisation of evidence, and accurate use of vocabulary and information. Students use mathematical techniques appropriately in a wide range of subjects
94. Students have easy access to ICT and are autonomous in using a wide range of appropriate applications in their work. The standard of work in many subjects is good.

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

95. All students, regardless of social, ethnic or linguistic background make good progress and achieve well. They are all prepared well for moving on to work or higher or further education.
96. Students are fully informed as to their own progress, they are involved in self assessment and are aware of their progress and of targets set for their improvement. They are involved in discussions on school decisions that affect them.
97. Students acquire new skills successfully and make appropriate and occasionally very good progress. They can transfer skills into new and different situations.

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

98. Students in are well behaved and have a good attitude to their work and to their roles and responsibilities. They play important and responsible roles in the school, for example as prefects, as participants in a 'buddy reading' scheme and in mentoring younger pupils. The School Council is chaired and administered by members of the sixth form.

99. The rate of attendance is unsatisfactory. The school is concerned that the current self-certification by sixth formers is not working effectively and is looking at further strategies to monitor their attendance.
100. The majority of students respond well to the school's policies on behaviour and have a clear sense of right and wrong and show respect for each other and adults. Students give active support to the very effective 'U Choose' behaviour and motivation policy, providing valuable support to younger pupils.
101. Students are well informed about all aspects of equal opportunities and cultural diversity, and are fully involved in the various community and charitable activities in the school.

## The quality of education and training

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

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

102. In its self-evaluation, the school awarded itself a Grade 3 for this question (Good features outweigh shortcomings)

#### KS3 and KS4

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

103. Of the 222 lessons observed, just under a tenth was good with outstanding features and just over a half had good features with no important shortcomings. Only a very small number had shortcomings in important areas. This exceeds the targets set by the WAG. Teaching at KS4 was slightly better than at KS3.

104. Quality of teaching (95 KS3 lessons and 82 KS4 lessons were observed).

|     | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|-----|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| KS3 | 6%      | 50%     | 41%     | 3%      | 0%      |
| KS4 | 11%     | 55%     | 32%     | 2%      | 0%      |

105. Both the proportion of classes with outstanding features and the proportion with no important shortcomings have increased since the previous inspection. The proportion of lessons with important shortcomings is less than in the previous inspection.

106. Across the curriculum, teaching is predominantly good with no important shortcomings. The quality of teaching has good features that outweigh shortcomings in KS3 in design and technology, in KS4 in mathematics, and in both key stages in art, physical education and Welsh.

107. In all subjects teachers have established excellent relationships with pupils, which encourage a positive and constructive approach to learning. This is supported by the successful 'U Choose' policy, which actively promotes positive attitudes, good behaviour and equality of treatment.

108. Teachers are mostly well qualified and experienced and they have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They are familiar with recent developments in their subject areas. There have been difficulties in recruitment of suitably qualified teachers in some areas and a number of non-specialists support the head of department in the teaching of religious education. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils with SEN.

109. The school has developed a model for teaching which identifies a four part lesson which encourages teachers to share and review objectives for lessons with pupils and to encourage pupils to explore and demonstrate their skills and understanding. Whilst this is a fairly recent development it is already having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Teachers respond constructively to their pupils and their individual needs.
110. Most teaching is planned and prepared effectively so as to meet the needs of individual pupils, and available resources are used effectively. It is at least good in Welsh and physical education, where good features outweigh shortcomings, and it is best in geography and modern foreign languages where some of the provision is outstanding. There is a lack of challenge to higher ability pupils in a number of subjects.
111. The teaching of the key skills is integrated into schemes of work and lesson plans.
112. Within the school's model for good lessons, teachers use an appropriate variety of strategies to help, encourage and motivate pupils. The majority of lessons have good pace and an appropriate variety of activities. Most lessons start with helpful and well conducted question and answer activities which remind pupils of work done in previous lessons.
113. Classroom teaching is supported by homework which some, but by no means all pupils, record in their school diaries. Parents can check these to ensure homework is completed. There is a homework timetable which is mostly followed and which has appropriate expectations of workload.

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

114. Current procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are being developed well in line with the school development plan (SDP) and the recently updated school assessment policy. There are clear aims, objectives and agreed principles. Each subject department has a policy that conforms to the school policy.
115. There is consistent application of the continuous assessment of pupils' work. Subject departments' policies identify tasks and tests to be included. The assessment involves grades for effort, presentation, attainment and a target. The assessment of attainment and target grades are given in NC levels in KS3 and GCSE grades in KS4. The quality of this levelling and grading is inconsistent and needs to be further developed. There are accompanying comments to indicate strengths, weaknesses and how to improve; the quality of these comments varies considerably. There is very good practice in English and this should be shared across the school. This assessment forms the basis of a term mark which is recorded centrally to indicate the progress of individual pupils. This ensures that pupils are in appropriate teaching groups, recognises good work and identifies underachievers.

116. Good use is made of NC results from KS2 and information supplied by primary schools. This data, along with each term's continuous assessment grades, the school's predictive testing, KS3 results and GCSE results, is used to indicate the levels and grades that pupils should achieve at the end of each key stage. This data will be regularly shared with heads of year and form tutors so they can monitor pupils' progress and set targets. This initiative is new this current term, and will have to be refined and developed for form tutors to be effective in promoting improvement in pupil achievement.
117. Each department has its own individual policy and as a result day to day assessment varies. Some subject areas give comments only, whilst others give a mark. The frequency and regularity of day to day marking is inconsistent.
118. A small number of curriculum areas have initiated good practice with pupil self-assessment. These comments, incorporated in each continuous assessment set of grades, give pupils the opportunity to evaluate their own progress. Again, this process needs to be further developed.
119. Assessment procedures meet statutory requirements for the assessment and reporting of NC at the end of Y9.
120. Parents receive one full, detailed report a year. It includes subject achievement and target grades plus subject specific comments and advice on improvement. On occasions, this advice is too general in character to be helpful. Pupils have the opportunity to comment on their performance and set personal targets for each subject area. Form tutors, heads of year and the head-teacher provide informative comments on pupils' personal and social progress. Parents have the opportunity to respond to the report. Heads of year helpfully contact parents if there is cause for concern. Parents of pupils with SEN statements are fully involved in the review process.
121. In most subject areas, the rigour of assessment is good with no important shortcomings. English has outstanding features but there are shortcomings in important areas in physical education.

## **Sixth form**

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

122. The quality of teaching was good with outstanding features in a tenth of lessons and good with no important shortcomings in a further four fifths. No lessons had important shortcomings.
123. Quality of teaching (45 lessons were observed).

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11%     | 80%     | 9%      | 0%      | 0%      |

124. In art and geography teaching has good features some of which are outstanding. Teaching has good features that outweigh shortcomings in physical education. In all other subjects teaching has good features with no important shortcomings.
125. Teachers are well qualified and experienced and have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Relationships between students and teachers are good, and all students, regardless of gender, race or ability are encouraged to succeed.
126. The planning of teaching to meet the individual needs of students is generally good, and in geography has some outstanding features. Learning resources are used effectively to support teaching and learning.

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

127. Assessment is rigorous and accurate, and reflects the recently updated school policy. There are outstanding features in English and geography where assiduous marking provides helpful advice to students and where agreed targets are used well to challenge students.
128. Overall assessment is used effectively to inform the planning of teaching. This aspect needs improvement in physical education.
129. Marking for all courses reflects the examination course requirements, and most clearly indicates both good points and areas needing improvement.
130. Student progress is monitored effectively with students receiving at least one academic review tutorial a term. Parents receive an annual, detailed report on the student's progress.

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

|   |
|---|
| <b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings |
|---|

131. Overall for this question, the judgments of the inspection team match those provided by the school in its self evaluation report.

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

132. The curriculum overall meets the needs of all pupils and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996. The school complies with examining bodies' regulations.

133. The curriculum is accessible for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Pupils have opportunities to gain an appropriate range of GCSE and some vocational qualifications.

134. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced in each key stage. It provides effective continuity and progression between years and key stages.

135. The curriculum in KS3 meets the requirements of the NC and religious education with all pupils studying German as a second modern foreign language in Y9. Although drama and IT are not taught as discrete subjects in the key stage, they are respectively integrated into the English and design and technology programmes of study.

136. Pupils in KS4 continue to study the statutory core subjects in addition to a good programme of optional subjects. Pupils were offered a choice of vocational subjects in Y10; the uptake resulted in one subject being programmed in the curriculum. A small number of pupils follow an appropriate alternative programme which includes attendance at a local college of further education and monitored work experience placements.

137. Access to the sixth form is open. Students are able to choose from a wide range of AS, A2 and vocational courses including two modern languages. The programme is extended by twilight distance learning courses in law, sociology and psychology and the after-school AVCE course in information technology. The programme is enriched through links with a neighbouring comprehensive school. Good opportunities are also available for students wishing to return to school to gain accreditation through GNVQ Intermediate courses.

138. The planning for the development of key skills across the curriculum is good. In the majority of schemes of work, opportunities have been identified for pupils to develop basic and key skills. In the sixth form, key skills are time-tabled in lessons after school. This initiative is successful as it allows students to gain external accreditation.

139. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available for all years and is an outstanding feature of the school. In addition to a number of clubs that meet during the lunch-hour and after school, there are visits off-site to places of interest, and to venues such as galleries and theatres. A large number of pupils and students are involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and derive substantial benefit from the challenges offered in the four elements experienced in the programme. In addition to representing their school in a range of games and sports, many pupils have competed successfully at both county and national level.
140. A considerable number of pupils represent the school in sporting and musical activities. Many visits abroad take place for a range of valuable curricular and social purposes. Pupils and students benefit from the range of activities available, which broaden their experiences and promote their personal and social development.
141. The school is successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies make a very significant contribution to all these aspects.
142. Spiritual development is promoted through the daily life of the school. Pupils are given opportunities to explore values and beliefs in many areas of the curriculum. The school intends that all its members are equally-valued. The mutual respect that this involves is modelled well in the way in which teachers treat pupils.
143. The school's new behaviour code provides a clear moral basis for behaviour. The rules and rewards are understood and valued by pupils. They are promoted consistently throughout the school. Pupils and students have much involvement in charity work at all levels and learn to care for those less fortunate than themselves.
144. There is a very strong sense of community in the school. The wide range of shared experiences such as team games, residential visits and the very good relationships between pupils and teachers effectively foster social development. The School Council, largely run by sixth formers, enables pupils to participate actively in school life.
145. Cultural development is promoted in many areas of the curriculum. The wide range of extra-curricular activities and regular visits to Europe strengthen this provision.
146. The school provides well-focused and helpful information for parents. 'Network Elfed' (the parent/teacher association) at the school is active in its support of the school, both generally and via a number of fundraising events. Parents, in a recent survey, indicate a high level of support for the school.
147. There is a mutually beneficial partnership with the community. Local residents gain from the community service elements of the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and

school charitable activities. Local enterprises provide good support for work-related education and opportunities within the broad curriculum.

