

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

**Gowerton School
Cecil Road,
Gowerton,
Swansea SA4 3DL**

School Number: 670/4063

Date of Inspection: 16 – 20 May 2005

by

**Mr P Carter
W262/16926**

Date: 13th July 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T 39/04

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Gowerton 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 Gowerton School took place between 16th – 20th May, 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr Peter 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. 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

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 short inspection.

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

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

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LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

A Level	-	Advanced Level
AS	-	Advanced Subsidiary
CSI	-	Core Subject Indicator
EWO	-	Education Welfare Officer
GB	-	Governing Body
GCSE	-	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	-	General National Vocational Qualification
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
IEP	-	Individual Education Plan
INSET	-	In-Service Education and Training
NVQ	-	National Vocational Qualification
MAT	-	Most Able and Talented
NC	-	National Curriculum
PSE	-	Personal and Social Education
SDP	-	School Development Plan
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	-	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SER	-	Self-Evaluation Report
UA	-	Unitary Authority
WAG	-	Welsh Assembly Government

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Gowerton School is an English medium, 11-18, co-educational comprehensive school maintained by Swansea Unitary Authority (UA). It has 1326 pupils and students on roll, slightly fewer than at the time of the last inspection in June 2000. There are 167 students in the sixth form compared to 161 at the last inspection, when some sixth form students from a nearby Welsh medium school also attended Gowerton School.
2. Most pupils come from Gowerton and from the surrounding urban and rural communities. Some pupils come from parts of north Swansea, beyond the school's catchment area. The intake encompasses working and middle class families with a strong farming tradition associated with the north Gower area. The catchment area is neither particularly prosperous nor particularly disadvantaged although there are some disadvantaged groups. Sixteen per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure very close to the national average. Virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. Less than one per cent of pupils are from other ethnic groups.
3. Learners represent the full range of ability. Standardised tests on entry reflect an average distribution of scores. There are 18 pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 336 identified as needing some support, significantly more than at the last inspection.

The school's priorities and targets

4. The school has a comprehensive set of aims to provide for the academic, personal and social development of pupils and students within an orderly and caring environment. The school development plan (SDP) sets out targets for continuous improvement in several areas. These include:
 - standards of achievement and attainment;
 - literacy and numeracy
 - learning;
 - teaching;
 - assessment procedures;
 - behaviour;
 - community links;
 - professional development; and
 - accommodation.

Summary

5. Gowerton School continues to provide a high quality of education. Its pupils and students achieve high standards and examination results which compare favourably to those achieved in similar schools in Wales. Overall, teaching was graded one or two in 87% of lessons observed. This is a high figure and represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Senior and middle managers work effectively together to maintain and improve standards, learning and teaching. The inspection team agrees with all of the grades awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report (SER).

Table of grades awarded

6. The inspection team judged the school's work as follows:

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?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

Standards

7. The school's results in tests and public examinations are good. Pupils achieve well in relation to their ability.
8. In key stage 3 tests, results have been consistently good in recent years and particularly good in 2003. Compared with similar schools in Wales, the school's results are above average for the core subject indicator (CSI) which is the percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in English or Welsh, mathematics and science combined. Results are also better than the average for all schools in Swansea.
9. In key stage 4, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results are also good. In recent years, compared with similar schools in Wales, the school has been above the average for the percentage of pupils achieving five GCSE passes at grades A*-C as well as for the CSI. These results are better than the average for all schools in Swansea. The performance of boys is close to local and national averages. The performance of girls is significantly higher.
10. Standards in key skills are good. The great majority of pupils speak well and listen attentively. Most pupils read fluently and write well, often at length and for a range

of different purposes. They apply numeracy skills well in several subjects and make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), for example to research and present work.

11. There is little use of incidental Welsh outside Welsh lessons.
12. Pupils' progress in learning is good. Pupils of all abilities acquire new knowledge and skills and understand what they need to do to improve. Most pupils develop good personal, social and learning skills and show positive attitudes to learning. They respect the views and beliefs of others.
13. The behaviour of most pupils is good. However, a small minority of pupils in key stage 3 behave in an immature and irresponsible way in classes and around the school.
14. Attendance is above the benchmark of 90%

The quality of education and training

15. The quality of teaching in all lessons observed in key stages 3 and 4 was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
23.2%	62.3%	10.2%	4.3%	0%
69 lessons were inspected in key stages 3 and 4				

16. There were outstanding features in almost one out of every four lessons and no important shortcomings in over eight out of every ten lessons. This is well above the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) for 2004-2007 for the quality of teaching to be grade 2 or better in 65% of lessons. It is close to the target of grade 3 or better in 98% of lessons.
17. Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and committed. Most lessons are characterised by good working relationships which foster learning.
18. The great majority of teachers engage pupils in stimulating and innovative approaches to learning. In these cases, pupils are motivated in lessons.
19. Teachers monitor and review progress regularly but do not always use data on pupils' prior attainment in their planning. The frequency and consistency of day-to-day marking vary within and across subjects.
20. The curriculum generally meets the learning needs of pupils. A suitable alternative curriculum is followed by a small number of pupils in key stage 4 at risk of disengagement.
21. Statutory requirements with respect to Welsh in Year 11 are not met.
22. Learning experiences are enriched through the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school, particularly in sport, music and drama. This is an outstanding feature of the school.

23. The school is effective in promoting pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
24. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education or employment through well-organised careers education and work experience. The school has strong links with the local community and with institutions of higher education.
25. Very good pastoral links with feeder primary schools help pupils' smooth transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3. Curricular links strengthen further the continuity of pupils' experiences.
26. Pupils see the school as caring and staff as approachable, if they have any problems. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good, in class and around the school.
27. There is a comprehensive health education programme which is delivered as part of personal and social education (PSE). The content is detailed and covers a wide range of topics relevant to all year groups. Pupils speak highly of the PSE programme.
28. The learning needs of individual pupils are identified clearly. A good range of additional support is provided and co-ordinated well to enable these needs to be addressed effectively. Appropriate strategies to deal with the immature behaviour of a minority of pupils are implemented inconsistently.
29. The school's policies for equality of opportunity are effective. Both boys and girls, and pupils with different abilities and backgrounds, have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. Effective procedures are used well to address any reported incidents of bullying. Pupils with disabilities are cared for well. Appropriate steps are taken so that pupils are not disadvantaged.

