

**REPORT**

**on the**

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF  
THE SCHOOL INSPECTION ACT 1996**

**HOLYWELL HIGH SCHOOL  
THE STRAND  
HOLYWELL  
FLINTSHIRE  
CH8 7AW**

School Number: 664/4012

Date of Inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2003

**By**

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Registered Inspector W131

Under Estyn contract number: T/33/02

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## **CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES**

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through school was introduced in 1989. This system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to age 18 is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "Reception" (R) is applied to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of 5 during the academic year "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on to Y13 the year group who attain the age of 18 during the academic year:

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Years	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

Key stage 1 of the national curriculum consists of Y1 and Y2; KS2 of Y3 to Y6; KS3 of Y7 to Y9; KS4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

## **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

The five-point grading scale used to represent the main judgements in this report is as follows:

1. Very good: many good features, some of them outstanding.
2. Good: good features and no major shortcomings.
3. Satisfactory: good features outweigh shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

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## 1. CONTEXT

### The school and its priorities

Holywell High School is an 11-18 comprehensive school situated in a large site in the town of Holywell. There are 910 pupils on roll compared to 1057 at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. There are 129 students in the sixth form. Pupils are drawn from a wide geographical area including rural villages and the town of Holywell. The catchment area includes sections where there is relative affluence and little unemployment and those which are economically disadvantaged. 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, compared to the UA average of 12%. Most pupils come from English speaking homes; about one percent of pupils speak Welsh as a first language. One percent come from minority ethnic groups.

There is a wide range of ability represented in the school. 33% of pupils in KS3 and KS4 are identified on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs and four percent of the pupil population has a statement of special educational need (SEN).

The school's aims and objectives, as identified in the school development plan 2001-2003, are to raise standards of achievement, improve attendance, literacy and numeracy, improve teaching and learning and identify and share good practice.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

### The main findings of the report

- Holywell High school is an improving school. Since the last inspection in 1997, there has been a considerable improvement in standards of achievement and quality of teaching. The school has a shared vision of what it wants to achieve and effective strategies are being implemented to effect improvements. Throughout the school, there is a clear focus on improving standards of achievement and on including pupils of all abilities and very diverse backgrounds so that they fulfil their potential.
- The standards achieved by pupils are at least satisfactory in 98% of classes and good or better in 67%. In the previous inspection in 1997, standards of achievement were good in 30% of classes and at least satisfactory in 88%. Very good standards are achieved in a small percentage (4%) of classes and these occur in all key stages. Achievement is better in the sixth form (89% good or better) than in KS4 (69% good or better) or KS3 (54% good or better).

### Table of standards achieved in subjects

<i>Subject</i>	<i>KS3</i>	<i>KS4</i>	<i>Sixth form</i>
English	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Good	Satisfactory	Good

Design & technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Information technology	Satisfactory	-	-
History	Good	Good	Good
Geography	Good	Good	Good
Modern foreign languages	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Art	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
Music	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Physical education	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Religious education	Good	Good	Good
PSE	Good	Good	Good
Business and communication systems	-	Very good	-
Home economics- food	-	Very good	Very good
Home economics- textiles	-	Good	Good
Politics and government	-	-	Good
Leisure and tourism	-	Good	-
Health and social care, intermediate	-	-	Good
Engineering, intermediate	-	-	Good
Business, intermediate	-	-	Good
Engineering AVCE	-	-	Good
Business AVCE	-	-	Good

### **The main findings in KS3 and KS4**

- In KS3 and KS4, more able pupils make good progress in almost all subjects. Pupils of average ability and the less able make good progress in most subjects in KS4; in KS3, they achieve good standards in about half the subjects of the curriculum. Pupils with SEN achieve good standards in many subjects, particularly in KS4.
- Standards of achievement in the key skills of communication are good in both KS3 and KS4. Pupils are confident, expressing ideas and opinions clearly. Most pupils are attentive and listen well to the teacher, to each other and to audio-visual resources. Reading skills are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. There is effective support for those with reading difficulties and the majority of pupils are able to read fluently and with understanding. However, in KS3 and KS4, across the curriculum, research skills are insufficiently developed. Writing skills are good. The content of pupils' written work is generally relevant and detailed and pupils are aware of the need to adapt their style to suit the audience and purpose of their writing.
- Standards of achievement in numeracy are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. Most pupils can complete simple calculations confidently and accurately. They make good use of a range of graphs to record and analyse data but do so insufficiently in a minority of subjects.
- Standards of achievement in ICT are satisfactory in both KS3 and KS4. Pupils are beginning to use a wide range of ICT applications across the curriculum. Work undertaken shows growing expertise but is insufficient in many subject areas.

## **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- The ethos of the school reflects a clear sense of shared values. The school is a caring, happy community where all are valued. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils reflect on their own and others' experiences, lives and beliefs in many subjects. Assemblies are of a Christian nature, respect and responsibility are emphasised and Christian values as well as the values of other religions are discussed. Pupils respond well, are respectful and are very well behaved.
- Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and show respect for others and their environment. Through their good support for a number of national and local charities, pupils show a sense of care and responsibility for others.
- Relationships are good throughout the school. Across the curriculum and in extra curricular activities, pupils collaborate well to share views and information and to complete practical activities. Pupils make good use of opportunities to represent their peers in the school council and are confident that their views are taken seriously. A good range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' personal, social and cultural development.
- The standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and this has a positive effect on standards of achievement and quality of life in the school. Instances of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with very promptly and effectively. The rewards and incentives system is effective, particularly in KS3.
- The average rate of attendance for the three terms prior to inspection was just below 90%. This is unsatisfactory. A number of effective initiatives have been introduced to improve attendance rates. Nevertheless, the progress of a significant minority of pupils is hindered by periods of prolonged or intermittent absence.

## **Quality of education**

- The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 98% of classes and good or better in 67%. These figures exceed the target set by the National Assembly for the year 2002 for the quality of teaching in 95% of classes to be at least satisfactory and 50% good or better. In 5% of classes there is teaching of very good quality and this occurs in all key stages. The quality of teaching is better in the sixth form (89% good or better) than in KS4 (69% good or better) or KS3 (54% good or better). In the previous inspection in 1997, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 80% of classes.
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is consistently good. Planning is detailed and thorough. Classroom organisation is good in almost all subjects in KS4 and in the majority of subjects in KS3. Almost all lessons build effectively on work covered earlier and have clear objectives but these are not always shared with pupils. The quality of paired and group work across the curriculum is good. Explanations and instructions are clear, but in a few lessons in KS4, and a significant minority of lessons in KS3, teacher exposition goes on too long and pace slows. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are checked by questioning in almost all lessons but challenging, open

questions are not used sufficiently to ensure pupils think for themselves and analyse their ideas.

- Activities are well matched to individual pupil's needs and previous achievement in a majority of subjects. A good range of resources is used effectively. In a minority of subjects in KS4, however, and almost half the subjects in KS3, activities do not challenge and extend pupils' understanding sufficiently. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in seeking information for themselves.
- Assessment is accurate and consistent. The use made of assessments to improve standards of achievement is inconsistent in its effectiveness. In KS3, subject teachers have an accurate understanding of level criteria, but they do not always share this detailed knowledge sufficiently with pupils. In KS4, the link between performance and examination criteria and grades is more consistent and pupils have a better idea of what constitutes progress.
- Day-to-day marking is up-to-date and teachers keep good records of pupils' work. However, although comments on pupils' work sometimes identify strengths and weaknesses they are more frequently too general. This does not provide enough information for pupils to know where they are in terms of the requirements of the National Curriculum nor how to improve their performance. In a few subjects, pupils are encouraged to undertake self assessment and this also forms part of their work relating to the national record of achievement (NRoA) but across the curriculum, pupils do not assess their own progress sufficiently.
- Analysis of assessment data resulting from external examinations is good at whole school level and in individual departments. Arrangements for recording pupils' achievement and progress are good. Subject teachers and pastoral teams regularly monitor pupils' progress, identify underachievement and advise pupils accordingly. The system is well established and understood, good support is provided and some pupils from Y8 onwards subsequently receive individual mentoring.
- The school issues an annual report to parents. The format of the reports is good but the quality and usefulness of teachers' comments is inconsistent. The majority are very general in nature and refer more to pastoral issues than to the requirements of the subject and the way forward.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education in KS3 and KS4. Curriculum organisation makes a very positive contribution to meeting the school's commitment to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills for adult life and with spiritual, moral and cultural understanding. Curriculum provision is effective and pupils of all abilities have equality of access and opportunity at levels which fully meet their very diverse pastoral and academic needs.
- The quality of support and guidance is outstanding and is a major strength of the school. The pastoral system is very effective and clearly demonstrates concern for pupils' educational and personal welfare. Teachers work consistently to enhance pupils' self-esteem, to promote personal development and to address the problems of underachievement. Academic and personal progress is carefully monitored and pupils are very well supported to achieve their full potential.

- The PSE programme is very effective. The quality of careers education and guidance is good.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good and the school's response to the requirements of the Code of Practice is very good.
- Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions are good and make a valuable contribution to the life of the school, and pupils' personal, social and academic development. Liaison with industry, commerce and the world of business are good.

### **Management**

- The quality of self evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The senior management team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has identified very effective priorities to achieve improvements. Monitoring and evaluating procedures are successful and provide a sound basis for further improvement and a prompt response to new educational initiatives. The quality of monitoring and evaluating at departmental level is good in most subjects.
- The school has a shared vision of what it wants to achieve and effective strategies are being implemented to effect improvements. The school benefits from the very effective leadership and clear educational direction of the head teacher. He is very ably supported by the senior management team which includes four assistant head teachers. Almost all departments are well organised: the quality of leadership of heads of department is good in almost all departments.
- Staff are very committed to the success of the school and are one of its strengths. The INSET provision is very well organised and is very good.
- The quantity and quality of resources across the school are satisfactory. In about half the subjects across the curriculum there are shortages in text books and other resources. The use made of available resources is good in almost all departments. Pupils have good access to ICT facilities in the lunch time and make good use of them but use ICT insufficiently in lessons. Pupils make good use the library during the lunch time but only a few departments use the facilities well.

### **The main findings in the sixth form**

- The standards achieved by students are at least satisfactory in all classes and good or better in 89%. Very good standards are achieved in 9% of classes. Sixth form students of all abilities make good progress in almost all subjects.
- Communication and numeracy skills are good; ICT skills are satisfactory.
- Students are developing into mature, confident and caring young adults and have a very positive effect on the ethos of the whole school. They respond very well to opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. Their attitude to work is very good in almost all subjects and they are confident to take responsibility for their own learning and

independent study. Unauthorised absence is very low. Attendance in the three terms prior to inspection was, however, unsatisfactory at 88.60%.

- The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in all classes and good or better in 93%. The quality of teaching is very good in 9% of classes. Teachers' and students' expectations are high, relationships are very good and students become confident in decision making and problem solving independently. In almost all classes, there is good discussion and interchange of ideas and information so that students analyse information and data well.
- Assessment, recording and reporting are good. The school's tracking and targeting system is particularly effective in the sixth form.
- The school has implemented Curriculum 2000 effectively and provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of students of diverse academic needs, aptitudes and interests. The curriculum meets statutory requirements with the exception of the statutory provision of religious education in Y12 and Y13. Completion rates are good but only a few students are working to gain accreditation in key skills.
- The wide range of activities included in the curriculum and the extra curriculum ensures students develop social skills, self-confidence and independence and are well prepared for the next step in their education and life after school.
- The support and guidance provided in the sixth form is very good. Form tutors know their students well, relationships are very good and all students are valued as individuals. The monitoring of academic progress by the head of the sixth form, form tutors and subject teachers is regular and thoroughly. Subject teachers give freely of their time to support individuals in their subject areas.
- The quality of careers education and guidance is good. Preparation for transition to higher education or further education is very good.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good. There is a clear vision of the sixth form provision the school wishes to achieve and this is shared throughout the school. Communication with the school development team, senior management team and the governing body is good so that there is evaluation across the provision and identification of areas requiring development. The head of the sixth form is a member of the senior management team and provides very effective leadership. She is very well supported by a team of tutors.
- The quantity and quality of resources are good in almost all subjects and available resources are used well. The accommodation for students is good. They make effective use of the library and available ICT facilities for research and presentation. In lessons, however, only a few subjects use ICT sufficiently.
- The previous report identified eight key issues for action. There has been good progress made in addressing all the key issues with the exception of key issue three which remains a key issue for action

### 3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### 3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

The standards achieved by pupils are at least satisfactory in 98% of classes and good or better in 67%. In the previous inspection in 1997, standards of achievement were good in 30% of classes and at least satisfactory in 88%. Very good standards are achieved in a small percentage (4%) of classes and these occur in all key stages. Achievement is better in the sixth form (89% good or better) than in KS4 (69% good or better) or KS3 (54% good or better).

**Table of standards achieved in subjects**

<i>Subject</i>	<i>KS3</i>	<i>KS4</i>
English	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Good
Welsh second language	Good	Satisfactory
Design & technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Satisfactory	-
History	Good	Good
Geography	Good	Good
Modern foreign languages	Good	Satisfactory
Art	Satisfactory	Good
Music	Satisfactory	Good
Physical education	Good	Satisfactory
Religious education	Good	Good
PSE	Good	Good
Business and communications systems	-	Very good
Home economics- food	-	Very good
Home economics- textiles	-	Good
Politics and government	-	-
Leisure and tourism	-	Good

In the end of KS3 National Curriculum tests in 2002, the percentages of pupils gaining level 5 or above in English, mathematics, science and the core subject indicator were below the national average. In 2002, the percentages of the Y11 cohort gaining grades A\*-G in mathematics, science and English were below national averages. In English, the percentage of the cohort gaining grades A\*-C was almost equal to the national average, in science it was below the average for Wales. Results at A\*-C for mathematics were significantly below the national average. In Welsh, the percentage of the cohort gaining grades A\*-G was above the average for Wales, while results at A\*-C were below. On the Wales examination data base, in most subjects, pupils demonstrated the progress expected from performance in KS3.

GCSE results have shown an improvement in grades A\*-C since the last inspection. The percentage of pupils gaining at least 5 A\*-C grades has increased from 36 % (in 1997) to 42% (in 2003) and the CSI (the percentage of pupils attaining grades A\*-C in mathematics, English and science) has increased from 25% to 28% over that period. Results at A\*-G have not improved. The percentage of pupils who did not gain any qualification was greater than the national average.

