

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

**Glyncoed Comprehensive School
Badminton Grove
Ebbw Vale
Blaenau Gwent
NP23 5UW**

School Number: 6774045

Date of Inspection: 20/03/06

by

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16926**

Date of Publication: 25th May 2006

Under Estyn contract number: 1202205

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- * nursery schools and settings maintained or used by local education authorities (LEAs);
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- * secondary schools;
- * special schools;
- * pupil referral units;
- * independent schools;
- * further education;
- * adult and community-based learning;
- * youth support services;
- * LEAs;
- * teacher education and training;
- * work-based learning;
- * careers companies; and
- * the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre Plus.

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- * makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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

The inspection of Glyncoed Comprehensive School took place between 20/03/06 and 24/03/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Peter Guy Carter undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a standard inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Glyncoed Comprehensive School is an 11-16 school in Ebbw Vale maintained by Blaenau Gwent LEA. It has 787 pupils on roll. The school serves mainly the outlying districts of Ebbw Vale, Glyncoed, Rassau, Garnlydan, Beaufort and parts of Newtown. The area is one of the most socially and economically deprived in Wales, due largely to the decline of local industry. Twenty-two percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals compared to the average in the LEA of 20% and the all-Wales average of 16%. Twenty-nine pupils have statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and a further 77 are on the SEN register. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from a white, British background and speak English as their first language. The school describes itself as taking pupils from the full ability range but with a significant number lacking in literacy and numeracy skills.
2. The school was last inspected in May, 2000. Since then there have been a number of changes including:
 - the completion of the transition from a junior comprehensive school (11-14) to an 11-16 comprehensive school;
 - significant improvements in the quality and provision of accommodation, particularly for physical education, dance, drama, music, science and information technology; and
 - the appointment of a new headteacher and the remodelling of the Senior Management Team (SMT).

The school's priorities and targets

3. The school has identified the following priorities for development in its current School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2004-2007:
 - implementation of a successful Performance Management system;
 - information and communications technology (ICT) skills development and curriculum impact;
 - key skills development and raising standards;
 - management at senior and middle levels and departmental mentoring;
 - successful implementation of the National Workforce Remodelling Agreement;
 - development of an effective system for school evaluation at all levels; and
 - further sports and performing arts development via increased facilities and usage.

Summary

4. Glyncoed Comprehensive School is a very successful school which serves its community well. There are outstanding features in many aspects of its work, including the standards achieved by learners, the quality of education it provides and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Table of grades awarded

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

Standards

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
English	2	1
Welsh second language	2	3
Mathematics	1	1
Information technology	2	2
Religious education (including religious studies)	3	3
Modern foreign languages	2	2

Standards of achievement

5. The overwhelming majority of pupils achieve high standards. They are very successful in achieving their agreed learning goals. Pupils of all abilities achieve good, and often very good standards across the curriculum and at both key stages. Standards achieved by girls are generally higher than those achieved by boys, but the difference between them is smaller than it is locally or nationally.

6. The following grades were awarded in the six subjects inspected:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
18%	58%	22%	2%	0%
These grades are based on observation of 60 lessons				

7. The highest standards, which have outstanding features, are achieved in mathematics at both key stages and in English at KS4. In English and Welsh second language at KS3 and in information technology and modern foreign languages at both key stages standards have good features and no important shortcomings. In Welsh second language at KS4 and religious education at both key stages standards have good features which outweigh some shortcomings.
8. Pupils' key skills in communication, numeracy and information technology are good overall. They show particular strengths in reading and writing. Pupils show good bilingual competence in lessons in Welsh second language and modern foreign languages, but seldom use the Welsh language in lessons in other subjects.
9. Pupils' attainment in formal assessments towards the end of both key stages is outstanding. It is significantly higher than both local and national averages in all key indicators. When compared to similar schools in Wales, attainment is in the top 25%. Results in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science are particularly good. Trends in performance show continuous, steady improvements over recent years.
10. Pupils make very good progress in learning. They improve significantly on their levels of achievement on entry to the school. They make good progress within and across both key stages and proceed confidently to the next stage of learning.
11. Pupils develop very good personal, social and learning skills. They work well both individually and with others and achieve high standards of behaviour and attendance. Their standards of achievement equip them well for effective participation in the workplace and community.

The quality of education and training

12. In lessons observed in the six subjects inspected and other subjects across the curriculum the grades awarded for teaching were as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
28%	57%	15%	0%	0%
These figures are based on observation of 87 lessons				

13. In 85% of lessons observed in the inspection teaching had good features and no important shortcomings. Of these lessons 28% had outstanding features in

the quality of teaching. These are impressive figures and show significant improvement on the last inspection. In all lessons there were more good features than shortcomings. These figures exceed the national targets for secondary schools and reflect several outstanding features in teaching across the school and particularly at KS4.

14. In almost all lessons teaching is planned carefully to challenge and engage pupils. Very good professional relationships at all levels make a positive contribution to the purposeful learning and teaching. There is an effective balance between support for pupils and challenge. In many lessons teachers make good and often outstanding use of a range of strategies and resources to stimulate pupils and meet their varied needs.
15. The monitoring of pupils' day-to-day achievements and progress is consistently good. Marking is accurate and helpful in indicating to pupils and parents standards achieved and targets for improvement. Reports are mostly of good quality and provide a comprehensive and useful overview of pupils' progress.
16. The curriculum meets learners' needs well. The school tackles social disadvantage successfully by providing learning experiences which develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence. This success is reflected in the high standards which pupils achieve.
17. The KS3 curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. An innovative curriculum at KS4 provides a range of options which addresses well the needs of the whole ability range of pupils.
18. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including revision clubs in all subjects during out-of-school hours. These activities are supported well by pupils and they help to broaden and enrich learners' experiences.
19. Partnerships with parents, the community and other providers of education are highly effective. These links enable the effective exchange of information to all concerned. They serve to inform interested parties of pupils' progress and the options which are available to pupils.
20. Work-Related Education (WRE) and careers advice is of high quality. In particular, the use of mentors from business and industry prepares pupils well for work experience.
21. The school does not comply fully with the statutory requirements for the provision of Welsh and religious education for some pupils at KS4.
22. The quality of support and guidance provided by the school to pupils is outstanding. They comment that teachers are very approachable and know them very well. The pastoral support system is a strong feature of the school.
23. Transition and induction procedures are outstanding. The school has very good links with the local primary schools and works with them to ensure that pupils are prepared very well for secondary school.

