

REPORT BY INDEPENDENT INSPECTORS

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SIXTH FORM ANNEX

YSGOL JOHN BRIGHT

INSPECTION DURING THE SUMMER TERM 2003

Sixth Form Annex

Context

Ysgol John Bright is an 11-18, mixed, community school in Llandudno, Conwy. There are currently 138 students in the sixth form, compared to 129 at the time of the last inspection. There are 71 students in Y12 and 67 in Y13; approximately 60 per cent are girls.

Students come mainly from the town of Llandudno but also from Penrhyn Bay and Deganwy. There are both prosperous and economically deprived wards within the school's catchment area and the intake is fully comprehensive. English is the first language of nearly all students. There are a few students from other ethnic heritages and from Welsh-speaking homes.

The school works closely with the further education college and has established a consortium with two comprehensive schools in order to provide a well-balanced, cost-effective curriculum for sixth form students. The school currently offers 21 A2/AS courses, three vocational courses and a Key Skills qualification. This includes an A2/AS course and vocational course that are taught at one of the consortium schools.

Main Findings

Overall, students achieve good standards. Standards were at least satisfactory in 98 per cent, and good in 63 per cent of classes observed. Results in the A level examinations were in line with the national average in 2001. A level results in 2002 were below the national average, particularly in the percentage of top grades. Standards achieved in class are not always translated into examination results, as students do not take sufficient responsibility for consolidating their learning through revision. Most students complete their course but only half complete their portfolios to gain qualifications in Key Skills.

Students represent the school well and have a positive attitude to their learning. They are mature and responsible and take a lead in helping younger pupils. They raise large sums of money for charities. Attendance is just below satisfactory levels, having averaged 89.6 per cent during the first two terms in the current school year. A small minority of students fail to arrive on time at the start of the school day or to lessons.

The quality of teaching is good. In the 50 classes observed, teaching was at least satisfactory in all classes, good in 58 per cent and very good in a further 12 per cent. Teaching is becoming increasingly innovative, with the introduction of interactive whiteboard technology. However, teaching is sometimes over-prescriptive and does not fully challenge students by probing their understanding.

The overall care, support and guidance for students are very good. Both form tutors and teaching staff are very caring and supportive of students. Teachers mark sixth form coursework assignments thoroughly. They provide good oral feedback but written comments and annotations do not always focus sufficiently well on how students can improve their performance. Students' progress is monitored through intermediate assessments early in Y12 and action is taken to address difficulties.

Target-setting has begun, but is not yet sufficiently specific or embedded to raise motivation and standards significantly.

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. Good links with other local schools and the further education college have enlarged the range of option choices. In Y12 most students study four subjects plus Key Skills. In Y13 most students select three subjects for continued study at A2 Level. A small group of Y12 students is involved in a Youth Enterprise project. Many sixth form students take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, some of which allow them to excel at the highest level.

The management of the sixth form is very good. There are clear links between the students, sixth form staff and the senior management team. However, systems for tracking good practice across departments and identifying inconsistencies in teaching and learning within the sixth form are not sufficiently robust.

Careers education and guidance are very good and prepare students well for the world of work and/or the next stage of their education. Y12 students complete one week's work experience. The placements are directly related to students' actual career choices and enhance their knowledge of the world of work.

Teachers are well qualified and deployed. In most subjects and areas of learning students are provided with the books needed for them to make good progress in their studies. Although lessons are generally taught in suitable specialist rooms, the accommodation for a number of subjects is poor. Students do not have easy and regular access to ICT facilities and their accommodation is limited, which hampers the best use of private study time. Opportunities for research are restricted by the lack of access to good library facilities. These problems will be resolved when the school moves to its new accommodation.

Standards

1. How well do students achieve?

Grade 2: Good: good features and no major shortcomings

In classes observed in the sixth form, standards were at least satisfactory in 98 per cent, and good in 63 per cent. There were virtually no classes in which standards were judged to be very good. Whilst students are generally achieving well overall, they can be even further extended across the range of subjects. During the last inspection standards were satisfactory or better in all classes and good or better in 54 per cent.