148. Well established constructive links, both pastoral and curricular, with primary schools facilitate easy transition from KS2 to KS3. Teachers from the school, supported by appropriate Y7 pupils take assemblies at the feeder schools, and there are induction days held in July. Curricular links are well developed in most subjects and there are some cross-curricular projects. Useful partnership with other secondary schools and good knowledge of local college and university provision ensures that older pupils can select appropriate educational options as they leave KS4 and the sixth form.
149. The school has good links with initial teacher training colleges and benefits from the breadth of view that the regular supply of students bring.
150. The programmes for personal social and health education (PSHE), work related education, and careers education and guidance meet national guidelines, and are well planned in KS3 and KS4. In the sixth form, there are no time-tabled PSHE lessons, however, students benefit from the experiences offered in the general studies programme.

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

151. Good careers education and guidance is delivered by a professional careers adviser. It is closely integrated with well-focused work-related education in the PSHE programme. In the recent survey of parents, this area was said to be one of the strengths of the school. Y11 pupils undertake a monitored one-week work experience. Work experience is optional in the sixth form and a small number of students take advantage of opportunities to shadow employers in specific vocational areas.
152. The school has a policy for the promotion of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig. An audit recently carried out identifies good features in many subjects across the curriculum. Pupils further experience Welsh culture through a range of extra-curricular activities arranged in the main by the Welsh department. These include a Welsh Eisteddfod, and visits to Glan Llyn and Theatr Clwyd in Mold.
153. The bilingual competence of pupils is underdeveloped. The school has begun to provide bilingual signs and notices within the school, however, this aspect and the use of Welsh in gatherings such as assemblies is insufficiently developed.
154. The school is successful in enabling all pupils with SEN full access to the curriculum. They are encouraged to gain success in each stage and to participate fully in the life of the school. Very good arrangements are made for pupils with physical difficulties.
155. Pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is developed in several subject areas including English, geography, science and design and technology. Good examples include a whole school

paper recycling scheme, pupils using ICT to research alternative energy strategies and the use of recycled paper in art. A group of sixth form students are developing schemes to improve the school environment. Healthy life styles are promoted in food technology, physical education and science.

156. The new immersion programme introduced at the beginning of the autumn term for PSHE reinforces pupils' awareness and understanding of the workplace. Informative collaboration with Careers Wales, close links with local employers and a range of work-related events ensures that teachers, parents and pupils are well acquainted with the current needs of employers.
157. Good teaching skills in many parts of the curriculum provide ample opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills. Outside lessons these entrepreneurial skills are well nurtured in all key stages via activities like a Young Enterprise scheme, Dynamo Project, enterprise days, community action groups, their involvement in the School Council and representing the school on external groups.
158. The school is successful in ensuring that pupils and students acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to progress. Through a range of experiences and activities they are developing as independent learners.
159. The breadth and quality of the curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities and work-related education ensures that the learning experiences reflect national priorities and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

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

|  |
|--|
| <b>Grade 1:</b> Good with outstanding features |
|--|

160. In its self-evaluation, the school awarded itself a Grade 2 for this question (Good features and no important shortcomings).

### **The quality of care, support and guidance for learners**

161. The quality of care and support is outstanding. The school has a strong and well structured pastoral system. Parents appreciate the high quality of care that their children receive. Pupils trust teachers to deal with their concerns quickly and effectively. The school's practice matches its intentions well.
162. The school serves a small community in which pupils and their families are known well by teachers. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. It is easy for parents to meet with teachers to discuss concerns.
163. Pupils receive careful guidance on appropriate courses of future study in Y9 and Y11. Test results and academic achievement are taken fully into account. The school actively promotes gender equality and challenges stereotypes in pupils choices and expectations.
164. The sixth form prospectus is particularly well produced. It models the professional approach which the sixth form seeks to develop in students.
165. There are careful and thorough induction programmes for pupils entering Y7, Y10 and Y12. Pastoral links with the primary schools are very good. A very effective induction programme for students in Y12 ensures that they settle quickly to their new courses.
166. The school has a well planned PSHE programme. The aspects taught through a series of dedicated full morning sessions are of good quality. Other areas, which are part of the regular responsibility of form tutors, vary in the effectiveness with which they are taught.
167. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored. Although appropriate measures are taken to improve attendance, and there is very effective external support, attendance remains a concern. Punctuality at the beginning of the day and to lessons is good.
168. The school has recently introduced a new behaviour code. Staff, parents and pupils all agree that this has improved behaviour significantly. Much emphasis is placed on monitoring and rewarding good behaviour although misbehaviour is swiftly and effectively dealt with. Pupils value, and work for, the rewards. Most

pupils who experience the sanction of the “time out room” do not wish to repeat the experience.

169. Careers Wales is fully involved in an extensive programme of counselling and guidance for pupils from Y9 onwards. Pupils are well prepared for their transition to work or continuing education. The school's careers guidance and PSHE programmes meet the requirement of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) framework.
170. There are well documented and effective procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety. They are effectively monitored by governors and by the school's health and safety committee. Minor issues of health and safety were reported to the head during the inspection.
171. Child protection procedures are good. They are known to and followed by staff and there is very good support from the education welfare service.

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

172. Overall provision for pupils with SEN is good.
173. Most pupils with SEN are identified through very close liaison with the primary schools. Pupils are subsequently tested and re-tested to identify specific difficulties in literacy. The progress of pupils receiving support in literacy is assessed regularly. Annual reviews for pupils with statements of SEN are held in accordance with statutory requirements. However, as a result of the excessive classroom commitment of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), monitoring arrangements for ensuring that the needs of all pupils with SEN are met across the curriculum are not sufficiently well developed.
174. The school does not formally identify pupils who are of potentially very high attainment. Pupils are insufficiently challenged in many subjects.
175. Pupils with SEN have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. A large number of learning support assistants offer effective classroom support for pupils with statements of SEN, to whom they are assigned, and to other pupils in their classes. The degree to which teachers modify tasks and materials to meet individual pupils' needs in lessons varies considerably and is often not enough. Learning support assistants are not generally involved enough in the preparation of lessons and materials.
176. Small numbers of pupils are disapplied from subjects to follow a well managed and monitored literacy programme in which a computer integrated literacy system complements the use of written materials. Pupils are well taught by the SENCO with the capable support of a learning support assistant.
177. Individual education plans are now in place for all pupils for whom they are required although there are shortcomings in their content.

178. The school is a UA resource for pupils with visual impairment. Provision for them is outstanding. They are disapplied from Welsh in order to receive a small amount of very good individual teaching, including touch-typing, but are otherwise fully included in the life of the school. They are well provided with materials modified to meet their needs. Documentation relating to them is meticulously maintained.
179. There is regular contact with parents of pupils with SEN, and a good level of attendance at annual reviews. A simple but effective system of home – school books allows good contact with parents of pupils with SEN. It is particularly well used for pupils with visual impairment.
180. The school's new behaviour policy has had a significant impact on overall standards of behaviour and fewer pupils have their learning interrupted by the misbehaviour of others. All staff are trained to use the new behaviour management strategies and pupils with particular behavioural difficulties are helped by the Behaviour Support Service.

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

181. The school aims to promote the development of pupils so that they achieve their full potential as equally valued human beings and in this it is successful. The ethos and practices are caring, friendly and supportive and all pupils are valued as individuals. The school successfully creates a climate for good behaviour
182. All courses are open to all pupils and students. Good advice on course options aims to ensure equality of access.
183. The curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of racism, diversity and human rights. The few pupils and students from ethnic minority groups are successfully integrated into the daily life of the school.
184. The policy and procedures for dealing with bullying are understood and implemented. Pupils and students are confident that any issues reported will be dealt with promptly and efficiently.
185. The school is aware of recent statutory requirements regarding modifications to the buildings to allow access to pupils with physical disabilities, and an audit has been conducted and short, medium and long term Accessibility Plans have begun to be implemented. There is no lift to help pupils with physical disability but pupils with visual impairment are fully integrated into all aspects of school life.

## Leadership and management

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

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

186. Overall for this question, the judgements of the inspection team match those provided by the school in its self evaluation report.

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

187. The school has clearly stated and published aims that are focused on the development of individual pupils so that they all achieve their full potential as equally valued human beings. School strategies and policies all support and promote these aims, and they are the basis for school decision making. The head and senior managers share this clear view of the direction in which the school needs to move. These aims are shared with colleagues, parents and pupils clearly, continuously and consistently. This is an outstanding feature of the overall leadership of the school.

188. Overall the quality of middle management is good; it has outstanding features in English and geography, but has some shortcomings in physical education.

189. National and local priorities are reflected appropriately in both the curriculum and the life of the school. Good links, which benefit pupils, exist with the local community, business organisations, supporting agencies and other schools and colleges.

190. There is a detailed school development plan that identifies appropriate priorities, together with responsibilities, schedules, resources and the means of measuring successful achievement of the desired outcomes. The school plan is supported well by matching departmental development plans.

191. Targets for the performance of the school in public examinations and National Curriculum tests are agreed annually with the UA. These are not included in the school development plan. In 2004 the school exceeded all but one of its KS3 targets, and has already exceeded four targets agreed for 2005. At KS4, the school narrowly failed to achieve any of its targets; the result for the CSI was significantly short of the agreed target. The targets set for 2005 and 2006 for GCSE results are realistic and challenging, but those for KS3 results need to be revised. The school is at the early stages in the development of more sophisticated systems for the recording and monitoring of pupil targets and progress. As yet information that is collected is not used fully to inform planning and teaching.

192. There are effective and efficient procedures in place for the identification of the training needs of teachers, and for their support and development. These

procedures include an established and effective Performance Management system.

193. The head, who was appointed to the school in April 2003, well supported by his senior colleagues, is successfully challenging the governors, staff and pupils to improve in all aspects of the life and work of the school. It is clear that the strategies and policies they have introduced have the full support of staff and that these are being highly effective in promoting change and improvement. Senior managers are rigorous in their promotion of school initiatives. Surveys of the views of parents and pupils show very high levels of support for the school.