24. Pupils benefit from the very comprehensive Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme. It enables them to consider issues such as diversity, stereotyping and equal opportunities. It is delivered effectively by form tutors with good inputs from external agencies such as the police and health care professionals.
25. The school has outstanding systems for monitoring behaviour, punctuality and attendance. Very good use is made of outside agencies such as social services, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and youth service. These links ensure that pupils receive the best possible support to help them reach their potential.
26. Pupils are informed very well about future courses and career pathways. Very good guidance is provided to help pupils and parents make informed decisions about training, employment and further education.
27. The individual support for pupils with SEN and for those whose behaviour impedes their progress is outstanding.
28. The school recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and ensures that support systems are responsive to particular social, cultural and educational needs. Parents and pupils are confident of an early response to any discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Leadership and management

29. Leadership and strategic management are highly effective. The headteacher has well focused aims and values and provides strong leadership and clear direction. He is supported very well by a committed SMT who work purposefully and successfully to implement the school's objectives. They have good links with middle managers who fulfil their responsibilities effectively to improve standards and quality.
30. Leaders and managers take appropriate account of national priorities and have established productive and beneficial links with other providers of education in the locality.
31. The headteacher and SMT set challenging but realistic targets for individual staff, teams and departments. They use suitable procedures to monitor standards and performance and provide very good support to colleagues to help them achieve their goals.
32. Governors work closely with the school and contribute effectively to its development. They are proud of the school, familiar with it and well informed about issues that affect it. They operate through a good range of sub-committees to monitor provision and take effective and appropriate decisions. They fulfil their legal duties and responsibilities efficiently.

33. Leaders and managers use self-evaluation effectively to monitor learning and teaching. Senior managers are very proactive to ensure that middle managers use self-evaluation critically to analyse the performance of their teams. Overall, the process is undertaken thoroughly and involves a detailed analysis of pupils' performances at both key stages.
34. Planning for improvement is embedded firmly at whole school level. The SIP identifies clear targets for improvement over a three-year period. These targets focus clearly on pupils' achievements and are reviewed continually. The process makes an important contribution to monitoring the quality of learning and teaching. As a result, the school can show measurable improvements in several key areas.
35. There are sufficient teachers to enable the curriculum to be delivered effectively. They are well qualified and highly committed. There is a very good range of highly capable and experienced support staff. They work very effectively alongside teachers to enable the school to function efficiently in all aspects. Senior managers have ensured that recent changes to teachers' workloads are being implemented very successfully.
36. Resources and accommodation are largely sufficient for teaching and learning. Although some classrooms are small they are used well. The library is underused by pupils. There are good displays of pupils' work evident across the school and this nurtures a stimulating environment for learning.
37. Staff development is a strong feature of the school. It is managed very well to ensure that the needs of individual staff members are matched closely to the school's priorities for development.
38. The school budget is managed highly effectively and resources are reviewed regularly and rigorously. Resource needs are linked closely with priorities for improvement in learning and teaching to secure value for money.
39. The school has made significant progress since the last inspection. Nearly all the key issues have been addressed very well. Little progress has been made, however, on developing the use of the library as a resource for learning. This remains ongoing, although the school is currently installing computers in the library as part of the plan to upgrade the facilities available.

Recommendations

In order to build on the standards achieved and progress made the school should:

- R1 maintain the high standards in pupils' achievement;
- R2 address the shortcomings identified in some subjects in this report;
- R3 meet statutory requirements for Welsh and religious education at KS4: and
- R4 continue to implement plans to upgrade the library as a Learning Resource Centre.*

*This recommendation is featured as a priority for development in the current SIP.

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.

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.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

40. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its Self-Evaluation Report.
41. There are a number of outstanding features in the standards that pupils achieve. These include:
- their success in attaining agreed learning goals regardless of their social backgrounds;
 - their high attainment by comparison with national averages and local and national benchmarks which show continuous improvement;
 - the progress they make towards fulfilling their potential and moving on to the next stage in learning;
 - the development of their personal, social and learning skills;
 - the high standards of behaviour and attendance; and
 - their ability to participate effectively in the workplace and the community.
42. During the inspection, the following grades were awarded for the standards achieved by pupils in the six subjects inspected

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5
KS3	16%	60%	24%	0%	0%
KS4	22%	56%	18%	4%	0%
Whole school	18%	58%	22%	2%	0%

These figures are based on observation of 60 lessons

43. At KS3 and KS4 standards in 76% of lessons were judged to be grade one or two whilst in 98% of lessons standards were judged to be grade three or higher. These grades are significantly higher than the national target for 2007 for standards in 65% of lessons to be grade one or grade two and equal to the target for standards in 98% of lessons to be grade three or higher.
44. These grades are also considerably higher than the average for Wales in the previous academic year (2004-2005) when the standards at KS3 and KS4 in 8% of lessons were judged to be grade one and standards in 52% of lessons were judged to be grade two.
45. In the six subjects inspected the highest standards, which have outstanding features, are achieved in mathematics at both key stages and in English at KS4. In English and Welsh second language at KS3 and modern foreign languages and information technology at both key stages standards have good features and no important shortcomings. In Welsh second language at KS4 and religious education at both key stages standards have good features which outweigh some shortcomings.

46. At KS3 the performance of pupils in National Curriculum (NC) assessments in the core subjects has been consistently above the local and national averages during the last three years and in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales, where a comparable percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals.
47. At KS4 the proportion of pupils who attain five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A*-C is higher than the national average and in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales. This is also true of the proportion who attain five or more GCSE grades A*-G and the proportion of pupils who achieve grade C or above in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
48. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, achieve good and often very good standards, regardless of their social background. They achieve good standards in both key stages but, overall, achievement is slightly higher at KS4 than at KS3. Girls generally achieve higher standards than boys but the difference between them is smaller than it is locally and nationally. Occasionally, for example in assessments in English at the end of KS3 in 2005, boys outperform girls.
49. Pupils' key skills in communication have good features and no important shortcomings. The standards they achieve in listening, reading and writing are slightly higher than their standards in speaking. A minority of pupils show some reluctance to speak at length or to give extended answers to teachers' questions.
50. Pupils' numeracy skills are good across the curriculum. They demonstrate good skills in information technology in most subjects. They show good bilingual competence in Welsh second language and modern foreign languages lessons but they seldom use their Welsh language skills in lessons in other subjects.
51. Trends in pupils' performances show continuous, steady improvements over recent years. The most recent results are the best since the school became a full 11-16 comprehensive school in 2001.
52. Pupils make very good progress in learning. They improve significantly on their levels of achievement on entry to the school. They make good progress within and across the key stages. They develop well their knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.
53. Pupils have a good level of understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They make good progress towards fulfilling their potential and are very well placed to move on to the next stage of learning.
54. Pupils develop very good personal, social and learning skills. They show interest and motivation in lessons, work productively and make good use of their time. They work well individually and also in collaboration with others.

55. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is, with very few exceptions, of a high standard and this creates good conditions for learning. A large majority of parents agree, or strongly agree, that behaviour is good. Only one pupil has been excluded permanently in the last five years and the number of fixed term exclusions is low.
56. Attendance levels are good. Average attendance for the last year is 92.5% which is better than both LEA and national averages and significantly better than similar schools. Unauthorised attendance is consistently below one per cent. Punctuality at the start of and throughout the day is good, allowing lessons to start promptly without delay or disruption.
57. Pupils make good progress in their moral and wider development. They accept their responsibilities willingly and show honesty and fairness, for example when they participate in the school council. They show their concern for others by engaging in fund-raising activities to help those less fortunate than themselves.
58. Pupils understand the importance of equality of opportunity. They show respect for different beliefs, attitudes and social and cultural traditions. They are closely involved in their community and contribute effectively, for example, by performing in musical and dramatic productions and through work experience placements. The knowledge, skills and understanding they acquire equip them well for effective participation in the community and workplace.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

59. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its Self-Evaluation Report.
60. The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in lessons observed during the inspection.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	24%	56%	20%	0%	0%
KS4	33%	61%	6%	0%	0%
Whole school	28%	57%	15%	0%	0%
These figures are based on observation of 87 lessons					

61. In 85% of lessons observed teaching had good features and no important shortcomings. Of these lessons 28% had outstanding features in the quality of teaching. These are impressive figures and show a significant improvement on the last inspection, where 6% of the teaching was judged to be grade one. In all lessons there were more good features than shortcomings. These percentages

exceed the national targets for secondary schools and reflect several outstanding features in teaching across the school, particularly at KS4.

62. Lessons where teaching is outstanding are often characterised by:
- structured planning to consolidate and extend pupils' learning through proficient questioning and well resourced activities;
 - an effective balance between the level of challenge and support provided to pupils;
 - a brisk pace and enthusiasm, which engages and motivates pupils to make progress;
 - a very positive professional relationship between adults and pupils which is conducive to effective learning;
 - a focused monitoring and assessment of pupils' understanding and progress to enhance learning; and
 - dynamic and innovative strategies to stimulate pupils' learning.
63. In all other lessons some of the above features are evident but to a lesser degree. In the great majority of lessons teaching is well planned and appropriate to the ability and needs of the pupils.
64. Positive relationships between pupils, teachers and support staff make a very good contribution to the purposeful learning and teaching that takes place. In many instances this is outstanding and pupils appreciate the commitment and concern of staff.
65. Teachers display a good knowledge of their subjects and, where relevant, examination board specifications. This, along with their understanding of what constitutes effective learning, is used to the benefit of pupils.
66. Key skills are usually identified in planning and opportunities for pupils to develop these are built into lessons. Learning objectives are shared regularly with pupils, addressed during the lesson and returned to at the end. Lessons are structured well to meet the needs of all pupils.
67. Members of support staff are deployed effectively. Resources, where required, are adapted to meet the needs of learners.
68. Teachers promote equality of opportunities well and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect for all involved. There are instances of bilingualism in some lessons but this is limited. Teachers do, however, make suitable reference to Welsh culture.
69. In the minority of lessons where there are some shortcomings, there is a lack of challenge, especially for the most able, and limited opportunity for pupils to think independently. Very occasionally there is a lack of pace to lessons.
70. Overall the monitoring and assessment of pupils' work is consistently good. There is careful monitoring and recording of pupils' progress in subjects and the school as a whole. Teachers keep up-to-date and accurate records of grades

and marks awarded. Records of pupils' achievements are analysed and used well to inform departmental development plans. Whole school data is used very effectively to track progress and identify underachievement.

71. Marking of pupils' work is accurate and comments helpful in indicating, to both parents and pupils, standards achieved and targets for improvement. Pupils are kept fully aware of the standards they are achieving and the progress they are making.
72. Pupils' knowledge of their performance is assisted well by the use of easily understandable levels linked to NC documentation at KS3. In many of the subjects observed there are good examples of pupil self-assessment and targets for improvement. These help pupils refine skills required for self-evaluation.
73. Good use of the National Record of Achievement and Progress File assists pupils well in recording their achievements and developing an awareness of their strengths and areas for further development.
74. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment and reporting and satisfies examination board regulations.
75. Pupils and parents receive an interim and final end of year report each year. These are mostly of good quality and provide a comprehensive and useful overview of pupils' progress. Occasionally there is some inconsistency in these and in a minority of cases comments are general and do not relate closely to particular subjects.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

76. In its self evaluation the school awarded itself a grade one in this question. The inspection team identified many outstanding features. However, the school does not comply fully with the requirements for the time allocations for teaching compulsory Welsh and religious education in KS4. This is deemed to be an important shortcoming.
77. The curriculum meets learners' needs well. The school tackles social disadvantage successfully by providing learning experiences which develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence. This success is reflected in the high standards pupils achieve.
78. There are several outstanding features in the learning experiences provided by the school. These outstanding features include the:
 - effectiveness of steps taken to tackle social disadvantage;
 - positive contribution made by extra-curricular activities to raising standards;

- effectiveness of strategies which ensure that pupils acquire the necessary basic and key skills;
 - important part played by the school in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
 - productive links with parents and the community;
 - high quality of work related education and careers advice; and
 - the school's commitment to take account of employers' needs.
79. An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities broadens and enriches pupils' learning experiences. Revision clubs in all subjects are supported well by pupils and help to raise standards.
80. The school has very effective strategies for the development of key skills. Provision for literacy and numeracy is good. Portfolios of pupils' work in ICT held on computer demonstrate good skills.
81. Partnerships with parents, the local community, other primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities are highly effective. These links ensure the exchange of relevant information to all concerned parties, including the options available to pupils when they leave the school.
82. Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is very good. Pupils show respect for other people in the school and raise money for a range of charities. Older pupils help young learners with their reading. Pupils are made aware of their own and other cultures through a comprehensive programme of PSHE lessons, together with subject input and out-of-school activities.
83. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. An appropriate programme of class and year assemblies allows pupils to consider and reflect upon spiritual issues. The school has good arrangements to enable all pupils to receive their entitlement to a daily act of collective worship.
84. The curriculum at KS3 is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. An innovative curriculum at KS4 provides a range of courses. This addresses well the needs of pupils across the whole ability range. It includes the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network courses (ASDAN), a large number of vocational courses taught at other centres and alternative curricula tailored to the needs of pupils at risk of disaffection.
85. There is insufficient time allocated to cover the compulsory programme of study in Welsh and the agreed syllabus in religious education in KS4.
86. WRE is an integral part of the curriculum. All Y9 pupils are registered with Careers Wales on-line and careers advice at transition stages is of high quality. The use of business mentors to prepare pupils for work experience is an impressive feature of this provision.
87. The school tackles social disadvantage successfully by developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils have open access to a variety of courses which

are enhanced well by extra-curricular activities. This is reflected in the high standards which pupils achieve.