The standards students are currently achieving in their courses are listed below:

Subject	Course	Sixth form
Economics	GCE	Very Good
English	GCE	Good
Mathematics	GCE	Good
Science	GCE	Good
Design & Technology	GCE	Good
Welsh second language	GCE	Good
History	GCE	Good
Geography	GCE	Good
Modern Foreign Languages	GCE	Good
Music	GCE	Good
Religious Studies	GCE	Good
Health & Social Care	AVCE	Good
Art	GCE	Satisfactory
Physical Education *	GCE	Satisfactory
Geology *	GCE	Satisfactory
Business Studies	GCE/AVCE	Satisfactory
Psychology	GCE	Satisfactory
Personal and Social Education		Satisfactory

* Courses shared with two other comprehensive schools.

Standards are very good in economics. They are good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, Welsh second language, history, geography, modern foreign languages, music, religious studies, and health and social care. Standards are satisfactory in art, physical education, geology, business studies, psychology and personal and social education.

Overall, in classes observed during the inspection standards were good. The standard of students' attainment in examinations has been satisfactory. 2001 examinations results compare well with UA and Wales figures. For students who sat at least two A level examinations, 58 per cent of the grades they obtained were in the range A to C. In the schools in Conwy, the equivalent figure was 66 per cent and for all students in Wales it was 62 per cent. In 2002 examinations, for students who sat at least two A level examinations, 41 per cent of the grades they obtained were in the range A to C.

In the schools in Conwy, the equivalent figure was 62 per cent and for all students in Wales it was 66 per cent. In 2001, the average points score per candidate was just below UA figure but the same as Wales. In 2002, the average points score per candidate was 15 compared with a score of 19 for students in Conwy and 20 for students throughout Wales. Overall, results in A level examinations were in line with the national average in 2001. A level results in 2002 were below the national average, particularly in the percentage of students attaining top grades.

Students do not always pursue independent lines of enquiry, undertake research and think critically as a regular part of their learning. Standards achieved in class are not always translated into examination results as students do not take sufficient responsibility for consolidating their learning through revision.

Standards achieved in the six key skills are as follows:

Key Skills	Sixth Form
Communication	Good
Application of Number	Good
ICT	Satisfactory
Improving own learning and Performance	Satisfactory
Working with Others	Good
Problem solving	Good

Students make good progress in key skills and overall, standards are good. The school provides a good quality Key Skills programme that is delivered by specialist teachers. All students are expected to gain Key Skills qualifications at level 2 or level 3. Currently only half the students in the sixth form complete their portfolios to gain these qualifications. Those students that do complete portfolios produce good quality work.

Most students apply these key skills well. They listen attentively and the majority are articulate when responding to questions, expressing opinions, and challenging other students. Where there are shortcomings, students' limited vocabulary prevents them from providing extended answers that demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their work. Numeracy skills are generally used well to enhance the quality of students' course work in a number of subjects. With the exception of those students studying mathematics, most find the mathematical work difficult but generally make good progress. In some subjects, students appropriately select information from ICT sources to analyse and research topics. Not all students have sufficient access to computers and as a result, their ability to analyse and research topics outside the classroom is limited.

Sixth form students are mature and responsible members of the school community. Their ability to work together and solve problems is good. They regularly demonstrate these skills in class and also in the wide range of extra-curricular projects that they organise.

Approximately 85 per cent of Y11 pupils continue with their education. Of these, just under 50 per cent return to the sixth form; the remainder usually take up places at the further education college. Most students complete their course. The school keeps a

detailed account of the small percentage of students that leave. Three Y13 and six Y12 students have left during the current academic year. Most of these either secured employment or continued their studies in the college. A few students have difficulty moving from GCSE to A level work.

The attendance of sixth form students is just below satisfactory levels, having averaged 89.6 per cent during the first two terms in the current school year. This figure is similar to that achieved during the previous school year but is an improvement from the last inspection. Over the same period, unauthorised absence was 2.2 per cent, but may have been partly due to the school's policy of not authorising absence for the taking of holidays during term time unless parents provide very good reasons for this. However, one tenth of parents of sixth form students have already taken their children out of school for holidays during the current school year to date. Despite the efforts of staff, a small minority of students fail to arrive on time at the start of the school day or to lessons.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good in the sixth form. Students are given many opportunities to exercise appropriate responsibilities. Their duties include supporting staff as necessary, particularly in the recording of pupils' lateness as part of reception duties, reading at assemblies and functions, supervision of movement around the school and fund-raising. They also help to organise and take part in the annual school eisteddfod, the school's productions, parents' evenings and other events. Nominated Y12 students provide valuable support for KS3 pupils as part of the buddy system which covers both anti-bullying measures and help with reading. The head boy and head girl often represent the school at external functions. Students are also fully involved in fund-raising events for both local and national charities.