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

194. The governors are fully informed about the work and progress of the school, and of the standards being achieved. The full governing body, informed by its very active committees, is properly and effectively involved in the monitoring of school performance, strategic planning and the financial management of the school.
195. Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to the development of the school. They understand their roles and fulfil their legal requirements
196. All the required policies are in place.

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

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| <b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings |
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197. In its self-evaluation, the school awarded itself a Grade 3 for this question (Good features outweigh shortcomings).

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

198. Overall the school's self-evaluation report is an accurate and detailed analysis of its good features and shortcomings, and of the actions taken to address shortcomings. The report helpfully addresses the seven key questions of the common inspection framework. For four of these key questions, in this, their first attempt to use the new grading system, the school was slightly conservative in its judgments. In only one instance, Key Question 7, did the school judge itself to be a grade higher than determined in this report.

199. Self-evaluation in subject departments is also broadly accurate and comprehensive. Teachers have a good knowledge of the abilities and progress of the pupils they teach. Many departments usefully involve pupils in the assessment of their own performance measured against published criteria. All pupils' work is given both attainment and target grades, which pupils understand. There is some evidence in the school that this relatively new process has improved motivation. The revised assessment policy will include the central collection of these targets, which will allow closer monitoring of progress and improved decision making.

200. The monitoring of the quality of work within subject departments is effective in most areas and has outstanding features in geography and information technology. Monitoring and evaluation in physical education require further development.

201. Effective systems exist for the collection and analysis of data, managed by an assistant head. Each year there is a detailed school and departmental analysis of examination results, with subjects having to identify actions to be taken as a consequence of this analysis. Senior managers undertake lesson observation on a regular basis, for both self-evaluation and Performance Management. They therefore have an accurate knowledge of the support and development their colleagues require. Advisors from the UA are frequently involved in lesson observation.

202. The head of sixth form monitors student progress in detail, and accurate records are used to inform successful guidance and support.

203. The views of pupils and students are taken effectively at Year Councils and at the School Council. The pupils were, for example, a major influence in a recent refurbishment of toilets. In the negotiations for these the pupils also agreed to

accept a measure of responsibility for the proper care of maintenance of these facilities. The school has conducted, through a commercial company, very detailed and comprehensive attitude surveys of both pupils and parents. These had very good participation rates and overall show high levels of support for the school and its aims.

204. The staff of the school is fully involved in the self-evaluation process, contributing at both academic and pastoral level. Members of the senior management team have responsibilities as links to specific departments and work with the heads of department to review progress against a common agenda on a regular basis.

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

205. The processes established by the school to evaluate and review progress and standards provide helpful and essential information which is used to inform planning and decision making. For example, the successful 'U Choose' behaviour policy, introduced in 2003, and the provision of ICT resources, were outcomes of consultation with the staff to identify their priorities for the improvement of the school.
206. At school level the outcomes of self-evaluation are used well to inform planning and decision making, but not all subject departments have developed fully the interpretation of data needed to plan for improvement in teaching and learning effectively.
207. There is a detailed school development plan that identifies appropriate priorities, together with responsibilities, schedules, resources and the means of measuring successful achievement of the desired outcomes. The school plan is supported by matching departmental development plans. These subject plans are of good quality overall and are very good in English, geography, information technology and modern foreign languages. Planning is least good in music, physical education, science and Welsh.
208. Overall the school has made good progress at addressing the Key Issues identified in the previous inspection in 1998. Management now clearly and effectively communicates and shares priorities for improvement with colleagues so that there is a collective approach to improvement. The monitoring of pupils' work, the quality of marking and the use of tutor periods has improved significantly. Behaviour has improved significantly. Standards of attainment at KS3 have improved and there has been a marked increase in the effective use of ICT across the curriculum. The following Key Issue from the previous inspection has not been met fully and so continues to be a key issue to be addressed. "Strengthen the links between the SEN co-ordinator and subject departments, in order to improve the quality of work for pupils with SEN in mainstream classrooms, and thereby the standards they achieve."

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

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| <b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings |
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209. In its self-evaluation, the school awarded itself a Grade 1 for this question (Good with some outstanding features).

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

210. The school has enough well qualified, experienced teaching staff to meet the needs of the curriculum in almost all areas. There are, however insufficient specialist teachers of religious education and information communications technology (ICT) to extend courses into the sixth form. Many teachers have been in post for a long time and have a strong commitment to the school. This is well balanced by the presence of recently appointed staff in some subjects. Teachers new to the profession are very well supported but most are challenged by having to teach some lessons in subjects other than their main discipline. The pupil teacher ratio is 17.25:1, which is above the national average.

211. The everyday life of the school is enhanced by its support staff. The clerical team is efficient and effective though currently low in number. Technician support is good although the number in science is lower than average and there is insufficient support for food technology. The caretaking staff is vigilant and keep the school in good order.

212. The number of teaching assistants for pupils with SEN, including those with visual impairment, is sufficient. Teaching assistants provide good support on a day-to-day basis but they are insufficiently involved in lesson planning and the development of differentiated teaching materials.

213. Overall the provision of learning resources is very good. Departmental capitulation is fairly distributed and departments are able to bid for specific funds linked to departmental development plans and the SDP. There are some shortages of books in a minority of subjects, and in music there are insufficient tuned and untuned percussion instruments.

214. The number of computers is higher than average and well distributed across the school. Suites of computers are available for booking by staff, though occasionally this is difficult because of timetabled IT lessons. Electronic white boards and data projectors are used well to enhance teaching. The increasing use of ICT to improve standards is a strength of the school. The library is used well, and is attractive and effectively managed by the librarian but book numbers are low for the size of the school.

215. The school makes good use of resources found in the community and in industry.

216. The accommodation is sufficient for the number of pupils on role and meets most of the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum. For most subjects the classrooms provide good learning environments and teachers use them well. The display of pupils' work in classrooms is generally good, but in some corridor areas it is poor.
217. Rooms are mainly grouped into subject areas, Child development and health and social care are inappropriately taught in a food technology room. The music suite is poorly soundproofed and located above the theatre/hall so cannot be used for live music when examinations take place; this affects standards. Sports facilities are sufficient but other than the gymnasium they are in need of refurbishment, particularly the 'astro' turf, which is well worn. Drama and media facilities are good. Sixth form students have their own common room and dedicated computer suite which they use well.
218. The building is now over 50 years old and presents the school with a number of maintenance, room size, and soundproofing issues which the school is doing its best to resolve. There is an ongoing redecoration programme and a number of improvements are planned.
219. The heating system in the school is not efficient, and coupled to large areas of ill-fitting metal windows leads to a number of classrooms being insufficiently heated.
220. The school is clean; there is very little graffiti or litter. Pupils are enthusiastic in their praise of the recently refurbished boys' and girls' toilets.
221. The security of the site is compromised by the unfenced public footpath which runs through the site. Members of the public tend to use the school's internal roadways instead of following the line of the footpath. Dogs are regularly exercised and foul the sometimes waterlogged school playing fields.
222. Vandalism outside school hours has been a costly issue and the existence of a number of unenclosed recessed areas around the school makes site monitoring difficult. Funding has recently been provided to locate CCTV cameras around the site.

### **How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money**

223. The school manages its finances well. A significant balance of money which had been accumulated in previous years has been used very well to address priorities in the development plan. In particular this has been used to enhance ICT development across the school, to support the 'U Choose' behaviour policy, and to refurbish the pupils' toilets.
224. Teachers have good knowledge and expertise in their subjects. Overall, they are deployed well. In the few areas where non-specialists teach, every effort is made to ensure that the subject is the teacher's second specialism. Continuing professional development for teaching and support staff is good. Whole school,

departmental and individual needs are carefully analysed and appropriate in-house or external training is provided and evaluated.

225. The governors finance committee meets regularly and bases its decision making on sound evidence arising out of the continuous review of the school's performance and the views of staff and pupils. The school gives good value for money.
226. The allocation of funds to subject departments is done on the basis of a formula, and few shortages exist. Spending budgets are monitored regularly.
227. Staffing difficulties in the school's main office have made the running of the school more difficult in the past year, but the day to day administration of the school and its finances is good.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

#### Good features

##### **KS3**

228. Pupils listen respectfully to the teacher and to one another. They recall previous learning and pose questions to clarify understanding. In class discussions, they respond to questions demonstrating a good understanding of their work. For example, they predict events in videos and novels, describe features of different genres such as diary and gothic writing and explain definitions of words.
229. They collaborate well in pairs and small groups to discuss their reading, to plan written responses and to assess each other's writing against known criteria. There is good use and understanding of technical terms such as hyperbole, onomatopoeia and contractions.
230. They read aloud with accuracy and fluency and some with expression. Pupils with SEN demonstrate good ability to read unfamiliar words. There is a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of literary, non literary and media texts. Most pupils have a good understanding of what is read including that which is inferred. They understand the effects of language devices used by writers and the use of camera angles, music and lighting used by film makers for effect. Pupils refer to texts to support their ideas and opinions.
231. Pupils with reading difficulties are well supported with reading programmes and good progress is made. All read for pleasure, making good regular use of the school's library.
232. Pupils engage in a wide range of writing. They understand the language requirements of different audiences, purposes and forms. All pupils, including those with SEN write extended pieces when required. Most improve their writing by planning, drafting, using models and assessing against known criteria.

##### **KS4**

233. Most listen attentively to the teacher and to one another. They work well together in pairs and small groups to explain, analyse, solve problems and share ideas. They put forward a point of view and refer to texts to support opinion. Most understand that the tone and register of spoken language has to be adapted to audience and purpose.
234. They read a wide range of literary texts and non-literary materials including video. There is sound knowledge and understanding of plots, characters and

themes as well as the social, historical and cultural backgrounds of literary works.

235. Most demonstrate good skills of interpretation. They recognise and appreciate techniques used by writers such as hyperbole and rhetorical questions. There is also good understanding of structural devices in novels such as dual first person narrative. They have good skills of information retrieval and use techniques of skimming and scanning.
236. Writing is improved by planning, drafting and the use of models. The less able are supported by the provision of writing frames. Most respond to the diagnostic comments written by teachers. By the end of the course, most produce extended critical writing with effective structure and appropriate use of questions. Able pupils use mature expression and evoke atmosphere in narratives. They have good control of tense and punctuation.