88. The school responds well to the interests of its pupils and the needs of employers by introducing courses developing key skills (ASDAN) and vocational qualifications. Members of the business community play an important part in the delivery of the curriculum.
89. Aspects of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig are studied in most subjects. The school eisteddfod is supported well by pupils. Bilingual signs and subject displays raise awareness of the Welsh language. Whilst some teachers welcome pupils in Welsh the use of incidental Welsh is infrequent.
90. There is evidence of recycling and healthy eating projects in the school. An audit has been undertaken to co-ordinate the delivery of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC). However it is not yet embedded fully in the ethos of the school.
91. Involvement with the Dynamo Project in KS3 and visits to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) 'POD' initiative help pupils to develop skills such as problem-solving and decision-making. Pupils gain an insight into the opportunities for setting up small businesses through 'Business Awareness' days at KS4.
92. The school is successful in preparing its pupils for lifelong learning by providing a broad range of learning experiences and through its close links with employers and providers of further education.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

93. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its Self-Evaluation Report.
94. There are several outstanding features in the way learners are cared for, guided and supported. These include:
 - highly effective planning and management of care arrangements and support services;
 - high quality liaison between the school and local primary schools;
 - a carefully structured and co-ordinated guidance programme that includes health education and careers education and guidance;
 - the quality of procedures for monitoring pupils' punctuality, attendance and behaviour;
 - procedures for protecting pupils and dealing with appeals and complaints;
 - the individual support for pupils with SEN and for pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress; and

- the extent to which the school takes account of the pupils' background in planning and delivering support and guidance.
95. The school is a caring and inclusive community that helps all pupils feel confident and well-supported to achieve to the best of their ability.
 96. The quality of support and guidance provided by the school for pupils is outstanding. Form tutors, heads of year, key stage pastoral managers and senior managers provide very good support and guidance. Pupils comment that they feel confident and supported by teachers who know them very well as individuals. The pastoral support system is a strong feature of the work of the school.
 97. The school takes full account of the views of parents, carers and employers and responds quickly to their needs. Parents and carers are well informed about what their children are doing in school. They are involved in parents' evenings, school productions and concerts and receive regular reports about progress. The school planner is an effective channel of communication between teachers and parents.
 98. Advice for pupils on choosing courses in Y9 is very good. The input from Careers Wales supports the advice given by the school. Interviews with a range of careers specialists and teachers, along with a comprehensive option booklet ensure that pupils are well-informed about the choice of courses available to them. Parents and pupils attend an option evening where they have the opportunity to obtain good individual advice about subjects and courses.
 99. Careers guidance is included in the PSHE programme. This is supplemented well by support from employer mentors and Careers Wales. All pupils have an employer mentor in Y10 and Y11. Where possible pupils and mentors are matched in terms of pupils' intended careers. Pupils are well informed about post-16 choices. The school has good links with the neighbouring 11-18 comprehensive school and the local further education college.
 100. Transition and induction procedures for pupils moving from primary school are outstanding. The school has very strong links with its partner primary schools and works with them to ensure that pupils are prepared very effectively for secondary school. Y6 pupils visit the school on a number of well-planned occasions throughout the year. This ensures that pupils settle quickly into the life of the secondary school.
 101. Teachers, including the SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO), have regular contact with partner primary schools prior to transfer and engage in assessment reviews, the delivery of lessons in primary schools by secondary school teachers and the use of bridging projects involving several secondary school subject departments. Senior managers are continually reviewing and developing transition activities. This is done in full collaboration with partner primary schools.

102. The very comprehensive PSHE programme is delivered during discrete lessons. It takes account of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) Frameworks for PSE and Careers Education and Guidance. The content of the programme enables pupils to consider a wide range of appropriate issues, such as diversity, stereotyping and equal opportunities, as well as providing them with good guidance about health, safety and personal and academic progress.
103. Form tutors deliver the PSHE programme. They are supported well in this role by heads of year. Input from outside agencies, such as the police, health care professionals, the business community and local clergy, enhances the quality of the PSHE programme.
104. The school has very good systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Procedures are applied consistently by teachers. These are clearly understood by pupils who recognise the ways in which the school promotes the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
105. The systems for promoting good behaviour and for responding to behaviour that may impede academic progress are outstanding. There is a positive commitment to improve the behaviour of a number of pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties. The pupil behaviour target system is particularly effective at KS3. Pupils are set attainable targets and are monitored by the Learning Support Assistants (LSA). They are suitably rewarded for achieving their targets at the end of term.
106. Very good use is made of outside agencies, such as the social service, the EWO and the youth service. These links ensure that pupils receive the best possible support to help them reach their potential.
107. Policies and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are well managed. The school is involved in a healthy schools initiative. As part of this, healthy eating is promoted.
108. The school has detailed child protection procedures that are regularly updated and shared with all staff, including the lunchtime supervisor. A deputy headteacher is the named person who takes responsibility for this. Two additional trained child protection officers support him.
109. The supportive and caring ethos of the school means that pupils trust teachers and feel comfortable to approach them with problems or difficulties. The effective school council is also a forum where pupils can raise their opinions about issues that affect them. Pupils feel confident that their views are listened to and acted upon.
110. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school's commitment to the education of these pupils is clear and evident. Very good transitional arrangements between KS2 and KS3 allow for effective early identification of pupils' needs.

111. The enthusiastic SENCO works hard to raise the profile of SEN and of standards within the school. He provides good guidance and effective leadership. Links with the LEA are strong. Constructive intervention strategies are put in place following regular visits from the educational psychologist.
112. The five LSAs, three of whom are National Nursery Education Board (NNEB) qualified, provide very good support and work in close collaboration with the SENCO. The support is prioritised and mainly targeted at KS3 pupils. The Reading Reflex strategy is organised and monitored by the LSAs. Pupils make very good progress in these reading sessions. LSAs have good knowledge of their pupils and are a valuable and appreciated resource within the school.
113. Pupils with SEN at KS3 are taught by subject specialists in small discrete classes. They access a broad and balanced curriculum. They enjoy their lessons and are well behaved. Whenever possible, opportunities are taken for pupils with SEN to integrate with their peers in mainstream classes, when these are appropriate to their needs and abilities. There are further opportunities for flexibility in KS4. Pupils with specific learning difficulties receive the support of an experienced LEA specialist teacher.
114. The alternative curriculum arrangement for a number of pupils at KS4 is a particular strength of the school. The school deals flexibly and sensitively with targeted pupils who show disaffection, are significantly underachieving and in danger of permanent exclusion. Strong links with the local further education college and other outside agencies provide vocational experiences for these pupils. Courses are tailored to meet individual needs. A Youth Worker is based in the school.
115. Pupils with SEN make good progress at KS3 and KS4. Lessons are planned well with two or three concise targets. There are good examples of appropriate adaptation of teaching strategies to meet individual needs. The SENCO provides subject departments with updates on pupils with SEN.
116. Statutory requirements are met and the response to the Code of Practice is good. The detailed SEN register is reviewed regularly. Every pupil with SEN has an individual education plan (IEP) that relates to the needs of the pupil. IEP targets are shared with both pupil and parent. They are reviewed regularly and made available to all subject departments through the Head of Department. Statements of SEN are reviewed annually.
117. The school recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and ensures that support systems are responsive to particular social, cultural and educational needs. The school actively promotes equality of access to the whole curriculum; it is successful in challenging stereotypes and raising expectations, regardless of social or cultural background. All pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations. This encourages them to feel confident as learners and impacts positively on their achievement.