No sixth form student has been excluded in the past 12 months.

Quality of education

2. How effective are teaching and assessment?

Grade 2: Good: good features and no major shortcomings

The overall quality of teaching is good. In the 50 classes observed in the sixth form, teaching was at least satisfactory in all classes, good in 58 per cent and very good in a further 12 per cent. These figures are just below those of the last inspection. The proportion of teaching judged very good is not widespread or evident in all departments. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, Welsh second language, history, geography, modern foreign languages, music, religious studies, geology, economics and health and social care. It is satisfactory in business studies, psychology, art and physical education.

Most teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject and present it in a stimulating and coherent way. They use a range of teaching strategies and resources to effectively engage students in their learning. Relationships between teachers and students are very good and there is a good working atmosphere in most classes. Overall, teachers' planning is thorough and includes consistently high levels of support that meet students' individual needs. Most staff give generously of their time to provide students with additional help between lessons.

In a significant minority of classes, students are insufficiently challenged and the teaching is too prescriptive. In these classes, there is insufficient emphasis on rigorous questioning to encourage students to think independently and to undertake research for themselves. A number of students are too reliant on their teachers and do not consolidate the good teaching and support they receive by revising thoroughly themselves. As a result, the grades awarded for teaching in classes observed were higher than for the standards achieved through students' response.

Teachers mark sixth form coursework assignments thoroughly. They provide good oral feedback but written comments and annotations do not always focus sufficiently well on how students can improve their performance. Detailed records are kept and used to inform students of the current standard of their work. This information is used in conjunction with data from previous assessments to notify students about their predicted and potential course outcomes. All students' progress is monitored through intermediate assessments early in Y12 and action is taken to address difficulties. The school has identified a need to improve progress checks and target-setting within its development plans.

Parents of sixth form students receive good quality reports which provide accurate and clear indications of students' progress and performance. Although the format of sixth form reports provides a section for target-setting the contents of this section are frequently insufficiently specific to assist students in developing action plans to address any shortcomings identified.

3. How well do learning experiences meet the needs and interests of students in the wider community?

Grade 2: Good: good features and no major shortcomings

The school has effectively implemented Curriculum 2000 and offers a broad curriculum to students in the sixth form with a range of differing abilities, interests and aptitudes. The good links that exist with other local schools and the college have enabled the range of option choices to be enlarged. Breadth is maintained by allowing small numbers of students to study certain subjects, for example, art and music.

In Y12 most students study four subjects chosen from 21 Advanced Subsidiary and three Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education courses. The cost-effectiveness of providing this sixth form curriculum is kept under continual review to ensure that the school receives value for money. The student retention rate of just under 50 per cent is relatively good and students' progress is at least satisfactory. All Y12 students attend two key skills lessons each week except for a small minority who are involved in an enterprise project and only attend one Key Skills lesson. In Y13 most students select three subjects for continued study at A2 Level.

Many sixth form students take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, some of which allow them to excel at the highest level. The school has established good links with the nearby special school. Sixth form students organise an annual Christmas party at the school and annually help at a local centre where workers with disabilities produce garden furniture. Welsh second language students attend residential language courses and French students make visits abroad which further

their cultural development. A physical education lesson is timetabled for all students and a number have achieved local and national honours in a range of sports.

About 50 local businesses and other concerns provide industrial placements to enable all Y12 students to undertake one week's work experience. The placements are directly related to students' actual career choices. This enhances their knowledge of the world of work and helps them to confirm or reject their earlier decisions. A small number of Y12 students also learn more about the world of work through an annual well-organised Young Enterprise project, which involves them in forming a company to produce and market products. This year's project was the engraving of glassware. Sixth form students visit local industries and agencies related to their particular career interests; for example, some have recently attended a health clinic to support their interest in medical matters.

