



**Estyn**

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg  
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
For Education and Training in Wales



**BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL**  
**INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**

...Rhagoriaeth I bawb.....Excellence for all...

## **Inspection under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996**

**Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari**

**Llanhari  
Rhondda Cynon Taf  
CF72 9XE**

**School number: 668/4064**

**Date of inspection: 26-30 April 2004**

**by**

**R Alun Charles HMI**

© Crown Copyright 2004

This Report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

## Contents

## Page

<b>1. Context</b>	<b>1</b>
The school and its priorities	1
<b>2. Main findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Educational standards achieved by pupils</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	9
3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum	11
<b>4. Ethos of the school</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	13
4.2 Behaviour and attitudes	14
4.3 Attendance	14
<b>5. Quality of education</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1 Teaching	16
5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting	17
5.3 Curriculum	18
5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	19
5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)	20
5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions	21
5.7 Partnership with industry	22
<b>6. Management</b>	<b>23</b>
6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement	23
6.2 Leadership and efficiency	24
6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	25
<b>7. Subjects and areas of learning</b>	<b>28</b>
Welsh	28
English	29
Mathematics	30
Science	31
Design and technology	32
Catering	33
Child development and child care	34
Information technology	34
History	36
Geography	37

Modern foreign languages	38
Art	39
Music	40
Physical education	42
Religious education	43
Sociology	44
Business studies	44
Drama	45
Media studies	46
Vocational courses	47
Personal and social education (PSE)	48

<b>8. School improvement</b>	<b>49</b>
------------------------------	-----------

8.1 Progress since the last inspection	49
8.2 Key issues for action	50

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>52</b>
-----------------	-----------

A. Basic information about the school	52
B. School data and indicators	52
C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations	53
D. The evidence base of the inspection	55
E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	56

<b>Sixth Form Appendix</b>	<b>57</b>
----------------------------	-----------

1. Standards of achievement	57
2. Quality of education	59
3. Leadership and management	61
4. Subjects and areas of learning	61
Welsh	61
English	62
Mathematics	63
Science (biology, chemistry, physics)	63
Design and technology	65
Information technology	65
Modern foreign languages (French and Spanish)	66
History	67
Geography	67
Religious education	68
Religious studies (Year 13)	68
Sociology	68
Business studies	69
Law	70
Art	70
Music (Year 12)	71
Physical education	71

Drama	72
Media studies	72
Vocational subjects	73
Travel and tourism, accommodation and catering, retailing and distribution services	74
5. Recommendations	75

## **1. Context**

### **The school and its priorities**

Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari is a designated bilingual school for 11-18 year old pupils, which is maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taff Education Authority. It was opened in 1974. It has 1061 pupils on roll, including 144 in Years 12 and 13.

The school is situated in the village of Llanhari. In the main, the pupils come from the Welsh-medium primary schools of Llantrisant and Tonyrefail, the Welsh Unit in Dolau Primary School in Rhondda Cynon Taff, and the Welsh-medium primary schools Y Ferch o'r Sgêr, Cynwyd Sant, Cwm Garw and Bro Ogwr, which are located in the County Borough of Bridgend.

Approximately half the pupils come from a residential area which is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged, a quarter of the pupils come from a comparatively prosperous area and the remainder from areas which are economically disadvantaged. Ten per cent of the pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals.

The school's intake covers the full range of ability. Three pupils (0.3% of pupils in years 7-11) have statements of special educational needs (SEN). One hundred and sixty-six other pupils, (18% of pupils in years 7-11) are at the Action Stage of the SEN Code of Practice: 128 of them are at the School Action Stage (SA) and 38 are at the School Action Plus Stage (SA+). No pupil is disapplied from the National Curriculum.

Almost all pupils belong to the white ethnic group with only 0.2% being from a mix of other ethnic groups. Ninety-seven percent of the pupils come from homes in which English is the main language but all the pupils are able to speak Welsh to first language standard. The remainder come from homes in which Welsh is the first language.

### **The school's main priorities**

The school has 15 aims which touch upon all aspects of the school's life and work. The School Development Plan (SDP) 2003-2006 provides an outline of these and how the school intends to achieve them. One of the main objectives of this plan is maintaining and raising standards in every aspect of school life and work so that satisfaction, success and motivation comes to all who are members of the community and 'family' of Llanhari. It aims to ensure balanced and wide-ranging experiences for children and young people by responding to their varied needs and to offer them quality experiences and success which will encourage the self-respect and self-esteem which is at the core of good learning. Forward planning to meet the changes which will come in the wake of establishing a Welsh-medium secondary school in the Borough of Bridgend in September 2006 is also an important, current priority.