118. The school is very successful in creating an atmosphere where pupils are free from harassment and discrimination. Parents and pupils are confident of an effective early school response to incidents of bullying.
119. The school monitors the examination results of boys and girls and takes appropriate action to tackle underachievement. All subject options are available to boys and girls and there is evidence that the school tackles stereotyping when advising pupils on their options at the end of KS3.
120. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to consider a range of courses in KS4. These include vocational and work-based learning and courses delivered by a further education college.
121. Clear policies and procedures have been established to ensure that a culture of tolerance and appreciation of all cultures is promoted. The PSHE programme enables pupils to consider issues of race and equality. Diversity is recognised and celebrated in assemblies and in the work of departments.
122. Teachers work very closely with social services to ensure that the needs of looked after children are met well with relevant education and social plans.
123. Although the school has no physically disabled pupils in wheelchairs, it has a duty to plan and implement action to improve accessibility for physically disabled pupils. Wheelchair access is restricted to the ground floor only and, therefore, it does not fully meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. However, it makes reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

124. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its Self-Evaluation Report.
125. There are several outstanding features of leadership and management at all levels. These include the:
 - clear direction provided by leaders and managers through shared values, aims, objectives and targets;
 - extent to which aims and values are reflected in the work of the school and promote equality for all;
 - management and continuous improvement of individual staff, teams and departments; and

- the effective procedures used to monitor performance, promote professional development and improve the quality of provision.
126. Leadership and strategic management are highly effective. This is demonstrated by the consistently high standards of achievement and attainment maintained since the last inspection. The headteacher has well-focused aims and values. He provides strong leadership and clear direction. He is supported very well by a committed SMT who share his vision for the school and work purposefully and successfully to achieve the school's objectives.
 127. The SMT has good links with middle managers. Together they have established a good range of policies which promote high achievement and equality of opportunity. Senior and middle managers work well as a team to implement these policies thoroughly. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
 128. Consistency in the quality of middle management is a particular strength of the school. It takes appropriate and effective steps to ensure that the impact on the quality of education provided for pupils caused by any absence of middle managers is kept to a minimum.
 129. Leaders and managers take appropriate account of national priorities. They are making good progress in several important areas, for example in developing pupils' awareness of sustainable development and the importance of recycling. Managers' development of pupils' bilingual competence across the curriculum is, however, at an earlier stage of development.
 130. Productive and beneficial links have been established with other providers of education in the locality. Managers work effectively in collaboration with other schools and colleges to develop the opportunities which can be offered to pupils.
 131. The headteacher and SMT set challenging but realistic targets for individual staff, teams and departments. The process of setting targets involves discussions based on the review of performance and potential and the agreement of future goals. These procedures are used successfully to monitor standards. Leaders and managers provide very good support to help colleagues achieve their goals.
 132. Governors work closely with the school and contribute effectively to its development. They are proud of the school and the part it plays in the community. Many governors are frequent visitors to the school and, as a consequence, they are well informed about issues that affect it.
 133. The Governing Body (GB) operates through a good range of sub-committees. Through their work in these committees and through other points of contact they monitor provision and take effective and appropriate decisions, for example, when appointing new members of staff or in financial management. They fulfil their legal duties and responsibilities effectively.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

134. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its Self-Evaluation Report.
135. The process of self-evaluation is well established across the school. Senior managers are very proactive in ensuring that middle managers use self-evaluation critically to analyse the performance within their areas of responsibility. Overall the process is undertaken thoroughly and involves a detailed analysis of pupils' performances in both key stages.
136. The school's self-evaluation report, prepared for the inspection, provides an accurate assessment of the school. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement clearly and focuses particularly on important issues relating to raising standards in pupils' performances.
137. The inspection team concur with the grades awarded by the school in six out of the seven key questions, the only exception being in key question three.
138. The headteacher and senior managers are very well informed about the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. There is a clear systematic process of review that involves all staff in self-assessment and the monitoring of their performance. This is a strong feature of the school.
139. Most middle managers make good use of self-evaluation within their areas of responsibility. Benchmark data is used very effectively to identify targets for improvement in many subjects.
140. The school is generally successful in taking account of the views of pupils, parents and other interested parties. In particular, the school council forms an effective mechanism for seeking and acting upon the views of pupils. The school is highly receptive to the views of parents and the local community.
141. Planning for improvement is embedded firmly at whole school level. The SIP identifies clear targets for improvement over a three-year period. These targets focus clearly on pupils' achievements and are reviewed continually.
142. Most subject departments have development plans of good quality. They identify measurable aspects for improvement that are linked closely with school targets. Reviews of pupils' achievements, particularly in relation to external examinations and tests, are carried out robustly. This is an outstanding feature in mathematics.
143. There is some inconsistency in the overall quality of planning for improvement across subjects. In a small minority of cases departmental development plans lack clarity and rigour.

144. The school reviews the effectiveness of its learning experiences frequently. For example, pastoral year teams meet regularly and evaluate critically aspects of the PSHE programme for pupils. This forms an effective mechanism for reviewing and improving the quality of teaching.
145. The SIP and most subject department plans identify realistic time scales and resource costs for aspects of development. The headteacher and senior managers ensure that resources are adequately funded to address priorities for improvement.
146. The school has made significant progress since the last inspection. Nearly all the key issues have been addressed very well. Little progress has been made, however, on developing the use of the library as a resource for learning. This remains ongoing, although the school is currently installing computers in the library as part of the plan to upgrade the facilities available.
147. Self-evaluation and planning for improvement are used very effectively to monitor the quality of learning and teaching across the school. The system for monitoring pupils' achievements has been very successful in showing sustained improvement. This is particularly apparent in the high standards of pupils' attainments at the end of each key stage.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

148. This grade matches the grade awarded by the school in its Self-Evaluation Report.
149. Outstanding features include the:
 - quality of the management of staff development to ensure that the budget is utilised effectively to maintain high standards in learning and teaching; and
 - the rigour in which the school keeps its resources under review to ensure best value for money.
150. There are sufficient teachers to ensure the curriculum is delivered effectively; they are well qualified, and highly committed. There is a good balance of teachers with many years' experience together with those who are relatively new to the profession.
151. There is a very good range of highly capable and experienced support and administrative staff. They work very effectively alongside teachers to enable the school to function efficiently in all aspects. There is a good team spirit evident amongst all staff members that is mutually beneficial to them and pupils. This is evidenced by the fact that the school has been awarded 'Investors in People' for the second time.
152. There are some current difficulties in staffing in English due to the long-term absence of the head of department. This has disrupted the department's long-term strategic planning. The school is in the process of addressing this

situation. Suitable contingency plans have been implemented to cover teaching, maintain standards and minimise disruption to learning.