Leadership and management

30. Senior managers have a clear vision of the future direction of the school. They work collaboratively and effectively with middle managers to maintain and improve standards, teaching and learning. The management of staff development is a key factor in the high standards of professionalism and the consistently good quality of middle management.
31. Governors fulfil their role well, being fully involved in strategic and financial management and regularly reviewing performance.
32. The school has clear aims and values to promote a culture of learning, achievement and mutual respect. In key stage 4 these aims are widely fulfilled as pupils respond well. In key stage 3 they are partially fulfilled but the behaviour of some pupils detracts from this ethos. Their behaviour is not always managed effectively.
33. The school's performance is monitored and evaluated well. Self-evaluation arrangements are systematic and draw upon comprehensive sets of data and the views of pupils, staff and other interested parties.

34. Information is generally used effectively to inform whole-school planning and development. Planning at departmental levels is good overall. Departmental development plans are highly variable in content and rigour and the quality of some does not reflect the good work done by departments.
35. Overall, actions taken have resulted in measurable improvements in, for example, the achievement of boys, the attainment of the most able and talented and in the provision of ICT resources.
36. Pupils have access to a good range of appropriate resources to support their learning. Most teachers and pupils use computers well to enrich learning experiences.
37. Overall, accommodation is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. The outside fabric of many buildings is drab but, inside, most classrooms provide suitable settings for teaching and learning.
38. The school manages its resources effectively and ensures good value for money. Spending decisions are prioritised to best meet the needs of pupils.

The sixth form

Standards

39. Students undertaking Advanced (A) level courses achieve standards which are good, and in some cases very good, in relation to their abilities. They attain standards, as measured by average points scores, which are close to but slightly below local and national averages.
40. Standards in key skills are very good overall. Skills in communication are very good. Students' application of number skills is very good. Their use of ICT is very good.
41. Students work well together and collaborate with each other very successfully. They also make good progress in working independently to improve their own learning. Their problem-solving skills are very good.
42. A high proportion of students go on to study at university.
43. Attendance, behaviour and punctuality are all very good.

The quality of education and training

44. The quality of teaching in the sixth-form lessons observed was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
36%	64%	0%	0%	0%
11 lessons were inspected in the sixth form				

45. Teaching is of a high quality. Most teachers provide appropriate challenges for students which help them to fulfil their potential.

46. Teachers establish very good working relationships with students. This leads to a positive learning atmosphere.
47. Students' progress is monitored well. Teachers know their students very well and use their understanding of individual needs to ensure that they make progress commensurate with their ability.
48. The school collaborates with other schools to expand the wide range of A Level subjects available to students.
49. Statutory requirements in relation to the provision of religious education in the sixth form are not met.
50. Students are prepared well for entry to employment through strong links with Careers Wales West and voluntary work experience. Aspects of the PSE programme and visits to higher education institutions prepare students well to apply successfully for places at university.
51. Students receive very good pastoral and academic support from tutors. Students comment on how teachers are always prepared to help and offer guidance. Their individual learning needs are diagnosed effectively.
52. Procedures for induction into the sixth form are effective. Students' progress is monitored regularly and they receive good advice on careers, interviews and completing application forms.
53. All students in the sixth form, whatever their gender, ability or background, are provided with equal opportunities and access to the curriculum.

Leadership and management

54. The sixth form is well managed. Communication between senior managers, the head of sixth form and sixth form tutors is very good.
55. The sixth form has a strong sense of community and students are proud of their school. The ethos enables them to gain in confidence, maturity and independence.
56. Students' performance is monitored and evaluated well. Self-evaluation is effective and subsequent planning has resulted in measurable improvements in students' achievement and personal development.
57. Information is used effectively to support individual students through teaching and a very good tutorial system.
58. Teachers are well qualified and have a good range of expertise and experience in their subjects.
59. The school makes very good use of resources to enrich the learning experiences for students. ICT provision is very good. Students have access to study and recreational areas and to a section of the library which provides a conducive environment for independent study.

Progress since the last inspection

60. In most respects the school has made good progress since the last inspection. Each of the key issues from that inspection has been addressed well.

Recommendations

- R1 Maintain and improve the existing high standards of achievement and external examination results.
- R2 Develop and implement strategies to address the immature behaviour of a small minority of pupils in key stage 3.
- R3 Improve the quality and consistency of day-to-day marking of pupils' work.
- R4 Improve the quality and consistency of departmental and section development plans.
- R5 Continue to improve accommodation, as funds become available.*
- R6 Ensure that statutory requirements for the provision of Welsh in key stage 4 and religious education in the sixth form are met.*

*These recommendations are addressed in current development and strategic planning.

Standards

Key question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

Their success in achieving agreed learning goals

62. Recent results in public examinations are good. In 2003, results were very good and the school's performance in key stage 3 and key stage 4 placed it in the top quarter compared to similar schools in Wales. In 2004 the school's performance was well above the average achieved by similar schools in Wales. Results are also better than the average for all schools in Swansea.
63. The performance of boys is close to local and national averages. The performance of girls is significantly higher.
64. In key stage 3, in each of the last two years, the proportion of pupils who achieved level 5 or above in National Curriculum (NC) assessments in each of the core subjects, and in all three combined was above the averages for schools in Wales with a similar intake.
65. In key stage 4, in each of the last two years GCSE results have been good. In 2003, the school was in the top quarter of similar schools for the percentage of pupils achieving five GCSE passes at grades A*-C and A*-G as well as for the CSI and the average GCSE points score. In 2004 performance was above the average for similar schools in all of the key indicators except for the percentage achieving five GCSE passes at grades A*-G.
66. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills. The great majority of pupils listen carefully and understand the instructions and advice offered by teachers. A small minority of pupils in key stage 3 is less attentive and has difficulty maintaining satisfactory levels of concentration. Pupils speak well; they generally volunteer answers and use a good range of vocabulary confidently and accurately.
67. Pupils demonstrate good reading and writing skills. They read fluently and write well, often at length and for a range of different purposes.
68. Pupils apply their skills in the use of number in a range of subjects. They handle data with confidence and use graphs appropriately to present numerical information.
69. Pupils have good skills in the use and application of ICT. They use ICT effectively for a number of purposes including researching information and presenting work.