The school has carefully considered the curriculum it offers in the sixth form in relation to other providers in the area. As a result, the school has formed a successful and cost-effective consortium with two other local comprehensive schools to provide sixth form students with a wider range of academic and vocational courses. There are also good links with the local college. Approximately 35 per cent of Y11 pupils continue their education at the college. The school has good links with higher education institutions, particularly at Manchester and Liverpool, and students make an annual visit to Oxford University.

Overall, the post-16 curriculum offers a broad choice of courses and provides good opportunities for progression to further education, higher education and work-based training. The school meets the recommendations of the ACCAC work-related education framework.

4. How well are students cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 1: Very good: many good features, some of them outstanding

The overall care, support and guidance for students are very good. The regular team of form tutors headed by the head of the sixth form and assisted by an administrative assistant provides very good support and is a very effective team. Teaching staff know their students very well and assist them as individuals. They are well aware of their backgrounds and personal needs. Relationships between staff and students and between students and students are a marked feature; both form tutors and teaching staff are very caring and supportive of students. All students are fully integrated and made to feel valued in classes. The contribution of the individual is considered important.

The Careers Wales adviser interviews all sixth form students and helps them with their applications to university. Many attend an annual careers convention at which a wide range of industry and services representatives are present, and some students attend a higher education fair to learn more about the opportunities offered by universities. Comprehensive booklets are available regarding information on a gap year, applications and admission to higher education. There are also interviews with former students.

There are well-defined induction procedures and all staff are involved with transition arrangements from Y11 to Y12. Y11 pupils have taster days when they experience AS level work and talk to sixth form students and staff about the courses they are interested in. Interviews are held with Y11 pupils post-GCSE results. On entering the sixth form students follow a precise induction programme. There is a comprehensive guidance programme for all Y12 and Y13 students.

Good quality student study guides are available to all students in the workroom. They include information regarding planning for revision, preparing for examinations, effective revision, critical reading and time management. These guidelines are very well received by students. Students also study a Key Skills programme. Students' academic progress is carefully monitored, weaknesses identified and a support programme compiled. Form tutors, referred to as learning managers, play an important role in tracking students' progress. Students are happy with the support provided.

The school has a student charter outlining expectation for all students.

Leadership and management

5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 1: Very good: many good features, some of them outstanding

Developments in the sixth form are included in the school development plan. The senior management team recognises the need to continually monitor the cost - effectiveness of courses offered and the need to more rigorously monitor standards, teaching and learning. Class sizes vary from approximately 3 to 12 students and overall they provide value for money. The school has a clear policy for reviewing the viability of courses and continually reviews provision with the governing body. The consortium was established after the last inspection in order to provide more cost-effective sixth form provision.

The head of sixth form provides very good leadership. He is ably supported by an administrator and an experienced team of form tutors. Each has clearly defined responsibilities that contribute to the smooth running of sixth form provision in the school. They work together very effectively to provide a positive working environment for all students. A strength of the system is the clear link between the students, sixth form staff and the senior management team. This link works very well in practice as communication is regular and all work together to quickly solve problems.

6. How well do learners and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 2: Good: good features and no major shortcomings

The school has established an effective and consultative process of evaluating its sixth form provision. There is a clear commitment to continuous improvement in the sixth form and good systems are in place in order to achieve this. Through regular and on-going evaluation, strengths and areas requiring development are accurately identified.

The senior management and head of sixth form have a good knowledge of the work in the sixth form and all are pro-active in helping to plan for improvement. About four years ago the senior management team reviewed sixth form provision. As a result an action plan was produced that specifically focused on improving standards, teaching and learning. Current monitoring is largely subject based. As a result, opportunities for tracking good practice across departments and identifying inconsistencies in teaching and learning within the sixth form are missed. Through regular communication with the head of sixth form, students are able to identify issues for action. The school has no formal system for seeking the views of learners, staff and other parties on the quality of its sixth form provision.

The head of sixth form and senior managers rigorously analyse examination data and use this information effectively to track students' progress and identify predicted grades. They are aware that a significant minority of students find Advanced level work difficult and have very good systems in place to provide mentoring and support for those students considered to be under-achieving.

7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 3: Satisfactory: good features out weigh shortcomings

Around 53 per cent of the school's teachers work in the sixth form. They are all well qualified for the subjects they teach and are effectively deployed.