153. Resources are generally sufficient across the school to support learning and teaching. Many subject departments produce their own workbooks for pupils' use. These are often of very good quality. There is an increasing use of ICT across the school. A few classrooms have Interactive Whiteboards or Data Projectors and the school is in the process of acquiring more.
154. The library is under-used by pupils. It is stocked adequately with books but few pupils make use of it for independent study. Books, however, are taken from the library by teachers to promote pupils' reading during tutorial periods.
155. Generally accommodation provides a good setting for learning and teaching. The space available is adequate but not generous for the number of pupils on roll. Although some classrooms are small they are used well. Facilities in physical education and drama have improved significantly since the last inspection. There are good displays of pupils' work evident across the school and this nurtures a stimulating environment for learning.
156. The school buildings do not provide easy access for some people with disabilities. Currently, however, there are no pupils with physical disabilities on roll.
157. Overall the school buildings are maintained well by the site manager. The school self-evaluation report acknowledges the poor quality of exterior doors. There are also other shortcomings such as some broken toilet seats and doors, particularly in the boys' toilets.
158. The school has rigorous and very effective systems in place to ensure that it makes best use of its resources. The bursar works very effectively alongside the headteacher to monitor and review the school budget accurately and regularly.
159. Members of staff are deployed very well to make productive use of their time and expertise. Very good use is made of LSAs to assist pupils with SEN. There are good quality induction programmes to meet the needs of newly qualified teachers.
160. Senior managers have ensured that recent changes to teacher's workloads are being implemented very successfully. Suitable arrangements are in place to allow teachers time for planning, preparation and assessment; this is working well.
161. Staff development is a very strong feature of the school. It is very well managed to ensure that the needs of individual staff are matched closely to the school's priorities for development. This works very successfully to utilise the overall budget to best effect.
162. Subject departments have a designated allocation of funds for essential resource needs. This allocation is supplemented by a bidding system which is

overseen closely by the headteacher and senior managers. Overall, the procedure ensures that departmental needs are linked closely with priorities for improvement in the SIP.

163. An example of outstanding practice is the way in which the school plans its budget commitment to cover the many transition activities with local primary schools. There is an annual action plan that identifies specific costs in terms of resources and staff time. The budget is scrutinised thoroughly with primary headteachers and has a clear focus on pupils' needs and value for money.
164. The school budget is managed very effectively and resources are reviewed regularly and rigorously. Overall the school provides very good value for money. This is reflected in the very high standards of pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

KS3: Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

165. Pupils develop a good awareness of the purposes of using language and how they must adapt their own language to suit their audience.
166. On the whole pupils listen carefully having good recall of what they have learned previously.
167. Pupils, including those with SEN, read well and broadly in relation to their abilities and needs. They respond positively to the breadth of reading material promoted by the department. This experience contributes strongly to the pupils' understanding of citizenship and the diverse society in which they live, including aspects of the Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.
168. Across the key stage, pupils, especially those of lower and average ability, make good progress in speaking, listening, and writing and particularly good progress in reading.

Shortcomings

169. There are no important shortcomings but a few pupils do not take enough care with spelling, grammar and punctuation, especially paragraphing.

KS4: Grade 1 Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

170. Many pupils make very good progress in listening, reading and writing. The progress they make in reading, particularly in Y11, is outstanding in relation to their ability.
171. Pupils, particularly those of low and average ability, demonstrate outstanding confidence and skill in analysing texts and show mature interpretation of mood and character.
172. In Y10 many pupils' analysis of poetry is outstanding.
173. In Y11 many pupils' understanding of the characteristics of persuasive language is outstanding.

Good features

174. Many pupils demonstrate increasing fluency in their speaking. They contribute confidently to "hot seating" question and answer sessions based on their set texts, for example as characters in "*An Inspector Calls*".
175. Pupils make good progress in developing their understanding of what they read.
176. All pupils write convincingly in an increasing range of styles, including the autobiographical, narrative, descriptive, persuasive, instructive and reporting styles.
177. Many pupils re-draft their work conscientiously and the final presentation of their folders is often of very good quality.
178. Some pupils demonstrate increased independent learning skills.

Shortcomings

179. There are no important shortcomings, but a small minority of pupils lacks confidence in providing extended answers or in reading out work to the whole class.

Welsh second language

KS 3 Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

180. Pupils respond well to revision sessions at the beginning of lessons and in listening tasks they show a good understanding of language. They complete a good range of tasks using their listening skills. They use familiar language with confidence and their pronunciation is generally good.
181. Language games and activities are undertaken with confidence. Pupils respond well to opportunities to practise language in pairs and small groups.

182. Pupils read short extracts well, usually in groups. They respond well when completing related tasks. Their grasp of Welsh increases when they undertake a short task on a book of their choice.
183. Pupils' written work consists of a good variety of factual and personal pieces. Sentence patterns and appropriate vocabulary are accurately written and language exercises are completed correctly.

Shortcomings

184. There are no important shortcomings, but a few pupils are unwilling to extend their oral answers. They lack fluency in their oral responses because of uncertainty. They understand more language than they use. When completing a language activity they use very little incidental language.
185. In addition, a few less able pupils have difficulty with written work; both sentence structures and general spelling can be erratic. Written work is sometimes not sufficiently extended as pupils progress through KS3.

KS 4 Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

186. More able pupils converse confidently using familiar sentence patterns. They use language effectively to express and justify their opinions on various topics.
187. Pupils work well in pairs discussing their ideas and questioning each other. They understand how the language works and apply this knowledge to express themselves clearly and meaningfully.
188. Pupils who follow the full GCSE examination course read material closely linked to the course requirements. They understand information contained in the texts and complete tasks requiring information.
189. At this level the external examination dictates what written work has to be undertaken and pupils complete a good quantity of tasks to a good standard. Their writing shows a good grasp of structure and sequence.
190. Pupils following the full GCSE course achieve good standards with no important shortcomings.

Shortcomings

191. The lack of regular contact for those pupils who do not undertake the GCSE course makes it difficult for them to retain what they learn and this has an adverse effect on the standard of their achievement. They are unable to build on progress made at KS3.

192. Standards vary in the oral work of lower ability pupils who tend to lack the fluency needed to converse with confidence. Their contributions are brief. Retaining language previously learnt is a problem for them and this in turn can be a barrier to them gaining fluency.
193. When reading pupils sometimes mispronounce both simple and more complex words. Some read slowly without expression and lack clarity and meaning.
194. Pieces of written work are sometimes short and pupils tend to depend on basic language patterns, which lack the variety expected at KS4. In non-examination classes writing is limited to copying or completing basic language exercises.

Mathematics

KS3 Grade 1 Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

195. Pupils of different abilities, including those with SEN, progress well through the key stage. Many gain a secure understanding of the work they do and achieve high standards during and at the end of the key stage.
196. Pupils across the ability range and key stage can recall earlier work and use it to solve problems in new contexts. They apply well the mathematics they have learned and often use it purposefully in practical and realistic situations.
197. Pupils in Y7 spot pattern in number very quickly and many are able to write and use simple algebraic equations to represent the pattern and to generate appropriate graphs.
198. Pupils in Y7 and Y8 explain their work on probability confidently and with understanding and several can justify why one strategy for winning a game of chance might be better than another one.
199. Pupils in Y9 use trial and improvement methods efficiently to find solutions to algebraic equations. They, and many other pupils in KS3, show exceptionally mature use of calculators.