70. The standard of spoken Welsh in Welsh lessons is good, but there is little evidence of bilingualism in the everyday life of the school.

The sixth form

71. Overall, since the last inspection, good standards of achievement and attainment have been maintained in the sixth form, despite a little fluctuation in performance in some years.
72. Students undertaking A level courses achieve standards which are good, and in some cases very good, in relation to their abilities. The number of students who continue their education into the sixth form has increased since the last inspection and the school is now catering for a wider range of abilities. Students attain standards, as measured by average points scores which are close to but slightly below local and national averages.
73. Standards in key skills are very good overall. Skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing are very good. Students apply their number skills well and cope with the mathematical demands of everyday life. Their use of ICT is very good. Students are proficient in using software and hardware as appropriate for different purposes.

Their progress in learning

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

74. Pupils' progress in learning is good. Pupils of all abilities acquire new knowledge and skills and understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils of higher ability in the 'Extension Group' in both key stages make particularly good progress.

The sixth form

75. Students generally make good progress in learning. Regular interviews with tutors help them to develop a clear understanding of their present performance, their potential and what they need to work on, in order to improve. Their experiences in the sixth form prepare them well to move on to the next stage of education or employment. A high proportion of students go on to study at university.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

76. Most pupils develop good personal, social and learning skills. They show positive attitudes to learning, especially in key stage 4. A small minority of pupils in key stage 3 has less well developed personal and social skills and shows insufficient consideration for others. The great majority of pupils, however, respects the views and beliefs of others.

77. The behaviour of most pupils is good. Pupils generally relate very well to each other and are courteous to visitors. A small minority of pupils in key stage 3, however, behave in an immature and irresponsible manner in some lessons and around the school. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils excluded since the last inspection.
78. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is above the national benchmark of 90%. Attendance rates in each year group are above 90%. There are very good procedures for identifying individuals with poor attendance records and helping them to improve. The effective incentive system for encouraging good attendance in year 7 does not operate in other year groups.
79. The dispersed nature of the school site hampers prompt arrival at some lessons. Nevertheless, most pupils arrive promptly. A small minority of pupils however, shows little urgency in getting to lessons, particularly after breaks and lunch-time. As a consequence, the start of some lessons is delayed.

The sixth form

80. Students develop very good personal, social and learning skills. They are highly motivated and work hard, in consultation with tutors, to achieve the targets set. Students work very well together. They also develop the capacity to work independently in order to improve their own learning. In many subjects students demonstrate very good problem-solving skills.
81. Students show positive and responsible attitudes. Attendance, behaviour and punctuality are all very good.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

83. The quality of teaching in all lessons observed in key stages 3 and 4 was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
23.2%	62.3%	10.2%	4.3%	0%
69 lessons were inspected in key stages 3 and 4				

84. The quality of teaching is at least good with no important shortcomings in over 85% of lessons. This is a significantly high figure and surpasses the national target for 2004-2007 of grades 1 and 2 in 65% of lessons. The percentage of lessons judged to be grade 3 or better is almost 96% which is close to the national target of 98%.
85. The great majority of teachers engages pupils in stimulating and interesting tasks that engage and challenge them. They use appropriate teaching strategies that ensure the active participation of pupils. In the best lessons teachers use their knowledge of how pupils learn to ensure that pupils achieve their potential.
86. Teachers are well qualified, committed and enthusiastic. They have a thorough knowledge of the subjects that they teach and explain concepts and tasks clearly. Pupils' learning is enhanced when teachers share learning outcomes with them at the start of lessons and learning is consolidated at the end.
87. Most lessons are characterised by good working relationships that foster learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and establish a good work ethic in lessons.
88. In a small minority of lessons, teachers tend to be too tolerant of the poor attitudes to learning and inappropriate behaviour of a small number of pupils.
89. Teachers usually plan lessons well. Occasionally, however, planning and teaching do not take into account sufficiently the prior achievement and individual needs of pupils.

The sixth form

90. The quality of teaching in the sixth-form lessons observed was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
36%	64%	0%	0%	0%
11 lessons were inspected in the sixth form				

91. In the lessons observed in the sixth form, the quality of teaching was good with outstanding features in over a third of lessons. There were no important shortcomings in 100% of lessons. Although the sample was small this is a high level of performance.
92. Most teachers provide very good challenges for students that help them meet their potential. They encourage students to think independently and to challenge and justify viewpoints.
93. Teaching is well informed by teachers' very good subject knowledge and sound knowledge of the strengths and characteristics of individual students. Teachers know their students very well and use their understanding to ensure they make progress commensurate with their ability.
94. Teachers establish very good working relationships with students. This contributes to a positive atmosphere for learning, conducive to individual and collaborative

work. Teachers have very high expectations for students and expect them to be fully involved and engaged in lessons.

95. Students' progress is monitored well. In many lessons teachers ask students to reflect on their own progress and to set informal targets for future lessons.
96. Teachers usually structure their lessons well. They make learning objectives clear and use resources of high quality that stimulate learning.

The rigour of assessment and its use in planning for improvement

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

97. Assessment procedures meet statutory requirements and those of awarding bodies for recording and accrediting learners' achievements.
98. Parents and guardians receive annual reports of good quality which provide useful information about pupils' progress and achievement in subject-specific skills and in personal skills and qualities. However, some comments by teachers, in relation to how pupils can improve their performance, are very general and fail to identify specific areas for improvement, in relation to subject-specific skills.
99. The school has a good system for informing parents of pupils' progress or causes for concern. Parents are also informed if a pupil is worthy of commendation.
100. A particular strength of the annual reports is the way in which pupils are encouraged to comment on their progress. Teachers support pupils in this process, which often results in thoughtful and perceptive reflections on their development.
101. Teachers monitor and review progress regularly but do not always use assessment data on the outcomes of prior learning to inform departmental or lesson planning.
102. Day-to-day marking is variable in terms of quality, frequency and consistency. Some pupils do not have a clear understanding about how well they are doing in all subjects.