Available resources are managed efficiently and value for money is achieved well. In most subjects and areas of learning students are provided with the books needed for their studies. These and other resources are generally matched well to their needs and help them to make good progress. Improving facilities in ICT are increasing the amount and quality of resources available to students. However, in economics, business studies and psychology books are out-of-date, stocks depleted and resources generally not well matched to students' individual needs. In art, limited resources constrain the range of processes and activities offered.

Lessons are generally taught in suitable specialist rooms of satisfactory or better quality. Nevertheless, accommodation is poor in design and technology and, while a laser-cutting machine is of very good quality, several other machines are out-dated. There are no specialist rooms for economics or psychology. Changing rooms are in a poor state and, in inclement weather, become very wet.

The general ambience of the sixth-form area is not conducive to independent study, nor is it inviting as a place to return to after completing studies in KS4. However, students make the best of available accommodation and resources and, with their teachers, work around the problems they present. Facilities for private study are basic and cramped. Common-room provision is available but is in a poor state of repair and although the school has several computers linked to the Internet, students have difficulty in gaining access to them at times convenient to them. However, some departments have computers, and students sometimes have access to these during their lessons. Those students who have personal computers are able to continue their work at home using specific web-sites suggested by staff. In one or two instances staff allow students access to their e-mail addresses and students can seek assistance in

their studies when they are away from school. Opportunities for research are also restricted by the lack of access to good library facilities.

Students are timetabled for sporting activities and several have received honours for representing the school in sporting events. The school has a relatively new sports hall and small multi-gym. These are good facilities.

Partnerships with local colleges are good and some students pursue joint courses with them and the school. The head of sixth form monitors students' attendance and progress well and reports to the head teacher on matters such as quality of provision and completion of coursework and courses overall.

Subjects and areas of learning

English

Standards of achievement are good, and are better than previous examination results.

Good features

- Students display good understanding of complex texts.
- Students show the capacity to write with insight in response to well-conceived tasks and challenging material.
- Students can produce sustained assignments of good quality as a result of independent research and enquiry.
- Students demonstrate the ability to engage effectively in critical debates about language and literature in a manner that displays analysis and discrimination.

Standards have improved since the last inspection and there is now more evidence of good work.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good. External examination results are generally commensurate with students' ability and, taken over the last few years, are broadly in line with UA and Wales figures.

Good features

- Students in Y12 show increasing confidence in using the Calculus to find maximum and minimum values of functions. They use computers well to explore the properties of various functions.
- Students can carry out with understanding various calculations using vectors in 2 and 3 dimensions. They often suggest a strategy for working through a given problem and show ability to think for themselves. They enter into mature discussion with their teachers.
- Students are conversant with the more widely used probability distribution functions and can carry out appropriate hypothesis tests based on given information. They use computers to simulate and investigate various realistic situations and suggest simple mathematical models to support the outcomes they observe. Some pieces of coursework are of a very high calibre.
- Students show understanding of the techniques of linear programming and use appropriate computer software to help them maximise or minimise various functions subject to constraints.

Shortcomings

- Students continue to exhibit some insecurity in algebraic manipulation and in their independent learning beyond the classroom.

Standards have improved since the last inspection. Girls' and boys' performance in external examinations is now comparable.

Science

Standards of achievement are good in all disciplines, though this is not reflected in recent AS level results.

Good features

- The majority of students make good progress in the separate disciplines. They keep an accurate record of work and respond well to questioning, often demonstrating a mature knowledge of scientific principles.
- Practical skills are good with students able to devise and plan investigations. There is evidence in assignments and reports of considerable research and an awareness of the requirement for accurate measurements, fair testing and the importance of estimation skills to ensure investigations proceed satisfactorily.
- Students are adept at extracting information from a variety of sources, including texts, newspapers and the Internet, to address a range of scientific issues.

Shortcomings

- A minority of students, mainly in Y12, have a less secure knowledge of basic concepts in science and find difficulty in articulating answers to in-depth questioning

Standards have improved since the last inspection.

Welsh second language

Standards of achievement are good. These standards are reflected in the examination results.