In KS3 and KS4, more able pupils make good progress in almost all subjects. Pupils of average ability and the less able make good progress in most subjects in KS4; in KS3, they achieve good standards in about half the subjects of the curriculum. Pupils with SEN achieve good standards in many subjects, particularly in KS4.

## **3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum**

### **Communication**

Standards of achievement in the key skills of communication are good.

In speaking, many pupils are confident and respond well to teachers' questions, expressing ideas and opinions clearly and often providing detailed and extended explanations. Standards improve as pupils move through the school. Good collaboration in pairs and groups is a feature of many lessons across the curriculum and, pupils sometimes make effective presentations to the class. In such subjects as design and technology, religious education and science, pupils use subject terminology accurately and there is good understanding and use of key words in many subjects.

In listening, most pupils are attentive and listen well to the teacher, to each other and to audio-visual resources. They respond quickly to instructions and their subsequent work shows that they have listened with concentration and understanding to the information they have been given. Interaction between teachers and pupils is good across the curriculum.

Reading skills are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. There is effective support for those with reading difficulties and the majority of pupils are able to read fluently and with understanding. They can read aloud audibly and with appropriate expression, and make good use of text books. In a number of subjects, pupils retrieve information from a range of sources, both printed and on ICT, and undertake research as part of their homework. However, across the curriculum in the two key stages, research skills are insufficiently developed. Pupils in Y7 and Y8 make good use of the library for personal reading for pleasure.

Writing skills are good, though there are examples of incomplete work and insecurity in the technical aspects of spelling and grammar in the work of a significant minority of pupils across the curriculum. The content of pupils' work is generally relevant and detailed and pupils are aware of the need to adapt their style to suit the audience and purpose of their writing. Most understand the need to edit and revise their work and the standard of project and coursework is usually good in relation to ability.

### **Numeracy**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. In KS3, standards of achievement are good in science, geography, design and technology and history and are satisfactory in other subjects. In KS4, standards of achievement are good in science, design and technology, geography, history, home economics, business and communication systems and leisure and tourism and satisfactory in other subjects.

Most pupils have a thorough understanding of number and can complete simple calculations confidently and accurately. They can measure and weigh accurately using a range of units in

many subjects. They collect, record and analyse data successfully in a variety of contexts. Pupils make good use of a range of graphs to record and analyse data but do so insufficiently in a minority of subjects.

## **ICT**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and KS4. They are satisfactory in all subjects in KS3. In KS4, standards are good in music, business and communication, leisure and tourism and home economics: they are satisfactory in other subjects. Pupils are beginning to use a wide range of ICT applications in a variety of subject areas. They demonstrate effective use of word processing and there are useful graphical and desk-top publishing tasks undertaken in some subject areas. Pupils also make use of spreadsheets, the internet and CD Roms for research, modelling and information retrieval. However, the potential of ICT to aid and extend learning in an accessible and co-ordinated manner is not realised. Work undertaken shows growing expertise but is insufficient in many subject areas.

## **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

The ethos of the school reflects a clear sense of shared values. The school is a caring, happy community where all are valued. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Spiritual awareness is developed through assemblies, religious education and many other subjects. Pupils reflect on their own and others' experiences, lives and beliefs in many subjects. Assemblies are of a Christian nature, respect and responsibility are emphasised and Christian values as well as the values of other religions are explained. They celebrate pupils' achievement and provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on current issues and moral dilemmas. Pupils respond well, are respectful and are very well behaved. The Matrix Club is successful in allowing pupils to reflect on their own experiences and the Christian experience.

Moral issues are raised and discussed regularly in religious education, PSE and other subjects. The school succeeds in fostering pupils' self-discipline, respect for others and responsibility. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and show respect for others and their environment. In class, pupils express their opinions honestly. They show respect for visitors to the school. The great majority of pupils respond sensibly when asked to reach a moral judgement on current issues relating to the environment, health and the problems of world poverty. In PSE, religious education and a number of other subjects, pupils consider racism, bullying and human rights and they appreciate the need to respect others whatever their background and race. The school is successful in promoting racial equality. Through their good support for a number of national and local charities, pupils show a sense of care and responsibility for others.

Relationships are good throughout the school. A small minority of pupils have difficulty in coping securely with the demands of living in the school community but the school support and values encourage a positive response. Across the curriculum and in extra curricular activities, pupils collaborate well to share views and information and to complete practical activities. Pupils are friendly and helpful and work well together across the age range. They

make good use of opportunities to represent their peers in the school council and are confident that their views are taken seriously. They take pride in representing the school at local and national events in a variety of activities. The breakfast club creates a very good opportunity to foster good social behaviour and provides a good start to the day. Pupils respond well and appreciate the provision.

A good range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' personal, social and cultural development. The numerous vocal and instrumental musical groups and a regular musical production make an important contribution to the cultural life of the school. There are talent contests and a variety of clubs including homework, coaching and debating clubs. Cultural awareness is developed through visits to art galleries, libraries and other places of interest. An understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales is developed well in almost half the subjects of the curriculum. Pupils benefit from participation in a successful St David's Day concert and local eisteddfods, residential courses and membership of the Urdd. There are bilingual signs around the school. Pupils learn of the culture of Europe through information exchanges and educational visits. They are developing an understanding of the responsibilities of living and working in a multi-cultural community through activities in a number of subjects.

## **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

The standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and this has a positive effect on standards of achievement and quality of life in the school. The school is a caring community, relationships are good and pupils of all ages mix well. Policies and expectations of pupils are clear and the consequences of pupils' misbehaviour are understood by all. Pupils understand what constitutes good behaviour and usually respond positively. The whole school pastoral support system is very well organised and procedures for monitoring behaviour and supporting those with disaffection are implemented effectively. Instances of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with very promptly and effectively.

Pupils' attitudes towards learning in class are good and most pupils are actively involved in their work, sustain concentration and interest and apply themselves well. In a small number of classes, a minority of pupils show a lack of interest and commitment. The rewards and incentives system is effective, particularly in KS3. It recognises achievement, effort, behaviour and attendance. The system is applied consistently, is well organised and coordinated and evaluated. Behaviour at the beginning and end of the school day and during breaks and lunchtimes is orderly.

Policies and procedures for dealing with bullying are well understood and well implemented. They have been monitored and evaluated and pupils have been consulted on their implementation. The PSE programme and a number of other subjects allow pupils to reflect on this issue. Parents and pupils are confident that incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively.

The number of permanent exclusions is very low; 79 pupils were suspended temporarily in the three terms prior to inspection. The school goes to great lengths to provide additional support for pupils considered to be at risk of disaffection and a range of initiatives is well organised. Very good use is made of external specialist agencies in supporting young people when necessary.

### **4.3 Attendance**

The average rate of attendance for the three terms prior to inspection was just below 90%. This is unsatisfactory. Improving attendance is a priority in the school development plan and there is a whole school target of to 90%. Attendance rates in KS3 and KS4 have improved gradually to 91.43% in the spring term of 2003. The average rate of attendance for the whole school during that term was 90.14%.

A number of effective initiatives have been introduced to improve attendance rates. Policies, strategies and internal school procedures are clear, well understood and overseen effectively by an assistant head teacher. He is ably supported by very efficient administrative staff. There is very good communication at all levels. Absence is closely monitored by form tutors and heads of year and there is prompt response by means of first day call for identified pupils. Full attendance and improved attendance are rewarded and there are compact arrangements for identified pupils in KS4. There are year and form targets and good attendance is identified and celebrated. Attendance registers are maintained in subject lessons and teachers are fully aware of patterns of absence. Parents are expected to inform the school on the first day of absence and they are contacted when pupils are not in school. The ESW service gives most effective support and communicates regularly with heads of year. Nevertheless, the progress of a significant minority of pupils is hindered by periods of prolonged or intermittent absence.

Registration procedures are fully computerised and implemented by administrative staff who identify attendance patterns and produce data for weekly monitoring. Form tutors are conscientious in following attendance guidelines and record data correctly and promptly. School registers are maintained in accordance with statutory requirements. Unauthorised absence is very low and holidays in term time are strongly discouraged and these rates are also low.

Punctuality is satisfactory. A few pupils arrive late at the commencement of the school day and a small minority are slow arriving at lessons. Otherwise, the school day operates efficiently and punctually. The school makes breakfast and refreshment arrangements for those pupils who arrive early.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in 98% of classes and good or better in 67%. These figures exceed the target set by the National Assembly for the year 2002 for the quality of teaching in 95% of classes to be at least satisfactory and 50% good or better. In 5% of classes there is teaching of very good quality and this occurs in all key stages. The quality of teaching is better in the sixth form (89% good or better) than in KS4 (69% good or better) or KS3 (54% good or better). In the previous inspection in 1997, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 80% of classes.

In KS3, the quality of teaching is good in Welsh, history, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education, religious education and PSE. It is satisfactory in other subjects. In KS4, the quality of teaching is very good in home economics (food) and business

and communications systems. It is good in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art, religious education, PSE, business and communication systems, home economics (textiles) and leisure and tourism; in other subjects it is satisfactory.

Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is consistently good. Planning is detailed and thorough and in almost all subjects there is good planning to cover the attainment targets of the National Curriculum and examination specifications. Good planning for progression through KS3 and KS4 is a feature of many schemes of work and opportunities to assess pupils' work are usually identified. Curriculum links with primary schools are developing well and a few subjects have good examples of Y7 activities which build on work covered in KS2.

Classroom organisation is good in almost all subjects in KS4 and in the majority of subjects in KS3. Almost all lessons build effectively on work covered earlier and have clear objectives but these are not always shared with pupils. There is often a good sequence of activities and sometimes an effective final recapitulation of key points. Practical activities are well organised and practical skills developed effectively. Relationships are good and behaviour is usually managed effectively.

In many lessons, teachers use a good range of teaching techniques. In the majority of subjects, pupils have sufficient opportunities to work together to discuss their ideas, share information and practical tasks. The quality of paired and group work across the curriculum is good. Explanations and instructions are clear, but in a few lessons in KS4, and a significant minority of lessons in KS3, teacher exposition goes on too long and pace slows. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are checked by questioning in almost all lessons but challenging, open questions are not used sufficiently to ensure pupils think for themselves and analyse their ideas. Opportunities to develop key skills are identified in almost all programmes of study but only a few subjects implement strategies for developing and recording ICT skills sufficiently.

Activities are well matched to individual pupil's needs and previous achievement in a majority of subjects. A good range of resources is often well planned and used effectively to generate interest and provide a variety of experiences. In a minority of subjects in KS4, however, and almost half the subjects in KS3, activities do not challenge and extend pupils' understanding sufficiently. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in seeking information for themselves.

## **5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting**

The school's policy statement for assessment, recording and reporting briefly outlines the required procedures and forms the basis for individual departments' own policies which reflect its aims and objectives. In most subjects, regular opportunities for assessment are identified in schemes of work, usually at the end of units of work or at half-termly intervals. Departments use a full range of assessment techniques and there is a common marking code that forms part of the school's guidance on literacy. This identifies errors in such aspects as spelling and expression but the system of using marks or grades is not consistent either across the school or within some departments.

In KS3, the use of National Curriculum levels and their associated criteria is inconsistent across the curriculum. Subject teachers have an accurate understanding of level criteria, but they do not always share this detailed knowledge sufficiently with pupils. Day-to-day

marking is up-to-date and teachers keep good records of pupils' work. Internal moderation procedures are good and some subjects keep useful portfolios of pupils' work to exemplify standards. However, although comments on pupils' work sometimes identify strengths and weaknesses they are more frequently too general, albeit positive and encouraging. This does not provide enough information for pupils to know where they are in terms of the requirements of the National Curriculum nor how to improve their performance. In KS4, the link between performance and examination criteria and grades is more consistent and pupils have a better idea of what constitutes progress. In a few subjects, pupils are encouraged to undertake self-assessment and this also forms part of their work relating to the NRoA but across the curriculum pupils do not assess their own progress sufficiently.

The school's arrangements for recording pupils' achievement and progress are good. All pupils have targets for improvement in all subjects. In KS3, these are based on previous performance in the core subjects in KS2, on the results of CATs and other assessments. They are amended if necessary by individual departments and shared with pupils and parents. In KS4, achievement during KS3 is also used as an indicator when identifying target GCSE or entry level grades. In both key stages, subject teachers and pastoral teams regularly monitor pupils' progress in working towards these targets, identify underachievement and advise pupils accordingly. The system is well established and understood, good support is provided and some pupils from Y8 onwards subsequently receive individual mentoring. A new computerised system has recently been introduced for tracking and target setting and this effectively presents teachers with a straightforward visual record of pupils' progress. The system, though new, has already proved to be useful.

The NRoA process begins in Y7 and continues through KS3 and KS4. The process provides an important focus for self assessment, celebrating and promoting academic achievement and personal development and emphasising the positive progress made by each pupil. In line with national policy, documents are produced for all pupils at the end of KS4. An award ceremony is held at the end of Y11 and is very well supported by parents.

Arrangements for reporting test results at the end of KS3 follow statutory requirements. Pupils with SEN have detailed Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in line with the Code of Practice. Statements of SEN are reviewed twice each year with appropriate parental involvement.

The school issues an annual report to parents. The new format of the reports is good but the quality and usefulness of teachers' comments is inconsistent both across and within departments. Some are detailed and subject-specific and refer closely to attainment targets. However, the majority are very general in nature and refer more to pastoral issues than to the requirements of the subject and the way forward.

Analysis of assessment data resulting from external examinations is good at whole school level and in individual departments. This informs future groupings and courses and helps the school to monitor its equal opportunities policy, including the relative performance of boys and girls.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education in KS3 and KS4. Curriculum organisation makes a very positive contribution to meeting the school's commitment to equip pupils with the knowledge

and skills for adult life and with spiritual, moral and cultural understanding. Curriculum provision is effective and pupils of all abilities have equality of access and opportunity at levels which fully meet their very diverse pastoral and academic needs. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the National Curriculum and to suitable range of accredited courses; they enjoy good quality support to ensure their integration into the full life of the school. Thirty-five pupils with SEN have statements of need. Sixteen of these include disapplications from a subject of the National Curriculum and they follow suitable alternative activities. The school's curriculum meets the recommended 25 hour teaching week.