### ***Sixth form***

237. Good relationships in lessons encourage students to cooperate well, share ideas and contribute to discussion.
238. They respond to and analyse an appropriate variety of literary and non-literary texts, orally and in extended critical essays. They demonstrate a good understanding of different kinds of writing including unseen material.
239. Writing is of good quality. It shows developing knowledge and understanding of challenging texts, contexts and literary techniques.
240. There is good understanding of examination requirements and assessment criteria. They realistically assess strengths and weaknesses in their own writing as well as in exemplar materials.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3 and KS4***

241. For a few pupils, the range and quality of writing is affected by poor attendance.
242. A small number of pupils do not re-draft with rigour so that presentation is poor, structure is weak and errors of punctuation and spelling persist.

#### ***KS3***

243. In a small number of lessons there is an undercurrent of talking which slows the pace of learning.

#### ***KS4***

244. A small number of pupils of middle abilities present written critical responses which lack depth and detail.

### ***Sixth form***

245. A number of students lack confidence in interpreting texts. They are reluctant to put forward a point of view and are over reliant on the teacher.

## Mathematics

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 3 | Good features outweigh shortcomings         |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

### Good features

#### **KS3 and KS4**

246. Pupils across the age and ability ranges answer questions orally with clarity, understanding and accuracy. They have a sound knowledge of number, vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and the relationship between them.
247. They have spatial awareness and understand the concepts of area and volume and the appropriate units used. They understand the basic concepts of the modal and median averages of sets of numbers.
248. Pupils with SEN have effective support and make good progress.
249. Pupils use calculators appropriately and use ICT to enhance their learning.

#### **KS3**

250. In the NC tests at key stage 3, the proportion of pupils gaining at least a level 5, has improved over recent years and is now above the Welsh average. There is no significant difference between the standards of achievement of the boys and the girls.
251. Pupils understand the concepts needed to calculate the circumference and area of circles and can make the necessary calculations to draw pie charts to illustrate everyday situations.

#### **KS4**

252. The more able pupils have a sound knowledge of transformations and can apply this knowledge practically. They are able to factorise all types of quadratic expression.

#### **Sixth form**

253. Over recent years, there has been a consistently good pass rate, with a number of students having the highest grades.
254. Y13 students have a very good understanding of a range of concepts in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. They can adapt this knowledge to solve associated questions.
255. Y12 students are making progress in understanding the basic concepts of pure mathematics, and statistics.
256. Students' learning is enhanced by readily available extra support.

## Shortcomings

### **KS3 and KS4**

257. A small minority of pupils lack confidence in their mathematical abilities. The presentation of work by a small number of pupils is untidy and illogical.

### **KS4**

258. The GCSE results for A\* - C passes are well below the national averages in 2004.

259. A small minority of pupils are content to achieve as little as possible.

260. For a small number of pupils absence has an adverse effect on progress and achievement.

### **Sixth form**

261. In year 12, a small number of students have basic weaknesses especially when applying complex algebraic techniques. This can have an effect on progress.

|                |
|----------------|
| <b>Science</b> |
|----------------|

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

## Good features

### **KS3**

262. A majority of pupils has a secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics covering all aspects of the NC.

263. Most pupils recall key concepts well, and apply them to a range of problems and applications in familiar and unfamiliar situations.

264. The majority of pupils has a good understanding of the link between scientific principles and applications associated with the environment and healthy living.

265. Most pupils use scientific terms accurately in responses to questions, in problem solving and in reporting on practical activities.

266. Pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their ability.

267. Pupils develop good practical skills. The majority of pupils work safely and collaborate well.

268. With a majority of pupils, problem-solving skills are well developed, most are good listeners and are willing to contribute to class discussions.

#### **KS4**

269. A majority of pupils has a good understanding of the more complex principles developed in the key stage in life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical properties.
270. They have a good recall of previous work and can apply their knowledge to a range of tasks and applications.
271. They are developing a good awareness of issues related to the environment, health, the economy, and aspects of sustainable development.
272. Pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their abilities.
273. The quality of investigations for a small majority of pupils is good overall.
274. Where standards are good, pupils develop their scientific knowledge and understanding to inform their planning, and some indicate the outcomes of preliminary work. Actual measurements are systematically recorded.
275. They are able to analyse their results using graphs or numerical methods, assess the validity of their findings and indicate ways to improve their procedures.
276. Problem-solving skills are well developed with a significant number of pupils.

#### **Sixth form**

277. The majority of students in biology, chemistry and physics make good progress relative to their ability.
278. The majority of students have a good recall and understanding of key concepts and principles.
279. They are able to apply their theoretical knowledge and understanding to a wide range of problems linked to the more complex principles experienced in the programmes of study.
280. In practical work observed, students achieve good standards overall.
281. They are able to apply their theoretical understanding to explain outcomes in practical work and develop their understanding of hypotheses considered in theory lessons.
282. A majority of students demonstrate confidence when asked to explain their answers to problems, analyse results and evaluate their findings.

## Shortcomings

### **KS3**

- 283. A minority of average and lower ability pupils has a less secure recall and understanding of current and previous work.
- 284. They sometimes have difficulty in applying scientific principles to a range of tasks and applications.
- 285. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop investigative skills on a regular basis.

### **KS4**

- 286. A minority of average and lower ability pupils has a less secure recall of previous work, and they have difficulty applying some scientific principles to a number of tasks and applications in everyday life.
- 287. The progress of a small minority of pupils is hindered by a lack of focus in class.
- 288. For a minority of pupils, the quality of investigative work is unsatisfactory, with a significant number of these pupils failing to achieve expected levels in the skill areas of planning, analysing and evaluating.

### **Sixth form**

- 289. A minority of students has a less secure knowledge and understanding of current and previous work.
- 290. They have difficulty applying some of the more complex principles to tasks and practical applications.

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| <b>Welsh second language</b> |
|------------------------------|

|                    |         |                                     |
|--------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 3 | Good features outweigh shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 3 | Good features outweigh shortcomings |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 3 | Good features outweigh shortcomings |

## Good features

### **KS3**

- 291. Pupils, have a positive attitude to Welsh. They listen well to their teachers and understand simple instructions and general comments in Welsh by their teachers.
- 292. They follow short simple items on audio tapes well, and respond by completing verbal and written tasks confidently.
- 293. Pupils generally enjoy oral work and the vast majority are keen to volunteer answers.

294. Pupils with SEN work well with other pupils and have a good attitude to their work.
295. They co-operate well in pair and group work, asking and answering basic questions with developing confidence and accuracy.
296. Pupils read aloud to a good standard. They generally pronounce most words correctly and the more able pupils use appropriate expression and intonation.
297. Most pupils understand short passages on familiar topics from magazines and course books and respond quite well, referring to key items in the text.
298. Pupils write short paragraphs, dialogues and letters with developing accuracy and express likes and dislikes using simple set reasons well.
299. Pupils in Y7 make good progress and use constructions learnt in earlier weeks correctly on the whole. Pupils in Y8 write interesting short poems on the theme of animals.

#### **KS4**

300. The small number of pupils entered for the full course (GCSE) in 2004 all achieved higher grade passes.
301. Most pupils are generally enthusiastic, support each others' learning and enjoy their Welsh lessons.
302. The majority of pupils across the key stage respond quite well orally in the structured situations in classes, using language presented in the lessons reasonably accurately on the whole.
303. More able pupils in the top sets speak with increasing fluency when discussing GCSE topics. They use a range of vocabulary, constructions and verb forms accurately in set situations.
304. Most pupils across the key stage read short passages and other examination passages well. They pronounce most words correctly. The more able, in both the full and short courses, use appropriate expression and intonation.
305. More able pupils in the GCSE full and short courses write interesting extended examination tasks, such as formal and informal letters and articles expressing opinions with a good degree of accuracy.

#### **Sixth form**

306. Students listen well to their teachers and follow explanations and ideas expressed by their teacher in Welsh quite well.

307. They respond at a satisfactory level to the set poems, films and the media, and offer short responses.
308. Their writing skills are developing quite well and they are acquiring some of the skills needed to be successful at AS level.
309. Students are increasing in confidence when speaking to visitors and other members of staff. They enjoy going to Welsh cultural events outside school and are endeavouring hard to bridge the gap between GCSE and AS level.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

310. Middle and lower ability pupils lack the confidence to expand on short answers when speaking to the teacher and each other.
311. Most pupils do not read independently from a sufficient wide range of suitable material.
312. Middle and lower ability pupils make basic grammatical and punctuation errors when writing extended tasks.
313. Pupils with SEN have difficulty responding to simple questions and using previously learned language.

#### ***KS4***

314. In pair and group work, middle and lower ability pupils concentrate almost exclusively on constructions and vocabulary presented in the lessons. They don't vary and expand on their responses.
315. The written work of most pupils following the short course contains a number of basic grammatical and spelling errors.
316. Pupils in the short course classes do not listen attentively to extended formal tasks and do not respond to the content by discussing items orally or in writing.

#### ***Sixth form***

317. In oral work, when discussing film and poetry, students are, at present, reluctant to express their ideas in an extended way.
318. Students make basic grammatical errors when tackling more ambitious literary course work writing tasks.

## Design technology

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 3 | Good features outweigh shortcomings         |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

### Good features

#### **KS3**

319. Pupils are able to generate a range of design ideas to meet the design briefs they have been given. Most pupils successfully develop their ideas into a final solution.
320. Pupils understand and apply electronic, mechanical and microprocessor control principles within appropriate design and make tasks. Good use is made of ICT electronic modelling design circuitry. There is good understanding of how flow charts are used to sequence operations using microprocessor control for traffic lights and barriers. Pupils understand and apply basic structural principles in their project work.
321. Effective use is made of ICT for basic designing, modelling, presentation and research.
322. Pupils plan well for making, use orthographic drawing skills well and have a good understanding of making processes in a wide range of materials.
323. Lower ability and pupils with SEN make good progress.

#### **KS4**

324. Standards are good in GCSE Resistant Materials and Graphic Products
325. Pupils understand and apply a design process to their project work. They research well, construct appropriate specifications for their designs and understand the link between design specifications and evaluations. Pupils explore and develop their ideas well using models and mock-ups.
326. Within a limited range of techniques, presentation skills are good. Pupils use ICT design packages effectively to enhance the presentation of their work. ICT is also used well for word processing and research on the Internet.
327. Making skills are well developed. Pupils plan well for making and use a range of appropriate materials well. They have a good understanding of making processes.

## **Shortcomings**

### **KS3**

- 328. Most pupils do not fully understand and implement all the stages of a design process. Few pupils understand the link between a design specification and evaluation.
- 329. Drawing and presentation skills vary widely across projects but are generally underdeveloped.
- 330. Insufficient use is made of CAD/CAM, particularly in work with resistant materials.
- 331. Limited designing opportunities in most modules results in more able pupils being insufficiently challenged.