Good features

- Students studying the AS and A2 level syllabi achieve good standards in oral and written work.
- They understand and recall the contents of prescribed poems, understand style and express an opinion on content. They discuss moral issues and demonstrate good knowledge of aspects of racialism in the wider context.
- Students are confident when discussing short stories. They develop appropriate critical terms and show good knowledge of texts studied, referring to textual detail and quotations in support of points made in discussion. Skills of analysis and practical criticism are developing well and students show a good awareness of the cultural background of texts.
- Written tasks encourage students to prepare, analyse and respond to a range of topics. In their written work students demonstrate good subject knowledge and the ability to analyse and use critical terminology.

Standards have improved since the last inspection.

Design and technology

Standards of achievement are good. Students pursue the AS and A2 level design and technology, Product Design course. Examination results have been good.

Good features

- Designing skills and the presentation of work are generally of a good standard.
- The vast majority of students produce practical outcomes of a good standard, with some very good examples.
- Students plan well for their industrial placement and produce good case study reports.
- Where appropriate, students make good use of anthropometric data and ergonomic studies to influence the development of the initial design.
- The majority of students make good use of sketch books to record initial ideas and designs.

Shortcomings

- In the small minority of examples where the standard of practical work is unsatisfactory, student motivation is also unsatisfactory.

Standards of achievement and examination results continue to be good. The standard and application of ICT skills, including CAD/CAM and Pro-desktop, have improved in all material areas.

History

Standards of achievement are good. Standards observed are better than those achieved in A level examinations over the last two years, where students' results have been broadly in line with ability.

Good features

- Students in Y12 can write well-structured essays, characterised by sustained argument that is both critical and relevant. In marking past papers they show a good working understanding of assessment criteria and their meaning.
- In Y13, students make rapid progress in their knowledge and use of historiography. For example, 'models' of resistance put forward by various historians inform their assessment of the July Bomb Plot to assassinate Hitler. Their impressive grasp of the techniques of synoptic analysis is also evident in the critical overview they are able to provide of the nature and impact of various Tudor rebellions.

Shortcomings

- Students can discuss the usefulness of the content of a source at length but do not pause to consider the question, "useful for what?" - which can lead to a realisation, for example, that sources can be useful for reasons other than those intended.

- Neglect of context in source evaluation is evident in the written work of some students.

Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection in the standards achieved.

Geography

Standards of achievement achieved by classes in the sixth form are good. Examination results have been broadly in line with ability.

Good features

- Students generally possess an appropriate range of geographical knowledge and apply it when debating and writing about contemporary issues.
- Some students demonstrate the capacity to use prior knowledge across a range of contexts and in so doing transfer knowledge and understanding to increasingly complex topics.
- Students generally show equal confidence in using their knowledge and understanding of processes, patterns and place. This was particularly evident in their studies of sustainable economic activity.
- The application of contextual information, at various geographical scales, was strongly presented by a number of sixth form students.
- Students demonstrated the capacity to work independently and in groups whilst undertaking geographical investigation.
- Students possess a wide range of analytical skills to use effectively on the data collected from numerous sources. The presentation of A level coursework is generally of a good quality.

Shortcomings

- Students do not always apply themselves to independent research outside specified lessons to supplement their levels of knowledge and understanding and push up their levels of competence in each module. They are sometimes too dependent on teachers' notes and advice.

Standards have improved since the last inspection

Modern Foreign Languages

Standards are good. This is mirrored in A level results which have added a measure of progress to students' prior attainment, with a good proportion of top grades, though numbers have been small.

Good features

- Students in Y12 are achieving well in all four language skills.
- Some students in Y13 speak and write fluently with a good level of accuracy.

- Most students are able to understand the spoken and written language with relative ease and extract information in response to questions.
- Students are developing a good understanding of the rules of grammar.

Shortcomings

- Errors in grammar mar the spoken and written work of a minority of students.

The good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Art

Standards of achievement are satisfactory. At A level, although there has been some variability in attainment recently, results also reflect satisfactory standards.

Good features

- Students, particularly in Y12, study art with interest, enthusiasm and commitment showing initiative and developing more individual approaches.
- Many produce skilful, imaginative and ambitious work, for example in calligraphy and in large-scale tonal portraits, using a wide range of influences and references.

Shortcomings

- Some students, particularly in Y13 show less commitment, produce work of a more superficial nature and have difficulty explaining their intentions or the ideas which underpin their work.

Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in improving standards in art except in respect of the use of computers to generate artwork.

Music

Standards of achievement are good. Examination results have been satisfactory.

