

Inspection under Section 10 of the
Schools Inspections Act 1996

FITZALAN HIGH SCHOOL
Lawrenny Avenue
Leckwith
Cardiff
CF11 8XB

School Number: 681/4042

Date of Inspection: 11 – 15 OCTOBER 2004

by

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110 8205

Date : 13 DECEMBER 2004

Under Estyn contract number: T/11/04

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Fitzalan 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. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Fitzalan High school took place between 11 – 15 October 2004. An independent team of inspectors, led by Miss G Owen 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:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Grade 1 | good with outstanding features |
| Grade 2 | good features and no important shortcomings |
| Grade 3 | good features outweigh shortcomings |
| Grade 4 | some good features, but shortcomings in important areas |
| Grade 5 | many important shortcomings |

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.

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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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Fitzalan High School is an 11-19 mixed, community school serving the areas of Butetown, Grangetown, Riverside and Canton in Cardiff Unitary Authority (UA). There are 1592 pupils on roll, including 258 in the sixth form. Overall, there are 80 more boys than girls in the school.
2. The areas served by the school are economically disadvantaged. Forty-four per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure well above the national average of 15.7%.
3. The school is multi-cultural. Sixty-three per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and represent about 30 nationalities and over 20 languages. English is the second language for 56% of pupils and there are currently 572 pupils in Y7-11 who receive teaching in English as an additional language. Between 30 and 55 pupils each year speak little or no English on entry. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language.
4. Pupils have a wide range of special educational needs (SEN). Fifty-four pupils have statements of SEN and a further 239 pupils are on the SEN register. In the latest year, 88% cent of pupils, on entry, had a reading age below their chronological age, and, in the case of 50% of pupils, two or more years below. A unit on site, for pupils with mild or moderate learning difficulties, resourced by the UA, caters for 55 pupils.
5. The school has links with local partner primary schools and is part of the Cardiff Collegium of ten schools and a college, to extend provision for pupils aged 14 and over. At the sixth form stage, it works in partnership with Cathays High School and Coleg Glan Hafren to increase the range of courses offered.
6. The headteacher for the last eighteen years retired at the end of the last academic year and the previous deputy head is the current acting headteacher for a year. The other members of the senior management team are nearly all well established at the school.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school has a clear mission statement – to seek excellence through hard work and respect for others.
8. Its aims are to promote the vocational, personal and social development of each individual pupil, in a caring and achieving environment. To this end the targets in its current school development plan are to continue to improve:

- Standards of achievement
- Pupils' key skills
- Attendance rates
- Standards of behaviour
- Pupils' spiritual development
- The quality of the accommodation

Summary

9. Fitzalan High School is a good school. It successfully promotes pupils' achievement, with emphasis on individuals' needs. Pupils are given very good support, in a caring community, where cultural diversity is celebrated. This success is achieved through meeting a much wider range of needs and challenges than in most schools.

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? | 1 |
| 6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? | 2 |
| 7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? | 1 |

Standards of Achievement

(In standard and full inspections)

| Standards in subjects inspected | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|------------|
| Subject | KS3 | KS4 | Sixth Form |
| English | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Welsh second language | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Design & Technology | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Religious Education | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Religious Studies | - | 2 | - |
| Business Studies | - | 3 | 2 |

KS3 and KS4

10. In the five subjects inspected at key stage (KS) 3, pupils achieved good standards with no important shortcomings. In the six subjects inspected at KS4, there were outstanding features in one subject, no important shortcomings in four subjects and some shortcomings in one subject.
11. In the lessons inspected in those six subjects, the following grades were awarded:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10% | 59% | 27% | 4% | 0% |

12. These grades are above both current national targets and grades awarded in inspections.
13. Pupils are generally well motivated, behave well and are keen to meet their targets and improve their performance. They also gain good study habits and learn to work independently.
14. The most able pupils achieve well and gain all-round success in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) at the top grades. Some, who are entered early for GCSE and even Advanced (A2) level, achieve very well.
15. Pupils with SEN make good progress. Those who arrive at the school with little or no English make very good progress. The progress of pupils supported in a number of projects is also very good.
16. Pupils' key skills are good overall and those who have any difficulties are given extra support to enhance these skills. Reading ages improve significantly. In general, pupils listen, speak, use numbers and use computers more confidently than they write.
17. Girls do better than boys in examinations overall but the gap between them has narrowed and is less significant than the gap nationally.
18. Results in the National Curriculum (NC) tests and at GCSE have improved significantly since the last inspection and, in 2004, were the highest to date. Whilst below national averages, in comparison with schools of a similar intake, results place the school above average or in the top 25 per cent of schools.
19. Results in vocational qualifications, including those of pupils following the alternative curriculum, have also been good and thus virtually every pupil in recent years has left school with qualifications.

20. Whilst a significant minority of pupils do not attend regularly, the school works very hard to encourage good attendance and compensate for any adverse effects on pupils' progress.

The quality of education and training

21. In the six subjects inspected, the grades awarded for teaching were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13% | 59% | 20% | 8% | 0% |

22. The proportion of lessons awarded grades 1 and 2 exceeds national targets significantly though the proportion of lessons awarded grade 4 does not quite meet the target. In the lessons seen in all other subjects, both targets were surpassed. Overall, the quality of teaching is a strength of the school.
23. Teachers are well qualified, committed and enthusiastic. They are also good role models for pupils, in representing the rich cultural diversity of the school. They establish very good working relationships with pupils and present them with challenging and stimulating learning experiences to meet their diverse needs.
24. Teachers monitor and review progress systematically and employ a very wide range of support procedures to ensure that pupils reach their potential. Day-to-day assessment is less effective in identifying areas for improvement.
25. The curriculum is broad and balanced, allowing flexibility. At KS4 there is a wide range of courses leading to qualifications, and an alternative curriculum successfully caters for those at risk of disaffection. Work-related education is of high quality and prepares pupils effectively for the next stage of education, training or employment.
26. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs, visits, study skills and revision sessions, and holiday courses. Teachers are very generous in the time they give to individuals and small groups outside lesson times.
27. Pupils and parents appreciate the high quality of support which they receive from the school and from outside agencies, to which it is closely linked. The number of pupils who receive mentoring is unusually high.
28. There is a well-planned personal, health and social education programme to promote pupils' personal development.
29. Pupils are proud of the school's multi-cultural ethos and atmosphere of mutual respect.
30. The provision and support for those who arrive with little or no English are outstanding.

Leadership and management

31. Outstanding leadership, with vision and direction, has resulted in all sections of the school and wider community sharing the same values. Morale is high and there is a strong sense of teamwork, with pupils' best interests at heart.
32. Governors represent all sections of the wider community and are strongly supportive of the school, taking an increasingly strategic and monitoring role.
33. There is a high degree of professionalism amongst the teaching staff and at all levels of management. A culture of self-evaluation has been established and is continuing to develop, with systematic procedures in place.
34. Self-evaluation informs the setting and prioritising of targets. As a consequence, appropriate plans have been developed and actions taken, which have led to demonstrable improvements.
35. The pro-active approach to gaining funding to support individual pupils' needs has been outstanding. Systems to analyse and review the use of resources are robust and ensure very good value for money.
36. The outside appearance of most buildings is poor but, inside, the school provides a stimulating learning environment. Effective use is made of the school's facilities and resources.

SIXTH FORM

Standards of achievement

37. In the six subjects inspected, standards were good with no important shortcomings in five subjects. In the other subject, good features outweighed some shortcomings.
38. The grades awarded for the lessons inspected in these subjects, and consequently a very small sample, were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 0% | 67% | 33% | 0% | 0% |

39. The number of students successfully completing their courses and going on to Higher Education has increased year on year and now represents considerable success.
40. The most able students achieve very well, gaining the top grades. Students with SEN receive effective support to make good progress in their studies.
41. Key skills are generally good and any students with difficulties attend lessons to develop those skills and gain accreditation.

42. Students gain in confidence and maturity in the sixth form. They develop their talents in many fields, often in leadership roles. They also show increased motivation and a commitment to on-going learning opportunities and career development.
43. Results in A level examinations have been fairly consistent in recent years. Girls have done better than boys and, across the full range of grades, their results have been broadly in line with the national average. Boys' results have been lower. Across a range of other courses, of a vocational nature, results have represented good progress by students across the ability range.

The quality of education and training

44. The quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected was as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15% | 62% | 19% | 4% | 0% |

45. Grades awarded in all other classes seen indicate a good quality of teaching overall.
46. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge effectively and plan lessons carefully to meet examination requirements and support students' learning.
47. Progress is closely monitored and reviewed by teachers. Students are encouraged to be increasingly responsible for their own learning. Reports to parents clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement.
48. There is open access to a wide range of courses leading to examination, including many of a vocational nature. The choice is enriched by partnerships with other establishments through the Cardiff Collegium, and offers students a good degree of flexibility. The programme of extra-curricular opportunities is also wide.
49. Work-related education is of high quality. It prepares students effectively for Higher Education, for employment and for enterprise. Students were recently winners in a national enterprise competition with entries from schools and colleges all over Wales.
50. Students continue to receive very good academic and pastoral support and are given opportunities to take leadership roles amongst their peers and amongst younger pupils. They contribute significantly to the school's life and work.