Good features

200. Pupils' mental number skills are good across the key stage. One middle ability class in Y9, for example, shows good progress in answering end of KS3 aural examination questions.
201. Pupils with SEN use mathematical language well and become increasingly confident in explaining properties of various two dimensional shapes.
202. Pupils are fluent in number in written calculations and can interpret simple statistical information correctly. They use mathematical notation and

terminology well in communicating ideas and findings to one another or to teachers.

Shortcomings

203. There are no important shortcomings although in a very few lessons, and for just a few pupils, standards are limited because work is not matched well enough to their ability or prior achievement.

KS4 Grade 1 Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

204. The generic outstanding features noted above at KS3 apply equally well and mostly, to a greater and more developed extent, to pupils at KS4. Most pupils continue to develop effective and appropriate use of scientific calculators.

205. Many pupils show a well developed ability to evaluate and review their own work and to check it for correctness. With appropriate support from teachers they have confidence to attempt difficult questions and generally know, from checking, whether they are correct or not.

206. Pupils in Y10 use basic statistical procedures to compare real data from different geographical regions. They offer reasoned explanations, on the basis of their calculations and often of their knowledge of the geography of the regions, for similarities or differences observed.

207. Able pupils in Y11 make very good use of computers to investigate various algebraic graphs. They know the properties of, and can sketch graphs, of several different functions.

Good features

208. The vast majority of pupils across the ability range build well on the work they have done in KS3 and make good progress in all aspects of their work. Several become increasingly independent and well-motivated learners during the key stage.

209. Coursework for external examinations is of good or better standard. Pupils achieve very well in these external examinations reflecting the high quality of work they do throughout the key stage.

Shortcomings

210. There are no important shortcomings although, as at KS3, in a very few lessons, and for just a few pupils, standards are limited because work is not matched well enough to their ability or prior achievement.

Information technology

KS3 Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

211. Pupils make quick progress confidently acquiring new skills. They are able to create presentations of a high standard, utilising a range of information technology applications. They successfully consider the purpose of the presentation and its audience. When preparing graphs many pupils demonstrate good practice in making the information clear, perhaps to someone with vision difficulties.
212. Pupils' work is accurate and they understand the need for accuracy when processing data and presenting information.
213. Pupils are able to select and analyse data sensibly from a range of sources, including the internet and they integrate it together with data that they have collected. They then organise, store and present the information appropriately.
214. Pupils enter data into spreadsheets and can amend the design and change formulas in accordance with a model. Many pupils can design spreadsheets to model real situations and to collect relevant data.

Shortcomings

215. There are no important shortcomings, but a small minority of pupils in Y9 has some difficulty recalling how to insert functions into spreadsheet tables.

KS4 Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

216. Most pupils can successfully apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT at an appropriate level to a range of situations. Their products are attractive and are fit for their intended purpose and audience.
217. Pupils solve problems which relate closely to the real world and as a result design complete ICT systems for others to use, such as in a small business or sporting clubs. These systems involve analysing and organising data and presenting a range of informative reports.
218. Pupils produce sets of designs with a common style for the stationery needs of an organisation when, for example, devising advertising materials and questionnaires. They consider carefully the requirement and means of data collection and phrase questionnaires appropriately.
219. Most pupils analyse problems and undertake sensible approaches to designing solutions. They choose appropriate ICT resources and apply them

competently. Many go on to evaluate their solutions and document them, including a useful users' guide, matched to the need of the anticipated user.

220. Pupils discuss wider issues with respect to ICT and the way this subject is changing both in the world of work and in society generally. Most use technically valid and precise terminology.

Shortcomings

221. There are no important shortcomings, but a small minority of pupils, mainly in Y10, make little progress and require more help and support.
222. In addition, a small minority of pupils in Y11 do not fully understand the hardware specifications that they write.

Religious education (including religious studies)

KS3 Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

223. Pupils across the ability range have good factual knowledge and understanding of the units of work studied, which reflect the local agreed syllabus.
224. Pupils have a good knowledge of some of the major Bible stories and a good understanding of the authority attributed to religious texts.
225. Pupils show an awareness of how religious belief influences human behaviour. They are aware of how human mortality raises questions about an afterlife and can distinguish between religious and secular beliefs in this respect.
226. Pupils can explore the way contemporary religious practice is based on religious history and tradition. They are able to give their own responses, the more able supporting their views with reasons.
227. Pupils with SEN have a secure factual knowledge of religions and a good conceptual understanding. They work effectively with one another to develop this knowledge and respond well to support.

Shortcomings

228. A minority of pupils finds it difficult to distinguish between the beliefs and practices of Christianity and the other world religions studied. With some their recollection is unclear, with others their understanding is superficial.
229. A minority of pupils show limited skills of exploring their understanding and responding to new knowledge. Their ability to explain their ideas about religious beliefs is limited.

KS4 Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

230. Pupils have a good understanding of the personal and social challenges faced by contemporary society. They are able to distinguish between secular, moral and religious responses to issues such as euthanasia and abortion.
231. Pupils have a clear understanding of how religious belief has motivated social reformers such as Martin Luther King.
232. Pupils listen well to one another and display an open mindedness when their views about religion are challenged. The more able pupils write accurately and at length. They are able to describe, analyse and apply their knowledge of religion.
233. External examination results continue to improve narrowing the gap between the school, LEA and all-Wales averages.

Shortcomings

234. As at KS3, a minority of pupils at KS4 show limited skills of exploring their understanding of religion and responding to new knowledge. Their ability to speak at length giving extended answers is limited.
235. Few pupils demonstrate the skills of managing their own learning in religious education. Their ability to judge their own performance and identify targets for improvement is limited.

Modern foreign languages

KS3 Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

236. Across the key stage pupils are keen to demonstrate their recall of vocabulary and structures. They participate fully and successfully in a wide range of activities across the four skill areas. Generally they demonstrate a clear understanding of what is expected and take a pride in their work.
237. For the most part pupils accurately pronounce new language and quickly incorporate new vocabulary and structures into their own oral and written work. They speak in full sentences and provide opinions. In the best examples they support their responses with reasons.
238. Throughout the key stage pupils demonstrate increasingly good written skills; a number use dictionaries appropriately to support their learning. Many in Y7 write paragraphs and short letters on familiar topics. By Y9 they write extended responses and successfully lengthen their work, using a variety of grammatical structures, including different tenses, adverbs and connectives.

239. Pupils of low ability and those with SEN contribute well in lessons and make good progress in their language learning. They successfully make the link between the spoken and written word. With appropriate support they can understand short passages of authentic French and identify the main details. In oral work they participate successfully in basic exchanges of information.
240. By Y9 more able pupils can listen for gist in lengthy taped passages. They use strategies to understand longer written texts effectively. They can identify vocabulary from previous contexts and begin to infer the meaning of new words and to translate text written in tenses other than the present.
241. Pupils are increasingly aware of the skills needed for successful language learning. In the best examples, they can explain their strategies for learning and remembering new language and identify how they can make links between English and French.