Good features

- Students are competent and experienced performers who demonstrate a good sense of style and occasion.
- Students' essays demonstrate a good ability to draft and re-draft ideas. Some also show evidence of competent individual research including effective use of the Internet.
- A number of student compositions demonstrate a good understanding of the chosen genre and are technically and stylistically interesting.
- A number of students demonstrate effective use of ICT in generating compositions.

Shortcomings

- Some harmonic techniques are misunderstood particularly in 'chorale' writing and students find difficulty in identifying errors and making suggestions for appropriate improvements.

Standards have improved since the last inspection.

Physical education

Standards of achievement are satisfactory. An increasing number of students are opting to study the subject at A level. Standards achieved by these students are at least satisfactory. Previous performance in external examinations has been weak and students have attained very low grades. All sixth form students have one lesson a week of physical education.

Good features

- Most students are highly motivated, have a mature attitude to the subject and make good progress. Overall, written work is good and the best personal profiles are very detailed.
- Most Y12 students work diligently and develop a sound understanding of contemporary sport.

Shortcomings

- A few Y13 students make slow progress when revising energy systems independently.
- A number of students are passive in class and their oral responses to questions are brief.
- Students do not readily take responsibility for their own learning. Lack of regular access to ICT and other subject specific resources limit students' ability to extend their knowledge and understanding.

Standards in the sixth form were not reported on in the last inspection.

Religious Studies

Standards of achievement are good. Examination results also represent a good standard of achievement.

Good features

- Students have a sound knowledge and understanding of Hinduism, philosophy and ethics and apply these to examination requirements.
- They are able to discuss and apply ethical theories and religious standpoints to a range of issues and problems. They do this confidently, sensitively and thoughtfully often relating the work to their own experiences and reading.

- They work independently and co-operatively and are respectful of the views of others. Information gathered is used to formulate their own views and opinions.
- Technical terms and language are accurately applied in oral and written responses.
- Written responses to questions take account of the assessment criteria and are often balanced and well argued.

Shortcomings

- A minority of students rely too heavily on teacher exposition and fail to support their views with reasoned arguments.

Standards in examination classes remain consistently good.

Religious education

No statutory religious education lessons were observed during the week of the inspection. Statutory religious education contributes a number of units to the personal and social education programme in Y12 though not all students take advantage of this entitlement.

Personal and Social Education

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

Good features

- Most students appreciate the relevance of useful advice and guidance which they receive, with regard to their career and academic aspirations.
- They listen attentively to each other and guest speakers.
- Some discuss topics enthusiastically and articulately.

Shortcomings

- Some students fail to participate fully in discussion of key issues.

There was no subject PSE report in the last inspection.

Geology

Overall, standards of achievement are satisfactory. However, results at AS and A2 have been below expectations.

Good Features

- Some students have a clear and secure knowledge of the physical processes at work within the earth's crust and can use this information to explain crystal shape/size and rock development.
- A number have very clear ideas about the relationships between plan and sectional images and can link palaeontological knowledge to the cross sections to explain the Laws of Succession etc.

- In a number of cases students understand and use subject specific terminology and vocabulary in a sophisticated manner. They discuss with confidence and use ICT for research.

Shortcomings

- A number of students possess insufficient background information to make sense of the more complex concepts that emerge. Their basic understanding of concepts are poor, for example a number failed regularly to interpret the relationships between cooling rates and crystal size.
- In a number of cases students' understanding of basic vocabulary is limited.

Examination results are broadly in line with those at the time of the previous inspection.

Economics

Standards of achievement are very good. At A level, results represent good achievement in relation to students' abilities.

Good features

- Students across the ability range are able to offer extended contributions to whole class question and answer sessions.
- Students' research skills are good and they can use methods of economic enquiry.
- Students make effective use of focused tasks to enhance economic theory.
- There are good applications of ICT that help students make good progress through modified tasks.
- Students' presentation skills are good overall demonstrating informed perspectives.
- Case studies used by students which are linked with economic contexts are well structured and presented.

Since the previous inspection standards have improved. More use is made of ICT for word-processing and research.

Health and Social Care

Standards of achievement are good and are reflected in the external examination results. Students achieve well in relation to ability, and frequently exceed expectation.

Good features

- Students successfully research topics independently, competently present their findings to the group and participate in peer-group evaluation.
- Students understand and apply planning and preparation skills and the assessment criteria; they incorporate these into their coursework and generally achieve good standards.