### **KS4**

- 332. Quick developmental drawing skills are less well developed than other aspects of designing.
- 333. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties varies widely.

## **AS Product Design** (This is a new course to the school which started this term.)

**Sixth Form**      Grade 2      Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

- 334. In project work students use a design process well. They understand its function and use it effectively to design products. Presentation skills are good.
- 335. Students evaluate commercial products well and are able to incorporate good features in their own work. Effective use is made of ICT for designing and research.

### **Shortcomings**

- 336. Quick developmental drawing skills are underdeveloped.

## Information technology

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

### Good features

#### **KS3**

337. Pupils make good progress in their development of IT competencies. By the end of Y7, pupils manage computers effectively. They confidently conduct fundamental computer operations such as logging on, calling up and saving their work, and accessing appropriate applications and the Internet.
338. Standards of communicating information are good. Pupils confidently combine text and images, and change and arrange fonts and layouts in appropriate combinations according to their designs' needs. Design work is often good and results from the use of a wide range of communicating information techniques including PowerPoint presentations.
339. Pupils are able to design data capture forms to gather information, set up databases, understand terminology and carry out basic interrogations. They understand the function of a spreadsheet and are able to compile basic spreadsheets, conduct calculations and model number using appropriate formulae.
340. More able pupils are challenged with open ended problem solving as in the sustainable energy project in Y9, and less able pupils and those with SEN make good progress through modified activities.

#### **KS4**

341. Pupils develop a comprehensive range of IT skills in the portfolio component of the GCSE course. They confidently communicate, handle and model information for a variety of purposes and audiences.
342. Pupils' project work displays confidence in communicating, handling and modelling information using databases and spreadsheets in the solution of problems they identify. Research, analysis and problem solving skills are often well developed. Pupils make good use of a variety of research tools including the Internet.
343. Pupils present their work well and are able to explain clearly why they have chosen specific IT applications. More able pupils are challenged with open ended problem solving, and less able pupils and those with SEN make good progress in their skill development.
344. Examination results are higher than both national and UA averages and show good value added performance overall.

## Shortcomings

### KS3

345. Pupils do not speak at length of the social, economic, ethical and moral issues related to the use of ICT.

### KS4

346. Pupils do not use 'real life' contexts sufficiently in their project work to enhance opportunities for both research and evaluation.

## AVCE Information and Communication Technology

(This is a new course which is taught outside the formal timetable.)

**Sixth Form**      Grade 2      Good features and no important shortcomings

### Good features

347. Students are confident users of a wide range of desktop publishing skills in the production of letterheads, order forms, advertising material and questionnaires for imaginary commercial contexts.

348. Good evaluation and report writing is evident in some students' work.

### Shortcomings

349. A minority of students is behind schedule in the completion of their coursework.

## History

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

### Good features

#### KS3

350. Pupils have good levels of background knowledge and good understanding of chronology. They recall their learning successfully and can apply and organise this information meaningfully to solve challenging historical problems

351. From Y7 onwards, pupils adopt good investigative approaches when they examine problems. Pupils use a variety of sources of evidence effectively to compare and contrast differing interpretations of historical events and developments; they provide convincing explanations of the causes of change occurring over time.

352. In Y7 and Y8, pupils have good levels of understanding, for instance, of the differing claims to the English Throne in 1066; in Y8, they make imaginative use of pictorial and written sources of evidence to arrive at balanced judgements about the kingship and personalities of Henry V111 and Elizabeth 1. By Y9, pupils become progressively confident in testing their sources of evidence for bias, reliability and usefulness.
353. Pupils evaluate the sources effectively and use them to develop well-balanced oral and written arguments which show awareness of how historical interpretations emerge and also change over time.
354. By the end of KS3, pupils make good progress in distinguishing between long-term and short-term causes of change, for instance in their investigations into the industrial and social changes of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.
355. Most pupils achieve good standards in selecting, organising and communicating information through a wide range of writing tasks and challenges in which they use a good range of historical vocabulary.
356. They show good progress in developing their thinking skills through the construction of concept and mind maps.
357. Pupils with SEN achieve good standards relative to their ability.

#### **KS4**

358. Pupils successfully build upon the historical skills acquired in KS3. Most pupils exhibit a growing maturity in the depth of their responses to tasks and challenges
359. Pupils are increasingly well-focused upon providing reasonable and convincing explanations for the motivation and attitudes of people in the past by asking more complex questions of the sources.
360. Above average and many average ability pupils achieve good standards in identifying and explaining the major turning points which occurred in the history of crime and punishment over time.
361. Most pupils produce well-organised and well-presented written work. They use ICT tools effectively to enhance their presentation and to further develop their research skills.
362. Pupils make effective use of the local and national environment to extend their knowledge and understanding of the particular historical and cultural development of Wales.
363. Pupils make good progress in applying their knowledge and understanding from other curricular areas, such as literacy and ICT, to raise their standards in written work and to extend their problem-solving and research skills.

### **Sixth form**

364. Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of the historical debates related to the success of the plethora of revolutionary ideas and policies during the French Revolution. They identify interesting and relevant questions to ask of the sources and are very clear in their identification of propaganda and bias.
365. Students make careful use of the sources and successfully construct balanced and opposing arguments in their oral and written work.
366. Students show a good ability to synthesise the views of the major professional historians with expertise in the period they are studying; they use their analytical and critical skills effectively to evaluate and explain the differences in interpretation found in their arguments.
367. Written work shows that students can select relevant primary and secondary material confidently; their use of such evidence supports their arguments convincingly. They select and organise their written material effectively and there is good evidence that students can weigh and measure the variety of factors which they need to consider so that they can arrive at a balanced judgement.
368. A significant number of students have a good ability to “think on their feet” to argue a convincing case during class discussions.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3 and KS4**

369. A small number of pupils do not write in sufficient depth and detail to explain the points which they seek to make in their written work. A minority of pupils are reluctant to extend their ideas during oral sessions in class; they are over reliant upon brief oral responses to questioning.

#### **Sixth form**

370. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Geography**

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 1 | Good with outstanding features              |

### **Good and outstanding features**

#### **KS3 and 4**

371. Pupils have well developed geographical skills. They can use maps at a variety of scales, create and read graphs, interpret photographs and draw appropriate diagrams.

- 372. Pupils understand how physical hazards such as volcanic activity, earthquakes, and flooding impact differentially on communities, according to their levels of economic development. They appreciate that, in some cases, hazards are caused or exacerbated by human activity.
- 373. They understand the relationship between people and the environment and have a good understanding of sustainable development.
- 374. Pupils use appropriate geographical terminology in both written and oral work.
- 375. They have a good knowledge of many aspects of the geography of Wales.
- 376. The most able pupils achieve well, attaining a high proportion of the highest grades at the end of KS3 and at GCSE.

#### **KS4**

- 377. Pupils' good skills of geographical enquiry are shown in individual research and first hand field study. Most pupils use ICT effectively for presentation and some use it well for investigation.

#### **Sixth form**

- 378. Students have an excellent knowledge of places and environments throughout the world.
- 379. They understand well the dynamic nature of many geographical processes and features. They are sensitive to the variety of ways in which people's responses to physical, human and economic developments can vary.
- 380. They apply their extensive range of enquiry skills including statistical analysis very effectively in very good first hand investigations. They use ICT effectively for research and for good presentation of their work.
- 381. Students have an excellent geographical vocabulary which they use easily and accurately in their written and oral work.
- 382. When under pressure, students work together quickly and productively. They share their knowledge and use their skills to demonstrate their collective understanding of, for instance, how a drainage basin operates as a system.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3 and 4**

- 383. Some pupils' spelling of geographical and non geographical words is weak.
- 384. A minority of pupils present their work with less care so their maps, diagrams etc do not make clear their understanding.
- 385. Some pupils find it difficult to select relevant information from text that is presented to them and miss important details.

### **KS4**

386. Some pupils, particular those of lower ability, forget some of the skills that they acquired earlier.

### **Sixth form**

387. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Modern foreign language**

|                    |         |  |
|--------------------|---------|--|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 2 | Good features, no important shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features, no important shortcomings |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 2 | Good features, no important shortcomings |

### **Good features**

#### **KS3 and KS4**

388. All pupils take a second language in Y9 and make good progress.

389. In general, pupils are able to understand and respond appropriately to the authentic target language, and increasingly make use of the target language themselves.

390. Both boys and girls are motivated to communicate on a range of topics. Most pupils are able to use two or more language skills in combination and can adapt language learned for use in a new context.

391. Pupils increasingly develop the ability to produce written work in different registers for different purposes and to understand and apply grammatical rules.

392. Most pupils make good progress towards fulfilling their potential in the different language skills, against agreed learning goals, including those with learning needs or visual impairment.

393. They demonstrate good co-operative learning skills, especially in pairwork.

394. They behave well in class, are attentive and usually on task.

395. Pupils also demonstrate an increasing awareness and appreciation of other cultures in comparison to their own.

#### **Sixth Form**

396. Students demonstrate an increasing confidence and ability to communicate their ideas and opinions on a range of social topics, using a range of appropriate vocabulary, in both speaking and writing.

397. They are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses and work towards appropriate targets in different skills.

- 398. Students are motivated to develop their independent learning skills and are able to use the target language to obtain a range of information in carrying out their research project.
- 399. They make increasing use of ICT for coursework including presentation of statistical data.
- 400. Students develop a European perspective and promote the study of MFL in school and the wider community.

## **Shortcomings**

### ***KS3 and KS4***

- 401. Sometimes pupils do not pay sufficient attention to accuracy and do not naturally self-correct without prompting, even when they have the ability to do so.
- 402. Some pupils tend to use single words or phrases instead of attempting to produce whole sentences which they have learned.

### ***Sixth form***

- 403. There are no important shortcomings

|            |
|------------|
| <b>Art</b> |
|------------|

|                    |         |  |
|--------------------|---------|--|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 3 | Good features outweigh shortcomings          |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 3 | Good features outweigh shortcomings          |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 2 | Good: features and no important shortcomings |

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- 404. Girls make good progress and they demonstrate that they understand and are able to apply the essential elements of line, tone, colour, pattern, texture, shape and form, with skill and imagination.
- 405. When speaking and writing about art, most pupils show that they are acquiring and using an art vocabulary accurately.
- 406. They develop new craft skills in both two- and three-dimensional activities and are able to use computers creatively.
- 407. In their own paintings, and when working with clay, pupils demonstrate an outstandingly good practical and imaginative response to the work of Welsh artists and to the art of other cultures.
- 408. Pupils with SEN, including those with visual impairment, are able to achieve well in new craft experiences because their particular individual needs are well addressed.