The main quantitative targets of the school for 2003-2006 are as follows:

### Key stage 3 tests

Percentage who attain level 5+<sup>1</sup>

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Future Targets</b>		
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Welsh	69	78	68	73	80
English	60	79	59	81	80
Mathematics	70	70	68	72	75
Science	58	64	65	63	67
Core Subject Indicator (CSI) <sup>2</sup>	58	58	55	60	61

### Key stage 4

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Future Targets</b>		
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
CSI	34	26	38	43	44
5 GCSE subjects grades A*-C	48	49	58	61	64
5 GCSE subjects grades A*-G	95	91	90	96	95
Leaving full-time education without a qualification	0	0	0	0	0

The previous inspection of the school was undertaken during the summer term 1998.

<sup>1</sup> Level 5 is the level that it is expected that most pupils will attain in the National Curriculum assessment at key stage 3.

<sup>2</sup> The core subject indicator (CSI) in key stage 3 notes the percentage of pupils who have succeeded in achieving level 5 in all core subjects, that is either in Welsh (first language) or English, together with mathematics and science. In key stage 4, it refers to the percentage of pupils who achieve grades A\*-C in all core subjects.

## 2. Main findings

This school has many good features. It is an organised community in which, in the main, pupils apply themselves to their work and achieve well. It is also a caring community that makes successful efforts to meet the pastoral needs of all pupils. The school makes an exceptional contribution in developing pupils' ability to communicate confidently in Welsh for various purposes. The school has recently started or modified a number of schemes, particularly in self-evaluation, management and leadership. Although their potential has not yet been fully realised, there are already signs that they are assisting the process of laying a firm foundation for further improvement.

### Educational standards achieved by the pupils

#### Standards of achievement in the subjects

Subject	KS3	KS4	Sixth form
Welsh	Good	Good	Good
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Science	Good	Satisfactory	
Biology			Good
Chemistry			Good
Physics			Good
Geography	Very good	Very good	Very good
History	Good	Good	Good
Religious education	Good	Good	
Religious studies			Good
Modern foreign languages	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Art	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Design and technology	Good	Good	Good
Catering		Good	
Child development and child care		Good	
Information technology	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Music	Good	Good	Good
Physical education	Good	Good	Good
Sociology		Good	Good
Business studies		Good	Good
Drama	Good	Very good	Very good
Law			Good
Vocational subjects		Good	Good
Health and care			Very good
Media studies		Good	Good
Personal and social education	Satisfactory	Good	

- In key stages 3 and 4, standards were satisfactory or better in 99% of the lessons that were observed during the inspection, good in 65% and very good in 14%. These figures are well above the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government of 50% for good or very good standards. The percentage of good and very good standards was slightly higher in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.
- In the sixth form, standards were satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed. Standard were good or very good in 87% of the lessons.
- On the whole, pupils of all abilities achieve good standards in most subjects across the curriculum.

### Public tests and examinations

- In 2003, in the statutory tests of the National Curriculum at key stage 3, the percentage of year 9 pupils who achieved the CSI was higher than the local education authority (LEA) and the national percentage, and was in the second quartile of schools with a similar proportion of pupils registered as entitled to free school meals. Three of the core subjects achieved the national target for 2002 but in science the results were much lower.
- In key stage 4, in 2003, 49% of pupils achieved five or more grades A\*-C at GCSE. This is slightly higher than the LEA percentage but slightly less than the percentage for Wales. This figure was also lower in comparison with other, similar schools. The results for girls were 11 percentage points higher than those for boys. Twenty-six percent of pupils achieved the CSI, which is much lower than the school target. This compares with 38% for Wales and 32% for the LEA. The figure has dropped from 34% in 2002 and 42% in 2001. The percentage achieving the higher grades (A\*-C) in Welsh is significantly higher than the average for Wales but the percentage in other subjects is lower than the average, especially in science. The low numbers who are successful in achieving higher grades in science have had a significant effect on the key stage 4 performance indicators for the school. Ninety-one percent of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-G grades which is slightly lower than the school target. This is much higher than the LEA percentage and higher than the average for Wales. It is lower than for other, similar schools. The percentages for pupils who achieved one A\*-C or one A\*-G grade were higher than the percentage for the LEA and Wales. The pupils' average points score is consistently higher than those of the LEA and Wales. No pupil left the school without any qualification.
- In the 2003 examinations, 92% of sixth form students who were registered for 2 GCE Advanced Level/Advanced Supplementary examinations or an equivalent qualification achieved two or more grades A-E. Sixty-seven percent of them gained A-C grades, which is one percentage point lower than the percentage for Wales but six percentage points higher than the percentage for the LEA. The average points score for students, 19, was the same as for the previous year, which continues to be slightly lower than for Wales but a little higher than for the LEA. Judging by the achievements of students in year 11, the progress they have made is similar to that made by students throughout Wales.