Shortcomings

242. There are no important shortcomings, but a few pupils occasionally mispronounce words when reading aloud, but not when recalling them from memory.
243. In addition, a small minority of pupils in Y9 do not focus consistently during independent study, despite the support of their teacher; they do not complete their class work as a result.

KS4 Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

244. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate good progression from KS3 to KS4 and across the key stage. They continue to move with confidence from simple to more complex language structures.
245. Generally pupils have good pronunciation when speaking from memory and when reading aloud. They demonstrate good recall of vocabulary and structures. By Y11 they demonstrate in their course work that they can speak at length on the GCSE topic areas, using a range of tenses.
246. Pupils understand authentic spoken language in longer passages and can identify opinions and feelings, as well as concrete details. They can infer meaning of newly encountered language in reading and listening texts. They successfully identify triggers for tenses other than the present.
247. Most pupils, especially those working at GCSE higher tier, have a good grasp of grammatical structures. They form tenses accurately and use clauses, conjunctions and additional details to extend their written course work. They make use of models and writing frames to improve their own writing.

248. Pupils of all abilities build effectively on each other's responses. They are proactive in seeking further clarification and, in the best examples, can identify what is needed in order to improve their performance.
249. Throughout the key stage pupils of lower ability can recall language learned in different contexts and with support can transfer this knowledge into a new context. They successfully make the connections between English and French in order to remember pronunciation and meaning.

Shortcomings

250. There are no important shortcomings but a small minority of pupils in Y10 do not pay enough attention to accurate pronunciation and a few pupils of lower ability do not utilise grammatical structures accurately in writing, despite clear explanation and extensive prior oral practice.

School's response to the inspection

251. The headteacher, staff and governors welcome the report. It is pleasing to note that acknowledgement is given to Glyncoed as being a very successful school which serves its community well.
252. Additionally, the recognition of the many outstanding features of the school has been confirmed by the inspection team.
253. In particular, the report outlines that the quality of care, support and guidance provided by the school is outstanding. It recognises that the school has effective measures to support the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and eliminate negative behaviour allowing for effective pupil attainment to be achieved in formal examinations at both KS3 and KS4 which is consistently above both the local and national averages for such examinations.
254. There are several outstanding features in the school's provision of appropriate learning experiences, and a number of features contribute positively to effective teaching and learning including the recognition that teachers and pupils get on very well together. We are very pleased that the report notes that extra-curricular provision is outstanding as is the transition link between the school and its partner primary schools.
255. The outstanding standards achieved by pupils reflect the quality of teaching and learning within the school and the skill, commitment and dedication of our teachers and the outstanding work of our support staff is duly acknowledged.
256. The report acknowledges that all pupils, regardless of ability, ethnicity, gender and social background have outstanding opportunities to achieve well. It also confirms the commitment of the GB and their undoubted contribution to the school's overall development.

257. The report provides useful recommendations for further improving performance and it is pleasing to note the accurate correlation of the school's self-evaluation report with the inspection team's findings overall, proving that our self-evaluation systems in the school function effectively at all levels.
258. A copy of the school's action plan in response to the inspection recommendations will be sent to all parents. The governors' annual report to parents will report on the progress we are making on the inspection recommendations.
259. In conclusion, the school wishes to acknowledge the professional, collaborative and diligent approach of the inspection team at all stages of the inspection process.
260. The positive endorsement of the work of all concerned at the school means that we can now move forward confidently and build further on the many outstanding features that are highlighted in the report. The acknowledgement that the school has made significant progress since the last inspection is further confirmation of our development. This is particularly relevant due to the relatively short period of time since the school has become a fully fledged 11-16 comprehensive school.
261. The inspection, and the subsequent report, provides us with a valuable external audit and a firm base from which we aim to move further forward as a school.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Glyncoed Comprehensive School
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11-16
Address of school	Badminton Grove, Ebbw Vale Blaenau Gwent
Postcode	NP23 5UW
Telephone number	01495 303216
Headteacher	Mr Colin James
Date of appointment	1 st January 2003
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr I Edwards
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Carter
Dates of inspection	20-24 March 2006

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	181	138	166	155	123	-	-	763

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	40	4	43.2

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	18:1
Average teaching group size	24
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	0.77%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	94.4	89.3	90.1	93.8	97.6			92.4
Term 2	91.6	90.8	92.6	91.6	92			91.7
Term 3	92.3	92.9	92.4	93.1	93.9			93.3

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	22
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	29

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2005															
Total number of pupils in Y9:155															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	23	49	12	6	0	-
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	8	21	34	24	9	0	-
Mathematics	Test	School	0	1	1	-	-	-	12	24	34	20	7	0	-
		National	0	4	1	-	-	-	8	20	33	23	10	0	-
	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	21	15	48	12	0	-
		National	0	1	1	0	0	1	7	19	26	32	14	0	-
	Test	School	0	2	1	-	-	-	10	18	16	36	18	0	-
		National	0	5	1	-	-	-	5	17	20	36	15	0	-
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	1	0	-	-	10	18	16	36	18	0	-
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	20	33	27	12	0	-
	Test	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	13	37	28	13	0	-
		National	0	4	0	-	-	-	5	17	33	28	13	0	-

- D Pupils excepted 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	56.7	In the school	56.7
In Wales	56	In Wales	57

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2005	123
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	41

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	93	83	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	63	42	52
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	91	81	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	51	28	38
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	97	96	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	80	68	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	96	89	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	4	11	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	1	5	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-	-	-

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Fifteen inspectors, including the school's nominee and a peer assessor, spent a total of 48 days in the school and met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

- sixty lessons or part lessons in the six subjects inspected;
- twenty-seven lessons or part lessons taught by teachers in other subjects;
- acts of collective worship;
- registration and form tutor periods; and
- a range of extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team had meetings with:

- staff, governors, parents and carers before the inspection began;
- senior managers, middle managers, teachers, support and administrative staff; and
- groups of pupils during the inspection.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- two hundred and sixty-nine responses to a parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection; and
- a wide range of pupils' work across the curriculum from Y7 to Y11.

The registered inspector held post-inspection meetings with the senior management team and the governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr Peter Carter (Rgl)	Summary, Recommendations, KQ1, KQ5
Mr Martin Rawle	KQ2
Mr Jeff Hanney	KQ3
Mrs Jayne Edwards	KQ4
Mr David Williams	KQ6, KQ7
Mr Gwyn Griffiths	SEN (contributing to KQ4)
Mr Kerry Jones	Contributing to KQ1 and KQ7
Mrs Meiriol Meredith-Jones	English
Dr Alan Cooke	Mathematics
Mrs Heulwen Jones	Welsh second language
Mr Mike Pickin	Information technology
Ms Dawn Sadler	Modern foreign languages
Mr Peter Harris	Religious education
Mr Robert Gore	Nominee
Mrs Helen Jones	Peer Assessor

Acknowledgement

The inspectors wish to express their thanks to the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents of the school for their co-operation during the inspection period.

Contractor

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