In KS3, pupils follow all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and PSE. In Y7, pupils are taught in mixed ability groups for all subjects except for mathematics, where they are set according to ability. Setting or banding starts in Y8 for science, Welsh, French, geography and history. English is set according to ability from Y9. In Y9, a significant minority of pupils are extracted from Welsh and French for one lesson a week in order to receive additional support in literacy and numeracy. While this is successful in improving their key skills, it has an adverse effect upon continuity in the mainstream curriculum. The school has formed effective curriculum links with its feeder primary schools and continuity in pupils' learning between KS2 and KS3 is developing well.

The quality of the curriculum in KS4 is very good; it provides a very wide variety of opportunities and experiences and meets pupils' diverse academic, personal and social needs very well. The organisation of the common core curriculum ensures that pupils follow English, Welsh, mathematics, double award science, physical education, religious education, careers education and PSE. Pupils choose subjects from four option columns. In Y10, vocational GCSE leisure and tourism and business and communications systems are introduced as new subjects and a small group of pupils studies single award science. Lower ability pupils have appropriate access to entry level courses in English, mathematics, science and life skills. There is a good take-up of subjects across the curriculum and good support and advice results in pupils following a well balanced curriculum. At the end of KS4 the great majority of pupils go on to further study in school or college. The school works successfully with the Youth Access Service of the local authority and there are currently 13 pupils who follow a well planned alternative curriculum which fully meets their needs.

Work experience is well managed and undertaken by all Y10 pupils. Pupils undergo a wide range of work-related experiences, including talks and visits related to curriculum activities. The school meets the work-related education targets recommended in the ACCAC framework. Arrangements for PSE are very good and very effective. There are timetabled lessons once every fortnight across the school. The programme is very well planned with appropriate content and continuity, including careers education and guidance and all aspects of health and social education. It fully meets the PSE framework requirements; pupils value the provision.

Planning for the development of communication and numeracy is good across the curriculum. Planning for the development of ICT skills is included in many schemes of work, but in practice it is not fully developed in a number of curriculum areas. Planning for the development of Cwricwlwm Cymreig and multiculturalism is good. In the majority of subjects, schemes of work are detailed and informative. They cover National Curriculum requirements and examination specifications, provide good guidance for teaching and learning and for ensuring that there is continuity and progression in learning within and between key stages. All subjects include homework that provides good opportunities for pupils to extend and consolidate their work. All pupils have homework diaries which are

usually well used and are monitored effectively. The school has a homework timetable in place and the planners are an effective means of communication between school and many parents.

The programme of extra-curricular activities organised by the school is good. Pupils enrich and extend their learning through a wide range of extra-curricular events which include musical, sporting and cultural activities. The school's debating club has gained distinction in public speaking contests and has won prestigious awards. A good range of visits, including residential visits, are well linked to the curriculum. There are extensive and valuable links with the community and pupils have opportunities to work with a variety of local charities and other institutions. The school's talent contest is a particularly popular event with pupils and their parents. Pupils respond well to opportunities to attend the school's breakfast club, homework clubs and community homework club, where a wide range of facilities and support are available to help them raise their standards of achievement. These activities do a great deal to broaden experience and increase pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.

#### **5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

The quality of support and guidance is outstanding and is a major strength of the school. The pastoral system is very effective and clearly demonstrates concern for pupils' educational and personal welfare. Teachers work consistently to enhance pupils' self-esteem, to promote personal development and to address the problems of underachievement. Academic and personal progress is carefully monitored and pupils are very well supported to achieve their full potential.

The pastoral system consists of an assistant head teacher who oversees the provision, and five heads of year, each of whom has an assistant and teams of form tutors. Communication between members of the pastoral teams is very good. There is good informal day to day communication between form tutors and heads of year and formal meetings at least every month. Record keeping is very good.

Pastoral links with primary schools are very successful and pupils settle quickly. Pupils in need of support are identified early. Those in need of extra help in numeracy and literacy are withdrawn from lessons to receive further tuition. Staff give of their own time generously to support pupils who need additional subject teaching both during lunch breaks and after school. The school has effective arrangements for mentoring pupils identified through the monitoring system from Y8 onwards. Mentoring of pupils in KS4 is effective in improving GCSE grades and self-esteem, and pupils appreciate this help. The merit system, which rewards both academic and wider achievement, is effective, particularly in KS3. There is direct communication with parents to celebrate good achievement and identify underachievement.

On entry to the school in Y7, pupils are placed in mixed ability tutor groups and, if possible, will remain with the same pastoral team throughout KS3 and KS4. Relationships between form tutors and their pupils are good and form tutors know their pupils well. Form tutors meet their forms each morning and afternoon for registration. They check attendance and uniforms and monitor homework diaries and the updating of NRoA and progress files. Form tutor periods are used effectively.

A house system offers a good incentive for pupils across the year groups to collaborate and to compete in sporting and other events. The school council is effective in enabling pupils from

all year groups to discuss a wide range of issues and helps to improve the quality of school life. Elected representatives from each form gain experience and confidence in expressing viewpoints and formulating reports.

The PSE programme is very effective. An identified coordinator oversees the programme and pastoral teams are successfully involved in its review. The programme is detailed and comprehensive and fully meets the requirements of the ACCAC framework. Form tutors deliver the timetabled lessons with additional input from a wide range of external speakers. Aspects are also delivered through subjects in the curriculum and on days when the timetable is suspended. Standards of achievement in designated lessons are good in KS3 and KS4.

The quality of careers education and guidance is good. The well planned programme develops pupils' self awareness, career planning skills, understanding of career opportunities and the world of work. Pupils receive relevant information and objective advice. The up to date careers library is used well by pupils especially those in Y9. Activities are well integrated into the PSE and work experience programmes and begin in Y8. Pupils value the programme and most pupils have a good understanding of job opportunities and their requirements. There is a very good relationship with careers advisors who are based at the school for part of the week, attend parents' meetings and are fully involved in planning and delivering the programme. From Y8 onwards there are useful interviews with a careers advisor. Pupils do not undertake mock interviews to develop their interview skills.

Procedures for child protection meet statutory requirements. There is a close liaison with external agencies including a social worker, the EWO, the educational psychology service and other relevant outside agencies. A school nurse monitors pupils' health and contributes to the PSE programme. A team of teaching and support staff have up-to-date qualifications in first aid and there are good links with the nearby clinic. Pupils looked after by a local authority have appropriate care plans. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are good though a few areas for concern were identified to the head teacher during the week of the inspection.

## **5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)**

The provision for pupils with SEN is good and the school's response to the requirements of the Code of Practice is very good. Pupils with SEN are well integrated into mainstream classes and extra curricular activities and have access to appropriate accredited courses including vocational, GCSE and entry levels.

Subject teachers are responsible for providing appropriate work for pupils with SEN within their subject areas. The SEN coordinator distributes very good information and IEPs to subject teachers. In almost all subjects, the information is used well and work is well adapted to meet pupils' identified needs. In Y9, pupils are withdrawn from one lesson of Welsh and one of modern foreign languages a week for additional help with basic skills. While pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy this practice has an adverse effect on continuity in the mainstream curriculum.

A small team of learning support assistants offer very effective support to individual pupils and small groups in the resource centre and in mainstream classes. They have developed good expertise and work closely with the SEN coordinator and class teachers to provide differentiated materials. Learning support assistants keep a good record of support offered,

this is shared and discussed with the SEN coordinator and forms an effective basis for future planning. There is, however, insufficient support in some mainstream classes.

The resource centre for the pupils who have statements for moderate learning difficulty is very well organised. It provides a good teaching and resource base and supports the successful integration of the pupils into mainstream classes. Pupils are disapplied from a subject of the National Curriculum to ensure extra support in their literacy and numeracy skills in the resource centre. Activities are well matched to their educational needs. Individual educational programmes are based mainly on programmes devised by teachers and supported by relevant commercial schemes. Drama is used effectively to enhance pupils' communication and social skills.

In KS4, thirty pupils follow the life skills course that leads to WJEC entry level qualification. It is successful in offering pupils an insight into the world of work and developing social skills. Pupils enjoy the practical aspects of the course and this is reflected in their good written work. Further qualification is gained by some students by incorporating aspects of an OCR course in leisure and tourism. The course is well organised and provides very good, relevant experiences for the pupils.

There are 271 pupils on the register of SEN. This number is substantially higher than the national average. The arrangements for identifying pupils to be placed on the SEN register are good, and the register is reviewed regularly and effectively. Thirty-five pupils have statements of SEN and 16 have been disapplied correctly from a subject of the National Curriculum. Statements are reviewed effectively, with most parents making good contributions. The LEA and external agencies are consulted as needed. All pupils on the register of SEN have a very good IEP. They include targets which relate very well to the pupils' needs. IEPs are shared and discussed with individual pupils and their parents, which is very good practice.

The quality of leadership displayed by the SEN coordinator is very good. She offers very good direction to the school and guidance to the staff. She is very well supported by the resource teacher and the learning support assistants. Very good support is provided by peripatetic LEA teachers for pupils with specific learning difficulties and pupils with behavioural difficulties. There are very good links with primary schools, with subject teachers and outside agencies. The senior management team and the designated governor are very supportive of the provision and ensure a wide range of opportunities for pupils with SEN.

## **5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions**

Partnerships with parents and community, schools and other institutions are good and make a valuable contribution to the life of the school, and pupils' personal, social and academic development.

The range and quality of information provided to parents is very good. Parents receive a wealth of information including an informative weekly newsletter and a good range of information booklets. The prospectus issued to parents of all new pupils is user-friendly and of a high standard in both content and presentation. However, this document and the governors' annual report to parents contain a few minor omissions.

Open evenings are held throughout the year to provide parents with opportunities to discuss pupils' progress. They are well supported, attendance is monitored and alternative arrangements are made to contact parents who are unable to attend. A home/school agreement is well established. The school operates an 'open-door' system whereby parents are able to make contact or an appointment with the school to discuss any problems. The home-school association is very active and provides valuable support in fund raising activities. Public events organised at the school are well supported by parents: the talent contest and NRoA award ceremony are very well attended.

There is a strong community ethos in the school. Community links are well established and are used to enhance pupils' experiences in such subjects as physical education, history, geography, Welsh and the PSE programme. A local community house extends pupils' learning experiences and the community careers office is sited at the school.

Pastoral links with feeder partner primary schools are very effective. Arrangements for the pupils to transfer to the secondary school are extensive, very well organised and begin at the end of Y5. The transition programme in Y6 includes an induction programme and an open evening for parents. Pupil and parental concerns are dispelled quickly and pupils settle well into Y7. There are effective links with other schools through sporting and other activities and with local colleges of further education. Well-established partnerships with initial teacher training institutions benefit pupils. Trainee teachers are well supported at the school.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

Pupils' awareness of the world of work and economic and industrial understanding are greatly enhanced as a result of well established partnerships with industry and business. Liaison with industry, commerce and the world of business is good.

The school meets the recommendations of the National Assembly work-related education targets. Policy documents are implemented through a comprehensive programme of experiences which include the work experience, PSE, and careers education and guidance programmes, vocational courses and other subjects.

The programme begins in Y8 and there are planned activities in every year group. Pupils in Y10 undertake two weeks' work experience in the summer term. They are thoroughly prepared for their placements, are well monitored by a team of teachers and evaluations form part of their NRoA. Work experience and other visits are used effectively to enhance pupils' learning in a number of subjects including leisure and tourism, life skills, design and technology, Welsh, English, business and communication systems, PSE and in the alternative curriculum. Pupils also gain in self confidence and communication skills from the experiences. There is a good programme of placements in industry for staff to extend their knowledge and experiences.

Valuable links are firmly established with ELWa, Careers Wales and a number of local companies including Kimberly Clarke and Kingspan. The school is becoming increasingly involved in income generation from external sources and has been successful in obtaining funding for cross-curricular work, revision and breakfast clubs.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

The quality of self evaluation and planning for improvement is good. The self evaluation report provides a useful summary of recent key decisions and improvements. The senior management team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has identified very effective priorities to achieve improvements.

The planning and review of the school development plan provides an effective focus for planning, monitoring and evaluating key priorities across the school. The current plan for 2002-2003, is a very clear document which identifies five key priority areas which all have important implications for improving standards of achievement. Departments and the provision for pupils with SEN are included in procedures and produce plans which address the identified areas for development. Targets, success criteria, evaluation procedures, resources and requirements for INSET are identified, as well as monitoring responsibilities. Success criteria in many development plans are not sufficiently quantified. Development plans are thoroughly reviewed with link members of the senior management team. The process is successful in informing the senior management team, the school development team and governing body of those targets which have not been achieved and helps to identify new priorities and targets. Procedures are effective and provide a sound basis for further improvement and a prompt response to new educational initiatives. The quality of monitoring and evaluating at departmental level is good in most subjects.

Monitoring exercises to review a range of curricular developments, whole school programmes and the implementation of identified policies are regularly undertaken. First hand evidence includes scrutiny of pupils' books, homework diaries and schemes of work and pupils' questionnaires. Reviews have a very clear focus and outcomes are often quantified. The head teacher has completed a programme of lesson observation, and there is a regular monitoring of teaching and learning as part of the literacy and numeracy improvement programmes. There is not, however, sufficient monitoring of teaching and learning at departmental level to share current good practice more effectively. The monitoring and evaluating of the provision for pupils with SEN and the PSE programme are effective. Initiatives to promote and monitor the provision of communication and numeracy across the curriculum are realistic and well planned; they are having a positive effect upon pupils' standards of achievement. The provision for ICT is not coordinated or monitored sufficiently: there is insufficient formal liaison with subject coordinators to ensure that planned experiences are fully implemented and pupils' achievements and progress are recorded.

Whole school targets for improvement are set for raising achievement in KS3 and KS4 and are included in the school development plan. The process uses information from primary schools, CATs scores and assessment information from departments. Examination results are analysed thoroughly, national and local data are used to compare performance as well as performance against departmental targets. There is a growing understanding of target setting at departmental level. It is good in about half the subjects across the curriculum.

## **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The school has a shared vision of what it wants to achieve and effective strategies are being implemented to effect improvements. Throughout the school, there is a clear focus on improving standards of achievement and on including pupils of all abilities and very diverse backgrounds so that they fulfil their potential. The school benefits from the very effective leadership and clear educational direction of the head teacher. He is very ably supported by the senior management team which includes four assistant head teachers. Assistant head teachers have clearly identified whole school responsibilities as well as links to identified departments. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the quality of leadership of the senior management team is consistently very good. Almost all departments are well organised: the quality of leadership of heads of department is good in almost all departments.