### **KS4**

- 409. Boys and girls are developing as imaginative and independent artists. They are able to use their growing knowledge of different artists' work to enrich their own practical work. In examinations, girls achieve very close to the national average.
- 410. Most pupils understand how to research and develop a theme creatively. They understand how to use their sketchbooks to collect and record their research findings. When drawing from natural forms, they look and record accurately in line and tone.
- 411. Pupils know how to use computers to research artists' work and to create art.

### **Sixth form**

- 412. Students show outstandingly good imaginative and personal responses to the work of Welsh artists. Male and female students are developing very well as independent creative artists. They are achieving well in examinations.
- 413. They are able to select from, and skilfully experiment with, a range of new techniques in sculpture and printmaking.
- 414. They know how to use their sketchbooks with flair when recording and collecting visual resources.
- 415. They are able to use computers to research artists' work, to creatively manipulate images and to present their findings to the group.
- 416. Students are developing their understanding and awareness of both historical and contemporary art by regular study-visits to local and national art galleries.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- 417. Boys do not achieve as well as they should. The majority are slow in acquiring the essential skills and understanding needed to reach the expected national level.

#### **KS4**

- 418. Too many pupils rely on copying text from books or merely printing out what they find on the Internet. They do not express their own thoughts and emotions when writing about art.

#### **Sixth form**

- 419. When considering works of art, few students go beyond descriptive or factual comments in their writings.

## Music

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 3 | Good features outweigh shortcomings         |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

### Good features

#### **KS3**

420. Pupils often sing with enthusiasm and give suitable attention to diction and intonation. They perform melodies and parts confidently and accurately on keyboards and classroom instruments and maintain secure ensemble in whole class performances.
421. Numerous short melodic compositions, in different styles, are often well shaped. Pupils can identify instruments and basic features in different recorded extracts of music. They have a sound awareness of musical elements. A few make perceptive comments when appraising.
422. Pupils with SEN make appropriate progress.

#### **KS4**

423. Pupils make good progress in instrumental performing and maintain good ensemble in group performance. Work in composing displays interesting treatment of melodic material and good understanding of structure and of the medium chosen.
424. Pupils are acquiring good knowledge and understanding of technical terms. They are able to discern features well when appraising music from the different areas of study.

#### **Sixth form**

425. Students are confident and experienced vocal and instrumental performers. Compositions demonstrate good understanding of harmony and melody and part-writing and are often idiomatic for the chosen style and medium.
426. Students are acquiring good knowledge and understanding of the features and characteristics of the music being studied in their different areas of study. Aural perception skills, although uneven, are good, overall.

### Shortcomings

#### **KS3**

427. Occasionally, in certain classes the quality of singing lacks refinement and conviction.
428. Pupils' ability and experience of exploring different sounds and combining them imaginatively in varied composing tasks, is limited. A significant minority of pupils

are reluctant to express opinions or only make brief, superficial responses when appraising.

### **KS4**

429. A few compositions require further refinement. Occasionally, the appraising skills of a few pupils are not always secure in certain tasks.

### **Sixth form**

430. Initial ideas, in a few compositions, have not yet been adequately developed.

431. A few coursework essays in Y12 require further planning.

## **Physical education**

**Key Stage 3**      Grade 3      good features outweigh shortcomings

**Key Stage 4**      Grade 3      good features outweigh shortcomings

**Sixth Form**      Grade 3      good features outweigh shortcomings

### **Good features**

#### **KS3 and KS4**

432. Pupils are enthusiastic and generally work hard on the tasks set.

433. They demonstrate a clear awareness of safety and are able to apply it when working independently of the teacher.

434. They work well together on collaborative tasks in pairs and small groups to achieve specific lesson outcomes.

435. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the effects of exercise on the body and the importance of warm up and warm down.

#### **KS3**

436. In gymnastics, pupils are able to perform sequences, which include balances and linking movements.

437. In Y8 gymnastics, the girls are able to perform to a good standard. They demonstrate good body tension, clarity of shape, fluent linking movements and combine floor and apparatus work effectively in sequence work. They are able to evaluate their work using the appropriate terminology.

438. In football most pupils are able to pass and receive to a satisfactory standard and apply these skills in a game situation.

439. In hockey the most able demonstrate more complex skills. They show good control when travelling with the ball, change direction and use space effectively.

- 440. The most able pupils in netball are able to umpire. They demonstrate a good awareness of tactics and strategies for set play situations.
- 441. Some pupils are able to evaluate their performance as a team and suggest ways to improve.

#### **KS4**

- 442. In netball, girls demonstrate a very good skill level. They have good footwork and use a range of passes effectively in game situations.
- 443. In racquet sports, particularly boys' squash, a good skill level was evident. The majority could play forehand and backhand shots consistently, placing the ball tactically in difficult positions for a return.
- 444. The higher grade pass rate at GCSE for 2004 was just below the average for Wales.
- 445. Pupils following the GCSE course, particularly the girls, are outstanding in the way they are able to identify key components of fitness and apply them to specific positions in team games. They can clearly articulate how different types of training activities could enhance performance, thus applying theory to practice effectively.

#### **Sixth Form**

- 446. Students are well motivated and enthusiastic. They contribute well in lessons responding to questioning without prompting from the teacher.
- 447. They are able to recall information and apply it to new work.
- 448. Written work is of a satisfactory standard.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3 and KS4**

- 449. Some pupils find it difficult to focus and stay on task – this happens most frequently in boys groups where poor behaviour amongst a few can disrupt lessons.
- 450. In most activities pupils' knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped. They can answer questions accurately when guided but are unable to give extended answers or explain their understanding in any depth.
- 451. Only a small minority are able to transfer knowledge across activities.

##### **KS3**

- 452. In gymnastics a number of pupils in lower ability groups find it difficult to balance and link movements together to produce a fluent sequence of any quality. They are unable to recall the names of specific gymnastic movements and to explain what they are doing with any clarity.

453. In striking and fielding activities lower ability pupils are unable to throw and catch with any consistency or accuracy.
454. In hockey and football some pupils find it difficult to maintain control of the ball. They have little understanding of basic tactics and strategies in terms of angles of pass and supporting play.

#### **KS4**

455. Maximum participation is not achieved in a number of lessons where some pupils appear disinterested and de-motivated. This is primarily with the boys' groups.
456. Skill level with the least able pupils in games is poor. They find it difficult to pass or play a shot accurately. Decision-making skills are underdeveloped.
457. The average and below average pupils find it difficult to transfer skills practiced into competitive situations.

#### **Sixth Form**

458. Pupils lack confidence when it comes to giving any extended answers to questions. Depth of understanding with most students is underdeveloped.
459. They are not always able to give a range of examples when applying theory to practice.

### **Religious education**

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 3</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

#### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

460. Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and the other principal religions as required by the locally agreed syllabus.
461. Pupils are able to define key religious terms and explore religious concepts. They can identify the beliefs of the different religions, for example, beliefs about good and evil in Hinduism. They also understand differences in practice within religions and are able to explain, for example, the differences between infant and believers baptism in Christianity.
462. They have a good understanding of how people's lifestyles are influenced by their religious beliefs, for example how the lifestyle of Jews is influenced by their food laws. They understand the significance of pilgrimage in religion and can identify the places of pilgrimage in the different religions. They are able to use their own life experiences to understand religious practices.

463. Pupils are able to explain and discuss concepts such as prejudice and discrimination and relate them to significant people in recent times such as Martin Luther King. They are able to relate environmental issues to religious teaching and discuss the attitudes of different religions to conservation and man's treatment of the world.
464. Pupils' oral work is good. They work well in pairs and groups and respond well in active learning and problem solving activities. The written work of the majority of pupils is also good. They are able to write in a good variety of styles, produce reflective empathy work, and create memory maps, posters and other artwork.

#### **KS4**

465. Pupils continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of the subject by their diligent approach to the units of work studied, which in Y10 follow the GCSE short course syllabus and in Y11 the locally agreed syllabus.
466. Pupils acquire a range of skills which enable them to explore religion and human experience for themselves. They are able to relate religious teaching to current moral and social issues such as the sanctity of marriage, the use of contraceptives and euthanasia.
467. Pupils are able to consider the beliefs of different religions as well as drawing on their own experiences. They show respect and open-mindedness towards people with different beliefs and see a value in exploring the nature of diversity. They are able to appreciate the relevance of the subject to their everyday lives.
468. Pupils work well in pairs and groups and engage well in active learning and problem solving exercises. They express their opinions effectively both orally and in writing and most present balanced evaluation answers.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3**

469. A small minority of pupils have incomplete work in their exercise books and do not produce extended answers either orally or in writing.

##### **KS4**

470. A minority of lesser able pupils find it difficult to remain on task and consequently fail to complete their work satisfactorily. Some of the same pupils also lack the maturity required to deal with some of the issues involved in the syllabus.

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| <b>Religious studies</b> |
|--------------------------|

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

#### **Good features**

471. Pupils following the GCSE full course have a secure knowledge and understanding of their work. Results at this level in 2004 were above the UA and national average.

472. Pupils engage well with the subject and understand its relevance. They know their target grades and are keen to succeed. They work well individually, in pairs and in groups. They take responsibility for their own learning in problem solving and active learning exercises, for example, building up their own knowledge of the features of an Anglican church by using a memory map exercise.
473. Most pupils produce a good standard of written work. They are able to present arguments for and against a particular viewpoint, for example when considering capital punishment from both the teachings of Judaism and Christianity.
474. They have a good understanding of the attitudes of different religions to contemporary issues. Most are able to arrange coherent arguments thereby presenting well-balanced evaluation answers.
475. A high standard of coursework is produced involving individual research and often enhanced by good use of ICT.

### **Shortcomings**

476. A minority of pupils find it difficult to write in detail and to produce a balanced argument.

## **Business studies**

**Key Stage 4**    Grade 3    Good features outweigh shortcomings.

### **Good features**

477. A minority of pupils has a good understanding of business terminology.
478. A minority has a secure recall of business principles and can apply them to a range of tasks in the programme of study.
479. In one Y10 class pupils have a secure understanding of the factors to be considered when a business is re-located.
480. In Y11, a minority of pupils was able to complete a cash flow chart and accurately calculate monthly balances and evaluate the performance of a business.
481. A minority of the pupils was developing their coursework assignments to a good standard.