The sixth form

103. The quality of assessment and recording is good. Work is marked regularly. Comments by teachers indicate students' level of performance and provide advice on how they can improve their work.
104. Students have regular discussions with teachers about their progress. They are also encouraged to evaluate their work and set targets for improvement.
105. The school meets statutory requirements for reporting and fulfils the requirements of examination boards.

106. Parents receive a comprehensive annual report that indicates the level of progress and targets for improvement. Students contribute very effectively to these reports by reflecting on their progress during the academic year. In addition to the annual report, parents are informed of interim progress, cause for concern or commendation.

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

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

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

108. The curriculum generally meets the learning needs of pupils. At key stage 3, in addition to the National Curriculum, pupils take drama and, in year 9, Spanish as a second modern foreign language. At key stage 4, a new curriculum pattern gives year 10 pupils a greater freedom of choice. Also at key stage 4 there are opportunities to follow additional subjects, including GCSE dance, within and outside the curriculum framework.
109. Pupils of high ability are identified and receive appropriate work as part of the 'More Able and Talented' (MAT) project. This is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.
110. A suitable alternative curriculum is followed by a small number of pupils at risk of disengagement.
111. In the sixth form the school collaborates well with other schools to expand on the wide range of AS and A2 level subjects available.
112. Curricular planning enables pupils to develop their key skills. They receive good opportunities to apply communication and numeracy skills. Pupils are also provided with appropriate opportunities to use ICT. They receive few opportunities however, in subjects other than Welsh, to develop bilingual skills.
113. Learning experiences are enriched through the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school, particularly in sport, music and drama. This is an outstanding feature of the school. Success in sporting and cultural activities is celebrated in the media and contributes to the school's high standing in the community.
114. The school is effective in promoting pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
115. School assemblies are well planned and make an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Arrangements have been put in place to enable pupils to participate in a daily act of collective worship through a 'thought for the day' in registration periods. This gives pupils the opportunity to reflect on a range of

spiritual and moral topics. However, the quality of this provision across tutorial groups is inconsistent.

116. The school shows outstanding support for charitable causes. Students receive formal training in developing and applying these social skills. Pupils and students demonstrate concern and care for others.
117. The cultural development of pupils and students is actively promoted through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, visits to places of cultural interest and links with foreign countries. At present students from Japan and Korea are studying in the sixth form. These students enrich the sixth form and make a significant contribution to awareness of the concept of global citizenship.
118. The school has good links with parents and productive links with the community. Links with primary schools are very good and contribute to pupils' smooth transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3. There are effective curricular links in the core subjects, Welsh, music and sport. The school has strong links with initial teacher education and training institutions. Each year the school helps support and mentor a number of student teachers in their training.
119. The school does not meet statutory requirements to provide Welsh for all pupils at key stage 4 and religious education in the sixth form.

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

120. Work-related education is delivered successfully through the PSE programme and through strong links with Careers Wales West. Pupils and students are informed well of their opportunities at the end of key stages. Year 10 pupils speak highly of the arrangements for work experience which strengthen links with the business and industrial community.
121. 'Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig' is embedded well in the delivery of subjects in the curriculum and in other school activities, such as a 'Gymanfa Ganu', held in local chapels each year. These experiences contribute positively to pupils' knowledge and understanding of their Welsh heritage. There are, however, few bilingual signs around the school.
122. The school is successful in promoting equality of access to the curriculum and in providing opportunities for all to reach their potential. The use of learning support assistants, the alternative curriculum and involvement with extra-curricular activities are successful in tackling social disadvantage.
123. PSE makes a positive contribution in educating pupils about sustainable development. The school has achieved the bronze award as an Eco-school mainly through the efforts of a group of pupils in key stage 3 who organise paper recycling throughout the school. A poster campaign is raising awareness of global citizenship and the school is preparing for the Eco-school silver award.
124. Partnership with the business world and inputs of good quality from Careers Wales West keep teachers, parents and pupils up-to-date with the current needs of employers.

125. In many areas of the curriculum, pupils are provided with good opportunities to use problem-solving and decision-making skills effectively. These skills are further enhanced when pupils participate successfully in the Dynamo project. The many successful money-raising events for charity, organised by students are run along business lines.
126. The school is investing resources in staff development on further understanding of the nature of learning. Pupils and students are encouraged to acquire the skills needed for lifelong learning and to be independent learners. However, there are few vocational courses in the current 14-19 curricular provision.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners.

128. The school provides a good level of support for its pupils. Pupils see the school as caring and feel that members of staff can be approached if they have any problems. Relationships between teachers and pupils in class are generally good. The school works very closely and effectively with the education welfare officer (EWO) and with external support services.
129. Links with parents and carers are good. Parents' evenings and an open-door policy help develop relationships. Pupils are advised well at the end of year 9 concerning subject choices. Parents and carers are kept fully informed.
130. There are effective induction procedures into the sixth form. Students' progress is monitored regularly and they receive good advice on careers and applications for courses in higher education institutions.
131. Very good pastoral and academic links with partner primary schools ensure pupils' smooth transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3. Visits are made by members of staff and curricular links strengthen further these relationships.
132. The school provides good pastoral support. Heads of year, form tutors and management teams know pupils well. A notable feature of the pastoral support is the interview procedures conducted with year 11 pupils. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and discussed, they are advised on study skills, and guided on career options and sixth-form studies.
133. A comprehensive PSE programme includes good guidance about careers and health education. A variety of social issues and a wide range of other relevant topics are discussed across all year groups. Pupils speak highly of the programme. The full-time school nurse plays a significant role in promoting pupils' welfare.

134. Sixth-form students receive very good pastoral and academic support from tutors. Students comment on how teachers are always prepared to help and offer guidance. Individual learning needs are diagnosed and met effectively.
135. The school has good strategies for monitoring attendance. Registers are kept carefully and checked by the attendance officer. Parents and carers are notified immediately of absences. To counter frequent absences by specific pupils, a project worker, funded by the local authority, works with disaffected pupils and the school also offers a modified timetable for them. These two initiatives provide good support for pupils at risk of disengagement.
136. A behaviour, discipline and learning programme is in place and outlines procedures in dealing with pupils with behaviour problems. It is not, however, implemented consistently.
137. The school has a detailed child protection policy. A member of the senior management team is responsible for this and all members of staff are kept fully informed of procedures and responsibilities.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs.