### The standards achieved in key skills

Skill	KS3		KS4		Y12/13	
	Welsh	English	Welsh	English	Welsh	English
Speaking	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Listening	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Reading	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Writing	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Numeracy	Good		Good		Good	
ICT	Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Good	

Wider Key Skill	KS3	KS4	Y12/Y13
Problem solving	Good	Good	Good
Working together	Good	Good	Good
Improving own learning	Good	Good	Good

### The ethos of the school

- Pupils' spiritual development is good and their moral development is very good. Although much of the collective worship is of good quality, it does not happen on a regular basis in every class and this is contrary to statutory requirements. The teaching and the general life of the school present a strong moral framework to the pupils.
- Pupils' social and cultural development is good. Pupils' social development is nurtured well by such means as the year forum and through a number of charity activities in the local community and beyond. The older pupils help the younger ones in several positive ways. In the main, pupils' perception of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good. The school encourages pupils' awareness of other cultures effectively, in particular through its contact with Umqhele School in South Africa.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are generally good. The vast majority are polite and helpful. They listen well and concentrate on their work. Nevertheless, there is a small amount of unacceptable behaviour in classes in both key stages which impairs learning.
- Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. The school makes a great effort to improve attendance rates. Punctuality is good in the main. However, a small number of pupils in key stage 4 avoid some lessons because they lose interest in aspects of their school work.

## Quality of education

- In key stages 3 and 4, the quality of teaching in almost all the lessons was satisfactory or better, 56% were good and 22% were very good. These statistics are above the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government for at least 95% of lessons satisfactory and 50% good or very good. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is very much lower than was the case during the previous inspection. Despite the significant progress in the quality of teaching, expectations are still not sufficiently high. The school does not fully consider the range of ability within classes. A number of pupils display the ability to achieve even higher standards. The tasks which are set, do not always extend pupils to the limit, especially the more able pupils.
- In years 12 and 13, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the lessons. The teaching was good or very good in 90% of them.
- In key stages 3 and 4, the quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. Work is marked regularly and in a good number of cases it includes helpful comments on pupils' strengths and weaknesses and shows ways in which they can improve. The monitoring of the progress of pupils is good. Very informative reports are provided for parents.
- In years 12 and 13, the quality of assessment is generally good. Teachers mark work regularly and constructively and include comments on how work could be improved. The quality of reports is consistently good.
- The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum for pupils of all abilities are good. The school has recently established a strategy to coordinate and promote key skills across the curriculum. The development of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is generally good. The school has a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- In the sixth form, curricular provision is very good. There is a good range of courses, including vocational courses. Effective contacts with local colleges of further education enable the school to broaden provision. There is a detailed and effective scheme in place to promote key skills.
- The support and guidance of pupils are good. The scheme of work for personal and social education (PSE) is of good quality and meets statutory requirements. Pupils' achievements in key stage 3 are satisfactory. There is insufficient time to do justice to the scheme of work. Pupils' achieve well in key stage 4. In the sixth form, the number of contact hours is too small for the provision to be effective. Pupils have good careers advice. The school has good welfare procedures in place to respond to pupils' personal needs.
- On the whole, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The support teachers provide good support for the pupils but their expertise is not always used in the best possible way in mainstream classes. Pupils' individual education plans (IEP) do not show sufficiently clearly specific learning and teaching needs.

- The partnership with parents and the community is good. The curricular and pastoral contacts with feeder primary schools are very good and contribute well to establishing progression and continuity between key stages 2 and 3. The partnership with industry is good and offers various valuable experiences to pupils.

### **Management, leadership and self-evaluation**

- The leadership of the school is good.
- The governing body is very supportive of the school. Members make a good contribution when reviewing policies and monitoring finance. Their responsibilities, understanding and knowledge in relation to curricular matters are developing well.
- The headteacher, who was appointed in April 2003, has a clear vision for the school. She has established a new management structure that emphasises the importance of leadership and teachers' contribution to the school as a whole. The leadership and management teams are responding well to their new functions. The quality of departmental management, on the whole, is good. For the most part, curricular planning is a strong feature of the work of departments. There is too much variation in the quality of the departmental development plans and in the use of comparative data. Heads of year contribute to the effective system of pastoral care, but their monitoring role has not been developed sufficiently.
- The SDP is a comprehensive, clear document but its role in directing school initiatives has not been fully established.
- The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory. The whole school self-evaluation document is good as it identifies priorities and offers clear guidance for the school. The quality of self-evaluation documents is satisfactory in the main but it is not consistent enough.
- There is a clear structure for monitoring and reviewing the quality of teaching and learning. It has a positive effect, especially on the quality of lesson planning.
- The school uses its budget well. The deputy headteacher who has responsibility for the budget manages it efficiently. The reserve fund equates to about 1% of the budget, which is much lower than the percentage recommended by the Audit Commission.
- The quality of staffing is good. Overall, in-service training is effective. The administrative and technical staff, the site manager, the caretakers and the team of cleaners make a good contribution to the life and work of the school. The suitability of the buildings and the availability of the facilities are generally good, although there are some shortcomings that require attention. In general, the school has an adequate supply of resources and it makes good use of them.