KS3 and KS4 are divided into year groups with a head of year, an assistant head of year and a team of form tutors. Year teams work effectively together, support pupils and monitor their academic and wider progress. Communication between staff with pastoral and academic responsibilities is very good and year teams are well managed.

Communication is good throughout the school. There are regular briefings and meetings at all levels and a good understanding of whole school issues and policies. There is very effective communication between departments, the school development team, the senior management team and the governing body. The routine organisation of the school is very good. Support staff and teaching staff collaborate well. The governing body contains a wide range of expertise and is very well informed. Governors provide effective support for their link departments. They show a very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses and of key strategies to bring about improvements. They are very actively involved in financial decisions, curriculum and other planning procedures, monitoring exercises and in staff appointments.

The financial management of the school is very good and the available budget is managed very effectively by the head teacher, the senior administrative officer and the finance committee of the governing body. Financial decisions are very well focused on the educational priorities identified in the school development plan. The school is successful in supplementing the school's basic allocation by attracting project funding and grants for specific activities. The financial contributions received from the home school association have been used effectively. The finance committee of the governing body meets every half term and receives reports of high quality from the head teacher. There has been appropriate response to the few issues noted in the most recent financial audit report.

Departments identify financial priorities in the departmental development plans and justify bids for funds in addition to their formula funded allowances. Heads of department are responsible for monitoring departmental spending and this is done effectively. Human and available financial resources are managed effectively and efficiently.

## **6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

### **Staffing**

Staff are very committed to the success of the school and are one of its strengths. There are 59 full time and 1 part time teacher at the school, to give a full time equivalent of 59.6. The

pupil/teacher ratio is 15.3:1 which is low for the size of school. Teachers are well qualified and there is a good balance between experienced teachers and those new to the profession. Almost all are graduates and have teaching qualifications. There are 12 support staff: they include office and clerical staff, laboratory and workshop technicians and a librarian. Support staff provide very effective support across a wide range of duties and responsibilities and make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. Staff are well deployed to cover their curricular and pastoral roles. Non contact time is generally in line with responsibilities. Difficulties with staff absence have been of some concern to the school this year. Staff have worked very effectively together to overcome problems arising from these unfortunate circumstances.

The INSET provision is very well organised by an assistant head teacher. All staff, both teaching and support staff, are included in the provision. INSET is very well focused on priorities included in the school development plan. INSET needs are identified by individual staff and arise from departmental discussions and monitoring exercises. The effect of INSET is good in most departments. There are good examples of new ideas and information being shared effectively and resulting in improvements in teaching and provision at whole school, departmental and individual levels. Initiatives to develop literacy skills through regular whole school INSET and advice to individual departments and teachers has had a significant effect in improving standards of achievement across the curriculum.

The induction programme for newly qualified teachers and those new to the school is good and they are well supported by departments and the INSET coordinator. Staff new to the school and supply teachers are provided with clear information when they arrive at the school and are well supported. The school has good links with initial teacher training establishments and trainee teachers are successfully mentored at the school.

### **Accommodation**

The school's accommodation is sufficient to meet the curriculum and pastoral needs of pupils but many areas require redecoration and refurbishment. Catering arrangements are well organised and well adapted to meet the needs of pupils. Almost all subject rooms are arranged to allow good communication within the department. The school demonstrates its respect and trust in the pupils by allowing access to a number of classrooms early in the morning and during the lunch hour. The accommodation available for physical education is sufficient but the all weather pitch is in need of attention.

Caretakers are efficient and procedures for dealing with site problems are effective. Committed cleaning staff ensure a high level of cleanliness throughout the school. Corridors and classrooms are free from graffiti and litter but there is a considerable problem of litter below the all weather pitch and around the tennis courts. Space in corridors is used very effectively in some areas with displays to celebrate the wide range of school activities and pupils' achievements, raise awareness of multi cultural issues and create a subject identity. In other areas corridors are bare. Most classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment with records of pupils' work, technical vocabulary and posters.

### **Resources**

The expenditure on resources per pupil is below the national average. The quantity and quality of resources across the curriculum are satisfactory. In about half the subjects across the curriculum there are shortages in text books and other resources. The use made of available

resources is good in almost all subjects. Facilities for ICT are satisfactory. Access to computers is good in a few subjects but unsatisfactory in history, geography and art. The ratio of pupils to computers is 4.7:1 which is better than the national average but about a third of computers are more than five years old. There are problems with booking procedures so that to the use of available teaching areas is not maximised. Pupils have good access to ICT facilities in the lunch time and make good use of them.

The library provides a satisfactory whole school resource centre. It is supervised all day. It is very well resourced in terms of computers but the stock of books for reading and research is below national recommendations. The recently appointed librarian is present in the morning and the lunch time. The librarian is efficient and helpful and is working hard to develop effective links with departments. Pupils make good use of the library during the lunch time but only a few departments use the facilities well.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **English**

Standards of achievement in English are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. In the National Curriculum tests in KS3 in 2002, 52% of pupils gained level 5 or above which is below the national average. In the GCSE examination in English, 54% of the cohort gained a grade A\*-C and 80% gained a grade A\*-G. Results at A\*-C were almost equal to the national average. A good proportion of pupils also took the GCSE English Literature examination. 78% of the pupils entered gained a grade A\*-C and 99% gained a grade A\*-G.

#### **Good features**

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

- Many pupils are confident and articulate.
- Pupils demonstrate good listening skills.
- They are able to collaborate effectively in pair and small group work.
- They can respond to questions in detail, extend their ideas and challenge the opinions of others.
- Most pupils can read aloud clearly and audibly, often with appropriate expression.
- Those with reading difficulties receive good support and make good progress.
- The majority of pupils understand the characters, plot and themes of the literature they read and this increases as they move into KS4, where many pupils produce sensitive, extended and detailed responses to a range of challenging texts.
- Most pupils can retrieve information from a range of texts, can skim and scan for particular information and undertake independent research from both books and IT resources.
- Pupils make increasing progress in making inferences and deductions, to evaluate a text and to appreciate the techniques used by writers for particular effects. More able pupils, especially in KS4, focus closely on an author's use of language and are able to make a detailed analysis of the texts they study.
- Pupils understand the need to adapt their style to suit the audience and purpose of their writing and show understanding of the characteristics of a range of genres.

- Some pupils in KS3 and most in KS4 understand the need to edit and revise their written work. Final drafts of coursework in KS4 are of good quality; the content is relevant, the work is extended and essays are largely accurate in terms of spelling and grammar.
- Pupils demonstrate an increasing ability to annotate texts and to make useful notes.
- There are examples of written work where standards are enhanced by the use of IT.

### **Shortcomings**

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

- A significant minority of pupils, particularly in KS3, lack confidence in oral work. Responses are brief and some pupils are reticent when asked to speak to the whole class.
- Many pupils in KS3 do not understand the need to edit and revise their writing and think that redrafting means copying up neatly.
- Insecurity in spelling, punctuation and grammar, incomplete work and carelessness with presentation are features of a significant number of pupils' writing, especially in KS3.
- Although pupils in Y7 and Y8 make satisfactory use of the library, pupils undertake wider reading for pleasure insufficiently, particularly in KS4.

Since the last inspection, the department has made progress in the standards achieved.

### **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. In 2002, the percentage of pupils gaining at least a level 5 in the National Curriculum tests in KS3 was 48.2%. This was below the national average. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, 69% of pupils gained grades A\* to G and 30% gained grades A\* to C. These results were below the national average.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- In both the mental starter activities and the plenary sessions, pupils answer questions with clarity, understanding and accuracy.
- They have a good knowledge of whole numbers, decimal and vulgar fractions, percentages and the relationship between them.
- They understand the concepts of spatial awareness, volume and capacity and can use appropriate units.
- They have a basic awareness of axes in coordinate geometry, can plot points and can recognise shapes.
- Most pupils use calculators appropriately.
- More able pupils have a good knowledge of inequalities with graphs.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils have a sound knowledge of Pythagoras' theorem, the trigonometry of a right angled triangle and can apply this knowledge to every day examples.
- They have investigated the angle properties of the circle and can apply this knowledge.
- They can apply their knowledge of basic algebra to solve equations.

- More able pupils are able to draw graphs of appropriate algebraic equations, and use the graphs to solve them.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

- Less able pupils do not always complete their work. A small minority of pupils have difficulty concentrating on their work.
- When using calculators, pupils do not always use estimation to check their answers.
- ICT is used insufficiently in a mathematical context.

Since the last inspection there has been good progress and standards of achievement have improved from satisfactory to good in KS4.

### **Science**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. Pupils with SEN are well integrated into mainstream classes, have full access to the National Curriculum and GCSE accredited courses in KS4. In the end of KS3 National Curriculum tests in 2002, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or more was below the national average. 80% of the Y11 cohort entered for double science at GCSE level and almost all achieved at least a grade G. The percentage of pupils achieving A\*-C grades was below the average for Wales.

### **Good features**

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

- Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding across the attainment targets of the National Curriculum. They make good progress from KS3 to KS4
- They often have good recall of previous topics and are able to apply what they have learned in new contexts and to explain new phenomena.
- They use correct scientific terminology accurately to explain their ideas orally and in their written work.
- They make good progress in understanding current environmental and health issues and make progress in understanding the application of science to their everyday lives
- They confidently collaborate in practical and group activities and share information and practical tasks effectively.
- From Y7 onwards, they develop the skills of scientific investigation
- Pupils make progress in planning investigations and by the end of KS4, refer to detailed scientific knowledge and employ preliminary experiments to inform planning.
- All pupils complete practical activities safely and observe and measure accurately, using units correctly. Almost all pupils produce clear, accurate records of their findings.
- Pupils can calculate correctly in scientific contexts and use graphs accurately to record and analyse data. More able pupils refer effectively to underlying theory when analysing.
- Pupils make progress in evaluating their investigations. More able pupils make good progress in evaluation in both key stages. They can identify anomalous results and make detailed suggestions for improving accuracy and procedures

## **Shortcomings**

- In KS3, in a significant minority of classes, pupils recall previous topics and key scientific concepts in insufficient detail.
- In both key stages, periods of intermittent or longer absence hinders the progress in knowledge and understanding of a significant minority of pupils. Their notes are incomplete and they do not complete coursework with sufficient care. Consequently, planning is not sufficiently detailed, analysis does not refer to knowledge and understanding and evaluations do not identify methods for improving procedures and elimination errors.

Standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection.

## **Welsh second language**

Standards of achievement in listening, speaking, reading and writing are good in KS3 and satisfactory in KS4. In KS4 about a third of the cohort are entered for the full course GCSE examination and most of the remainder are entered for the short course. In 2002, almost all the pupils who entered the full course gained grades A\*-G and 51% gained grades A\*-C. In the short course, 92% of pupils gained grades A\*-G and 25% gained A\*-C. Results of both groups at A\*-C were below national averages.

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- Pupils enjoy their Welsh lessons and usually have a positive attitude to the language. They respond well in the oral sessions at the beginning of lessons.
- They make good progress in listening. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to tapes they hear on videos and cassettes. They are able to select relevant information from what they hear and answer basic questions orally and in written form.
- Pupils enjoy oral work, they are keen to volunteer answers and co-operate well in paired and group work. Most pupils are confident when speaking as individuals or in paired work and talk about familiar topics, like the family, their district, and sport. They are able to ask and answer questions on a variety of topics and explain their preferences. They confidently use basic patterns like 'achos' in their explanations. More able pupils can give reasons for their points of view.
- More able pupils speak Welsh with a good degree of accuracy and fluency. Pupils of average and lower ability pupils are making good progress and use basic constructions and vocabulary well.
- Pupils read aloud to a good standard in class, and they read in an interesting and meaningful way. They understand short passages on familiar topics and respond well by answering questions both orally and in written form. This is one of the strengths of the department.
- When writing, pupils respond well to a variety of stimuli. They write for a variety of purposes including writing where they express their opinions. They usually use familiar patterns correctly and can vary the person and the tense of the verb. The standard of accuracy and punctuation of more able pupils is good and they use constructions learned earlier well.

- Pupils produce folio work on a variety of topics which are word processed and enhanced with images and graphs using ICT. These and other extended personal projects produced by KS3 pupils are displayed on classroom walls and create a very good learning environment.

#### ***KS4***

- More able pupils make good progress from KS3 to KS4.
- Pupils enjoy using the language and have a positive attitude to Welsh.
- They work well in groups, discuss set topics in a meaningful way, express opinions and occasionally support their point of view with evidence. More able pupils are confident to speak freely on a variety of topics without using their work sheets.
- More able pupils read to a good standard. When reading aloud, pupils' expression is clear and meaningful. They show good understanding of a range of material and respond well both orally and in writing. More able pupils are beginning to respond to a range of authentic material and can discuss the characters and the story line.
- More able pupils write well, producing work that has a good degree of accuracy and is interesting to read. They produce extended course work to a good standard and can express their opinions in a range of written forms.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

- Lower ability pupils in Y8 and Y9 make errors in basic grammar in their more extended writing.
- More able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to discuss more extended items and use language for real communication purposes.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils of average and lower ability pupils are limited in the number of topics that they can discuss confidently without looking at their work sheets. They are reluctant to expand on set answers.
- The written work of pupils of average and lower ability following the short course contains inaccuracies and grammatical errors which are repeated.

There has been good progress since the last inspection. Pupils are more confident in using Welsh in group work and more able pupils have made progress in extending their responses both orally and in written form.

### **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and KS4 in resistant materials and systems and control. In 2002, about half the Y11 cohort entered the GCSE examinations in resistant materials and in systems and control. Almost all pupils (97%) gained grades A\*- G and 47% gained A\*-C grades.

#### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils understand the design process

- They show knowledge of a variety of skills and processes
- They experience a variety of materials when undertaking project work.
- They can suggest possible areas for research and analysis when presented with a design problem.
- Practical skills are executed safely and pupils often produce well made items
- Pupils participate well in whole class and group activities.
- Many pupils demonstrate good written standards and there are some examples of imaginative and well organised graphical work.
- Pupils have some opportunity for using ICT applications when developing their design and technology project work. In Y9 projects, there are examples of the use of ICT of a high standard.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils demonstrate a knowledge of designing skills.
- They demonstrate sound making skills and practical activities are completed safely.
- There are examples of accurately manufactured and well made products in resistant material study.
- Pupils produce relevant examples of modelling and can experiment with their design ideas especially within the systems and control course.
- They understand and use technical terminology correctly.
- There are examples of project work of an interesting and challenging nature in both the resistant materials and systems and control courses.
- Pupils have some opportunity for using ICT applications when developing their design and technology project work

#### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils understand design principles but these are not always fulfilled in a refined and organised way.
- They do not always link research, analysis and specification.
- They do not always identify the reasons for the selection of a final chosen idea from a range of potential ideas. Their evaluations do not always make reference to how the final product compares to initial specification.
- Sometimes, pupils employ creative and developmental sketching insufficiently.
- There are examples of incomplete work in the folders of a minority of pupils.
- Pupils do not use ICT sufficiently in their work

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils' design folios are not sufficiently organised and well presented.
- Pupils use developmental and creative sketching with annotation insufficiently.
- Design specifications are not always sufficiently focused and detailed and are not always linked to final product outcomes and evaluation.
- Pupils do not use a sufficiently broad range of materials and projects to improve the quality and final finish of manufactured outcomes.
- They do not use ICT sufficiently in their project work in both the resistant materials and systems and control areas.

## **Information technology**

Standards of achievement in KS3 are satisfactory.

There are no discreet ICT courses offered in KS4 or in sixth form.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils demonstrate useful skills when using word processed text, often including graphical images imported from a variety of sources.
- They approach to problem solving confidently, resulting in independent and cooperative learning.
- Pupils understand basic computing skills. They can use the mouse/keyboard effectively when making use of icons, menus and functions and most pupils are confident in their use of equipment and software.
- Many pupils handle information well, including number, through the use of databases and spreadsheets.
- Pupils make use of technical terminology in their written work and in conversation and discussion.
- Many pupils produce written work that has been planned, drafted and re-drafted and is often accurate in its content detail and grammar.
- Many pupils produce project work which is well presented.
- Pupils have a secure appreciation of the role of ICT in everyday use.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of pupils lack confidence when approaching the subject. They rely too greatly on the teacher.
- Pupils do not use more sophisticated software and hardware sufficiently to support graphical work and desk-top publishing.

Some progress has been made since the last inspection with the implementation of a structured KS3 provision.

## **History**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4. In 2002, a good proportion (41%) of the cohort entered the GCSE examinations and 96% gained grades A\*-G. 51% of the pupils who entered gained grades A\*-C which is below the national average.

### **Good features**

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

- In KS3, pupils have good levels of background knowledge and understanding and their recall skills are secure.
- Pupils have good listening skills; they are keen to achieve good standards in attaining the learning objectives which are identified for them in every lesson.
- They speak articulately during class and group discussions. They use subject specific vocabulary accurately and in the correct context.

- They have good levels of chronological awareness and can extract accurate and relevant information from a variety of sources of primary and secondary historical evidence. They effectively apply their background knowledge to extend their understanding of the source material.
- By the end of KS3, pupils are developing good investigative approaches when examining historical problems and issues. They use sources of evidence effectively to compare and contrast differing interpretations of historical events and developments, providing good reasons to explain change over time. As they mature, they learn to distinguish successfully between the long-term and short-term causes of change.
- Pupils make good progress in testing sources of evidence for bias, reliability and usefulness, evaluating the sources effectively and working positively together to construct logical oral and written arguments.
- In KS4, pupils successfully build upon the skills acquired in KS3. Their oral and written work shows a growing maturity and insight into the motivation and attitudes of people in the past.
- Pupils successfully detect bias and propaganda in sources of evidence, for instance in their work on Philip 11's motives for sending the Armada against Elizabeth 1. They select and organise information effectively in their essay and evidential work, planning their writing carefully and developing convincing arguments.
- Most pupils' work is well presented and well organised; pupils include relevant material to respond appropriately to the challenge posed in their extended writing tasks. They write for a range of purposes and effectively extend their literacy skills.
- Pupils successfully apply their knowledge and understanding from other curricular areas, such as literacy and numeracy and information and communications technology to extend their historical and research skills and to extend their learning in history.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of pupils in both key stages do not include sufficient detail in their written explanations.

The department has made good progress in addressing those areas which were judged to require further development in the last inspection report.

## **Geography**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4. In 2002, almost all the pupils who entered the GCSE examinations gained grades A\*-G. 51% gained grades A\*-C which is below the national average.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils undertake field visits in a range of locations, carry out enquiries and investigations and acquire knowledge and understanding of the physical and human characteristics of Wales. Their grasp of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good.
- They build an increasing vocabulary of subject terms and use key words and terminology with increasing precision. Basic geographical skills develop well.

- Pupils gain an awareness of the cultural and economic diversity of countries and their populations and how the interaction of physical and human factors can bring both positive and negative effects.
- Across the key stage, they demonstrate their familiarity with atlases, maps, photographs and diagrams and are able to extract relevant information from a wide range of sources.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils build successfully upon the skills acquired in KS3. Their oral and written work shows a growing maturity in the depth of their responses and insights into the inequalities in the economic development of nations.
- They provide viable explanations for the differing weather conditions experienced in this country. The theoretical aspects of their work is enhanced by the study of actual situations.
- They conduct effective independent research and produce coursework assignments which reflect good ability in collecting, recording and evaluating a range of evidence from primary and secondary sources.

#### **Shortcomings**

- In KS3 and KS4, lower ability pupils are often more confident orally than in writing.
- The progress of a small minority of pupils, both in class and over time, is restricted by the lack of understanding or the incorrect use of key words, occasionally by a lack of concentration or inattention.
- Missing or incomplete work in exercise books, mainly due to pupils' absences, also restricts progress.

The department has made good progress since the last inspection.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and satisfactory in KS4. In 2002, the proportion of the year group entered for a modern foreign language at GCSE was in line with the national average. All pupils entered gained an A\* - G grade. In French, 44% gained an A\* - C grade, which is below the average for Wales. In German, 93% gained an A\* - C grade, which is above the national average

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Pupils listen well to the teacher, to cassettes, and to each other.
- Listening comprehension skills are good.
- Pupils have a good recall of vocabulary and are confident in oral work.
- They volunteer answers readily, boys as well as girls.
- Reading comprehension skills are good and pupils can use dictionaries to extend their vocabulary.
- Pupils make good progress in structured writing tasks, often working from a model.
- Pupils across the whole ability range, including those with SEN, produce extended writing.

#### **KS4**

- Most pupils listen well.
- They understand the teachers' use of the foreign language in class and can extract relevant information from cassette recordings.
- They are competent in GCSE oral tasks and most can ask and answer a range of questions, using past, present and future tenses.
- In a small minority of classes, pupils try to use the target language for routine classroom communication.
- Reading comprehension skills are good.
- The standard of written coursework is satisfactory. The supportive framework allows the less able to achieve some success in test conditions; the most able produce good coursework.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils do not regularly use the target language for routine classroom exchanges.
- Pupils occasionally develop a more personal response in their written work, but do not do so often enough to develop greater independence.

#### **KS4**

- The majority of pupils are less confident in more open situations e.g in unrehearsed conversation on familiar topics.
- Pupils in Y10 are slow to develop the full range of language and tenses acquired in Y9.
- In most classes, pupils are insufficiently challenged to use their initiative in writing, with the result that they rarely develop a personal response.
- Intermittent absence has an adverse effect on the work of a significant minority of pupils.

There has been progress since the last inspection, particularly in KS3.

#### **Art**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. In 2002 GCSE examination, pupils' results at grades A\*-G and the higher grades A\*-C, were below the national average.

#### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils make good progress in developing observational drawing skills over the key stage.
- They develop skill and awareness in the use of colour, shape and texture.
- They develop three-dimensional skills in imaginative ceramic work.
- They are using sketchbooks to record and explore creative ideas.
- Pupils show an imaginative response when designing new graphic letterforms.
- They develop an understanding of the art of other cultures.

#### **KS4**

- Sketchbook work shows an imaginative and experimental approach.
- Pupils understood colour and it used with vivacity when working with collage.

- Creative graphic design solutions are developed from themes based on the rich local architectural and industrial heritage.
- Pupils know how to observe closely the mundane, such as a pebble on the beach, and develop delightful sculptural forms from their drawings.
- Poetry, such as ‘St Winifred’s Well’ by Gerard Manley Hopkins, forms the basis for carefully measured and finely drawn calligraphy.
- Pupils know how to use computers as a creative tool.
- They are able to use art to express moral and social issues and develop greater understanding of the art of other cultures.
- Pupils develop an awareness of historical and contemporary art from visits to galleries.
- Pupils are beginning to express their personal opinions in their writing.

### **Shortcomings**

- In KS3, pupils are not sufficiently accustomed to talking about art in response to questions and do not yet readily use the art vocabulary to which they are regularly exposed.
- Pupils’ awareness of art is limited by not visiting an art gallery or working with an artist.
- Pupils do not use ICT in creative and research activities or in research from the Internet sufficiently in their lessons.

Since the previous report there has been good progress, particularly in KS4.

## **Music**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4. Five candidates entered the GCSE examinations in 2002. All gained grades A\*-C.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils sing with a pleasing tone and secure intonation.
- Most pupils perform various pieces and their own compositions with a good degree of accuracy and usually maintain good ensemble when performing together.
- Work in progress in Y8 vocal “Machine” compositions and Y9 “Blues” compositions shows promise. Short melodic compositions by many pupils across the key stage are rhythmically interesting and well shaped.
- Pupils have a sound awareness of musical elements and can, when appraising, identify instruments and features in different recorded extracts.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils make good progress in instrumental and vocal performance and achieve good standards. Many pupils are able and confident performers.
- Most Y10 pupils make appropriate progress in the two common composing tasks undertaken. Many of these compositions and several works by Y11 pupils have a good sense of style and structure and display interesting treatment of ideas.
- Most pupils are developing an appropriate vocabulary of technical terms. More able pupils can discern technical and expressive features well when appraising music from different styles and periods.

There is good use made of the department's limited ICT resources to enhance work in composing in both key stages.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils do not always sing with adequate refinement and conviction.
- In instrumental performance, pupils are not always able to play in time with others.
- Progress in their group composing tasks is sometimes slow and outcomes limited in musical interest.
- Many pupils make perfunctory comments when appraising their own music-making.

#### ***KS4***

- A few pupils in Y10 need regular support when composing in order to make progress.
- The appraising skills of a few pupils are not evenly developed across a range of musical contexts.

There is good quality instrumental and vocal tuition, provided for one in eleven of pupils on roll. Numerous extra-curricular groups perform at a good standard and there are regular successful productions. These all complement the work of the department and make a worthwhile contribution to the life of the school and the community.

### **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and satisfactory in KS4. In 2002, all pupils who entered the GCSE examinations gained grades A\* – G. 40% gained grades A\* - C, which was below the national average.

#### **Good features**

All pupils dress appropriately and smartly for practical activities. They are enthusiastic, attentive and usually behave well. There is an excellent participation rate across the key stages, and the relationship between staff and pupils is good.

#### ***KS3***

- Most pupils demonstrate good movement skills and knowledge across a range of activities. They are able to practise and refine their actions using constructive feedback from their teachers and peers to improve their performance. Pupils can evaluate their own performance, and the performance of others, identifying strengths and weaknesses. The most able can suggest ways to improve.
- In tennis, the majority of girls in Y9 can sustain a rally and demonstrate good basic technique. Most able pupils demonstrate tactical awareness by effectively placing the ball to outwit their opponents in competitive situations.
- In Y8 and Y9, boys demonstrate good decision-making. In cricket, they are able to adapt, anticipate and select the appropriate skills to suit the demands of the situation. More able pupils display good tactical awareness and accuracy by placing shots into space to create scoring opportunities.
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- Pupils have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the body including safe warm up and cool down routines.
- They are able to answer questions accurately, using the correct terminology, to explain technical and safety points. They are willing to contribute to discussion.
- They work very well together in pairs and small groups. They are able to organise themselves effectively to complete tasks and work independently of the teacher. This is particularly evident in athletics.

#### ***KS4***

- Most pupils consolidate their skills and techniques in the range of activities. In tennis and cricket, more able pupils can apply basic tactics and strategies in competitive situations. They understand and in most cases can demonstrate how to create and utilise space effectively
- They understand the importance of exercise and its contribution to a healthy lifestyle
- Pupils use their own and teacher's observation to improve their performance.
- In GCSE classes, pupils make good progress in developing knowledge and understanding of the theoretical elements of physical performance. Work is well prepared and they display a mature and enthusiastic attitude. Written work is well presented.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

- In KS3, pupils of average and lower ability sometimes experience difficulty in transferring skills from practice into games.
- Pupils do not always recognise or understand the principles underpinning movement.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils are sometimes unable to demonstrate sufficient control and accuracy in their performance and cannot adapt their skills effectively to cope with the demands of the situation.
- Pupils do not plan and implement more complex tactics and strategies into competitive situations sufficiently.
- Pupils of average and lower ability do not demonstrate increasingly refined techniques and skills from KS3 to KS4.

#### **Extra curricular**

There is a well-organised extra curricular programme and all pupils have the opportunity to attend a range of after school clubs. Inter school fixtures and visits enhance the curriculum. There are a number of individual and team successes which bring credit to the school with pupils achieving county and national recognition.

There has been good progress since the last inspection.

## **Religious education**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of the units of work studied.
- They have good knowledge of how and why believers from different religions worship, meditate and celebrate their faith.
- They contribute well in class discussions and paired work and more able pupils and those of average ability contribute at length.
- Less able pupils use technical terms well and are aware of symbolism used in the religions they have studied.
- Across the ability range, pupils write short, appropriate answers in their exercise books and express their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions.
- Through role-play, art and project work, pupils develop an understanding of the importance of religious beliefs in shaping the identity of both individuals and faith communities.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of moral, social and spiritual issues is developed successfully. Pupils value the course and their evaluation of its content are very positive.
- Pupils respond thoughtfully to the issues, are honest in discussing their own values and when considering those of others in the class.
- They successfully consider contemporary issues from different standpoints, including the religious standpoint.
- They discuss with confidence issues raised by their experience of the natural world and human relationships, and of the ways religions try to address these issues.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils use ICT resources insufficiently for research.