Leadership and management

51. The leadership and management of the sixth form are part of the established good practice for the school as a whole. There is a strong corporate ethos, with shared values based on meeting students' individual needs.

52. Channels of communication are good and the sixth form staff work effectively as a team.
53. The views of students and stakeholders are taken into account and made good use of in systematic self-evaluation procedures.
54. This process has enabled priorities to be identified and actions taken to bring about measurable improvements in the sixth form.
55. Students have good access to resources, including computer facilities, to enable them to undertake research and work independently. Outstanding use is made of all available resources in school and in the community.

Progress since the last inspection

56. There has been significant progress overall since the last inspection, particularly in improved standards and examination results, in the range of teaching strategies and match to individual needs, and in self-evaluation. The revised management structure has contributed to this progress in clarifying responsibilities and accountability. The school has worked hard on all the key issues from the last report, though some issues, such as attendance rates and the quality of the accommodation remain on-going areas for attention. Nonetheless, much has been achieved and the organisational issues have been resolved.

Recommendations

57. Inspectors agree with the priorities that the school has identified in its development plan. For the maintenance of current good practice and for on-going progress, the school should focus on continuing to improve:
 1. Standards of achievement and examination success.
 2. Pupils' key skills
 3. Assessment
 4. Attendance
 5. Behaviour
 6. Accommodation.

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

58. The school graded this key question as grade 3, over-emphasising attainment in examinations in comparison with national averages. In terms of achievement, relative to pupils' abilities, the school does well.

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

KS3 and KS4

59. The team inspected five subjects at KS3 – English, mathematics, Welsh second language, design and technology and religious education. In all five, pupils achieve good standards with no important shortcomings.

60. At KS4, the above subjects were inspected, with business studies. In design and technology, there are outstanding features; in English, mathematics, Welsh second language and religious education and studies, standards are good with no important shortcomings; in business studies, good features outweigh some shortcomings.

61. The good features common to all subjects are pupils' motivation, their well-developed key skills (particularly speaking, listening and reading), and their response to challenging tasks involving independent study and problem-solving. The shortcomings relate to the progress of a small minority of pupils who are not as well motivated and whose understanding is not probed when teaching is over-directive.

62. In the lessons inspected at KS3 and KS4, the following grades were awarded:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10% | 59% | 27% | 4% | 0% |

63. These grades are significantly above the current Welsh Assembly Government targets for at least 95% of lessons to be awarded a grade 3 and at least 50% of lessons to be awarded grades 1 and 2. They are also above the grades awarded in all secondary schools in Wales last year.

64. The most able pupils achieve well and attain highly in public examinations. They are given opportunities to take GCSE and even A2 level examinations when they are ready, notably in mathematics, music and community languages. In these they are very successful. Pupils with SEN make good progress, achieve well in relation to ability and attain well in public examinations.

65. Most of the targets set by the school for success in national tests and examinations are met or surpassed. The only significant discrepancy has been in English at KS3.
66. Pupils' key skills are generally good as the school offers much individual support to boost those skills. Pupils mostly listen well to the teacher, to other pupils and to audio-visual resources. They respond orally with interest, though girls are generally more reticent than boys. Reading ages improve significantly through extra sessions and in-class support.
67. Standards of writing are more variable as many pupils find written English the most difficult of the four communication skills, particularly those for whom English is an additional language. The most able write extensively and fluently but the work of a number of pupils of lower ability is marred by technical inaccuracies and poor presentation.
68. Standards of numeracy are generally good and pupils apply numbers competently in a range of subjects and formats. Pupils for whom English is an additional language often excel in mathematics and their performance in national tests and examinations is very good.
69. Pupils have generally good skills in information and communications technology and these skills were used well in lessons observed in design and technology and in business studies. However, the extent to which they are able to use their skills in subjects across the curriculum varies. Thus their skills are not developed to the maximum.
70. Pupils make good progress in Welsh across both key stages and use their ability to speak Welsh in competing in school and national Eisteddfodau. Three groups from the school recently represented the county in the Urdd national Eisteddfod.
71. Pupils who speak little or no English on arrival make very good progress. Their success in national tests and examinations is testament to the outstanding support they receive as individuals or in small groups. Pupils targeted in the 'Raising Ethnic Minority Achievement' and the 'Black Caribbean Achievement Project' make exceptionally good progress. The 'Haven Project' also provides very good support for asylum seekers.
72. Other targeted groups of pupils at KS3 and KS4 also achieve well, with support through various strategies, including mentoring.
73. Results in the NC tests at the end of KS3 have risen year on year and peaked in 2004, when 40% of pupils reached level 5 in all three core subjects. Whilst this is below the national average, it compares very favourably with that of schools of a similar intake. Results in mathematics and science have consistently placed the school in the top 25% of schools in recent years.
74. At KS4, there has also been significant improvement since the last inspection. Virtually all pupils leave school with qualifications, in GCSE or vocational

courses. The proportion gaining at least one GCSE, and a grade A*-C in all three core subjects have placed the school in the top 25% of schools with a similar intake. Whilst below the national average, the proportion gaining at least five subjects at grades A*-C or A*-G also compares well with that of schools of a similar intake.

75. Girls outperform boys, as nationally, but the gap between them in test and examination results is narrower than the gap nationally. In some subjects, boys do better.

Sixth form

76. Of the six subjects inspected, standards are good with no important shortcomings in English, mathematics, Welsh second language, religious education and business studies. In design and technology, good features outweigh some shortcomings.

77. Again, students work with motivation and increased confidence in their ability to work independently.

78. In the small sample of sixth form lessons seen, the grades awarded were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 0% | 67% | 33% | 0% | 0% |

79. There is open access to sixth form courses and a very wide range of ability in the sixth form. Students of all abilities do well. The most able students achieve very well, gaining the top grades in public examinations. Students with SEN make good progress. The numbers who enter the sixth form, who complete their courses and who go on to Higher Education have all increased. Forty-nine students went on to Higher Education this year.

80. Students' key skills are generally good, relative to ability. They listen with interest and ask pertinent questions. Oral skills are generally more highly developed than written skills. Students give oral presentations, discuss and debate purposefully but sometimes have technical difficulties in writing. They use the Internet for research and reading skills develop well. Students apply numbers competently and appropriately.

81. Many students attend lessons in key skills. The success rate in accreditation at level one has been good, with fewer numbers at level two and three. The quality of portfolios which students build up has been better than results would indicate.

82. The outstanding feature, as at KS3 and KS4, is students' progress in relation to their linguistic background. Those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress.

83. A level results have been fairly consistent over recent years, with an average points score of 14. Girls' results have been broadly in line with the national average but boys' results have been lower. Results in the one and two-year vocational courses have been good and have enabled many students to access Higher Education and training opportunities.

Pupils' progress in learning

KS3 and KS4

84. The school's emphasis on meeting individual pupils' needs results in good progress. The flexibility of the curriculum, withdrawal sessions and in-class support are tailored to enhance progress, particularly through the development of linguistic competence and basic skills.
85. Pupils can thus access all aspects of the curriculum and fulfil their potential across the curriculum, by applying these skills in new contexts. They acquire knowledge and develop their skills.
86. Pupils are fully involved in their learning through the setting of targets. They show good awareness of their strengths and of areas in which they need to improve. Most respond well to challenging learning experiences and will readily work independently to further their understanding. Progress between the key stages is good.

Sixth form

87. Sixth form students are reflective about the progress they are making. They are aware of the need to extend their knowledge and also develop their key skills. Their motivation is good, the resources in the Learning Centre being well used before school in the morning, as well as during the day and after school.
88. They are mature in their evaluation of their strengths and areas in which they need to improve and act upon feed-back from teachers on the quality of their work. There is good collaboration between students of differing abilities to aid progress.
89. Self-esteem and expectations are increasing among sixth form students. Many show real determination to succeed in their chosen course of study or career opportunity.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills.

KS3 and KS4

90. Pupils are generally well motivated in lessons and respond well to the task in hand. More striking is their eagerness to improve their performance by attending lunch-time, after school, week-end and holiday sessions which teachers run for them, to complete homework, boost basic skills, develop study skills and revise for tests and examinations.

91. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and incidents of misbehaviour are usually effectively handled. The prevailing culture is one of respect for others and the atmosphere over lunch is particularly sociable.
92. The school struggles to meet 90% attendance over a whole school year, though has reached this level this term to date. A significant minority of pupils do not attend regularly but the school works very hard to promote good attendance and follow up absence; Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) guidelines are followed. Most pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.
93. Pupils readily show initiative and organise their work well, though they do not all receive homework regularly and consistently across the curriculum, nor are the tasks always sufficiently challenging. In group work they collaborate well, in creative and problem-solving activities.
94. Pupils develop well as individuals, gaining in skills, knowledge and self-confidence. Aspirations grow, and also concern for others less fortunate. They have good awareness of issues of equal opportunities. Respect for other cultures is a key feature of the school and also an over-arching sense of belonging to the community of Fitzalan. Pupils are encouraged to go confidently out into the wider community and the career opportunities ahead of them.