There is a good range of computer equipment in the specialist rooms while the provision across the subjects is satisfactory.

**Key issues from the previous inspection**

The school has made good progress in relation to most of the issues but a few aspects still require attention.

### **3. Educational standards achieved by the pupils**

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

For sixth-form standards please refer to the sixth-form appendix.

##### **Classes inspected**

In key stages 3 and 4, standards were satisfactory or better in 99% of the lessons which were observed during the inspection. They were good in 65% and very good in 14%. These figures are well above the Welsh Assembly Government's target of 50% for good or very good standards. The percentage of good or very good standards was a little higher in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.

The standards for individual subjects are shown in the table in Section 2: Main findings.

Almost without exception, the school has succeeded in maintaining standards in subjects noted in the previous report. In a number of subjects, the teachers have succeeded in raising the standard from satisfactory to good and, in geography and drama, from good to very good in one or more of the key stages.

On the whole, pupils, whatever their ability, achieve good standards in most of the subjects of the curriculum. However, they do not always achieve their full potential.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are making good progress.

There are a number of things which are characteristic of pupils who achieve good standards. They:

- listen well, apply themselves to their work and respond enthusiastically;
- can discuss confidently and use subject vocabulary correctly and appropriately;
- use their skills of explanation, analysis and interpretation, and reach effective conclusions in tasks across the curriculum;
- effectively research, experiment and work independently;
- write well for different purposes;
- are able to apply skills and knowledge that they have learnt previously to meet the needs of new situations, and
- effectively evaluate their own work, and that of other pupils, in order to improve.

Where standards are only satisfactory, or at times unsatisfactory, pupils:

- lack appropriate vocabulary and are unable to expand on their comments and develop an opinion;
- lack commitment to the work and do not concentrate and complete tasks;
- make slow progress; and
- produce written work that is too superficial and inaccurate.

### **Public tests and examinations**

In 2003, in the National Curriculum statutory tests at key stage 3, the percentage of year 9 pupils who achieved the CSI was higher than the county and national percentage and was in the second quartile of similar schools. Three of the core subjects achieved the national target for 2002 but in science the results were much lower.

In key stage 4, in 2003, 49% of pupils achieved five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE, which is similar to the school's target. This is slightly higher than the Local Education Authority (LEA) percentage but slightly lower than the percentage for Wales. This percentage was also much lower in comparison with other schools in which pupils come from a similar background. The results for girls were 11% higher than those for boys. 26% of pupils achieved the CSI which was lower than the school target. This compares with 38% for Wales and 32% for the LEA. The figure has dropped from 34% in 2002 and 42% in 2001. The percentage in Welsh is significantly higher than the average score for Wales but the percentage is lower in other subjects, especially in science. The low numbers who succeed in achieving higher grades (A\*-C) in science have had a great effect on the school's performance. 91% of pupils achieved 5 or more A\*-G grades which is slightly lower than the school target. This is much higher than the LEA percentage and higher than the percentage for Wales. The percentage is lower than for other schools in which pupils come from a similar background. The percentage for pupils who achieved one A\*-C and A\*-G grade was higher than the percentage for the LEA and Wales. The pupils' average points score is consistently higher than those of the LEA and Wales. No pupil left the school without any qualification.

Judging from the achievements of pupils two years earlier in key stage 3, the progress they made in year 11 was similar to the average progress made by pupils throughout Wales. The subjects in which pupils performed better than average included French, history, music and physical education. The subjects in which pupils made less progress than average included science, mathematics and design and technology.

In the 2003 examinations, 92% of sixth form students registered for 2 GCE Advanced Level/ Advanced Supplementary examinations or an equivalent qualification achieved two or more A-E grades. 67% of them gained A-C grades, which is 1% lower than the percentage for Wales but 6% higher than the percentage for the county. The average points' score of the students, 19, was the same as for the

previous year which remained 1% lower than for Wales but marginally higher than for the county. Judging by the achievements of students in year 11, the progress they made is similar to that made by students throughout Wales.

### **3.2 The standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum**

Please refer to the sixth-form appendix for the sixth form.

The whole-school strategy to promote the development of key skills is at a developmental stage. The process of planning and monitoring to ensure balanced progression for these skills across key stages 3 and 4 has only just started. There is, therefore, some inconsistency within and across departments in terms of the quality of planning to raise standards.

#### **Literacy**

Pupils' listening standards are good. With the exception of a few lessons in both key stages, pupils across the whole range of ability listen attentively to teachers' instructions and presentations.