138. The school supports pupils with SEN well. Good transition arrangements enable their needs to be identified at an early stage. Pupils are carefully assessed and closely monitored by the SEN co-ordinator (SENCO). She is organised and caring and supported effectively by teachers, senior managers and a designated governor.
139. There is a commitment in the school towards the integration of pupils with SEN. Pupils in year 7 are integrated into the mainstream classes and receive appropriate support in lessons. Pupils in years 8 and 9 are supported well in discrete classes. Pupils with difficulties in literacy receive additional support from specialists and respond well.
140. User-friendly individual education plans (IEP) are used well in lessons to enable support to be targeted effectively. Good relationships with outside agencies in the UA enhance the overall quality of support provided.
141. The school has good intervention strategies to deal with pupils whose behaviour impedes their own progress and that of others. In many cases these strategies are used effectively.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities.

142. The school supports all pupils and recognises fully the diversity of their social and educational background.
143. The school's equal opportunities policy is implemented effectively and both boys and girls have access to all areas of the curriculum and school activities in general. The school monitors the relative performance of boys and girls in examinations.

144. The school addresses reported incidents of bullying quickly. Effective procedures are in place. Trained pupil mediators offer invaluable support to the few pupils who suffer bullying.
145. The school is aware of its responsibilities for disabled learners and has drawn up an action plan. However, the nature of the accommodation creates many problems for facilitating access.
146. Through the curriculum in general, and PSE lessons in particular, aspects of culture, diversity and racism are addressed successfully.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

147. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
148. The school has clear aims and values, to promote a culture of learning, achievement and mutual respect. These aims are largely fulfilled, particularly at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.
149. The headteacher has a clear vision of the future direction of the school. He works closely with the deputy and assistant headteachers, and together they form an effective headship team, each with different and complementary strengths. They are reflective of current practice and always seeking to improve.
150. They work collaboratively with middle managers and staff, particularly through the regular cycle of meetings and staff working groups, to consult and share objectives. These are appropriately focused on standards, teaching and learning.
151. The headship team gives a strong lead in many varied facets of management but has not been entirely successful in ensuring that all members of staff implement the school's policy on behaviour and discipline consistently. However, they have identified this as an area for improvement and drawn up plans for whole-school training in the near future.
152. Managers use effective policies to promote equality of opportunity and to cater well for pupils of differing abilities, backgrounds and needs.
153. Managers also take account of other WAG priorities. Transition arrangements have developed well and the school is broadening its curriculum from 14-19 in a consortium with other schools. There are also close links with the local college and plans to develop further the vocational provision. Specific projects emphasise sustainable development and the school is an 'Eco-School'. However, bilingualism is not strongly promoted.

154. From its regular self-evaluation, the school has identified appropriate priorities for improvement and has planned its staff development programme accordingly. The bi-annual interviews between senior and middle managers review performance and set challenging targets. This system works well.
155. Most numerical targets, set for national tests and GCSE examinations, have been met recently and, in some indicators, surpassed by a good margin. Targets are carefully set, based on varied and detailed data on pupils' attainment and progress.
156. The management of staff development is a key factor in the high standards of professionalism and the consistently good quality of middle management. All teaching staff and support staff are offered an annual interview, training is linked to individual, departmental and whole-school priorities and performance reviews monitor its effectiveness.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

157. Governors fulfil their role effectively. They are fully involved in strategic planning and management and undertake this work through a structure of 13 committees, which feed information into meetings of the governing body (GB). They have established appropriate links between spending on resources and development planning. This has resulted in significant improvements, such as in the facilities for ICT.
158. Governors also review performance effectively. They respond to various data presented to them and search out first-hand evidence through their links with each faculty. Whilst the degree of involvement varies between governors, the system works well in most faculties.
159. Governors are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and they have carried out a self-evaluation of their own performance, resulting in a detailed, analytical report of high quality. Their knowledge of the school and awareness of their leadership role in it, enable them to act effectively as 'critical friends.'
160. The GB fulfils most of its legal responsibilities but statutory requirements are not met currently with regard to Welsh at key stage 4 and religious education in the sixth form. Plans are already drawn up to include Welsh from September 2005.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

161. This grade and all other grades for each of the key questions match those in the school's self-evaluation report.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

162. The process of self-evaluation is well-established. The school's self-evaluation report is structured well and addresses each of the seven key questions of the

common inspection framework. It grades each key question and lists areas of strength, aspects that need improvement and what action is being taken. While the document is an honest and accurate evaluation of the school, in a few key questions it is insufficiently comprehensive.

163. The headship team analyses rigorously a wide range of assessment and other data and informs staff, governors and parents about it. In particular, examination results are analysed thoroughly and used well to set targets for pupils and students.
164. The school seeks and acts upon the views of pupils, students, parents and other interested parties. In particular, the school council is an effective body that involves pupils and students well in discussion and decision-making.
165. The headship team and heads of faculties and sections work together openly and effectively. They are well informed about all aspects of the work of the school and their areas of responsibility. They monitor most aspects of the performance of the school well.
166. Headship team members have very little time available for lesson observation and direct monitoring of teachers' responses to feedback. There is evidence that a few teachers' response to feedback has not led to measurable improvements in individual pupils' learning and progress.
167. Heads of faculty, sections and year groups reflect well upon their work and that of form tutors and teachers. They are well informed about pupils' and students' progress and make considered changes to systems to support them. The sixth form's performance is monitored and evaluated particularly well.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

168. The school sets clear priorities and targets in its development plan. Departmental and section development plans link well with this although this is not always made clear in the documentation. In most respects, priorities are supported well through adequate allocation of resources.
169. The headship team and middle managers plan well for improvement. They are effective in highlighting the most important things that need to be done to move the school forward.
170. The effectiveness of planning for improvement, in terms of measurable outcomes, is good. For example, actions taken have resulted in improvements in boys' achievement, the attainment of the most able and talented pupils, and in ICT resources. Pupils' and students' quality of education is improving in most aspects of school life.
171. Managers at all levels generally focus well on pupils' progress and achievement as the most important measures of effectiveness. Planning done by departments is good overall. However, written plans are highly variable in content and rigour and often do not do justice to the good work that departments do.