Sixth form

95. Students gain in maturity during their time in the sixth form. They are well motivated to study independently, to research and to solve problems.
96. Through activities with their peers and in leading activities for younger pupils, students give a lot back to the school. They are good role models and ambassadors for their school. They have well developed personal and social skills, show respect for others and have a good awareness of social and global issues.
97. Students behave with courtesy and good humour. They are generally responsible about signing in and out of school, and this term to date, attendance has been over 90%. However, attendance levels tend to fall later in the year.
98. Students are aware of the demands of the world of work and of Higher Education. They undertake work experience and many are involved in community projects. A real commitment is evident on the part of many students and a sense of appreciation for the opportunities available to them.

The quality of education and training

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

| |
|--|
| Grade 2 : Good features and no important shortcomings |
|--|

This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

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

KS3 and KS4

99. In the six subjects inspected, teaching was at least good with no important shortcomings in 72% of lessons. Teaching in 8% of lessons had shortcomings in important areas.

| Grade1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13% | 59% | 20% | 8% | 0% |

100. Lessons in other subjects were also observed. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and a real strength of the school.
101. Pupils are engaged by challenging and stimulating tasks which interest them. Stimulus material is varied and reflects the diverse nature of the school community
102. In almost all lessons there are very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers are supportive, use praise regularly, manage pupils with confidence and have a clear understanding of the needs of specific pupils.
103. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and strive to ensure that they make good progress.
104. Teachers are well qualified, committed and enthusiastic with most teachers having a good knowledge of their subject. They plan and deliver lessons which meet the requirements of the NC and external examination bodies, and demonstrate good skills in explanation, demonstration and questioning.
105. Some teachers demonstrate a good understanding of factors which affect pupils' learning. They use this in a good way to develop pupils' skills as learners and adapt their lessons to take into account the needs of a wide variety of learners.
106. The majority of lessons contain a good variety of approaches which are appropriate to the needs of the pupils. A small number of teachers, however,

rely too heavily on their own input and fail to allow pupils to engage in independent learning.

107. The school has developed a common approach to lesson structure. Most teachers share learning outcomes with pupils, recap on prior learning and encourage pupils to reflect on their own learning at the end of lessons.
108. A wide range of support strategies are used to ensure that pupils with specific language or learning needs are well integrated into all aspects of school life. Teachers are very good role models for their pupils in representing the cultural diversity of the school.
109. The language needs of pupils are very well met by all staff. Pupils with English as an additional language receive very good teaching from Ethnic Minority Achievement Service teachers and, as a result, are able to make very good progress in subjects.
110. Teachers monitor and review pupils' progress systematically and employ a good range of support procedures to ensure that pupils fulfil their potential. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good. The mentoring of pupils in KS3 and KS4 is effective in targeting areas where they can improve their learning.

Sixth form

111. Teaching was at least good with no important shortcomings in 77% of the small sample of lessons in the six subjects inspected. Teaching in 4% of lessons had shortcomings in important areas.

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15% | 62% | 19% | 4% | 0% |

112. Teachers encourage students to become confident independent learners. Most teachers promote original and innovative responses from their students by engaging them in high quality discussion and questioning.
113. Teachers have very good working relationships with their students and are sensitive to their needs.
114. Teachers of sixth form students have very good subject knowledge. They ensure that their lessons not only help students meet examination requirements but also encourage students to consider topical issues, which enhances their understanding.
115. Planning is generally good and takes into account previous learning although a small number of teachers do not plan in sufficient detail for this level of work and do not manage lesson time as effectively as they could.

116. Resources and stimulus material are well chosen and varied. Teachers make good use of a range of resources, including the interactive whiteboard, to improve student learning.
117. Lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance where all students, irrespective of gender, race or ability are encouraged to achieve to the best of their ability.
118. Teachers encourage a wide range of students to return to the sixth form. With very good support from teachers, individual students are able to achieve to a level which exceeds expectations. Teachers monitor progress and performance carefully. Using a referral system, individual students who may not be achieving their potential are identified so that they can be given additional support.

The rigour of assessment and its use in planning and the improving of learning

KS3 and KS4

119. The school has developed a very good system for collating and analysing assessment data in KS3 and KS4. This is very well managed by key stage and senior managers and contributes effectively to improved standards in the school.
120. There are, however, some problems in using the computer software currently, which restricts access and use of the data to some degree. Not all teachers have easy access to data about pupils' progress and targets. Key stage managers do well to disseminate relevant data but teachers are not able to check information about pupils or contribute to pupil profiles in an efficient way.
121. The school meets statutory requirements for assessing and reporting pupils' achievements. Assessment procedures for pupils for whom English is an additional language are particularly rigorous.
122. Assessment is generally accurate and fair, although the regularity and quality of marking are inconsistent within and across subjects. Some teachers provide useful, targeted comments on pupils' work but others do not always indicate how pupils can improve. Pupils generally find teachers' advice helpful but some pupils find comments difficult to understand.
123. Some subjects have developed good self-assessment by pupils and peer assessment procedures. This practice, however, is not fully developed or co-ordinated across the school.
124. Annual reports are presented in a standardised format which, on the whole, clearly explains the criteria for success in each subject. The school provides clear guidance on report writing but not all teachers follow this by indicating how pupils can improve their work. Pupils contribute to reports by evaluating their

own progress. This is monitored by form tutors but the quality and focus of the evaluations are variable.

Sixth form

125. Assessment is used well to monitor students' progress. Teachers regularly check understanding during lessons and mark written work regularly.
126. Marking reflects examination course requirements and clearly identifies strengths and areas for development. Examination coursework marking is consistent with the expectations of the examining body.
127. Vocational courses are assessed using common assessment sheets which provide a useful overview of students' progress.
128. Most teachers share the focus of assessment with students and some teachers encourage them to be involved in self-evaluation. When this is done well, some students, particularly the more able, demonstrate an impressive analysis of their own progress. Self-assessment is not fully embedded into all subject areas.
129. Reports to parents are provided annually. These contain useful information on academic and personal progress as well as communicating clear targets for improvement. Interim reports are used well by teachers and the head of sixth form to monitor students' progress and performance.

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

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| Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings. |
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130. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

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

131. The curriculum overall successfully meets the needs of all pupils and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996. The curriculum is accessible for all pupils including those with SEN and for whom English is an additional language. Pupils have opportunities to obtain appropriate qualifications, when it is felt that they are ready to be entered for the examination.
132. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced in each key stage. It is flexible enough to meet the wide-ranging needs of many newcomers to the school. The curriculum provides effective continuity and progression between years and key stages.

133. The provision for community languages is very good. At KS4, a number of vocational subjects are available. However one band of pupils cannot access them in their programme of study. A small group of pupils follows a well-designed alternative curriculum which assists their inclusion in the school.
134. Access to the sixth form is open. Students can choose from an extensive range of Advanced Subsidiary (AS), A2 and vocational courses. The provision is enriched through partnerships with a number of other establishments.
135. The planning for the development of key skills across the curriculum is good overall. In the majority of schemes of work, opportunities have been identified for pupils to develop basic and key skills. This area of the curriculum is continually under review as witnessed in departmental development plans. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001.
136. In the sixth form, provision for key skills is good and many students attend lessons to develop those skills and gain accreditation.
137. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is available for all years and is a very good feature of the school. In addition to a number of clubs that meet during the lunch- hour and after school, many activities involve the school's community at weekends and during the holidays.
138. A significant number of pupils represent the school in sporting activities with considerable success. A number of visits are organised to venues such as galleries and theatres in this country, and for valuable curricular and social purposes abroad. Pupils and students benefit from the range of activities available, which broaden their experiences and promote their personal and social development.
139. The school is successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
140. Spiritual development is promoted through various areas of the curriculum, the range of assemblies each day and the daily life of the school .These experiences give pupils many opportunities to reflect on their own and other people's lives and beliefs, their environment and human condition.
141. Moral development is promoted successfully through the school's emphasis on respect, consideration for others and responsible behaviour. Through their support for charities, pupils and students show concern and care for children and people less fortunate than themselves.
142. Pupils mix well socially as there is a strong sense of community within the school. The relationships between the pupils themselves and with their teachers are good.

143. Cultural development is reflected in aspects of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities in a number of subjects. It is also inherent in the daily life of the school where pupils understand and appreciate their own and other cultures.
144. The school works hard to establish a partnership with the community it serves. However, attendance at parents' evenings is often disappointing. The small but active Parent-teacher Association (PTA) is very supportive at events held at the school.
145. Well- established, constructive pastoral links with primary schools facilitate transfer from KS2 to KS3. Although there are some curricular links, this is an area identified for development. Partnerships with other schools and colleges are well established in the sixth form.
146. The school has good links with initial teacher training establishments. Each year the school hosts up to twelve trainee teachers; some have then been appointed as full-time teachers at the school.
147. In KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form the curriculum overall meets legal requirements. The provision for personal, health and social education, work-related education and careers education and guidance is well planned in the curriculum in each key stage and follows national guidelines.