The standard of spoken language of most pupils, in both Welsh and English, is good. Pupils contribute well to whole-class discussions and when working in pairs or groups. They discuss their work naturally and, in almost all subjects, understand specialist terms well. The inaccurate expression of a few pupils impairs the standard of their spoken language. In most subjects, they contribute confidently and offer purposeful, extended comments. They are willing to answer questions with explanations, descriptions, analysis and conclusions. In a few subjects, however, they are too subdued and passive. Pupils' oral skills are further enriched by the opportunities they have for roleplay in subjects such as drama and Welsh.

Reading standards in Welsh and English are good across all subjects. The pupils read meaningfully with good awareness of the requirements of reading to an audience. They show a good understanding of what they read in their subject textbooks and their worksheets. In subjects such as drama, business, geography, art, media studies and history, pupils' research skills are developing well. In a number of subjects they are also succeeding well in using translingual skills, that is, using information read in one language effectively when writing in another language.

Writing standards are generally good in both languages, though standards in key stage 3 are more variable across the subjects in Welsh. At their best, in subjects such as history, Welsh, English, drama, religious education, geography and media studies, the pupils write for different purposes and in a variety of forms. They use appropriate terms and show good awareness of language registers.

#### **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

ICT standards are satisfactory. In key stage 3, pupils' use of some aspects of computers is developing satisfactorily in a number of subjects. However, their use of databases and spreadsheets is generally limited across the curriculum. In key stage 4, pupils gain competence and reinforce their skills by using computers in a good

number of subjects. They are able to find information on the internet and incorporate it well into their work. Overall, however, the pupils do not make sufficient use of ICT in both key stages across the curriculum, especially in the core subjects.

### **Numeracy**

Standards in numeracy are generally good. In several subjects, for example, geography, information technology, art, physical education and the vocational subjects in key stage 4, pupils time, measure and weigh accurately; create and interpret graphs, use formulae in spreadsheets and use statistics for different purposes.

### **Wider key skills**

Pupils' co-operation in pairs and groups is good and is a strong feature of learning in a number of subjects. There are good examples of problem-solving in lessons such as drama, history, art, media studies, information technology and geography. In these situations, pupils work logically.

Pupils' evaluate their own work well. In the best cases, pupils' learning improves because they assess their own work regularly. In a few subjects, the pupils do not take sufficient advantage of self-evaluation to improve their work.

## **4. Ethos of the school**

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

Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good. Their moral development is very good.

A number of subjects including religious education, Welsh, history, music, art, sociology and drama contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. In religious education, for example, pupils have good opportunities to reflect quietly on their own experiences, to discuss some of the major issues of life and to consider their own responses to these questions, together with the responses of people from different religions.

Collective worship is held on average twice a week for each year group. In general, it contributes well, sometimes very well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. In the best examples, there is a spiritual ethos and opportunities for pupils to be at peace and reflect or pray in a suitable atmosphere. At times, effective use is made of music to enrich the occasion. On three mornings a week, the pupils worship in their class groups. There are good guidelines for form teachers. The quality of these experiences varies from very good to superficial. In the best cases, pupils are given good opportunities to reflect and to respond to the theme in question. In a number of classes, collective worship is not held regularly. This is contrary to statutory requirements.

Pupils' moral development is very good. The teaching and the general life of the school present a strong moral framework for the pupils. The vast majority of pupils have strong values, which enable them to identify with others, offer care and support to each other, and to differentiate between good and bad, the acceptable and the unacceptable. The vast majority show respect to each other, to their teachers and other adults and to people who have different traditions and beliefs from their own. The pupils have regular opportunities to discuss moral issues and issues relating to racial equality during tutorials and in a number of subjects. The pupils are aware of the dangers of racial prejudice. The pupils show care and kindness for those less fortunate than themselves by raising funds for a number of charities, such as Love in a Box and Marie Curie. Often, it is the pupils themselves who organise the fundraising through their year forum.

Pupils' social development is good. The pupils work very well together. They are aware of the essentials of successful group work. Work in pairs and groups are of a high standard in a number of subjects. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are good. Numerous visits and trips, the year forum and work experience all contribute effectively to pupils' social development. The older pupils in the school assist the younger pupils in a number of activities. Pupils' social awareness is developed well through a number of activities in the community, for example by serving tea to local organisations for the elderly and regular contact with the village nursery, and world-wide.

Pupils' cultural development is good. A number of subjects across the school encourage pupils' awareness of the culture of Wales and the Welsh language. Pupils are given opportunities to see performances and concerts and visit art galleries. Welsh drama companies and authors come to the school to hold workshops. However, sometimes, opportunities are missed to develop the Cwricwlwm Cymreig, for example in art. Extra-curricular activities to foster pupils' identity with their Welsh heritage are also scarce. The European dimension is being developed well in modern foreign languages, with a French theatre company visiting the school and the pupils visiting France. The school effectively promotes an awareness of other cultures in a number of subjects, for example religious education, geography, art, music, drama and technology. The school has formed a valuable partnership with Umqhele secondary school in the Ivory Park township in South Africa. Year 9 pupils correspond with the pupils of the school.