172. Managers and tutors in the sixth form plan well for improvement and use information effectively to support individual students, through teaching and a very good tutorial system. Overall, planning has led to measurable progress in most students' achievement and personal development.
173. In most respects, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The school has changed in character but it continues to be successful and high standards of achievement have been maintained. Each of the key issues from the previous inspection has been addressed effectively and significant progress has been made.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

175. The level of staffing is adequate but not generous. In the main there are sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum at all key stages. This year, however, there have been some difficulties in staffing. Welsh in year 11 and religious education in the sixth form are not currently timetabled.
176. Teachers are well qualified and have very good knowledge and expertise in the subjects they teach across the curriculum. They are supported well by highly competent and committed administrative, technical, and support staff so that the school functions effectively on a daily basis.
177. Pupils and students have access to a good range of appropriate resources to support their learning. There has been a significant improvement in ICT provision since the last inspection and many teachers make good use of this to enrich learning experiences.
178. The library is well resourced with books and some computers. It is managed effectively by the librarian and provides a very pleasant and conducive environment that is used well by pupils and students for independent study.
179. Overall, accommodation is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. The outside fabric of many buildings is drab and the demountable classrooms are in a poor state of repair. The interiors of most classrooms, however, provide suitable settings for teaching and learning. These are often enriched by good quality displays of pupils' and students' work. Off-site facilities are used effectively.
180. The school buildings do not provide easy access for those with disabilities. Although the school is making plans to address this, lack of funding is inhibiting progress.

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

181. Teachers are deployed effectively to make best use of their expertise. There are very good procedures for staff development for teachers and associate staff. A notable feature is the use of in-house training sessions which have been used successfully to promote the ICT skills of many members of staff. Well-planned and highly appropriate induction programmes meet the needs of newly qualified teachers.
182. The school manages its resources efficiently. Effective procedures are used to obtain best value from suppliers and contractors. Some very good use is made of technical staff to cover minor maintenance of accommodation and to provide and maintain ICT resources throughout the school. The school has also been very successful in acquiring a significant quantity of computer hardware from external sources. All these initiatives have enabled significant savings to be made.
183. The school reviews its resources regularly and effectively. Spending decisions are prioritised to meet the needs of pupils and students. Resources are allocated fairly and systematically across the school to ensure that money is well spent.
184. Overall the school provides good value for money. This is reflected in the high achievements of pupils and students and in the good quality of teaching and learning experiences provided for them.

School's response to the inspection

The headteacher, staff and governors have appreciated the open and constructive nature of discussions which have taken place at all points in the inspection process. The high standards in all key areas have been maintained and, in some cases, improved upon since the last inspection.

The acknowledgement of the consistently good test and examination results at all key stages is something from which the school can derive considerable satisfaction, whilst accepting that continued effort may lead to even better results.

An area of particular satisfaction is the quality of teaching, which exceeds in quality the rigorous targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government. It is noted that to further build on this there are issues of planning and formative marking which need to be addressed and which will be built into our development planning.

The continued development of the broad curriculum on offer will continue to enhance the opportunities open to our pupils and students. The need to offer compulsory Welsh in year 11 and religious education in the sixth form is already part of our planning.

The school is pleased that the care and support which we give our pupils and students is seen as good and that pupils see the school as 'caring'. The school places great value on the relationship between teacher and pupil or student. The issue of the small minority of key stage 3 pupils whose conduct is not satisfactory is an area which will be addressed.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities, which is described in the report as outstanding, is something of which the school can be proud.

The very positive comments on all aspects of the school sixth form are something in which the school can take a real satisfaction. The school takes a real pride in the sixth form students; what they contribute and what they achieve. The school was pleased that sixth form students independently expressed their own pride in being a part of the school to the inspection team.

The very positive nature of the whole report is a tribute to the efforts of teachers, associate staff, governors, pupils and students. The school would like to thank the Registered Inspector and his team for the professional and collaborative approach, which has enabled a thorough evaluation of what we are doing and on which we can build for the future.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Gowerton
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11 - 18
Address of school	Cecil Road, Gowerton, Swansea
Post-code	SA4 3DL
Telephone number	01792 873461

Headteacher	Mr Paul Green
Date of appointment	June 1990
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr G G Crowther
Reporting inspector	Mr P Carter
Dates of inspection	16 – 20 May 2005

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	232	232	231	232	232	96	71	-	1326

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	65	20	75.2

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.6 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	22.21
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	79.4

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	94	92	91	92	86	93	94	91
Term 2	91	90	89	89	92	96	97	90
Term 3	95	93	90	91	88	95	96	92

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	16%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	61

Appendix C

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2004															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 227															
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	3	5	21	33	20	16	1	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	9	22	34	22	9	0	0
	Test	School	0	1	3	-	-	-	9	18	30	21	18	-	0
		National	0	4	2	2	0	0	8	22	31	23	10	0	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	15	30	32	15	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	1	9	20	25	30	14	1	0
	Test	School	0	4	1	-	-	-	4	18	16	46	12	-	0
		National	0	6	1	1	0	0	7	19	21	33	15	0	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	27	36	25	5	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	1	8	21	33	25	11	0	0
	Test	School	0	3	0	-	-	-	2	16	31	35	13	-	0
		National	0	4	1	1	0	0	6	19	31	25	14	0	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	57.3%	In the school	59.9%
In Wales	57%	In Wales	57%

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2004	247
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	40

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2004:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	89	84	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	51	50	51
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	84	82	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	41	37	38
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	99	96	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	72	72	75
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G C or the vocational qualification equivalent	32	37	47
attained no graded GCSE C or the vocational qualification equivalent	9	10	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	6	4	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	-	-	-

For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs			
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2004			179
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2004			164
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2004			14
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	64	71	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	93	96	95
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	17	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	-	-	-
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	-	-	-

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

A team of 9 inspectors, plus the school nominee, spent a total of 34.5 days at the school and met as a team before the inspection.