### **Shortcomings**

482. A significant number of pupils in both years have a less secure understanding of business principles and have difficulty applying them to a range of tasks.

483. In Y10, some pupils have difficulty identifying some of the key factors to be considered during the re-location of a business.
484. In Y11, some pupils are not fully focused on some of the tasks set in class and in the completion of their coursework assignments.
485. The examination results in 2004 were very disappointing.

## **Business and communication systems**

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

### **Good features**

486. In both written and oral work, most pupils are developing a good understanding of basic business principles.
487. They are able to use business terminology in a cross-section of tasks and problem solving situations.
488. In Y11, the majority of pupils can identify the important features needed in a letter of application, and successfully analyse exemplar material.
489. Pupils in both years are confident in the use of ICT.
490. A majority demonstrate good skills in a range of tasks including completing a balance sheet using a spreadsheet, and inputting images in a series of adverts to promote a business.

### **Shortcomings**

491. A small minority is not secure in their use of some business terminology and principles.
492. A minority make slower progress with the more demanding tasks.

## **GNVQ Intermediate Business**

**Sixth Form**    Grade 2    Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

493. The majority of students are making good progress in a range of tasks relative to their ability.
494. They are developing a good understanding of basic principles and use business terminology appropriately.

495. They are able to identify a range of issues of grievance in the workplace and have a good understanding of the role of trade unions and industrial tribunals.
496. They have a good understanding of the importance of customer care in business outlets.
497. Most students have a good understanding of how businesses function.

### **Shortcomings**

498. A minority of students is less secure in the interpretation of some business principles, and is making slower progress with some tasks.

## **AVCE Business**

**Sixth Form**      Grade 2      Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

499. A majority of students have a good understanding of business terminology and are able to apply sound business principles to a range of tasks.
500. Most students in Y12 have a good understanding of the importance of market research and the limitations of some methods.
501. Students in the Y13 class have a good understanding of the fundamental principles of contract law and how it is applied in the business world.
502. They are able to recall the stages followed before Bills become Statute Law and compare these procedures with those followed by the European Parliament.
503. The two students following the double award course have completed portfolio units of coursework of a high standard.

### **Shortcomings**

504. A minority of students is not secure in the application of some business principles to some tasks.

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| <b>GCSE Travel and tourism</b> |
|--------------------------------|

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

### **Good features**

505. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the impact of tourism on specific locations in England and Wales. They perceive the benefits and problems that

tourism brings. They appreciate how shifts in general prosperity change the attractiveness of tourist destinations

506. In their written work pupils use a good subject specific vocabulary.
507. Pupils have undertaken a course related work placement. Through this they have learnt much of the reality of working life, which was often not what they expected, and have been able to reflect upon their experiences. Many have made good use of ICT for the presentation of their work.

### **Shortcomings**

508. Pupils are occasionally reluctant to use language appropriate to the subject in their oral work.
509. Some written work is developed only briefly and ideas are not explored in depth.

## **Drama**

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| <b>Key Stage 4</b> | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |
| <b>Sixth Form</b>  | Grade 2 | Good features and no important shortcomings |

### **Good features**

#### **KS4**

510. All pupils listen attentively and respond readily to instructions with purpose and enthusiasm. They collaborate well in groups to negotiate plans for improvised and scripted scenes.
511. There is good knowledge and understanding of plays, including awareness of plots, themes and dialogue.
512. Pupils are developing skills in adopting and sustaining roles. Good progress is made in matching actions, gestures and expressions to dialogue and the feelings of characters.
513. There is good understanding and use of technical terms such as “flash back” and “cross cutting”.
514. Pupils are effectively involved in assessing their own work and that of others. Written and verbal evaluations are good. Pupils know the criteria and justify the critical comments made.

#### **Sixth form**

515. There are good standards of concentration and collaboration in “warm up” activities
516. involving trust. They listen intently and respond rapidly to instructions. Students also collaborate well in small groups, putting forward ideas for improvisations and performance and negotiating decisions for improvement.

517. In writing and performance, students demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of plays including their social and historical backgrounds, characters, plots and themes. Written work is often detailed, well-structured and includes good standards of evaluation.
518. There is good knowledge and use of dramatic techniques such as “thought-tracking”.
519. Students demonstrate good standards when they adopt and sustain roles. They use empathy and understand that movements, gestures and facial expressions must be matched to characters, situations, dialogue and feelings. They justify choices in character portrayal by reference to scripts.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS4***

520. Pupils do not consistently implement what they know and understand about “blocking” and the use of acting space.

#### ***Sixth form***

521. Students are not sufficiently aware of audience in performance and voices are not always projected.

|                  |
|------------------|
| <b>Economics</b> |
|------------------|

**Sixth Form**      Grade 2      Good features and no important shortcomings

#### **Good features**

522. Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of economic laws and principles, such as those governing the law of supply and demand. They can apply these principles successfully to current situations and economic problems.
523. Y12 and 13 students compile data effectively and use the information they gain to approach problems and to present their ideas in a variety of forms. They develop good problem-solving skills and adopt an increasingly self-critical approach when reviewing the quality of their work and effort.
524. Increasingly, students demonstrate an ability to think analytically and to relate relevant data to economic problems. They have good calculation skills and record their learning systematically.
525. Graph and diagram work is careful, well-plotted and well-presented; it is effectively used to illustrate the points made in written explanations.
526. Students in Y12 and Y13 make good use of subject-specific vocabulary to convey their ideas. They make good efforts to read as widely as possible to

ensure that they keep up to date with current economic situations and they make good use of the Internet to access new interpretations and debates.

527. Students are able to read and apply complex texts and statistical data accurately and confidently. They extract relevant information from these sources and use this to produce well-organised essays and surveys.
528. Y12 and Y13 students make good use of their own experiences and their knowledge of the locality to provide apt illustrations in their work; they are articulate and confident in contributing their views and ideas during class and group discussions.

### **Shortcomings**

529. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Home Economics**

### **Food and Nutrition**

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

#### **Good features**

#### **KS4**

530. Pupils show good organisational and social skills when doing experiments in groups. They can agree conclusions and present their findings clearly using graphical techniques appropriately.
531. Equipment and processes are used skilfully and safely to make quality products. Planning skills are well developed and pupils concentrate on their tasks. Worthwhile contributions are made in class discussions when considering the outcomes of practical work.
532. The theoretical knowledge behind the need to work safely and hygienically is well understood. Pupils apply these principles when working with food and are careful to avoid cross-contamination.
533. A good understanding of the nutritional components of food is evident in coursework when pupils apply this knowledge to a variety of situations.
534. Pupils make effective use of computers for a variety of purposes including research, to aid written presentation, for temperature testing and to decorate products like cakes.

#### **Shortcomings**

535. There are no important shortcomings

## **Child Development**

**Key Stage 4**    Grade 3    Good features outweigh shortcomings

### **Good features**

- 536. Pupils understand factors that contribute to the development of a child and can plan and carry out activities to assess or promote development.
- 537. Written work is well presented and pupils take a pride in their work.
- 538. Pupils have a good understanding about factors that affect a foetus. They can identify lifestyles best suited to the production of a healthy infant.
- 539. In class discussions pupils display a sound understanding about feeding a baby. By investigating a range of foods available for weaning they can make well reasoned suggestions for appropriate foods for the various stages.

### **Shortcomings**

- 540. Most child studies display only a superficial analysis of research.
- 541. A high proportion of pupils have weak literacy skills that lower the standard of coursework.

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| <b>Health and Social Care</b> |
|-------------------------------|

## ***GNVQ Intermediate***

**Sixth Form**    Grade 3    Good features outweigh shortcomings

### **Good features**

- 542. Students are able to use software for dietary analysis. They can suggest modifications to daily menus so that they better meet the needs of clients.
- 543. Good use is made of case studies to understand the development of children. The most able students can evaluate the ways in which the main care environments have provided for the different developmental and safety needs of the child.
- 544. Research skills are developing well. Students work independently to identify and locate two different care settings. They understand the importance of codes of conduct and charters from both the clients and the care workers perspective.

545. Students take account of advice from teachers and are willing to draft and re-draft work to improve standards.

### **Shortcomings**

546. Most students have weak communication skills.
547. Students display a weak understanding of what constitutes a balanced diet.

## ***Health and Social Care (AVCE)***

**Sixth Form**      Grade 2      Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

548. Students are well motivated and work hard. A-Level examination results have been consistently good for several years.
549. Y12 students understand the difficult concept of homeostasis very well. They appreciate how this relates to the health of an individual and the implications for health professionals when problems arise. They can interpret and analyse data related to human body systems and can organise and report on their own experiments.
550. Wall displays and presentations given by students show they have a good awareness of the wider aspects of Health and Social Care.
551. Students are able to develop research topics linked to their own interest. They employ sound methodology and present and analyse their findings in some detail. The most able can draw realistic and valid conclusions, say how their work could be improve and recommend pathways for further research.

### **Shortcomings**

552. There are no important shortcomings

|                      |
|----------------------|
| <b>Media studies</b> |
|----------------------|

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

### **Good features**

#### ***KS4***

553. Pupils collaborate very well in small groups to plan and prepare project work. They negotiate decisions and justify choices.

- 554. They demonstrate good research skills, using magazines, games, films, the Internet and their own surveys to retrieve information needed for project work.
- 555. There is good critical analysis of a range of media forms with clear understanding of codes and conventions and appropriate use of terminology.
- 556. Most writing is of a good standard. Able pupils in particular demonstrate good skills in critical analysis, a mature style and effective structure.
- 557. Pupils produce a range of good quality artefacts such as video and year books. They often involve outside agencies in supporting production. Standards of technical knowledge and skills are good.

### **Shortcomings**

- 558. A small number of pupils in Y10 work at a slow pace when writing. There is insufficient depth and detail in the analytical work of these pupils.

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| <b>Politics and Government</b> |
|--------------------------------|

**Sixth Form**      Grade 2      Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

- 559. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of the structure of government institutions and of their function within the constitution.
- 560. They have a good understanding of the need to use current and specific examples to illustrate the points which they make in their oral and written work. Students make good use of relevant and diverse sources of evidence, and their work provides evidence of wide background reading.
- 561. Lessons are characterised by good standards of discussion in which students use subject terminology appropriately. They are ready to consider points of view which are different from their own and have a good ability to construct logical and convincing oral and written arguments.
- 562. Students show a good ability to select and organise information; many of them become increasingly self-critical in their evaluation of their written work.

### **Shortcomings**

- 563. There are no important shortcomings.