There has been good progress since the last inspection

## **Religious studies**

Standards of achievement are good in KS4. In 2002, a small group of pupils entered the GCSE examinations. All gained grades A\*- G and 60% gained grades A\*-C.

### **Good features**

- Pupils have good factual knowledge and understanding of the key concepts.
- In discussing issues in different religions, they respond critically and yet sympathetically to other people's beliefs and opinions.
- More able pupils and those of average ability handle religious interpretations with understanding and can explain how their religious beliefs shape their daily lives.

- Less able pupils gather and record information well but tend to describe an occurrence rather than respond to the question asked.
- Most pupils complete a good range of written work and are developing good skills in researching information, interpreting and presenting it.
- Pupils contribute effectively in class and the more able pupils provide detailed and extended contributions to discussions.

### **Shortcomings**

- Periods of intermittent or prolonged absence has an adverse effect on their progress of a small minority of pupils.

There was no separate report for religious studies in the last inspection

## **Personal and social development**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils show care and consideration for others and their property and are sensitive to their feelings.
- They have respect for themselves and others.
- They have a responsible attitude towards keeping the body safe and healthy.
- They are disciplined and take responsibility for actions and decisions.
- They are committed to practical involvement in the community.
- They listen attentively and respond appropriately.
- They can communicate feelings and views and maintain a personal standpoint with conviction.
- They can work both independently and cooperatively.
- They can recognise expressions of prejudice and stereotyping.
- They are developing an understanding of the nature of the local community with reference to justice, law and order.
- They understand the link between good diet, exercise and good health.
- They know some of the effects of and the risks from legal and illegal drugs.
- They recognise moral issues and dilemmas in every day life situations.
- They know what they believe to be right and wrong actions. They are developing an understanding of their aptitudes, interests and personal qualities in order to make informed choices about learning and occupational options..

#### **KS4**

- Pupils show progression in the knowledge, skills and understanding developed in KS3.
- They are ambitious, adaptable and open to new technologies.
- Most are able to be assertive and resist unwanted and other peer pressure.
- Pupils are willing to ask for help support and advice.
- They are aware of the range of sexual attitudes and behaviour in society and understand the risks involved in sexual behaviour.

- They have a developing awareness of their rights and responsibilities in the local and wider community.
- They increasingly understand how their beliefs and values affect their identity and lifestyle.
- They are increasingly aware of the relevant opportunities available to them in education, training, and employment and how best to use the career service.
- They are aware of a range of study skills and techniques for examination preparation.
- They know about the main global issues that pose a threat to the environment.

There are no significant shortcomings. PSE was not a subject of the curriculum at the last inspection.

### **Home economics: Food**

Standards of achievement are very good in KS4. Pupils with SEN achieve good standards. In 2002, 35 pupils entered the GCSE examinations: all pupils gained grades A\*-G and 94% of the 35 pupils gained A\* - C. These results are higher than UA and national averages.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils confidently discuss reasons for food choices identifying a number of complex reasons such as food allergies and genetic intolerance and can explain all aspects of food preservation to a very good standard. Most have a very good understanding of food choices and their relationship to diet.
- Many pupils demonstrate a very good standard of underpinning knowledge and understanding throughout their investigational coursework.
- More able pupils carry out in-depth research using a variety of sources. They collect and analyse data using questionnaire techniques, investigate and analyse information in line with their investigation brief and present their findings to a very good standard.
- All pupils use a very good standard of technical vocabulary in oral and written work, and are encouraged to use detailed factual extended writing and many produce written work complimented with a very good standard of presentation of collected and analysed data.
- ICT applications are used well.

#### **Shortcomings**

- A small minority of pupils have an irregular attendance pattern resulting in incomplete aspects of their work, coursework that lacks sufficient depth and analysis.

Since the last inspection standards have improved to a very good standard.

### **Home economics: Textiles**

Standards of achievement are good. In 2002, 16 pupils entered the GCSE examinations: 50% gained A\* - C and all gained A\* - G.

### **Good features**

- Pupils demonstrate a good standard of work in a range of design and decorative techniques including tie and dye, weaving, using a range of components and materials, and machine embroidery and appliqué.
- They complete a range of construction processes throughout their practical outcomes including good seam construction, a range of fastening and facing techniques, all made to a good standard in relation to their ability.
- Pupils use a good standard of technical vocabulary throughout their oral and written work and demonstrate a good standard of underpinning knowledge and understanding in all aspects of their work.
- More able pupils demonstrate a good standard of independent research and analysis, present their coursework and practical work to a good standard, and demonstrate innovative ideas in their creative, practical work.

### **Shortcomings**

- Products produced by a majority of pupils to meet the needs of the assignment briefs do not demonstrate sufficient innovation and challenge.
- Design drawings produced by a minority of pupils are limited in detail and annotation.
- A small minority of pupils have irregular patterns of attendance, resulting in areas of coursework that lack depth or are incomplete.

The department has maintained good standards since the last inspection.

### **Business and communication systems**

Standards of achievement are very good in KS4. In 2002, over a third of the Y11 cohort entered the GCSE examinations. All gained grades A\* -G; 78% of pupils gained grades A\*-C which is equal to the national average.

### **Good features**

- In KS4, pupils are well motivated and respond very positively to assignments. They can explain the purpose of financial documentation and produce a range of business documents accurately, making good use of ICT.
- They have a very good understanding of the range of communication methods a business can use and can identify and select appropriate methods.
- All pupils make good use of ICT and are competent in the use of spreadsheet, database and word processing packages. They input correctly and interrogate effectively to solve problems.
- They can explain the role of information technology to aid business and understand the basic concepts of how information is transferred across the Internet.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Standards have improved since the last inspection.

## **Vocational education**

### **Leisure and tourism**

This is a newly introduced course and is followed by a small group of Y10 pupils. Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of the vocational area and can relate the work they are currently doing to a realistic commercial setting.
- They appreciate the importance of good customer service to different types of customers who often pay for products and services and expect to be treated well.
- Investigations, role play activities and beneficial visits to local organisations give them further insight into customer needs; they understand that a company's staff should be provided with appropriate training to deal with dissatisfied customers.
- Pupils understand visitor attractions pay a major role in the industry, are aware of the importance of Tourist/Visitor Information Centres and accurately identify reasons for visits and modes of transport.

#### **Shortcomings**

- The work of a minority of pupils lacks sufficient detail with key points not fully developed; written work occasionally reflects received material rather than the product of their own research.

## **8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

### **8.1 Progress since the last inspection**

The previous report identified eight key issues for action. There has been good progress made in addressing all the key issues with the exception of key issue three which remains a key issue for action

1. *Improve standards of achievement, particularly the standard of work produced by average and below average ability pupils*

Pupils of average ability and the less able make good progress in most subjects in KS4; in KS3 they achieve good standards in about half the subjects of the curriculum.

2. *Improve the quality of teaching in science and in other subjects, where aspects of the work is unsatisfactory*

The quality of teaching is now good in science in KS4 and satisfactory in KS3. Across the curriculum, in KS4 and the sixth form there is no unsatisfactory teaching. In KS3, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in 4% of classes.

3. *Improve the standard of pupils' IT capability at KS3 and KS4.*

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in all key stages. Pupils and students make good use of ICT facilities in the lunchtime but develop ICT skills insufficiently in the majority of subjects. This remains a key issue for action.

4. *Ensure that subject assessments are used by subject teachers, form tutors, heads of departments and heads of years to improve pupils' standards of achievement.*

The school's arrangements for recording pupils' achievement and progress are good. Subject teachers and pastoral teams regularly monitor pupils' progress in working towards identified targets, identifying underachievement and advising pupils accordingly. Good support is provided at an early stage.

5. *Increase the level of support provided for pupils with SEN and develop strategies to further improve the reading skills of KS3 pupils at various stages of the Code of Practice.*

The provision for pupils with SEN is good and the school's response to the requirements of the Code of Practice is very good. There is effective support for those with reading difficulties and the majority of pupils are able to read fluently and with understanding. Learning support assistants are very effective but there is insufficient support from learning support assistants in some mainstream classes.

6. *Improve the quality of long term planning and formulate a management structure that will optimise the use of resources and allow the school to respond to its changing circumstances.*

The senior management team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has identified very effective priorities to achieve improvements. The quality of leadership of the senior management team is consistently very good. The quality of leadership of heads of department is good in almost all departments.

7. *Establish appropriate arrangements to :*

- *Monitor the effect of key management decisions on classroom practice, pupils' standards of achievement and staff morale*
- *Establish a whole consensus on school policies and curricular priorities*

The quality of self evaluation and planning for improvement is good. Procedures are effective and provide a sound basis for further improvement and a prompt response to new educational initiatives. The school has a shared vision of what it wants to achieve and effective strategies are being implemented to effect improvements.

8. *Ensure that statutory requirements with regard to collective worship are met.*

This key issue is fully met

## 8.2 Key issues for action

The head teacher, staff and governors should build on improvements already achieved. In order to improve standards of achievement and quality of provision they should:

- Raise standards of achievement in those subjects where a key stage is identified as satisfactory in the report.
- Continue to implement the range of effective strategies to improve attendance\*.
- Raise standards of achievement in ICT across the curriculum\*.
- Improve the quality of assessment, recording and reporting by
  - ❖ Further developing effective procedures to track an individual pupil's progress across the curriculum in terms of the learning objectives of the National Curriculum.
  - ❖ Fully implement self assessment and target setting strategies that already exist in the school, so that pupils identify their strengths and weaknesses more effectively and understand what they must do to improve their standards of achievement.
  - ❖ Ensure that this information is shared more effectively with parents.
    - Ensure that the statutory requirement for religious education in the sixth form is fully met.

Aspects of key issues identified with an asterisk are in the school development plan

### *Acknowledgement*

*The registered inspector and team wish to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy before and during the inspection.*

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Holywell High School
School type	Comprehensive
Age -range of pupils	11 – 18
Address of school	The Strand Holywell Flintshire
Post-Code	CH8 7AW
Telephone Number	01352 710011

Headteacher	Mr S Marson
Date of appointment	September 2000
Chair of Governors	Professor R Moore
Registered Inspector	Mrs A Powell
Dates of inspection	12 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2003

### B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>									
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Y14	Total
Number of pupils	146	144	167	167	157	86	43		910

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	59	1	59.6

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.3:1
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in special classes	10:1
Average teaching group size	19
Overall contact ratio	79 %

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	93.87	92.66	92.52	89.56	88.56	88.28	85.55	90.14
Term 2	93.6	91.1	88.5	85.4	88.0	90.7	85.4	89.2
Term 3	88.6	87.3	86.4	85.6	94.5	88.9	92.8	88.5

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	20%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	79 temporary No permanent

## C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2002															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 166															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
EN	Teacher assessment	School				1		2	16	25	37	16	3		
		National	1				1	3	10	23	32	22	9	1	
	Test	School		6		1	1	4	9	28	26	19	5		
		National	8						9	24	32	19	9		
MA	Teacher assessment	School				1		2	16	26	25	21	9		
		National	1					2	11	23	26	26	12	1	
	Test	School	1	9		1		1	13	28	21	18	8		
		National	8						9	23	23	25	13		
SC	Teacher assessment	School				1		2	14	31	31	19	2		
		National	1					2	11	26	31	22	9		
	Test	School		7					11	30	31	15	6		
		National	6						9	26	28	23	9		

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:	40	In the school:	38
In Wales:	51	In Wales:	50

D - Pupils exempted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum

A - Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence

F - Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence

W - Pupils who are working towards level 1

EP - Exceptional Performance, where pupils at Key Stage 3 perform above level 8.

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, CoE, GNVQ and NVQ</b>			
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2002: 172			
<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2002:</b>			
	School	UA	Wales
were entered for 5 or more GCSEs	79	88	86
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C	42	51	50
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-G	77	87	85
achieved GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language)	28	37	37
entered at least one CoE, GCSE short course or GCSE	95	94	97
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-C	68	74	74
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-G	87	91	92
achieved no graded GCSE	13	9	8
achieved one or more CoE only	3	2	3
achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-		
achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-		
achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	42		
achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	77		

<b>For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>			
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2002: 46			
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2001:32			
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2001:8			
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	38	58	66
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	84	93	94
Average points score per candidate	13	18	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	26		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	12		

## **D. The evidence base of the inspection**

In total, 224 classes were inspected. Many form registrations, assemblies and extra-curricular activities were observed. Most teachers were seen teaching two or more times and there were planned discussions with senior staff, heads of department, external personnel as well as many other teaching and non-teaching staff.

Inspectors scrutinised written and other work in all subjects across the curriculum of a representative sample of able, average ability and less able pupils from Y7 to Y13. Subject inspectors also saw a large amount of written and other work when they visited classrooms, workshops and laboratories. There were discussions with pupils both in the classroom and during the lunchtime on their work and other aspects of school life.

The documentation provided by the school was analysed before and during the inspection and formed the basis of pre-inspection planning and meetings. Further documentation provided by the school during the inspection week also contained valuable information. The registered inspector held pre-inspection meetings with the school staff, the governing body and parents to explain the inspection process and obtain their views on aspects of the school. An analysis was made of the 115 responses to questionnaires as well as comments received from parents and others. These all informed inspection planning.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs A Powell Registered Inspector	Science (biology)	Context. Main findings. Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum Attendance Teaching Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement Leadership and efficiency Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Progress since the last inspection Key issues for action Sixth form annexe
Mr J H James Lay Inspector		Behaviour and attitudes Attendance (support ) Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions Partnership with industry
Mr A E Edwards	Mathematics	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare PSE coordinator
Mr H Evans	Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural behaviour Provision for pupils with SEN Leadership and efficiency (support)
Mrs A Newman	History Economics Sociology	Curriculum Accommodation and learning resources(support )
Mr M E Page	English	Assessment, recording and reporting Sixth form coordinator
Mr E Bowyer	Geography Leisure and tourism	
Mr S G Davies	Science (physics)	
Mrs S J Down	Design & technology (support) support IT. Home economics Vocational coordinator Health & social care	
Mr E Forster	Art	
Ms C Inledon	Physical education	
Mr A W Jones	Music	
Mr T Lewis	Welsh	
Mrs V Pritt-Roberts	Business and communication systems	
Mr J K Watson	Design and technology Information technology Engineering	
Mrs A Woods	Modern foreign language	
Mr A T F Woods	Science (chemistry)	

# Holywell High School Sixth Form Annexe

## 1. CONTEXT

### The school and its priorities

Holywell High School is an 11-18 comprehensive school situated in a large site in the town of Holywell. There are 910 pupils on roll compared to 1057 at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. There are 129 students in the sixth form. Pupils are drawn from a wide geographical area, including rural villages and the town of Holywell. The catchment area includes sections where there is relative affluence and little unemployment and those which are economically disadvantaged. 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, compared to the UA average of 12%. Most pupils come from English speaking homes; about one percent of pupils speak Welsh as a first language. One percent come from minority ethnic groups.