#### **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

Pupils' behaviour and their attitude to learning are good.

The behaviour of **the vast majority of** pupils in lessons is good and fosters learning. Most pupils listen well to their teachers, concentrate on their work, share information and skills and work together well. However, there is a small amount of unsatisfactory behaviour in classes in both key stages, which impairs learning. The behaviour of pupils in the corridors, when going to lessons and at break and lunch times, is good.

The school is gradually reviewing its policy on behaviour management. It places considerable emphasis on ensuring that every pupil is appreciated as an individual and that he/she respects the opinions and property of others. The school has effective arrangements for promoting good behaviour and preventing bullying and has clear sanctions for pupils who misbehave. There are detailed procedures for staff to follow when instances of misbehaviour occur.

The school works closely with local authority agencies in Rhondda Cynon Taff and Bridgend to provide support and effective programmes for pupils with behavioural difficulties and others who lack motivation for schoolwork. The school also **provides** an alternative curriculum for these pupils.

During the last three terms, a comparatively high number of pupils, 63, have been excluded temporarily but **none have** been excluded permanently. The arrangements for exclusion follow National Assembly for Wales guidelines.

#### **4.3 Attendance**

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

The average percentage attendance of pupils of statutory school age for the three terms preceding the inspection was 90.7%. This is an increase since the last inspection, when attendance was unsatisfactory.

The school makes good use of **a computer** system to record and analyse attendance data. Attendance is monitored thoroughly. There is also effective communication

between the school and education welfare officers to discuss the attendance of individual pupils.

Most parents respond well to the school's efforts to improve attendance. Even so, the education of a number of pupils suffers as a result of occasional absences and the increasing tendency to go on holiday during term time.

Punctuality at the start of the day and for lessons is good. However, there are some factors that sometimes impair punctuality, for example, buses arriving late, the distances to be walked around the building and some pupils being too leisurely in their approach. There is also a small core of pupils in key stage 4 who miss some lessons because they have lost interest in aspects of their schoolwork. This impairs their progress and poses a risk to their safety.

## 5. Quality of education

### 5.1 Teaching

The quality of teaching is good.

In key stages 3 and 4, almost all the lessons were satisfactory or better, 56% were good and 22% were very good. These statistics are above the Welsh Assembly Government's targets, that is, at least 95% satisfactory and 50% good or very good.

Very good examples of teaching were seen in Welsh, media studies, music, geography, drama, design and technology and history. On the whole, teaching was satisfactory in art, French and information technology in key stage 3, and in science and mathematics in key stage 4. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is very much lower than during the previous inspection.

The quality of planning is consistently good. Very appropriately, there is a clear focus on methodology and the quality of pupils learning in the SDP. Ensuring that teachers throughout the school are planning lessons following specific steps has led to greater consistency in setting clear aims and objectives and using a variety of teaching strategies, including summing up at the end of a lesson. Appropriate attention is also given to progression from lesson to lesson.

Where teaching is very good, the tasks are challenging, the questions stimulating and the timing and pace of work is effective. In these lessons, teachers promote pupils' thinking and learning skills well and help them to become independent learners. Teachers make purposeful attempts to use the development of key skills to improve standards in several subjects. This has a positive effect on the teaching and the commitment and response of the pupils.

When teaching is satisfactory, there is a tendency for the teacher to over-direct the lesson, which restricts pupils' opportunities to play an active part. There is a lack of pace to the work and, in a few subjects pupils make too much use of work sheets.

Despite the significant progress in improving the quality of teaching, teachers do not always consider fully the range of ability in classes. A number of pupils could attain even higher standards. The tasks set do not always fully extend individuals.

Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subject is good and, often, their enthusiasm for their subject encourages pupils to enjoy their lessons. Many of them are generous in giving of their time outside lessons, to assist groups of pupils, especially when providing support for external examination requirements.

A positive feature of the vast majority of lessons is the good relationship between teachers and pupils. In the best lessons, the teachers give regular feedback to pupils, by praising success and providing good support for pupils with SEN.

## 5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. The school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the Code of Practice for SEN.

The school has reviewed its assessment policy and has established a task team to develop it further. In a few subjects, teachers make regular use of NC levels for assessment throughout key stage 3 but this has not **yet** been developed fully in every department.

Work is marked regularly in every department. In the main, the quality of the marking is good. In the best examples, the marking is constructive, includes beneficial comments on pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and indicates ways to improve. However, the pupils do not always have enough opportunities to act upon these suggestions. A strength in some of the practical subjects such as art are the oral assessments made when teachers discuss work with individuals and groups.