- The more able students read widely, synthesise information, analyse data, interpret results, justify realistic conclusions and make considered recommendations for further work.
- Coursework projects show care and originality in the selection of case studies; these are well planned and researched. Interesting and valuable health plans are produced.

Shortcomings

- A few less satisfactory case studies are insufficiently well researched.
- A small number of students have limited subject knowledge in an aspect of the work.

Standards have improved since the last inspection, particularly in the external units. Standards and application of ICT skills have improved.

Psychology

Overall, standards of achievement are satisfactory; however attainment in past public examinations is unsatisfactory.

Good features

- Students generally speak with confidence in class discussions communicating clearly and coherently.
- The majority of students listen carefully to arguments and have good recall of what they have heard.
- Students demonstrate a sophisticated and mature approach to the science of psychology.
- The majority of students produce carefully considered and perceptive work which shows that they have evaluated their data for relevance and reliability.
- A good range of practical work is undertaken and students progressively acquire the essential skills of scientific enquiry and make effective notes.

Shortcomings

- Students' responses in class are limited in terms of offering proof of facts or opinions.
- The less able students struggle with the analysis and interpretation of data and evaluation of experimental procedures in terms of reliability and accuracy.
- Students of low and middle ability do not use the comprehensive vocabulary of psychology with confidence.

Psychology was not reported on in the last inspection.

Business studies

Standards are satisfactory. AVCE and A level results represent satisfactory achievement.

Good features

- Students show a keen interest in the course elements and are able to utilise a whole range of skills and demonstrate their understanding with clarity of purpose.
- Students generally can demonstrate a well-developed understanding on how business uses market research to give it ideas on how to meet consumer demand.
- Students use a wide range of materials with developing confidence to plan their research, locate information and make good notes.
- Students' appraising skills are good overall. Students are, to varying degrees, able to discern technical shifts in demand and supply of goods and services.
- Students show personal initiative and a good understanding of how to cooperate in pair and group work to explore and combine knowledge effectively.
- Students have a good knowledge of business facts and of the current issues and problems facing industry and commerce.

Shortcomings

- Comprehension of language is mixed. The more able students respond at length, sustain conversation and express opinions but the less able struggle to exchange ideas.
- There is insufficient independent reading by most students to develop reasoned arguments.
- Absence hinders progress for a minority of students who struggle to make judgements of quality.
- Too few students complete homework for extension and enrichment of class work. A minority of students do not adhere to deadlines to complete work promptly.

Since the last inspection the subject has attempted to consolidate its standards.

Recommendations

1. Continue to challenge all students in order to improve their performance in external examinations.
2. Increase the number of students gaining key skills qualifications.
3. Monitor more rigorously the quality of teaching and learning to share good practice and improve consistency within and across subjects.
4. Ensure that the assessment of students' progress is consistent and includes clear targets for improvement.
5. Establish a formal system for seeking the views of learners, staff and other parties on the quality of sixth form provision.
6. Implement plans to improve accommodation and resources, particularly access to ICT.
7. Continue efforts to improve attendance and punctuality.

APPENDIX

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Ysgol John Bright
School type	LEA Maintained
Age -range of pupils	11 - 18 years
Address of school	Oxford Road Llandudno
Post-Code	LL30 1DL
Telephone Number	01492 860044

Headteacher	Mrs I S Perry
Date of appointment	1 st March 1994
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr D Rowley
Registered Inspector	Miss G Owen
Dates of inspection	28 th April - 2 nd May 2003

B. Public Examinations

For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs			
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2002: 61			
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2002: 55			
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2002: 17			
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	41	62	66
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	95	98	94
Average points score per candidate	15	19	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	1		

C. The evidence-base for the inspection of the sixth-form

- 50 lessons were inspected, covering all curricular areas and PSE.
- Inspectors attended form time and the sixth form assembly.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, the head of sixth form, heads of department and staff with whole-school responsibilities. The Registered Inspector met the governing body and all members of staff before the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work in all subjects.
- Inspectors met a group of students from Y12 and Y13.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to the work and life of the sixth form.
- Feed-back was given to the senior management team and to the head of sixth form at the end of inspection week, and to senior management and governors after the inspection.