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

148. There is a very good range of work-related activities in the curriculum in all key stages. The careers co-ordinator works closely with many employers and Careers Wales to structure the programme. All pupils in year (Y)10 and students in Y12 undertake well-monitored work experience placements. Work-related activities are an important component of the alternative curriculum.
149. The Cwricwlwm Cymreig features in pupils' work in many subjects and is highlighted in schemes of work in all key stages. Pupils experience the Welsh language and culture in lessons and through many extra-curricular activities organised by the Welsh Department; Urdd competitions, visits, residential courses and a Welsh Business Day. The School Eisteddfod is an important event in the school calendar. However bilingual displays and signs are not widely visible around the school to raise awareness of bilingualism.
150. The school is very successful in enabling pupils of all abilities and from a wide range of backgrounds equal access to the curriculum. They are encouraged to achieve success in each key stage and to participate fully in the life of the school. The alternative curriculum successfully caters for pupils at risk of disaffection.
151. Pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship are not currently developed across the curriculum, though there is

an input from aspects of the geography programme of study and environmental issues in science.

152. The two-day Careers Conference in Y11 and visits to the school by many speakers broaden and reinforce pupils' understanding of the work place. The school has a strong partnership with the business world as was witnessed in the number of letters received during the inspection period. These and the quality input from Careers Wales, keep teachers, parents and pupils well acquainted with the current needs of employers.
153. Good teaching strategies in many areas of the curriculum provide many opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills. These entrepreneurial skills are well nurtured in all key stages through activities such as the Dynamo Project, Industry Days, The Young Initiative Programme and a range of Enterprise Schemes.
154. The school is successful in ensuring that the majority of pupils and students acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to progress. They are developing as independent learners and taking more responsibility for their own learning. In these respects, their learning reflects national priorities and lays the foundation for lifelong learning.

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

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| Grade 1 Good with outstanding features |
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155. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

The quality of care, support and guidance

156. The school is a caring community, which provides a high level of support for all its pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and pupils feel that they are well supported. Staff work closely with educational welfare officers, social services, educational psychologists, community police and other outside support agencies.
157. The school establishes close links with parents and carers who are kept well informed of pupils' progress. Good use is made of pupils' planners, letters and telephone contact. Community languages are used in letters when the first language of the home is not English. Good partnerships exist between the school and local employers.
158. Parents and pupils are well informed about the many opportunities and initiatives available at the school. Careful guidance is given to enable pupils to choose the appropriate courses for them. Parents' evenings often take place in the feeder communities as well as in the school.
159. Good links with feeder schools and a carefully planned transition programme help Y7 pupils to settle in quickly. Those who arrive at other times are also

carefully integrated into the school community. Pupils appreciate the care which they receive. They know to whom they can go with their concerns.

160. The quality of the support and guidance which the school gives its pupils is outstanding. Meeting pupils' individual needs is a priority of all staff. Pastoral support and the improvement of study skills are often interlinked. The school has a study support manager who conducts support sessions in the lunch hour and after school.
161. There is a well-planned personal, health and social education (PHSE) programme, which follows guidelines of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC). Good relationships are built up in lessons and tutor sessions. Special initiatives such as the 'Black Caribbean' project, the 'Raising Ethnic Minority Achievement' project and the 'Haven' project for asylum seekers are used very effectively.
162. The school carefully monitors the behaviour, punctuality and regular attendance of its pupils and constantly seeks improvement. Good relations exist between the school and its educational welfare officers who know the pupils well. Initiatives such as the 'Anxious Attenders' scheme are used well. Appropriate action is taken to deal with latecomers and non-attenders.
163. Careers education and guidance at KS4 and in the sixth form are outstanding. Much time is spent ensuring that pupils make appropriate choices. The school works closely with the local careers service. Pupils and students benefit from work experience and involvement in entrepreneurial activities such as the Dynamo project.
164. The school has a detailed health and safety policy. Staff report any health and safety concerns to the estate manager. There are suitable arrangements for pupils with identified medical needs. Safety is a prominent theme in the PSHE programme and there is an appropriate emphasis placed upon issues relating to health.
165. The school has a child protection policy and a named person who takes responsibility for this. Staff are clear about the correct procedures.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

166. A Learning Support Department provides very effectively for pupils who have a wide range of special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are identified in Y6. All of Y7 pupils are screened and a small group of pupils with SEN is then taught for core subjects by one member of staff throughout the year.
167. A variety of appropriate strategies are used to support these pupils. An Additional Support Unit at KS3 and an Alternative Curriculum at KS4 have made a significant impact on the reduction of exclusion of disaffected pupils and those who show challenging behaviour.

168. Statutory requirements are met. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress. The school does all that it can to secure equal opportunities for disabled pupils.
169. The great majority of pupils fulfil their potential. Two or three clear targets on Individual Education Plans help pupils focus on what they need to do to improve and most staff use these effectively. Pupils with SEN have a high pass rate in external examinations.
170. Teaching staff and learning support assistants are experienced and work well together. Pupils' achievements are significantly raised because of this co-ordination.
171. External agencies are used effectively. Three youth workers, permanently on site, offer valuable support.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

172. The school supports all pupils sensitively and effectively. The needs of pupils who, for example, have difficult home circumstances or are looked after by the local authority are well met. Enhancing self-esteem features prominently in the effective study skills programme. Pupils often arrive at the school with little or no English. Outstanding provision is made for these pupils. Opportunities also exist for pupils to study their own community languages to examination level.
173. The school monitors and compares the examination results of boys and girls. It seeks to identify teaching strategies, which will help close any gaps in performance. Pupils of both genders have equal access to the curriculum and all other activities.
174. Its success in promoting good race relations across all areas of activity is an outstanding feature of the school. Pupils and students are proud to be part of this multi-cultural school. They happily work and play alongside one another and are anxious to emphasise that racism does not exist within their school community.
175. The school deals effectively with incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Bullying is taken very seriously. There is a clear anti-bullying policy and pupils are confident of its effectiveness. There are effective guidelines for the referral of pupils who misbehave. In serious cases of misbehaviour pupils are placed in the additional support unit for an appropriate time. An alternative curriculum provision exists for those whose behaviour is extremely challenging. As a result the exclusion rate at the school is very low.
176. The school makes appropriate provision and reasonable adjustments to avoid putting disabled learners at a disadvantage.
177. This is a multi-cultural school where diversity is celebrated. Pupils and students are keen to learn about, and sometimes share in the beliefs and practices, of their peers. Many feel privileged to attend such a diverse school. The respect

shown by pupils for the different religions and cultures of their contemporaries is another outstanding feature of the school.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: good with outstanding features

178. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

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

179. The outstanding features in the leadership and management of the school are the vision and direction which have created a culture of high expectations of achievement together with the celebration of cultural diversity. These values have been communicated so effectively that all sections of the school – staff, pupils and parents, and representatives of the wider community-share them. The sense of purpose is all-pervasive.

180. The extent to which these aims are translated into daily routine and focused on the best interests of each individual pupil is also unusually consistent. There is generous and enthusiastic commitment amongst the teaching staff and at all levels of management; morale is high.

181. There is also a consistently high level of professionalism, which is testament to the continuing professional development of staff. The sense of teamwork amongst the staff is striking and the links between senior management and staff are effective in monitoring, reviewing and bringing about improvements.

182. There is strong support from management for training and professional development. There are good links with institutions of Higher Education for initial teacher training and for further professional studies. The school delivers effective induction programmes for those teachers newly qualified or new to the school.

183. Numerous partnerships with other providers have been set up, to extend opportunities and support to pupils and also to ensure cost-effective provision in the 14-19 sector. The extent to which the school liaises with other providers and the effects in practice are outstanding features of management.

184. Challenging yet realistic targets are set at all levels – for the school, departments and pupils – and these are at the heart of working practice, often strongly motivational. Detailed analyses show that in most respects targets are met or surpassed.

185. The school takes account of the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities and is particularly successful in promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities, racial diversity, key skills and bilingualism, personal, social and work-related education. There have been initiatives relating to sustainable development but this is less embedded on a consistent, whole-school basis.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

186. Governors represent all sections of the wider school community and provide valuable links with it. The timing of the inspection coincided with a transitional period of re-elections and of re-development of the good initiatives which had been introduced. Governors have formed links with departments and some have already attended lessons and held discussions. Others have yet to develop that link.

187. Governors are well informed, having been provided with data and information relevant to the school's working practices. They are aware of their role as 'critical friends' in evaluating the school's performance and ask pertinent questions of senior management.

188. Governors are also involved in strategic planning and in finding the funding needed for the planned development of sporting facilities. The school development plan, in which they have an input, is the basis of their forward planning and evaluation of cost-effectiveness.

189. Governors are strongly supportive of the school and attend many of its public functions.

190. Legal and course requirements are met.

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

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| Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings |
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191. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

192. The self-evaluation report addresses the seven key questions of the common inspection framework thoroughly and fairly. The findings and judgements of the inspection team closely match those of the school. The school has provided overall judgements, listed good features and areas to improve, and graded each key question. However, the school's evaluation of pupils' and students' performance in key question 1 does not take enough account of information about their achievements in relation to their abilities.