A number of departments set agreed tasks for a term and mark them thoroughly. Though there are some good examples, the quality and use of departmental portfolios to standardise and moderate assessments **is mainly** satisfactory. With the exception of some subjects, for example drama and media studies, the teachers do not make enough use of assessment results when considering the next stage in pupils' learning.

Teachers record assessments of the progress and attainment of pupils with SEN in great detail. However, the targets in the IEPs are too general.

A key **element of** assessment is the contact book between the home and the school. The pupils note the targets for every subject in the contact book, which are discussed in interviews with a personal tutor. The information is then transferred to a personal progress file. Pupils also play a part in the assessment process across the curriculum, by completing self-assessment sheets. In this way, the school succeeds to a great extent in including pupils in an active way in assessment. This has a positive effect on their learning and their progress. Not every pupil, however, makes full use of the contact book to record targets for every subject. Key stage 4 Records of **Achievement** are of good quality.

The collection and analysis of information in order to monitor pupils' progress is good. The school has designed a very good computer system to provide year-end and interim reports to parents. The format of the reports provides an effective means of identifying pupils who are under-achieving across a range of subjects in each year by comparing targets and attainment. However, comments on subjects do not always describe a pupil's achievement sufficiently well.

A parents evening is held for each year following the interim report. The arrangement is generally valuable but the parents evening for year 10 pupils takes place too late in the year.

### 5.3 Curriculum

For specific comments about the sixth form, please refer to the sixth-form appendix.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum for pupils of all ability in key stages 3 and 4, including those with SEN, are good. Welsh is the medium of learning for every subject in key stages 3 and 4, with the exception of English. The time provision for subjects in both key stages is suitable.

In key stage 3, the pupils study all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Providing drama for all pupils enriches the provision. Every fortnight, each pupil has an information technology (IT) lesson and tutorial periods, which include PSE and other relevant issues. The tutorial periods are too short to do full justice to the content of the PSE course. In year 7, every subject is taught in mixed ability groups. Years 8 and 9 are divided into two groups and, within those groups, pupils are taught in an appropriate combination of mixed ability sets and groups.

In key stage 4, all the pupils study an appropriate, common core of subjects which includes Welsh, English, mathematics and science, together with one lesson a week of religious education, physical education, IT and PSE. They are able to sit the GCSE short-course in religious education and IT. Presenting specific lessons in PSE to complement morning tutorial sessions contributes well to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils are offered an appropriate choice to study either French or Spanish as a modern foreign language. There are suitable arrangements for science. A high proportion of pupils study double science. A small group follow the single science course and another subject within the time which is allocated to the double course. A small number of pupils choose to study the three sciences as separate subjects by selecting an additional science in one of the option columns

The school offers three columns with a wide range of options from which to choose. These include a number of subjects not taught in key stage 3, namely sociology, media studies, and business studies, as well as a good range of vocational and pre-vocational courses. Some of the courses are taught jointly with local further education colleges. This arrangement helps to ensure an inclusive curriculum, which meets the needs, ability and interest of most pupils. At present, the school is considering how to develop further purposeful opportunities for a small number of pupils who continue to lose interest in schoolwork.

Pupils with SEN have access to the whole curriculum and all examination courses. They have good support to integrate into the full life of the school. No pupil has been disapplied from the National Curriculum.

Every National Curriculum subject and religious education conform to the requirements. The curricular planning is good in the vast majority of subjects. The schemes of work are appropriately detailed and give effective direction to the teaching and learning. In the main, planning for the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good.

Curricular links with the feeder primary schools are good. These links contribute greatly to ensuring effective transition between key stages 2 and 3.

On the whole, homework contributes well to the standard of work. Teachers set homework regularly across the range of subjects. Homework complements effectively what is done in class by reinforcing pupils' knowledge and understanding and developing their skills. Sometimes, there is an imbalance between the amount of work set each evening because the school does not have a homework timetable.

The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, which consolidate and extend pupils' learning. **This includes various lunchtime clubs as well as clubs to complete homework and course work, and educational visits and trips abroad.** The educational visits and the variety of workshops held in the school have a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement in a number of subjects. Pupils also benefit from having the opportunity to be a part of the school production of a rock opera or a musical every other year.

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

For specific comments about the sixth form, please refer to the sixth-form appendix.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare are good.

The school is a close, happy and caring community, which places emphasis on the value of every individual and promotes equal opportunities for all.

The school has good arrangements for pupil support. It promotes a caring and supportive ethos and is very well appreciated by parents, as demonstrated by responses to the parents' questionnaire.

The heads of year fulfil their pastoral duties effectively, by making use of their generous non-contact time. They work and plan well with each other, and with PSE and careers coordinators. They also give good guidance to personal tutors but their role in monitoring has not been sufficiently developed.