There is a full range of ability represented in the school. 33% of pupils in KS3 and KS4 are identified on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs and four percent of the pupil population has a statement of special educational need (SEN).

The school's aims and objectives, as identified in the school development plan 2001-2003, are to raise standards of achievement, improve attendance, literacy and numeracy, improve teaching and learning and identify and share good practice.

## 2. MAIN FINDINGS

- The standards achieved by students are at least satisfactory in all classes and good or better in 89%. Very good standards are achieved in 9% of classes. Sixth form students of all abilities make good progress in almost all subjects. Standards of achievement are very good in home economics food and art and satisfactory in music. In other subjects students achieve good standards.
- Communication and numeracy skills are good; ICT skills are satisfactory.
- Students are developing into mature, confident and caring young adults and have a very positive effect on the ethos of the whole school. They respond very well to opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. Their attitude to work is very good in almost all subjects and they are confident to take responsibility for their own learning and independent study. Unauthorised absence is very low. Attendance in the three terms prior to inspection was, however, unsatisfactory at 88.60%.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in all classes and good or better in 93%. The quality of teaching is very good in 9% of classes. Teachers' and students' expectations are high, relationships are very good and students become confident in decision making and problem solving independently. In almost all classes, there is good discussion and interchange of ideas and information so that students analyse information and data well.
- Assessment, recording and reporting are good. The school's tracking and targeting system is particularly effective in the sixth form.

- The school has implemented Curriculum 2000 effectively and provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of students of diverse academic needs, aptitudes and interests. The curriculum meets statutory requirements with the exception of the statutory provision of religious education in Y12 and Y13. Completion rates are good but only a few students are working to gain accreditation in key skills.
- The wide range of activities included in the curriculum and the extra curriculum ensures students develop social skills, self-confidence and independence and are well prepared for the next step in their education and life after school.
- The support and guidance provided in the sixth form is very good. Form tutors know their students well, relationships are very good and all students are valued as individuals. The monitoring of academic progress by the head of the sixth form, form tutors and subject teachers is regular and thorough. Subject teachers give freely of their time to support individuals in their subject areas.
- The quality of careers education and guidance is good. Preparation for transition to higher education or further education is very good.
- The quality of leadership and management is very good. There is a clear vision of the sixth form provision the school wishes to achieve and this is shared throughout the school. Communication with the school development team, senior management team and the governing body is good so that there is evaluation across the provision and identification of areas requiring development. The head of the sixth form is a member of the senior management team and provides very effective leadership. She is very well supported by a team of tutors.
- The quantity and quality of resources are good in almost all subjects and available resources are used well. The accommodation for students is good. They make effective use of the library and available ICT facilities for research and presentation. In lessons, however, only a few subjects use ICT sufficiently.

### 3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

The standards achieved by students are at least satisfactory in all classes and good or better in 89%. Very good standards are achieved 9% of classes. Sixth form students of all abilities make good progress in almost all subjects.

**Table of standards achieved in subjects**

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Sixth form</i>
English	Good
Mathematics	Good
Science	Good
Welsh second language	Good
Design & technology	Good
History	Good
Geography	Good
Modern foreign languages	Good

Art	Very good
Music	Satisfactory
Physical education	Good
Religious education	Good
PSE	Good
Home economics, food	Very good
Home economics, textiles	Good
Politics and government	Good
Health and social care GNVQ intermediate	Good
Engineering GNVQ intermediate	Good
Business, GNVQ intermediate	Good
Engineering AVCE	Good
Business AVCE	Good

In the 2002 A level examinations, students obtained at least an E grade in almost all subjects entered. The percentage of students gaining grades A-C was below national averages. The average score per student was 13 compared to 20 nationally.

### **Communication**

Communication skills are good. Students are confident, mature and thoughtful. Responses are often extended showing originality and insight and the ability to analyse what has been heard. Students listen well to each other and to the teacher. They respect other people's opinions but many, particularly the most able, are ready to challenge and argue a point logically and with conviction. They read an appropriate range of complex material and can understand implicit meaning and the ways in which writers use language for particular purpose and effect. Students' written work is of good standard; extended and detailed, well organised and relevant, with a good standard of accuracy in final drafts.

### **Numeracy**

Standards of achievement in numeracy are good. They are good in science, geography, history, design and technology, home economics, government and politics, business, health and social care and engineering. Students are able to interpret and analyse statistical data in a wide range of contexts. They change formulae confidently and use mathematical skills to solve problems.

### **ICT**

Standards of achievement in ICT are satisfactory. They are good in business, health and social care, engineering, geography and modern foreign languages where students use ICT successfully for a range of purposes. In other subjects, students use ICT insufficiently in lessons. Students make good use of available facilities in study areas for research, analysis and presentation.

Students are developing into mature, confident and caring young adults and have a very positive effect on the ethos of the whole school. They respond very well to opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. They are particularly active in the school, wider community and the sixth form council.

Attendance is recorded and monitored across the curriculum by subject teachers and the pastoral system. Unauthorised absence is very low. Attendance in the three terms prior to inspection was, however, unsatisfactory at 88.60%. Students' punctuality to lessons is good.

Their attitude to work is very good in almost all subjects and they are confident to take responsibility for their own learning and independent study.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in all classes and good or better in 93%. The quality of teaching is very good in 9% of classes. It is very good in art, English and home economics (food and textiles) and satisfactory in music. It is good in all other subjects.

Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach, and planning to cover examination specifications and individual students' needs are good and frequently very good. A good range of resources and teaching techniques is used effectively to develop communication and numeracy and ensure students research information for themselves. Strategies to develop ICT are satisfactory. Teachers' and students' expectations are high, relationships are very good and students become confident in decision making and problem solving independently. In almost all classes, there is good discussion and interchange of ideas and information so that students analyse information and data well. Students are fully informed of the objectives of modules and lessons and provided with good support when objectives are not met.

Assessment, recording and reporting are good. Arrangements reflect the requirements of the examination courses followed at GCSE, GCE, GNVQ intermediate level and AVCE. Students are aware of the grade criteria for the subjects they study. Assessment objectives are fully discussed and the marking of written work is consistently cross-referenced to their requirements. Day-to-day marking is detailed and useful and students are helped to identify ways to improve. Teachers use a full range of assessment techniques and the standard of recording is good.

The school's tracking and targeting system is particularly effective. A new computerised system has been piloted in Y12 and Y13 and is used to produce the autumn assessment of progress and the annual report to parents. This uses information from GCSE performance and other assessment data to produce target and predicted grades. A clear visual code identifies both good progress and any underachievement and enables the head of sixth form and her pastoral team to provide the necessary support for individuals through interviews, mentoring and extra tuition where necessary. This regular monitoring and good quality support continues throughout the students' time in the sixth form and is very effective.

The format of the annual report to parents is good. In most cases, comments are helpful and subject-specific, target/predicted grades are included and the report indicates ways forward.

### Learning experiences

The school has implemented Curriculum 2000 effectively and provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of students of diverse academic needs, aptitudes and interests. The curriculum meets statutory requirements with the exception of the statutory provision of religious education in Y12 and Y13.

The school offers an extensive range of over 20 AS level courses in Y12, and 18 in Y13. Students make their choices from five option groups, which allow for diverse combinations of subjects. There is good continuity of provision from KS4. Politics and government and sociology are introduced as new A level subjects. Students can also study health and social

care, business and engineering at GNVQ intermediate level, and engineering or business at AVCE level. A small number of students take an AS level course in general studies. Class size varies from 2 to 20. Most students study four subjects at AS level and three at A-level. Completion rates are good: last year, all students studying AS courses remained in school to complete A2. All students could choose to gain accreditation in key skills course at level 3 but only a few have done so this year. Only a few students undertake the planned physical education recreational activities at a local leisure centre.

All students follow the PSE programme. The programme is very well planned and includes a wide range of activities including study skills, ways of managing finance and careers education. Students successfully broaden their experience in preparation for citizenship and adult life through a wide variety of community activities. They help with the transition of pupils into Y7, act as buddies to Y7 tutor groups, mentor Y8 pupils, provide reading support for KS3 pupils, and organise fund-raising and other events. They represent the school in a wide range of events in the local community. Through the sixth form council, they have developed a close link with a local special school and organise activities and social events to enrich the quality of life for its pupils. The wide range of activities included in the curriculum and the extra curriculum ensures students develop social skills, self-confidence and independence and are well prepared for the next step in their education and life after school.

Many Y12 students take up work placements in the February half-term which are directly linked to the subjects they are studying. Their experiences enhance their understanding of the world of work and provides additional information to inform their career choices. Work experience and other visits and talks related to curriculum activities are used very well to support students' understanding in the vocational courses of business, health and social care and engineering and in other subjects such as science and design and technology. An enterprise activity in engineering is successful in developing self confidence, key skills and an understanding of industrial procedures. The school meets the recommendations of the ACCAC work related education framework.

### **Support and guidance**

The support and guidance provided in the sixth form is very good. Students value the provision and, in turn, feel that they are valued by the school. Form tutors know their students well, relationships are very good and all students are valued as individuals. The monitoring of academic progress by the head of the sixth form, form tutors and subject teachers is regular and thorough. Subject teachers give freely of their time to support individuals in their subject areas. There is very good support for a few students whose attendance is affected by unfortunate circumstances to complete their studies.

The quality of careers education and guidance is good. Students receive relevant information and objective advice: almost all students have a good understanding of the academic and wider requirements of the careers they have chosen. They make good use of the up to date careers library and undertake regular interviews with careers advisors who also attend parents' evenings. A few undertake mock interviews to develop their interview skills.

Preparation for transition from Y11 into the sixth form and from the sixth form to higher education or further education is very good. Arrangements are well organised and there is a very good information concerning the sixth form provided for all Y11 pupils and their parents. There is very good liaison with higher education establishments which contributes to students' personal development and academic advancement. All students visit a higher educational establishment as part of their induction into the sixth form in the first week of Y12. Liaison continues throughout Y12 and Y13, through visits from liaison officers and

visits to Universities. Parents are very effectively involved in the process. They receive very good information on higher education provision and there are parents' evenings to inform them of academic, financial and other considerations.

## **6. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of self evaluation and planning for improvement is good. Targets for improvement, concerned with curriculum, standards and teaching are included in almost all departmental development plans and these are regularly monitored and evaluated with link members of the senior management team. Numerical targets for improvement are set in all departments, using analysis of examination performance and departmental records, and these are rigorously monitored and evaluated. Information is shared with the school development team, senior management team and the governing body so that there is evaluation across the provision and identification of areas requiring development. Through the sixth form council and communication with the head of sixth form, students have a voice in how the school deals with issues but there is no formal mechanism to seek their views.

The quality of leadership and management is very good. There is a clear vision of the sixth form provision the school wishes to achieve and this is shared throughout the school. The head of the sixth form is a member of the senior management team and provides very effective leadership. She is very well supported by a team of tutors. Communication between the pastoral team and the departments is very effective.

Teachers are well qualified to teach sixth form courses and many have very good subject expertise. The INSET provision is well organised and there is a good record of appropriate training so that teachers are fully aware of current initiatives. The quantity and quality of resources are good in almost all subjects and available resources are used well.

The accommodation for students is good. They have a social area and there is a timetabled provision of supervised designated study rooms during the school day. Students have good access to the library and to computers for study. They make effective use of available facilities for research and presentation. In lessons, however, only a few subjects use ICT sufficiently.

## **SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by students**

#### **English**

Standards of achievement are good. In the A level English literature examination in 2002, all students entered gained a grade A-D and 75% gained a grade A-C.

#### **Good features**

- Students are articulate, ready to debate an issue, to generate questions, to challenge opinions and to express a point of view with conviction.
- They show a good knowledge and understanding of the set texts and of their cultural and historical background.

- They are able to evaluate the critical opinions of others and are developing their own skills of literary criticism effectively.
- Most students show good skills of textual analysis. They understand implicit meanings and pay close attention to the nuances of language employed by writers.
- They can select and interpret appropriate examples and use quotations well to justify their views. They can make valid and perceptive comparisons between texts.
- A few students provide evidence of wider background reading.
- Students' essays in response to literature are mature, well focused, extended, well organised and accurate in terms of spelling and grammar.

There are no significant shortcomings. Since the last inspection, good standards have been maintained.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are good. Eight students entered A level examinations in 2002, 50% gained A- C grades and 84% gained grades A- E. The student who entered further mathematics gained a grade B.

### **Good features**

- Y13 students understand a range of concepts in all branches of mathematics and can apply this knowledge in problem solving situations.
- They have a good knowledge of algebraic methods and can apply them appropriately.
- They have a sound knowledge of methods of integration and their applications.
- Y12 students make good progress in understanding aspects of pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics.
- They understand the basic concepts of forces, resistance and Newton's laws.
- They have a sound knowledge of both discrete and continuous random variables.
- Most students are able to discuss their work in a confident manner and present their answers clearly and logically.

### **Shortcomings**

- ICT is used insufficiently in a mathematical context.

There has been good progress since the last inspection and standards of achievement have improved from satisfactory to good.

## **Science**

Standards of achievement are good. In the 2002 A level examinations, two students entered biology, one gained grades A-E. Five students entered chemistry, two gained grades A-C. Nine students entered physics, all gained grades A-E and three students gained A-C grades.

### **Good features**

- Students make good progress from KS4. They develop a good knowledge and understanding over a wide range of topics in biology, physics and chemistry.

- They produce well organised notes and use a good range of sources as well as the Internet for information. They analyse information effectively and can apply their findings to new contexts.
- They give detailed oral and written explanations and are confident to take part in detailed discussion.
- They complete more complex practical investigations to a high standard.
- They confidently substitute in mathematical equations and use mathematical skills to solve problems in a variety of different contexts.

### **Shortcomings**

- A few students are reluctant to apply what they know to solve problems or to analyse information.