These inspectors visited:

- 80 lessons or parts of lessons;
- a cross-section of registration and tutorial periods; and
- acts of collective worship.

Before the inspection, members of the team had meetings with:

- the senior management (headship) team;
- the governing body;
- parents and carers; and
- school staff.

During the inspection, members of the team had meetings with:

- members of the senior management (headship) team;
- middle managers;
- support staff;
- administrative staff;
- representatives from external support agencies; and
- pupils and students representing a cross-section of the age and ability range.

The team also considered:

- a selection of pupils' and students' work representing a cross-section of the age and ability range;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school both before and during the inspection; and
- 95 responses to a parents' questionnaire.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Mr P Carter Rgl	Key Question 1 and 6 th Form
Mrs J Edwards	Key Question 2
Mr J Hanney	Key Question 3
Mr C Rowlands	Key Question 4
Miss G Owen	Key Question 5
Dr A Cooke	Key Question 6
Mr D Williams	Key Question 7
Mr E Tipper (Lay inspector)	Contributing to key Questions 1, 4 and 5
Mr G Griffiths (SEN inspector)	Contributing to Key Question 4
Mr P Croft (Nominee)	

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

Celtic Inspection Services Unit
UWIC
Cyncoed Road
Cyncoed
Cardiff CF23 6XD

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

**Gowerton School
Cecil Road,
Gowerton,
Swansea SA4 3DL**

A SUMMARY REPORT FOR PARENTS

Date of Inspection: 16 – 20 May 2005

by

**Mr P Carter
W262/16926**

Date: 13th July 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T 39/04

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Gowerton 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 Gowerton School took place between 16th – 20th May, 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr Peter 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. 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

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 short inspection.

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

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

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

A Level	-	Advanced Level
AS	-	Advanced Subsidiary
CSI	-	Core Subject Indicator
EWO	-	Education Welfare Officer
GB	-	Governing Body
GCSE	-	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	-	General National Vocational Qualification
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
IEP	-	Individual Education Plan
INSET	-	In-Service Education and Training
NVQ	-	National Vocational Qualification
MAT	-	Most Able and Talented
NC	-	National Curriculum
PSE	-	Personal and Social Education
SDP	-	School Development Plan
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	-	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SER	-	Self-Evaluation Report
UA	-	Unitary Authority
WAG	-	Welsh Assembly Government

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Gowerton School is an English medium, 11-18, co-educational comprehensive school maintained by Swansea Unitary Authority (UA). It has 1326 pupils and students on roll, slightly fewer than at the time of the last inspection in June 2000. There are 167 students in the sixth form compared to 161 at the last inspection, when some sixth form students from a nearby Welsh medium school also attended Gowerton School.
2. Most pupils come from Gowerton and from the surrounding urban and rural communities. Some pupils come from parts of north Swansea, beyond the school's catchment area. The intake encompasses working and middle class families with a strong farming tradition associated with the north Gower area. The catchment area is neither particularly prosperous nor particularly disadvantaged although there are some disadvantaged groups. Sixteen per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure very close to the national average. Virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. Less than one per cent of pupils are from other ethnic groups.
3. Learners represent the full range of ability. Standardised tests on entry reflect an average distribution of scores. There are 18 pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 336 identified as needing some support, significantly more than at the last inspection.

The school's priorities and targets

4. The school has a comprehensive set of aims to provide for the academic, personal and social development of pupils and students within an orderly and caring environment. The school development plan (SDP) sets out targets for continuous improvement in several areas. These include:
 - standards of achievement and attainment;
 - literacy and numeracy
 - learning;
 - teaching;
 - assessment procedures;
 - behaviour;
 - community links;
 - professional development; and
 - accommodation.

Summary

5. Gowerton School continues to provide a high quality of education. Its pupils and students achieve high standards and examination results which compare favourably to those achieved in similar schools in Wales. Overall, teaching was graded one or two in 87% of lessons observed. This is a high figure and represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Senior and middle managers work effectively together to maintain and improve standards, learning and teaching. The inspection team agrees with all of the grades awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report (SER).

Table of grades awarded

6. The inspection team judged the school's work as follows:

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?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

Standards

7. The school's results in tests and public examinations are good. Pupils achieve well in relation to their ability.
8. In key stage 3 tests, results have been consistently good in recent years and particularly good in 2003. Compared with similar schools in Wales, the school's results are above average for the core subject indicator (CSI) which is the percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in English or Welsh, mathematics and science combined. Results are also better than the average for all schools in Swansea.
9. In key stage 4, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results are also good. In recent years, compared with similar schools in Wales, the school has been above the average for the percentage of pupils achieving five GCSE passes at grades A*-C as well as for the CSI. These results are better than the average for all schools in Swansea. The performance of boys is close to local and national averages. The performance of girls is significantly higher.
10. Standards in key skills are good. The great majority of pupils speak well and listen attentively. Most pupils read fluently and write well, often at length and for a range

of different purposes. They apply numeracy skills well in several subjects and make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), for example to research and present work.

11. There is little use of incidental Welsh outside Welsh lessons.
12. Pupils' progress in learning is good. Pupils of all abilities acquire new knowledge and skills and understand what they need to do to improve. Most pupils develop good personal, social and learning skills and show positive attitudes to learning. They respect the views and beliefs of others.
13. The behaviour of most pupils is good. However, a small minority of pupils in key stage 3 behave in an immature and irresponsible way in classes and around the school.
14. Attendance is above the benchmark of 90%

The quality of education and training

15. The quality of teaching in all lessons observed in key stages 3 and 4 was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
23.2%	62.3%	10.2%	4.3%	0%
69 lessons were inspected in key stages 3 and 4				

16. There were outstanding features in almost one out of every four lessons and no important shortcomings in over eight out of every ten lessons. This is well above the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) for 2004-2007 for the quality of teaching to be grade 2 or better in 65% of lessons. It is close to the target of grade 3 or better in 98% of lessons.
17. Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and committed. Most lessons are characterised by good working relationships which foster learning.
18. The great majority of teachers engage pupils in stimulating and innovative approaches to learning. In these cases, pupils are motivated in lessons.
19. Teachers monitor and review progress regularly but do not always use data on pupils' prior attainment in their planning. The frequency and consistency of day-to-day marking vary within and across subjects.
20. The curriculum generally meets the learning needs of pupils. A suitable alternative curriculum is followed by a small number of pupils in key stage 4 at risk of disengagement.
21. Statutory requirements with respect to Welsh in Year 11 are not met.
22. Learning experiences are enriched through the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school, particularly in sport, music and drama. This is an outstanding feature of the school.