193. Senior and middle managers are well informed about the areas for which they are responsible. They have established effective procedures to evaluate standards and provision. They have a clear understanding of the standards that pupils and students achieve and the quality of education provided.
194. Evidence about performance is gathered carefully using a range of methods. Members of staff use this evidence to analyse performance and review progress. These processes inform development planning and the setting and prioritising of targets for improvements. Leaders and managers make good use of these self-evaluation systems to devise and implement effective strategies to raise performance.
195. In all subject departments the results of internal and external assessments are closely scrutinised. Pupils' and students' attainments are compared to local and national benchmarking information in order to evaluate performance in subjects. The school uses a wide range of information for self-evaluation purposes. Systematic procedures include the review of subject departments, regular observation of lessons and examination of pupils' and students' work by middle and senior managers. Heads of faculties monitor the work of groups of subject departments. Overall, these processes enable the school to identify clearly and prioritise areas for improvement.
196. The school council and the sixth form council provide a good forum for pupils' and students' representatives to express views. This enables the school to take their views into account during self-evaluation. Procedures for seeking and taking account of views of parents, employers and other interested parties are beginning to develop. Indicators are used to evaluate other aspects of the school's work, such as behaviour and attendance.
197. Senior and middle managers take a lead in the self-evaluation process, largely through involvement in systematic management of teachers' performance and review of subject departments. Managers work effectively with other members of staff and external agencies such as Careers Wales to engage purposefully in evaluating standards and quality. All members of staff understand and fulfil their roles in these processes.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

198. Secure evidence from a range of sources is used to develop detailed plans for improvement. Sources include analyses of pupils' and students' attainment in examinations, performance management of teachers and reviews of subject departments.
199. The process of planning developments for the whole school and individual departments uses evidence to help set priorities and appropriately challenging targets for improvement. School and department development plans also specify the actions to be taken in order to address the objectives identified. Subject leaders make good use of information about performance to set well-focused targets for their departments and for individual pupils and students.

200. Leaders and managers make very good use of the available resources and accommodation to tackle the priorities in the development plans. The costs and implications for managing and acquiring resources are carefully considered. As a consequence, targets and priorities, although sometimes ambitious, are achievable.
201. Plans and strategies for development have realistic time-scales. In most cases these time-scales are based on three-year plans. The progress made in achieving agreed objectives is reviewed regularly and, where necessary, strategies are modified and adjusted.
202. In many cases actions taken as part of the development planning process have resulted in discernible improvements. Significant progress has been made in several important areas. Pupils' and students' attainment has improved, particularly that of boys and other targeted groups. There have also been improvements in standards of behaviour and in the range of professional development opportunities accessed by members of staff.

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

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| Grade 1: Good with outstanding features. |
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203. This grade matches the school's self- evaluation grade.

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

204. The staff as a whole is experienced, well qualified and has sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach all aspects of the curriculum. The level of staffing allows the curriculum to be taught effectively to all pupils and students. There are a few classes that are rather large making it difficult sometimes for teachers to address pupils' and students' individual needs.
205. Some pupils in a number of classes have language or other special needs. The teacher, assistants and/or technicians work together enthusiastically and effectively and support them well. There is very good access to professional advice and expertise for pupils with a disability or special educational need. However, there is no designated medical room.
206. There are enough administrative and other support staff for the school to function effectively.
207. The level of provision and the deployment of resources, including computers and electronic white boards, across the school are good. Most subjects use information and communications (ICT) well to enhance pupils' learning, although a small minority of staff do not make consistent use of it in their teaching. Sixth formers make good use of the computers in the Learning Centre for independent study. The school's Internet website provides additional good support for pupils.

208. The condition and quantity of books used across the curriculum are generally good. Not all pupils have access to these books at home. The library has been refurbished, is adequately resourced and supports pupils' and students' learning well.
209. The school makes use of a very large range of resources beyond the school and this is an outstanding feature of management. Pupils' and students' learning and achievement are enhanced considerably by their use. For example, several are helped by these facilities to attain sporting excellence. The partnerships with other schools, college, and other external providers address well the large range of pupils' and students' needs.
210. The overall quality of accommodation is good and, in most respects, provides a stimulating learning environment for pupils. There are enough rooms for the pupils on roll and for the very broad curriculum provided. The Ayland Centre offers very good accommodation and support to pupils with SEN. Most rooms are pleasant places to work in and are enhanced by good quality displays.
211. Nearly all specialist rooms are housed close to one another making sharing of resources and whole departmental discussion easier. Since the last inspection some very good improvements have been made to the overall facilities at the school. In particular, music and design and technology have very good accommodation and equipment, and there are agreed plans for a new sports hall to be built on site.
212. There are no lifts in the buildings but the school makes good arrangements to help the very few pupils who cannot easily access rooms above the ground floors.
213. The site, including playing fields, is in good order. The interior of buildings is kept clean. The outside fabric of most buildings, however, is poor and some are in need of attention. Litter is a problem in some areas.

How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.

214. The recently retired headteacher has managed the school's finances ably for some years. He is now a consultant for the acting headteacher. The senior management team, an estates manager, bursar and chair of the financial sub committee of the governing body manage the budget very effectively. The school's pro-active approach to gaining funding to support individual pupils' and students' needs has been outstanding.
215. Systems to analyse and review the use of resources are robust and ensure very good value for money. The school knows the costs of major programmes that are being planned and those that are ongoing. Contingency funds allow well for unseen circumstances. Debate and decisions about spending are linked well to the school's objectives and prioritise the effect it will have upon individual pupils.

Pupils and students generally have enough learning resources to support their needs and provision is reviewed regularly.

216. The priorities for spending have been pupils' and students' needs and their achievement, with the result that the outside fabric of some buildings and some indoor corridor areas have not been maintained very well. These problems are under continual review and receive attention, as funds become available.
217. Staff are deployed well so that their expertise is put to best use. There are effective procedures, known well to staff, for their development. Teachers evaluate their needs well and make them known to senior management informally and through the performance management and review systems in place. Managers are aware of the strengths and areas for development of staff.
218. Managers consult well with other schools and institutions about the school's provision and the subsequent decisions it makes. For example, tracking of the progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language was updated after a visit with local educational authority advisers to Manchester and Oldham.
219. The financial implications of, for example, staff development, deployment, the projected number of pupils and students on roll and subsequent room usage, are reviewed at appropriate times. External audits of the accounts have shown systems to be good. The accounting system, together with the expertise of those involved with financial matters, allows the school to monitor and account well for its spending.
220. The school has balanced well the cost of provision against its effectiveness. The outstanding feature is the extent to which provision is helping pupils and students from a very wide variety of academic and cultural backgrounds to realise their potential and is providing them with a good quality education appropriate to their needs.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Subject 1. English and English as an additional language

Key Stage 3- Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

221. Pupils are confident speakers. This is a particular strength. The majority are also willing to initiate questions and to read aloud. Some pupils read with very good audibility and expression.
222. From a low base in reading, the majority of pupils make significant progress through the key stage. Targeted support for reading has an increasingly good impact on standards at KS3.

223. Pupils make good progress in developing their vocabulary. The majority of pupils recognise and handle well linguistic and literary terminology. This is an increasing strength by the end of KS3, and particularly effectively demonstrated in able pupils.

224. Most pupils make good progress in their writing skills. By the end of KS3 many pupils are able to present their work effectively in a variety of forms, such as poems, stories, posters and magazines.

Shortcomings

225. Pupils' use of ICT is insufficiently developed and this impacts negatively on standards in reading and writing relative to different media.

Key Stage 4- Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

226. Pupils speak confidently and ask pertinent questions.

227. Reading skills continue to develop well. Many pupils show an increasing understanding of a wide range of texts, including pre-twentieth century literature. Many pupils demonstrate an increasing ability to read inferentially.

228. By the end of KS4, many pupils are able to respond thoughtfully orally and in writing to a range of increasingly complex texts.

229. Their vocabulary develops significantly and many pupils, particularly those of high ability, use linguistic and literary terminology well.

Shortcomings

230. In a small minority of middle and high ability classes in KS4, spelling, grammar and punctuation errors mar written work and depress attainment.

231. Pupils' use of ICT is underdeveloped and this impacts negatively on standards in reading and writing relative to different media.

Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

232. Most students achieve well according to their potential in English A level. They show particular strength in linguistic analysis.

233. The majority of students show independence as post-16 learners.

234. Many Y12 and Y13 students contribute perceptive and interesting comments on the texts they are studying.

Shortcomings

235. Structure and cohesion in a number of students' writing at A level are weaker than its content.

English as an Additional Language

KS3 and KS4

Good features

236. Pupils for whom English is an additional language gain good and very good language skills as they progress through KS3 and KS4.

237. The newcomers' classes for pupils who are an early stage of learning English are very successful in giving a firm base from which the great majority of these pupils move to increasing and sustained achievement in English and other subjects.

238. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and Afro-Caribbean pupils, particularly in KS4, achieve well. Targeted additional support has significantly contributed in raising standards.

Shortcomings

239. There are no significant shortcomings.

Sixth Form

Good features

240. Students for whom English is an additional language make up a significant percentage of A level English classes. They achieve very well in relation to their starting point in the secondary school, showing increasing ability to handle complex language and literary texts effectively.

241. A number of these students subsequently gain post-16 qualifications, either at A level in English or in Key Skills Communication.

Shortcomings

242. There are no significant shortcomings.

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| Subject 2 Mathematics |
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Key Stage 3 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 243. The great majority of pupils show good standards of work across all Attainment Targets of the NC.
- 244. Most pupils make good progress in current work. They complete set tasks in lessons and display good levels of knowledge and understanding in their work.
- 245. Most pupils explain their ideas confidently and use mathematical language correctly in both their oral responses and in their written work.
- 246. Recall of previous work is generally secure for the large majority of pupils.
- 247. Most pupils demonstrate good levels of fluency in both mental and written calculations. They use calculators competently where appropriate and make sensible use of estimates in a range of contexts.
- 248. Pupils of higher ability are proficient in basic algebra and display a willingness to tackle problems in more unfamiliar contexts.