## **Distance Learning Subjects**

**Sixth Form**      Grade 2      Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

564. Students achieve good standards in sociology, law and psychology, using good quality distance learning courses. This provision is a valuable and successful means of extending students' learning experiences in the sixth form.
565. Students' work in all three subjects shows a thorough coverage of the syllabus. Their notes are detailed and regularly updated with statistical and other data. Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of the subject area and their recall skills are secure; they make good links with relevant contemporary attitudes and legal and social developments.
566. Students make good use of a variety of research techniques and have a good command of the methodology and conceptual bases of these subjects. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and have a good ability to plan and construct well focused essays and research projects.
567. Students become increasingly confident in the use of investigative and experimental techniques and in forming and testing hypotheses. Many students make good progress in developing independent learning skills, using a number of sources of information, including the Internet.
568. They become increasingly self-critical in evaluating the quality of their written work and in identifying ways in which they can raise their standards of achievement.

### **Shortcomings**

569. There are no important shortcomings

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

570. The management, staff and governors welcome this report. We appreciate the advice and insights included and acknowledge the contribution the process will make to school improvement
571. We are very pleased that recognition has been given to the high standards in so many aspects of the school. The judgements in each key question show good features with no important shortcomings, with outstanding features in the area of care, guidance and support. We will continue to provide such support as it is fundamental in fulfilling our aim to promote the development and potential of each individual pupil and student. It is very gratifying that Elfed has been recognised as a caring school.

572. Good progress in standards of achievement has been identified, and the report also identifies aspects where we know we can still improve. It is particularly pleasing to note the reported improvement in behaviour as this has been a recent priority. We will continue to work with the small minority for whom this remains a challenge to safeguard the entitlement of disruption-free lessons for all.
573. Teachers have been heartened by the findings that the quality of teaching exceeds the targets set by the WAG. We will continue to share the good practice identified within the school, building on the strengths identified. As stated in the current development plan, we will continue to develop the role of our SENCO, to allow her to share her considerable expertise more widely to support teachers and learners in all curriculum areas.
574. We are encouraged that the issue of assessment for learning, already a priority in our school development plan, has been identified in the recommendations for further improvement. The inspection reinforces our belief that procedures for more consistent assessment and monitoring will lead to tangible improvement in standards at all levels. We will develop and share existing good practice and endeavour to make effective use of the data rich environment in which we operate. The challenge to identify and extend the most able is one we will take seriously and consider carefully in our action plan.
575. We welcome the positive comments concerning our provision of learning and extra-curricular activities for our pupils and students. However we also accept that we need to improve the attendance of some of our pupils and we will continue to work with the support of the Local Education Authority to address this challenge.
576. Effective leadership from staff and governors at all levels has enabled us to move forward significantly from the previous inspection, and the progress made has been recognised as good. Although we underestimated our grades in several of the key questions, our self evaluation and understanding of the issues faced by the school has been shown to be accurate and detailed.
577. Overall we are delighted with this report. The process involved the whole school community including pupils, parents, support staff, teachers, governors and many of our partners and friends. We have all learnt from the experience and will use this to continue to move forward together.

## Appendix A

### Basic information about the school

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Name of school                               | Elfed High School   |
| School type                                  | Community   |
| Age-range of pupils                          | 11 – 18   |
| Address of school                            | Mill Lane<br>Buckley<br>Flintshire                        |
| Post-code                                    | CH7 3HQ   |
| Telephone number                             | 01244 550217  |
| Headteacher                                  | Mr. P. J. Pierce  |
| Date of appointment                          | April 2003  |
| Chair of governors/<br>Appropriate authority | Mr. D. Messham  |
| Reporting inspector                          | Mr. T. O'Marah  |
| Dates of inspection                          | 29 <sup>th</sup> November – 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2004 |

## Appendix B

### School data and indicators

| Year group       | Y 7 | Y 8 | Y 9 | Y 10 | Y 11 | Y 12 | Y13 | Y 14 | Total |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|-----|------|-------|
| Number of pupils | 143 | 161 | 138 | 155  | 152  | 73   | 48  | 0    | 870   |

| Total number of teachers |           |           |                            |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
|                          | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers       | 47        | 7         | 50.3                       |

| Staffing information                                   |         |
|--|---------|
| Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes) | 17.25:1 |
| Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes            | N/A     |
| Average teaching group size                            | 22      |
| Overall contact ratio (percentage)                     | 78.46   |

| Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |              |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------|
|  | Y7   | Y8   | Y9   | Y10  | Y11  | Y12  | Y13  | Whole School |
| Term 1   | 93.2 | 93.2 | 90   | 84   | 83.6 | 89.1 | 88.9 | 88.8         |
| Term 2   | 93   | 90.3 | 89.5 | 86.6 | 85.8 | 92.3 | 89.9 | 91.6         |
| Term 3   | 91   | 89.7 | 85.1 | 84.3 | 96.3 | 91.5 | 96.2 | 93.5         |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals             | 11 |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 0  |

## Appendix C

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

| National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2004 |                    |          |   |   |    |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |
|--|--------------------|----------|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|
| Total number of pupils in Y9: 155                |                    |          |   |   |    |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |
| Percentage of pupils at each level               |                    |          |   |   |    |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |
|  |                    | D        | A | F | W  | 1 | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8 | EP |
| English  | Teacher assessment | School   | 2 | 1 | 0  | 0 | 0 | 7  | 27 | 34 | 20 | 8  | 0 | 0  |
|  |                    | National | 0 | 1 | 1  | 0 | 2 | 9  | 22 | 34 | 22 | 9  | 0 | 0  |
|  | Test               | School   | 2 | 4 | 0  | 0 | 0 | 6  | 20 | 41 | 22 | 5  | 0 | 0  |
| Mathematics                                      |                    | National | 0 | 3 | 4  | 0 | 0 | 8  | 21 | 31 | 23 | 10 | 0 | 0  |
|  | Teacher assessment | School   | 1 | 1 | 0  | 0 | 0 | 6  | 21 | 25 | 30 | 15 | 0 | 0  |
|  |                    | National | 0 | 1 | 0  | 0 | 1 | 8  | 2  | 25 | 29 | 14 | 0 | 0  |
| Science  | Test               | School   | 1 | 6 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 3  | 13 | 22 | 36 | 17 | 0 | 0  |
|  |                    | National | 0 | 5 | 2  | 0 | 0 | 7  | 19 | 21 | 32 | 14 | 0 | 0  |
|  | Teacher assessment | School   | 1 | 1 | 0  | 0 | 0 | 4  | 23 | 36 | 27 | 8  | 0 | 0  |
|  | National           | 0        | 1 | 0 | 0  | 1 | 8 | 21 | 32 | 25 | 11 | 0  | 0 |    |
| Test   | School             | 1        | 6 | 0 | 0  | 0 | 2 | 15 | 33 | 33 | 10 | 0  | 0 |    |
|  | National           | 0        | 4 | 2 | 0  | 0 | 6 | 19 | 31 | 25 | 14 | 0  | 0 |    |

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

| Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) |    |               |    |
|--|----|---------------|----|
| by Teacher Assessment  |    | by Test       |    |
| In the school  | 55 | In the school | 61 |
| In Wales   | 57 | In Wales      | 57 |

### Public Examination Results:

| For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2004                  | 151 |
| Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil                                  | 38  |

| The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2004:   | School | UA | Wales |
|---|--------|----|-------|
| entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent   | 91     | 91 | 87    |
| attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both              | 48     | 53 | 51    |
| attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both              | 91     | 90 | 85    |
| attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator) | 31     | 40 | 38    |
| entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE   | 92     | 97 | 97    |
| attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent  | 77     | 79 | 75    |
| attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent  | 91     | 95 | 93    |
| attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent  | 9      | 5  | 7     |
| attained one or more Entry level qualification only   | 0      | 2  | 3     |
| attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1   | 0      | 0  | 0     |
| attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2   | 0      | 0  | 0     |

| For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs                        |     |
|---|-----|
| Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2004                                   | 121 |
| Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2004 | 37  |
| Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2004          | 4   |

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|   | School | UA | Wales |
|---|--------|----|-------|
| Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C      | 70     | 66 | 68    |
| Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E      | 92     | 96 | 95    |
| Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects      | 19     | 19 | 20    |
| Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2 | 21     | -  | -     |
| Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3     | 15     | -  | -     |

## Appendix D

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

Prior to the inspection full discussions were held between the registered inspector and the head based on the school's self-evaluation report and the report of the previous inspection in 1998. In addition meetings were held with the staff of the school, with parents and with the governors. 232 questionnaires were returned by parents and analysed by the inspection team. Whole school and appropriate subject documents were collected and reviewed by inspectors. All of this information was used to inform the organisation of the inspection and the deployment of inspectors

During the inspection all the subjects of the curriculum were inspected in detail and 222 lessons were observed. Formal and informal interviews were held with pupils and the full daily life of the school was observed. The inspection team reviewed pupils' work in exercise books and folders and looked at pupils' work diaries and the school reports sent to their parents.

During the week the inspection team saw 26 form registration periods and 4 assemblies, and visits were made to a wide range of clubs and activities. Interviews were held with appropriate heads of department, and with those teachers and managers holding positions with whole school responsibilities.

The performance of the school in public examinations and tests was analysed in detail so that trends in performance over time, and comparisons to local and national data could be identified and accounted for.

## Appendix E

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| Team member | Responsibilities   |
|-------------|--|
| T.O'Marah   | Key Questions 1, 2, 5, and 6   |
| R.Cawthorne | Lay Inspector: Attendance: Behaviour: Work related education.                              |
| S.Gale      | Core Team: Design & technology: Information technology: Key Question 7                     |
| P. Rourke   | Core Team: Geography: Special educational needs: Key Question 4.                           |
| L.Bithell   | Core Team: English: Literacy   |
| A.Edwards   | Core Team: Mathematics: Numeracy.  |
| S.G.Davies  | Core Team; Science Co-ordinator: Business Studies: Key Question 3: Sixth form co-ordinator |
| T.Lewis     | Welsh  |
| D.Jones     | Science (biology)  |
| K.Davies    | Science (physics)  |
| A.Newman    | History: Politics: Economics: Law  |
| P.Daniel    | Modern foreign languages   |
| E.Forster   | Art  |
| V.Inceldon  | Physical education   |
| G.Owens     | Religious education  |
| P.Swinerton | Design & technology: Health & social care: Vocational courses co-ordinator                 |
| A.W.Jones   | Music  |
| D.Kelly     | School's Nominee   |

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