23. The school is effective in promoting pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
24. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education or employment through well-organised careers education and work experience. The school has strong links with the local community and with institutions of higher education.
25. Very good pastoral links with feeder primary schools help pupils' smooth transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3. Curricular links strengthen further the continuity of pupils' experiences.
26. Pupils see the school as caring and staff as approachable, if they have any problems. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good, in class and around the school.
27. There is a comprehensive health education programme which is delivered as part of personal and social education (PSE). The content is detailed and covers a wide range of topics relevant to all year groups. Pupils speak highly of the PSE programme.
28. The learning needs of individual pupils are identified clearly. A good range of additional support is provided and co-ordinated well to enable these needs to be addressed effectively. Appropriate strategies to deal with the immature behaviour of a minority of pupils are implemented inconsistently.
29. The school's policies for equality of opportunity are effective. Both boys and girls, and pupils with different abilities and backgrounds, have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. Effective procedures are used well to address any reported incidents of bullying. Pupils with disabilities are cared for well. Appropriate steps are taken so that pupils are not disadvantaged.

Leadership and management

30. Senior managers have a clear vision of the future direction of the school. They work collaboratively and effectively with middle managers to maintain and improve standards, teaching and learning. The management of staff development is a key factor in the high standards of professionalism and the consistently good quality of middle management.
31. Governors fulfil their role well, being fully involved in strategic and financial management and regularly reviewing performance.
32. The school has clear aims and values to promote a culture of learning, achievement and mutual respect. In key stage 4 these aims are widely fulfilled as pupils respond well. In key stage 3 they are partially fulfilled but the behaviour of some pupils detracts from this ethos. Their behaviour is not always managed effectively.
33. The school's performance is monitored and evaluated well. Self-evaluation arrangements are systematic and draw upon comprehensive sets of data and the views of pupils, staff and other interested parties.

34. Information is generally used effectively to inform whole-school planning and development. Planning at departmental levels is good overall. Departmental development plans are highly variable in content and rigour and the quality of some does not reflect the good work done by departments.
35. Overall, actions taken have resulted in measurable improvements in, for example, the achievement of boys, the attainment of the most able and talented and in the provision of ICT resources.
36. Pupils have access to a good range of appropriate resources to support their learning. Most teachers and pupils use computers well to enrich learning experiences.
37. Overall, accommodation is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. The outside fabric of many buildings is drab but, inside, most classrooms provide suitable settings for teaching and learning.
38. The school manages its resources effectively and ensures good value for money. Spending decisions are prioritised to best meet the needs of pupils.

The sixth form

Standards

39. Students undertaking Advanced (A) level courses achieve standards which are good, and in some cases very good, in relation to their abilities. They attain standards, as measured by average points scores, which are close to but slightly below local and national averages.
40. Standards in key skills are very good overall. Skills in communication are very good. Students' application of number skills is very good. Their use of ICT is very good.
41. Students work well together and collaborate with each other very successfully. They also make good progress in working independently to improve their own learning. Their problem-solving skills are very good.
42. A high proportion of students go on to study at university.
43. Attendance, behaviour and punctuality are all very good.

The quality of education and training

44. The quality of teaching in the sixth-form lessons observed was judged as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
36%	64%	0%	0%	0%
11 lessons were inspected in the sixth form				

45. Teaching is of a high quality. Most teachers provide appropriate challenges for students which help them to fulfil their potential.

46. Teachers establish very good working relationships with students. This leads to a positive learning atmosphere.
47. Students' progress is monitored well. Teachers know their students very well and use their understanding of individual needs to ensure that they make progress commensurate with their ability.
48. The school collaborates with other schools to expand the wide range of A Level subjects available to students.
49. Statutory requirements in relation to the provision of religious education in the sixth form are not met.
50. Students are prepared well for entry to employment through strong links with Careers Wales West and voluntary work experience. Aspects of the PSE programme and visits to higher education institutions prepare students well to apply successfully for places at university.
51. Students receive very good pastoral and academic support from tutors. Students comment on how teachers are always prepared to help and offer guidance. Their individual learning needs are diagnosed effectively.
52. Procedures for induction into the sixth form are effective. Students' progress is monitored regularly and they receive good advice on careers, interviews and completing application forms.
53. All students in the sixth form, whatever their gender, ability or background, are provided with equal opportunities and access to the curriculum.

Leadership and management

54. The sixth form is well managed. Communication between senior managers, the head of sixth form and sixth form tutors is very good.
55. The sixth form has a strong sense of community and students are proud of their school. The ethos enables them to gain in confidence, maturity and independence.
56. Students' performance is monitored and evaluated well. Self-evaluation is effective and subsequent planning has resulted in measurable improvements in students' achievement and personal development.
57. Information is used effectively to support individual students through teaching and a very good tutorial system.
58. Teachers are well qualified and have a good range of expertise and experience in their subjects.
59. The school makes very good use of resources to enrich the learning experiences for students. ICT provision is very good. Students have access to study and recreational areas and to a section of the library which provides a conducive environment for independent study.

Progress since the last inspection

60. In most respects the school has made good progress since the last inspection. Each of the key issues from that inspection has been addressed well.

Recommendations

- R1 Maintain and improve the existing high standards of achievement and external examination results.
- R2 Develop and implement strategies to address the immature behaviour of a small minority of pupils in key stage 3.
- R3 Improve the quality and consistency of day-to-day marking of pupils' work.
- R4 Improve the quality and consistency of departmental and section development plans.
- R5 Continue to improve accommodation, as funds become available.*
- R6 Ensure that statutory requirements for the provision of Welsh in key stage 4 and religious education in the sixth form are met.*

*These recommendations are addressed in current development and strategic planning.

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.