Shortcomings

- 249. A small proportion of pupils, generally of lower ability, are hesitant in basic number work and their recall of simple number facts is slow.
- 250. Occasionally a small minority of pupils are insecure in their recall of previous work and have a tendency to follow a taught technique with limited understanding.

Key Stage 4 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 251. The vast majority of pupils work well in lessons and make good progress.
- 252. They answer questions confidently and demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of mathematical processes in their oral responses. In written work, they apply suitable mathematical techniques competently to solve problems.
- 253. Standards in using and applying mathematics are good. Pupils of all abilities show a willingness to explore and investigate in various contexts and most are able to justify their ideas using appropriate mathematical reasoning. More able pupils can prove their result algebraically.

254. Pupils of higher ability display good standards in trigonometry and in algebra. They use trigonometrical ratios and scientific calculators proficiently to solve simple problems and give answers to sensible degrees of accuracy.
255. Pupils of middle and lower ability show good standards in graphical work. They construct various types of graphs competently and can extract pertinent findings from data presented in a range of graphical forms.

Shortcomings

256. The progress of a small number of middle to lower ability pupils is occasionally more limited in lessons. They tend to lose concentration and this impacts adversely on progress made.

Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

257. Most students show good standards of work in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics.
258. Most students are highly motivated and show high levels of independence in their work.
259. They engage well in whole class discussion and display good knowledge and understanding of underlying concepts in both oral and written work.
260. The majority of students in Y12, mainly of higher ability, demonstrate proficiency in manipulating algebraic expressions. They show a good knowledge of a range of techniques and employ them appropriately and accurately.
261. In Y12 students studying mechanics have a secure grasp of basic principles and apply them confidently to solve simple modelling problems.
262. There is a wide spread of ability evident amongst students studying statistics in Y13. Nevertheless most students show a sound grasp of current work in permutations and combinations and solve related problems competently.

Shortcomings

263. The department encourages students from diverse mathematical backgrounds to study the subject in the sixth form and hence standards of basic algebra in Y12 are variable. A small number of students in 12 make basic errors and show some fundamental misconceptions in manipulating algebraic expressions.

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| Subject 3 Welsh Second Language |
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Key Stage 3 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

264. Pupils are confident when participating in lessons orally and will extend an answer to express an opinion. They communicate well in pairs and small groups when using familiar language patterns.
265. Pupils read proficiently and their pronunciation is good. Y9 pupils read extended material and are able to understand the main ideas presented in a text.
266. Written tasks are completed accurately to express factual and personal information.

Shortcomings

- 267.** A small minority of pupils lack confidence to use language meaningfully.

Key Stage 4 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

268. Oral skills are good, with the great majority of pupils able to use the Welsh language for a variety of purposes.
269. Pupils read competently and are able to respond to a variety of reading material.
- 270.** In their written work, pupils produce an appropriate quantity of tasks. The more able pupils complete extended work with accuracy.

Shortcomings

271. Pupils' oral exchanges become increasingly dependent on the written word and some pupils lack fluency.
- 272.** Not all pupils are developing their skills to read independently.

Sixth Form- Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

273. Students make good progress using language freely to express mature attitudes and opinions.

274. Students are able to use specialist vocabulary confidently to appreciate challenging texts, including contemporary poetry.
275. Students convey good levels of understanding when analysing fiction and non-fiction material.
276. Y13 students can produce assignments of good quality in a wide range of forms.

Shortcomings

277. A few students lack fluency to express themselves confidently in discussions.

Subject 4. Design and Technology

Key Stage 3 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

Good features

278. At KS3 pupils display a good understanding of the design process and apply it purposefully and consistently in all material areas.
279. Pupils in Y7 respond well to focused, practical and design tasks. They develop good basic skills and knowledge of practical processes and health and safety procedures.
280. In Y8 and Y9, pupils respond positively to problem-solving design tasks. They are able to identify and carry out appropriate research and analysis to support the development of their ideas. They record useful specifications to guide their designing.
281. Standards of practical skills are good. Most pupils use tools and equipment confidently and competently. They gain a good understanding of materials and processes, and outcomes are usually of a good quality.
282. Pupils evaluate their work well in all materials and are able to make valuable links to their initial design specification. By Y9 pupils are able to suggest well-considered improvements and modifications to their design products.
283. Pupils use computers quite well for research and computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) for producing decorative logos for T-shirts and nets for packaging.

Shortcomings

284. A small minority of pupils find difficulty in expressing and analysing their design ideas. A small amount of work seen contains technical errors and incomplete tasks.
285. In resistant materials pupils use specifications that lack measurable criteria.

Key Stage 4 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Good and outstanding features

286. Pupils increase their understanding and application of the design process. They experiment well with a range of materials and processes in food and textiles and produce innovative solutions to design problems. In graphics products they also experiment well to produce interesting board games.
287. Research and investigation skills are good. Tasks are undertaken well and recorded in detail. Coursework design folios are well structured. Here the standard of design ideas and design drawings is good with a number of outstanding examples in food and textiles.
288. Practical project work is interesting and individual. Pupils display good knowledge and awareness of product development and manufacturing techniques. Completed projects show flair, imagination and a range of skills. Many are of a very good quality with some outstanding food and textile products.
289. Many pupils use computers effectively for CAD/CAM, research analysis and presentation.
290. Over recent years examination results in food and textiles have been consistently above national figures with a good number of pupils achieving the highest grades. Results in graphic products have improved in 2004.

Shortcomings

291. A small minority of coursework projects in graphics products lack sufficient depth, analysis and presentation to gain the higher grades.

Sixth Form - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

292. Students explore innovative ideas, combining materials in imaginative ways.
293. They make good use of mood and lifestyle theme boards to explore their feelings and responses to available products and their design characteristics.

294. Students produce a good range of mock-up models as an aid to product development, and use them effectively to evaluate and test their design ideas.
295. They investigate, expand and explore appropriate ideas to meet the brief and the context and make informed decisions based on this research work.
296. Final design solutions are completed to a good standard of precision in construction and in the finished product, incorporating a range of materials and processes.

Shortcomings

297. Students work to specifications which lack measurable criteria for on-going and final evaluation and testing.
298. Drawing techniques of a minority of students fail to demonstrate the range required to fully communicate design decisions. Often the drawings provided by students lack sufficient annotation and dimensions.
299. Students fail to undertake, in sufficient depth, end testing and the appraisal of the views of others, as an evaluation approach.

| |
|---------------------------------------|
| Subject 5. Religious Education |
|---------------------------------------|

300. Schemes of work take full account of the Cardiff Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

Key Stage 3 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

Good features

301. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Islam and the other principal religions they study. They accurately recall and interpret stories central to these religions.
302. Pupils are able to define key religious terms and use them in context, for example, terms such as 'sin' and 'prophet'. They can show how religions express themselves through symbols and identify the nature of ultimate questions such as life after death and how religion is a comfort for many, assisting them with their problems.
303. Pupils effectively identify how an appropriate range of religions mark and celebrate the key milestones in a person's life. In doing so they frequently draw upon their own experiences. They ask appropriate and sometimes searching questions and know how beliefs affect lifestyles.
304. They tackle issues such as free and arranged marriages in a balanced and informed manner, relating these well to real-life situations and considering them from a wide range of perspectives.

305. Their contributions to sensitive topics, such as capital punishment, both written and oral are often thoughtful.

Shortcomings

306. A small minority of pupils respond in a frivolous and cursory manner.

Key Stage 4 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings.

Good features

307. Pupils consider contentious issues effectively, such as the causes and consequences of conflict and the application of the 'Golden Rule' to such scenarios. In doing so they are able to apply previous learning productively.

308. They engage with topics in a positive way and respond thoughtfully to questions, often drawing upon their own experiences and knowledge and current affairs.

309. It is usual in lessons for them to consider their own views in the light of religious teachings and appreciate the opportunity to explore relevant topics. They are able to show how rules and laws found in a range of religions impact on actions and lifestyles.

Shortcomings

310. A small number of pupils fail to engage actively in classroom activities.

Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

311. Students have a good command of religious vocabulary and use key terms effectively when presenting their views. They give mature responses to difficult questions such as the question of truth and religion.

312. They are able to reflect on their own worldview in the light of different worldviews.

313. In discussion, they actively and articulately engage in interesting and relevant discussion of religious issues. They often draw on their own beliefs and life experiences to illustrate underlying religious concepts and their relevance. Some comments on the question of evil and suffering are of a profound nature and demonstrate a good grasp of the subject.

Shortcomings

314. The standards achieved by some students are constrained by their inability to attend all lessons provided, as a result of timetable clashes.

Religious Studies

Key Stage 4 - Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings.