There has been good progress since the last inspection

### **Welsh**

Standards of achievement are good. In 2002, a small number of students entered the A level examinations. All achieved grades A-E and 50% gained grades A-C.

### **Good features**

- In Y13, students express themselves fluently, discuss issues confidently, responding to the views of others and supporting their points of view with relevant information. They discuss poetry well, using appropriate vocabulary, phrases and terms associated with the appreciation of literature.
- In Y12, students are making good progress from KS4 and cope well with the demands of the literature aspects in the AS course. They are usually confident to discuss issues relating to their everyday lives and other experiences in an interesting and meaningful way.
- Writing skills are developing well. In Y12 and Y13 students produce extended writing for a range of purposes. Creative writing and work in response to set tasks is of a good standard of accuracy.

### **Shortcomings**

- In discussion, a few students rely too heavily on their notes.

Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection

### **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are good in product design. In 2002, two candidates entered the A level examinations. Both gained grades A-C.

## **Good features**

- Students demonstrate well developed designing skills. From a secure understanding of the design process they are able to formulate precise and detailed specifications
- Drawing and sketching skills reveal useful innovation and creativity. Students make use of a range of graphical applications. Modelling skills and experimentation are evident within students' project study.
- Student use ICT applications, including the Internet, appropriately for research and in project development and presentation.
- When developing projects, students use informative annotation and comprehensive research and analysis well in developing ideas. They are selective in their use of research information.
- Students form sound opinions about their work and are prepared to discuss and make decisions.
- Project tasks are innovative and challenging. Students experience and make use of a variety of materials when fulfilling their project work and produce accurate, well constructed and saleable final products.
- They show knowledge of a variety of skills and processes, work independently and are confident in problem solving.
- Students set good standards for their work, they evaluate their progress objectively and make effective modifications to their ideas and products.

## **Shortcomings**

- Students make insufficient use of a range of sophisticated software to develop more comprehensive and detailed tasks in the graphical, electronic and computer aided design and manufacturing areas.

## **History**

Standards of achievement are good. In 2002, three students entered the A level examinations and all the candidates gained grades A-C.

## **Good features**

- Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of the historical debates related to the political and economic developments and problems of the French Revolution. Many pupils have a very good understanding of why the Marxist interpretation of the pre-1789 economy of France would differ from the interpretations offered by revisionist and non-Marxist historians. They are fully aware of how hindsight can limit different interpretations of history.
- They have a good ability to use their knowledge and the evidence from the sources to construct opposing arguments when considering historical problems. They develop good analytical skills in interpreting and evaluating the information gained from a wide variety of sources. Essay work and other written responses provide good evidence of wide background reading, thorough research and careful planning.
- Students develop good oral skills; discussions in lessons are articulate and well informed and pupils express their views and ideas fluently and confidently.

There are no significant shortcomings. The department has made significant progress in addressing those areas which were judged to require further development in the last inspection report.

## **Geography**

Standards of achievement are good. In 2002, three candidates entered the A level examinations: all gained grades A-E.

### **Good features**

- Students have good learning skills; they apply their knowledge accurately to named case studies and work productively as individuals and as a group.
- They competently discuss more complex issues such as changing urban patterns leading to deprivation and segregation; they correctly identify decline in the core and suburbanisation at the urban rural fringe as indicators of change.
- They have a growing awareness of the relevance of geography to economic, environmental and social issues and respond constructively, drawing on their knowledge and understanding of the connections between the different aspects of the subject.

There are no significant shortcomings. Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

## **Modern foreign languages**

Standards of achievement are good. In 2002, at A level, all students gained an A - E grade. In French, grades ranged from C to E; in German there was one grade B.

### **Good features**

- Students understand the teachers' use of the foreign language and respond appropriately.
- They understand the gist of authentic recordings and can pick out specific information.
- Most students speak with confidence, with good accent and intonation; they can give extended answers without prompting.
- Students read aloud confidently and fluently and reading comprehension is good.
- In writing, all students are making progress in their ability to express complex ideas on a range of topics, with increasing accuracy and range of language.
- The most able write fluently and use their initiative to produce interesting, well researched work.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of pupils, particularly in Y12, are less confident in oral work and have problems with accuracy in written work. They are insecure in verb formation and in the idiomatic use of language.

Since the last inspection, good standards have been maintained.

## **Art**

Standards of achievement are very good. In the most recent A level examination in 2002, three students entered and all gained grades A-D

### **Good features**

- Students are developing very well as independent artists.
- They demonstrate particularly good photographic camera and darkroom skills.
- Sketchbook work shows much imagination.
- Observational drawing skills are developed well.
- Students are developing very good individual research skills.
- Students work very well together sharing their expertise in new craft processes.
- Colour is used with finesse in large scale paintings based on the natural environment.
- Contemporary art is understood from visits to major art galleries and sculpture parks.
- Artwork is enriched by using calligraphy of a high standard to present poetry.
- Students experiment successfully with new three-dimensional ceramic craft processes.
- They are able to work on a large scale to produce personally expressive sculpture.
- They explore and use the art of other cultures to support their own original work.

### **Shortcomings**

- Students undertake insufficient creative computer based art, especially digital camera work

Since the previous report there has been good progress.

## **Music**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in Y12. There is no class in music in Y13. In 2002, 2 candidates entered the A level examinations both gained grades A-C.

### **Good features**

- Students perform with a good degree of accuracy.
- Their free and Baroque style compositions show a sound awareness of the techniques commonly found in the styles chosen.
- Their background notes and draft essays for the coursework folio reflect personal research and a sound understanding of the music being studied.
- Aural skills, though uneven, are satisfactory, overall.

### **Shortcomings**

- Student performances are not always confident and convincing.
- Student compositions occasionally lack coherence and a sense of direction.
- Aural perception skills are not always secure.

## **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are good. In 2002, two students entered the A level examination with 100% pass rate A - E.

### **Good features**

- Students who follow AS and A2 examinations demonstrate a mature attitude to their work and make good progress. They are willing to contribute to discussion, share and articulate opinions successfully. They refer to appropriate practical examples to support their point of view.
- They are able to explain and apply relevant theoretical models to a number of sporting examples demonstrating a good depth of knowledge in the areas of skill acquisition and anatomy and physiology.

### **Shortcomings**

- Students develop and enhance their practical performance insufficiently.
- They do not use ICT consistently to develop and enhance their knowledge and understanding of movement.

### **Extra curriculum**

There is a well-organised extra curricular programme. All students have the opportunity to attend a range of after school clubs. Inter school fixtures and visits enhance the curriculum. There are a number of individual and team successes which bring credit to the school with some students achieving county and national recognition. Students assist with the coaching and organisation of junior sport in the school.

Physical education was not inspected as a sixth form subject at the time of the last inspection.

## **Religious studies**

Standards of achievement are good. Three students entered the A level examinations in 2002, all gained grades A-E.

### **Good features**

- Students have good knowledge and understanding of the ethical concepts of entitlement, fairness and of human rights.
- In their written work, they show good analytic skills when exploring ethical theories such as natural law and Utilitarianism.
- Systematic reasoning and the analysis of issues enable students to reach appropriate conclusions and most show evidence of independent thought and personal insights.
- They show confidence when they compare and evaluate the views of scholars and schools of thought.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no significant shortcomings. There has been good progress since the last inspection.

## **Personal and social development**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students can communicate their feelings and views effectively in a wide range of situations
- They can appreciate and critically evaluate other people's points of view.
- They are disciplined, take responsibility for actions and decisions and have respect for themselves and others.
- They can adapt to changing situations. They make decisions and choices effectively and are willing to ask for help, support and advice
- They are committed to practical involvement in the community and volunteer willingly for extra-curricular activities to broaden their education including support for pupils younger than themselves and fund-raising and other events
- Students understand the relevant opportunities available to them in education, training and employment and how best to use the careers service
- They know how to review their learning and set priorities for development and targets for improvement
- They work both independently and cooperatively and undertake a range of techniques to assist study and preparation for examinations
- They know the causes and effects of stress and the ways in which it can be managed

There are no significant shortcomings.

PSE was not inspected as a subject at the time of the last inspection.

## **Home economics : Food**

Standards of achievement are very good. In 2002, two students entered the A level examination: one gained an A grade and one a B grade.

### **Good features**

- Students demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding throughout their theoretical and investigational coursework.
- They demonstrate a good understanding of the requirements of the case study and research, investigate and prepare materials to a very good standard.
- They research additional information from a wide variety of sources, using a wide range of techniques, including questionnaires and ICT.
- ICT applications are used well to analyse information, to desk top publish investigational work and to research additional information and data. Students. present their findings to very high standard including graphical formats.
- Students use technical vocabulary confidently in discussions and their written work. Written work is of a high standard.

There are no significant shortcomings. Since the last inspection standards have improved to a very good standard.

## **Home economics: Textiles**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students demonstrate a good standard of underpinning knowledge and understanding in all aspects of their work. They are confident to discuss and share their ideas, using good technical vocabulary.
- They undertake detailed research. The completed work of more able students shows innovation in approach and evidence of detailed, in-depth research. A good range of data and information is analysed and presented to a good standard.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of students find difficulty in analysis.

Since the last inspection good standards have been maintained.

## **Sociology**

Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, discussions with students and scrutiny of their work enable a judgement to be made. Standards of achievement are good. In the A level examinations held in 2002, all the candidates gained grades A-E.

### **Good features**

- Students have good recall skills and can make appropriate links with relevant contemporary attitudes and social developments.
- They have good levels of background knowledge and acquire a good command of the methodology and conceptual basis of the course.
- Students use appropriate sociological terminology accurately and can offer convincing explanations of sociological theories and ideas.
- By Y13, students develop confidence in approaching sociological problems analytically and they evaluate their sources effectively. They use a wide range of contemporary sources to provide relevant illustrations and examples in order to enhance their written work.
- Written work is well presented.

There are no significant shortcomings. Good standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

## **Politics and Government**

Standards of achievement are good. In the 2002 A level examinations, all candidates gained grades A-E.

## **Good features**

- Students have good knowledge and understanding of the workings of the British Constitution and can successfully compare and contrast the operation of the British and American Constitutions.
- They show a secure understanding of current proposals to reform both the House of Commons and the House of Lords; they can identify the advantages and the drawbacks of the reforms which have been proposed.
- They have good knowledge and understanding of the workings of the major political parties in Britain and the United States; they have a clear awareness of the ideologies upon which the parties are based.
- Students make good use of up-to-date information and examples of changes in the workings of government through newspaper and magazine articles and through their researches on the Internet.
- Most students produce well argued and detailed essay work in which they display a good ability to examine differing points of view. They are prepared to consider points of view which are different from their own, for example on the question of devolution and the operation of devolved assemblies.

There are no significant shortcomings.

Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection

## **Vocational education**

### **Engineering**

Standards of achievement are good at GNVQ intermediate and AVCE levels. In 2002, at GNVQ intermediate level, four students gained merits and six gained passes. At AVCE Engineering double award level, four students entered the examinations, all gained grades A-E and one student gained grades A-C.

### **Good features**

- Students show confidence when discussing and explaining their work and make progress in analysing and discussing issues relating to their area of study and to current industrial engineering practice.
- They have a developing awareness and understanding of the theoretical and practical elements of the subject area and make appropriate use of a number of ICT applications to support their studies.
- Their assignments show positive developments, with a thorough approach to planning, generation of ideas and relevant investigative study.
- Students' work is generally well presented. Reports are organised, accurate in content and supported by a sensible use of graphical material and commercial information.
- Students use sketches and formal drawings effectively.
- They display enthusiasm for the development of personal designing and making skills. They undertake innovative and challenging projects which employ a variety of materials. Products are accurate and well constructed. Students understand and use a variety of skills and processes.

- They work independently, displaying good problem solving and decision making skills.
- They interact purposefully in small group situations and demonstrate good team building skills.
- They make effective use of experiences gained through extra-curricular experiences. They have made productive contributions to engineering initiatives and to engineering competitions.

### **Shortcomings**

- Students make insufficient use of sophisticated software to develop more comprehensive and detailed tasks in the graphical, electronic and computer aided design and manufacturing areas.

Progress since the last inspection has been good.

### **Health and social care**

Standards of achievement in GNVQ intermediate level are good. In 2002, 10 students entered the examinations, six gained pass awards and four merit awards.

### **Good features**

- Students undertaking this course are fully challenged and well motivated. They have a good knowledge and understanding of relevant issues of health and care and relate their work in school well to experiences gained through work placements, visits and visitors.
- All students use technical vocabulary correctly in both oral and written work. The work of more able students demonstrates a good standard of written work, depth of understanding and independent research. They are confident to share and develop their ideas through discussion.
- Students extract practical information effectively from practical manuals and make good progress in developing associated skills.
- They use a range of ICT applications to a good standard, use the Internet and other sources for research, word process aspects of their assignments and use desk top publishing for presenting aspects of investigations.

### **Shortcomings**

- The investigations of less able students are insufficiently detailed.

There has been good progress since the last inspection.

### **Intermediate and AVCE business**

Standards of achievement are good at GNVQ intermediate and AVCE levels. In 2002, all GNVQ students gained pass grades and four gained a merit award. At AVCE single award level, all students gained a pass grade and 60% gained A-C grades. This summer will be the first year for students to complete the AVCE double award.

## **Good features**

- Students are well motivated and clearly understand the assessment criteria for each grade. They are able to explain what they need to do to improve their work. They are confident and are ready to take responsibility for their own work.
- They can explain marketing confidently and can apply such concepts as product life cycle and Boston matrix to a range of products.
- Their understanding of business methods is enhanced by visits to industry. They make good use of experiences gained in local and wider businesses to produce good portfolios of work.
- Students make good progress in understanding the objectives of business and are able to identify a potential business, investigate suitable locations, types of ownership, sources of finance and cash flow, and conduct appropriate market research.
- They are confident to undertake research and to organise and analyse their findings. They use ICT skills well to research, design and present their findings to the rest of the class.

## **Shortcomings**

- They are no significant shortcomings.

Standards have improved since the last inspection.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The head teacher, staff and governors should build on improvements already achieved. In order to improve standards of achievement and quality of provision they should:

- Raise standards of achievement in those subjects identified as satisfactory in the report.
- Continue to implement the range of effective strategies to improve attendance\*.
- Raise standards of achievement in ICT across the curriculum\*.
- Ensure that the statutory requirement for religious education in the sixth form is fully met.

Aspects of key issues identified with an asterisk are in the school development plan