Good features

315. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the content of their course.
316. They give perceptive and informed comments on topics such as worship and the link between love and respect as underlying features of this.
317. In lessons, they regularly use key religious terms correctly and give clear definitions when asked to do so of words such as 'transubstantiation'. They know and appreciate how symbolism is used as a means of expression by religions and have a good grasp of the key concepts associated with prayer.
318. They effectively use 'mind-maps' to explore topics and develop their own understanding. They communicate their thoughts and feelings on issues of religion in a variety of ways, for example poetry and prayer.
319. Whilst focusing on the Christian religion, they are able to consider a range of perspectives from different religious standpoints. They are able to show how increased knowledge can result in increased tolerance and respect for religions.
320. Pupils are aware of the significance and place of festivals in religion.

Shortcomings

321. There are no important shortcomings.

| |
|------------------------------------|
| Subject 5. Business Studies |
|------------------------------------|

Key Stage 4 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

322. The majority of pupils develop a good understanding of business ownership and explain the characteristics of a sole trader.
323. Pupils have a good understanding of the role of trade unions.
324. Pupils are able to use business terms appropriately.
325. The majority of pupils are able to use numeracy skills effectively to complete a simple profit and loss account.

326. The majority of pupils are able to work independently and they effectively research business contexts.

Shortcomings

327. A significant minority of pupils are unable to recall previous learning and are unable to demonstrate an understanding of sources of finance.

328. A significant minority of pupils are passive in their learning and complete tasks without real understanding.

329. A minority of pupils are unable to complete simple profit and loss accounts correctly.

Sixth Form - Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings

Good features

330. Students achieve well in both vocational and A level courses.

331. Students demonstrate a sound understanding of business concepts including consumer law and types of economic systems.

332. Students are able to complete profit and loss accounts accurately.

333. Students are able to identify appropriate uses for business documents.

334. Students are able to apply theory to real-world examples.

335. The majority of students make effective use of research and planning to complete assignments successfully.

Shortcomings

336. A small minority of students are passive in their learning and the poor attendance of a small minority of students has an adverse impact on their achievement.

337. A small minority of students are unable to select information effectively.

School's response to the inspection

338. Inspectors agree with priorities the school has already identified in its development plan, and these should remain as a focus for the school's work.

Namely:

- standards of achievement
- key skills (literacy, numeracy, IT)
- assessment
- attendance
- behaviour
- accommodation

339. The inspection findings recognise that we successfully promote pupils' achievement, emphasising individual needs. It is also recognised that cultural diversity is celebrated in a caring school community where pupils are given good support.

340. It is pleasing to note that pupils are generally well motivated, behave well and are keen to meet targets and improve performance.

341. It is also pleasing to see highlighted improvements since the last inspection in many areas, including standards of achievement in all key stages, attendance, teaching and self-evaluation.

342. Findings also highlight the committed, enthusiastic and well qualified staff who present pupils with the required challenging and stimulating learning experiences to meet their diverse needs. This relates to all areas of the curriculum at all key stages, and would include work-related and extra curricular activities.

343. The report also makes clear that all sections of the school (from Governors to pupils) share the same values, with a sense of teamwork based around the best interests of students.

344. In conclusion, a report to celebrate achievement in all areas of school life, and a report which clearly indicates future priorities for development.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Name of school | Fitzalan High School |
| School type | Community |
| Age-range of pupils | 11-19 |
| Address of school | Lawrenny Avenue Leckwith Cardiff |
| Post-code | CF11 8XB |
| Telephone number | 02920-385040 |

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Headteacher | Mr John Hoole |
| Date of appointment | 1 September 2004 |
| Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority | Councillor Peter Perkins |
| Reporting inspector | Miss Glynis Owen |
| Dates of inspection | 11 – 15 October 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 | 277 | 269 | 264 | 263 | 261 | 174 | 84 | | 1592 |

| Total number of teachers | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers | 90 | 9 | 93.2 |

| Staffing information | |
|--|---------|
| Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes) | 17.08:1 |
| Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes | |
| Average teaching group size | 22.95 |
| Overall contact ratio (percentage) | 75.68 |

| Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-----|--------------|
| | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Y13 | Whole School |
| Term 1 | 92.3 | 88.3 | 87.4 | 85.7 | 85.7 | | | 87.9 |
| Term 2 | 91.1 | 90.1 | 87.1 | 84.4 | 80.8 | | | 86.7 |
| Term 3 | 89.7 | 87.0 | 85.8 | 84.7 | 87.3 | | | 86.8 |

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals | 44% |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 62 temp. 1 perm. |

Appendix C

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

| | | | D | A | F | W | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------------|--------------------|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|
| English | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 15 | 36 | 29 | 10 | 2 | 0 |
| | | National | 0.4 | 0.8 | 0 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 8.1 | 21.3 | 33.6 | 23.5 | 9.4 | 0.2 |
| | Test | School | 0 | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | 14 | 30 | 24 | 15 | 7 | - |
| | | National | 0.5 | 3.5 | 1.3 | - | - | - | 7.5 | 20.4 | 32.6 | 22.7 | 10.1 | - |
| Mathematics | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 20 | 23 | 30 | 16 | 7 | 0 |
| | | National | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.9 | 6.8 | 18.9 | 25.7 | 31.6 | 13.7 | 0.3 |
| | Test | School | 0 | 4 | 2 | - | - | - | 9 | 24 | 24 | 23 | 12 | - |
| | | National | 0.3 | 5.1 | 0.7 | - | - | - | 5.1 | 17.2 | 19.9 | 36.0 | 15.0 | - |
| Science | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 24 | 30 | 24 | 8 | 0 |
| | | National | 0.3 | 0.7 | 0 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 6.0 | 20.1 | 32.8 | 27.1 | 11.6 | 0.1 |
| | Test | School | 0 | 3 | 0 | - | - | - | 11 | 24 | 27 | 25 | 8 | - |
| | | National | 0.3 | 4.0 | 0.2 | - | - | - | 4.7 | 16.6 | 32.5 | 28.2 | 13.0 | - |

- 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 | 34.5 | In the school | 40 |
| In Wales | 56.9 | In Wales | 57.3 |

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 2003 | 238 |
| Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil | 26 |

| The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2003 : | School | UA | Wales |
|---|--------|----|-------|
| entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent | 73 | 86 | 87 |
| attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both | 29 | 48 | 51 |
| attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both | 71 | 84 | 85 |
| attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator) | 26 | 38 | 39 |
| entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE | 100 | 98 | 97 |
| attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent | 57 | 72 | 75 |
| attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent | 92 | 92 | 93 |
| attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| attained one or more Entry level qualification only | 16 | 3 | 3 |
| attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1 | 25 | | |
| attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2 | 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 2003 | 72 |
| Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2003 | 41 |
| Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2003 | 31 |

| | School | UA | Wales |
|---|--------|----|-------|
| Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C | 44 | 64 | 68 |
| Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E | 83 | 91 | 94 |
| Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects | 14 | 20 | 20 |
| Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2 | 45 | | |
| Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3 | 0 | | |

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

Fifteen inspectors spent a total of 54 days at the school and met as a team before the inspection.

Inspectors visited:

- Lessons or part lessons in the six subjects inspected;
- lessons or part lessons taught by other teachers at the school;
- assemblies, registrations and some lunch-time activities.

Inspectors met with:

- The headteacher and deputy, governing body, parents and staff before the inspection;
- Members of the senior management team, a number of middle managers and staff, and some representatives of the wider community during the inspection;
- Groups of pupils and students representing each age group and representing a number of school activities.

The team also considered:

- Samples of the work of representative pupils and students in each year group;
- samples of work in each subject inspected;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- responses to the questionnaire sent to parents.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| Team member | Responsibilities |
|----------------------|---|
| Miss Glynis Owen | KQ1, KQ5 |
| Ms Jayne Edwards | KQ2 |
| Mr Glyn Davies | KQ3 |
| Miss Gwyneth Owens | KQ4 |
| Mr Peter Carter | KQ6 |
| Dr Alan Cooke | KQ7 |
| Dr Janet Laugharne | English and English as an additional language |
| Mr David Williams | Mathematics |
| Ms Heulwen Jones | Welsh second language |
| Mrs Jane Down | Design & Technology |
| Mrs Margaret Herbert | Design & Technology |
| Mr Martin Rawle | Religious Education, Religious Studies |
| Mrs Julia Hopkins | Business Studies |
| Mrs Ann Norbury | SEN provision |
| Mrs Raj Singh | Lay Inspector |

Acknowledgement

The Inspection Team would like to thank the governors, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy during the inspection.

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Tel: 029 20416577

Report by Miss G Owen
Fitzalan High School – October 2004

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

**FITZALAN HIGH SCHOOL
Lawrenny Avenue
Leckwith
Cardiff
CF11 8XB**

A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

Date of Inspection: 11 – 15 OCTOBER 2004

by

**MISS G OWEN
110 8205**

Date: 13 DECEMBER 2004

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Fitzalan 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. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Fitzalan High school took place between 11 – 15 October 2004. An independent team of inspectors, led by Miss G Owen 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:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Grade 1 | good with outstanding features |
| Grade 2 | good features and no important shortcomings |
| Grade 3 | good features outweigh shortcomings |
| Grade 4 | some good features, but shortcomings in important areas |
| Grade 5 | 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 |

Context

The nature of the provider

Fitzalan High School is an 11-19 mixed, community school serving the areas of Butetown, Grangetown, Riverside and Canton in Cardiff Unitary Authority (UA). There are 1592 pupils on roll, including 258 in the sixth form. Overall, there are 80 more boys than girls in the school.

The areas served by the school are economically disadvantaged. Forty-four per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure well above the national average of 15.7%.

The school is multi-cultural. Sixty-three per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and represent about 30 nationalities and over 20 languages. English is the second language for 56% of pupils and there are currently 572 pupils in Y7-11 who receive teaching in English as an additional language. Between 30 and 55 pupils each year speak little or no English on entry. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language.

Pupils have a wide range of special educational needs (SEN). Fifty-four pupils have statements of SEN and a further 239 pupils are on the SEN register. In the latest year, 88% cent of pupils, on entry, had a reading age below their chronological age, and, in the case of 50% of pupils, two or more years below. A unit on site, for pupils with mild or moderate learning difficulties, resourced by the UA, caters for 55 pupils.

The school has links with local partner primary schools and is part of the Cardiff Collegium of ten schools and a college, to extend provision for pupils aged 14 and over. At the sixth form stage, it works in partnership with Cathays High School and Coleg Glan Hafren to increase the range of courses offered.

The headteacher for the last eighteen years retired at the end of the last academic year and the previous deputy head is the current acting headteacher for a year. The other members of the senior management team are nearly all well established at the school.

The school's priorities and targets

The school has a clear mission statement – to seek excellence through hard work and respect for others.

Its aims are to promote the vocational, personal and social development of each individual pupil, in a caring and achieving environment. To this end the targets in its current school development plan are to continue to improve:

- Standards of achievement

- Pupils' key skills
- Attendance rates
- Standards of behaviour
- Pupils' spiritual development
- The quality of the accommodation

Summary

Fitzalan High School is a good school. It successfully promotes pupils' achievement, with emphasis on individuals' needs. Pupils are given very good support, in a caring community, where cultural diversity is celebrated. This success is achieved through meeting a much wider range of needs and challenges than in most schools.

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? | 1 |
| 6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards? | 2 |
| 7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources? | 1 |

Standards of Achievement

| Standards in subjects inspected | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|------------|
| Subject | KS3 | KS4 | Sixth Form |
| English | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Welsh second language | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Design & Technology | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Religious Education | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Religious Studies | - | 2 | - |
| Business Studies | - | 3 | 2 |

KS3 and KS4

In the five subjects inspected at key stage (KS) 3, pupils achieved good standards with no important shortcomings. In the six subjects inspected at KS4, there were

outstanding features in one subject, no important shortcomings in four subjects and some shortcomings in one subject.

In the lessons inspected in those six subjects, the following grades were awarded:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10% | 59% | 27% | 4% | 0% |

These grades are above both current national targets and grades awarded in inspections.

Pupils are generally well motivated, behave well and are keen to meet their targets and improve their performance. They also gain good study habits and learn to work independently.

The most able pupils achieve well and gain all-round success in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) at the top grades. Some, who are entered early for GCSE and even Advanced (A2) level, achieve very well.

Pupils with SEN make good progress. Those who arrive at the school with little or no English make very good progress. The progress of pupils supported in a number of projects is also very good.

Pupils' key skills are good overall and those who have any difficulties are given extra support to enhance these skills. Reading ages improve significantly. In general, pupils listen, speak, use numbers and use computers more confidently than they write.

Girls do better than boys in examinations overall but the gap between them has narrowed and is less significant than the gap nationally.

Results in the National Curriculum (NC) tests and at GCSE have improved significantly since the last inspection and, in 2004, were the highest to date. Whilst below national averages, in comparison with schools of a similar intake, results place the school above average or in the top 25 per cent of schools.

Results in vocational qualifications, including those of pupils following the alternative curriculum, have also been good and thus virtually every pupil in recent years has left school with qualifications.

Whilst a significant minority of pupils do not attend regularly, the school works very hard to encourage good attendance and compensate for any adverse effects on pupils' progress.

The quality of education and training

In the six subjects inspected, the grades awarded for teaching were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 13% | 59% | 20% | 8% | 0% |

The proportion of lessons awarded grades 1 and 2 exceeds national targets significantly though the proportion of lessons awarded grade 4 does not quite meet the target. In the lessons seen in all other subjects, both targets were surpassed. Overall, the quality of teaching is a strength of the school.

Teachers are well qualified, committed and enthusiastic. They are also good role models for pupils, in representing the rich cultural diversity of the school. They establish very good working relationships with pupils and present them with challenging and stimulating learning experiences to meet their diverse needs.

Teachers monitor and review progress systematically and employ a very wide range of support procedures to ensure that pupils reach their potential. Day-to-day assessment is less effective in identifying areas for improvement.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, allowing flexibility. At KS4 there is a wide range of courses leading to qualifications, and an alternative curriculum successfully caters for those at risk of disaffection. Work-related education is of high quality and prepares pupils effectively for the next stage of education, training or employment.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs, visits, study skills and revision sessions, and holiday courses. Teachers are very generous in the time they give to individuals and small groups outside lesson times.

Pupils and parents appreciate the high quality of support which they receive from the school and from outside agencies, to which it is closely linked. The number of pupils who receive mentoring is unusually high.

There is a well-planned personal, health and social education programme to promote pupils' personal development.

Pupils are proud of the school's multi-cultural ethos and atmosphere of mutual respect.

The provision and support for those who arrive with little or no English are outstanding.

Leadership and management

Outstanding leadership, with vision and direction, has resulted in all sections of the school and wider community sharing the same values. Morale is high and there is a strong sense of teamwork, with pupils' best interests at heart.

Governors represent all sections of the wider community and are strongly supportive of the school, taking an increasingly strategic and monitoring role.

There is a high degree of professionalism amongst the teaching staff and at all levels of management. A culture of self-evaluation has been established and is continuing to develop, with systematic procedures in place.

Self-evaluation informs the setting and prioritising of targets. As a consequence, appropriate plans have been developed and actions taken, which have led to demonstrable improvements.

The pro-active approach to gaining funding to support individual pupils' needs has been outstanding. Systems to analyse and review the use of resources are robust and ensure very good value for money.

The outside appearance of most buildings is poor but, inside, the school provides a stimulating learning environment. Effective use is made of the school's facilities and resources.

SIXTH FORM

Standards of achievement

In the six subjects inspected, standards were good with no important shortcomings in five subjects. In the other subject, good features outweighed some shortcomings.

The grades awarded for the lessons inspected in these subjects, and consequently a very small sample, were as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 0% | 67% | 33% | 0% | 0% |

The number of students successfully completing their courses and going on to Higher Education has increased year on year and now represents considerable success.

The most able students achieve very well, gaining the top grades. Students with SEN receive effective support to make good progress in their studies.

Key skills are generally good and any students with difficulties attend lessons to develop those skills and gain accreditation.

Students gain in confidence and maturity in the sixth form. They develop their talents in many fields, often in leadership roles. They also show increased motivation and a commitment to on-going learning opportunities and career development.

Results in A level examinations have been fairly consistent in recent years. Girls have done better than boys and, across the full range of grades, their results have been broadly in line with the national average. Boys' results have been lower. Across a range of other courses, of a vocational nature, results have represented good progress by students across the ability range.

The quality of education and training

The quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected was as follows:

| Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 15% | 62% | 19% | 4% | 0% |

Grades awarded in all other classes seen indicate a good quality of teaching overall.

Teachers use their very good subject knowledge effectively and plan lessons carefully to meet examination requirements and support students' learning.

Progress is closely monitored and reviewed by teachers. Students are encouraged to be increasingly responsible for their own learning. Reports to parents clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement.

There is open access to a wide range of courses leading to examination, including many of a vocational nature. The choice is enriched by partnerships with other establishments through the Cardiff Collegium, and offers students a good degree of flexibility. The programme of extra-curricular opportunities is also wide.

Work-related education is of high quality. It prepares students effectively for Higher Education, for employment and for enterprise. Students were recently winners in a national enterprise competition with entries from schools and colleges all over Wales.

Students continue to receive very good academic and pastoral support and are given opportunities to take leadership roles amongst their peers and amongst younger pupils. They contribute significantly to the school's life and work.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the sixth form are part of the established good practice for the school as a whole. There is a strong corporate ethos, with shared values based on meeting students' individual needs.

Channels of communication are good and the sixth form staff work effectively as a team.

The views of students and stakeholders are taken into account and made good use of in systematic self-evaluation procedures.

This process has enabled priorities to be identified and actions taken to bring about measurable improvements in the sixth form.

Students have good access to resources, including computer facilities, to enable them to undertake research and work independently. Outstanding use is made of all available resources in school and in the community.

Progress since the last inspection

There has been significant progress overall since the last inspection, particularly in improved standards and examination results, in the range of teaching strategies and match to individual needs, and in self-evaluation. The revised management structure has contributed to this progress in clarifying responsibilities and accountability. The school has worked hard on all the key issues from the last report, though some issues, such as attendance rates and the quality of the accommodation remain on-going areas for attention. Nonetheless, much has been achieved and the organisational issues have been resolved.

Recommendations

Inspectors agree with the priorities that the school has identified in its development plan. For the maintenance of current good practice and for on-going progress, the school should focus on continuing to improve:

1. Standards of achievement and examination success.
2. Pupils' key skills
3. Assessment
4. Attendance
5. Behaviour
6. Accommodation.

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.