The system of heads of year and class tutors interviewing pupils at least twice a year assists well in monitoring their progress.

The school has a PSE programme, which has been carefully planned by the coordinator. It conforms with the recommendations of the PSE framework of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC). A detailed audit of pupils' experiences has assisted in its planning. Many subjects make a good contribution to provision in key stages 3 and 4. However, in key stage 3, the quality of the work is only satisfactory because most of the programme takes place during the tutorial periods, when time is too limited.

The quality of the advice and instruction in the careers education programme is good. It promotes pupils' understanding and awareness of the world of work effectively. Very beneficial contacts have been developed with companies and external agencies, for example with Careers Wales and the Education Business Partnership (EBP). The school is working towards the Careers Wales quality award. The school's arrangements for work experience are well organised and effective.

The sex education policy conforms to statutory requirements.

The school's welfare procedures are good and respond to pupils' personal needs. A **weekly independent** counselling service, a weekly service from a nurse, additional support from a teacher from the LEA's behaviour support service, re-assimilation arrangements after a long-term absence or illness, and an alternative curriculum programme in key stage 4 all help to promote social inclusion.

The quality of the individual support and care given to pupils within subjects is good. There are also appropriate arrangements in place for parents and pupils at the time of making subject choices in years 9 and 11.

The school's health and safety policy provides good guidance structures for the care, health and safety of pupils on the school site and when undertaking visits away from the school. The school takes suitable steps to ensure pupils' safety in lessons and during break-times and lunchtime.

The school's arrangements for child protection are good. The policy offers clear and comprehensive guidance to staff. The INSET held and the succinct aide-memoire prepared by the nominated person have helped to raise staff awareness of the arrangements.

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

Provision for pupils with SEN is good and the response of the school to the requirements of the Code of Practice is satisfactory.

The school has a learning support department with an SEN coordinator and two other experienced teachers who work together well. The department uses external agencies appropriately and relevant LEAs provide additional support to children who **are at the School Action Plus stage**.

The arrangements for identifying pupils with SEN are good, especially during year 7.

In key stage 3, pupils with SEN have access to a balanced and broad curriculum. In key stage 4, they can choose from courses that are suited to their ability.

Subject departments are responsible for providing suitable work for pupils with SEN. In the core subjects, the subject teachers set targets for pupils on the School Action Plus stage. The SEN coordinator collates and prepares an IEP for them. These targets vary from unsatisfactory to satisfactory and the IEP is deficient insofar as it does not show clearly the additional or different curricular needs of these pupils and what learning and teaching strategies should be adopted. As a result, there are restrictions on their use as a tool for planning and monitoring progress.

The teachers in the **learning support department** offer support to pupils in mainstream classes. This is mainly in Welsh, English and mathematics, with some support in science but very little in other subjects. On the whole, pupils make good progress but in some subjects the planning **does not** enable pupils to be extended fully. The support teachers are not always able to use their expertise in the best

possible way to promote the planning and the teaching. Sometimes, the teachers in the department also teach pupils in groups which are outside mainstream classes. In these groups, pupils make good progress in their reading and spelling and gain self-confidence, when taking part in drama activities. The pupils make good progress in 'Ready for Work' courses in key stage 4.

Recent investment in literacy computer software and the implementation of a reading scheme during lunchtime contribute well to raising standards of literacy. The school also holds a spelling club to give support to those pupils with weaknesses in spelling.

The SEN coordinator contacts parents regularly and takes advantage of every opportunity to consult with them and provide them with information about their children's development.

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

The school's partnership with parents, the community, schools and other institutions is good.

The parents receive comprehensive and useful information regularly from the school by means of reports, handbooks, circulars and contact books. The formal home/school agreement with parents and pupils contributes to developing close links. The governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements. The school succeeds in maintaining good links with parents and the wider community. Parents can arrange an interview to discuss their children's work at any time during the academic year, as well as during parents' evenings, open and induction evenings and careers events.

The parents' contributions in the pre-inspection meeting and their response to the parents' questionnaire show that they are very supportive of the school. The Parent-Teacher Association makes a significant contribution to the life and work of the school by organising social and fundraising events.

The pastoral and curricular links with feeder primary schools are very good, and help to further reinforce continuity and progression from key stage 2 to key stage 3. This remains one of the school's priorities. Secondary school teachers visit primary schools and primary school pupils attend technology and business days, and events in the MFL department in the secondary school. Teachers from **both phases meet** regularly to discuss subject issues as well as other aspects, such as literacy, numeracy and the arrangements for pupils with SEN. They also attend some INSET courses jointly.

Members of the senior management teams from the county's four Welsh medium secondary schools meet regularly to discuss methods of developing 14-19 learning pathways. This opportunity to share experiences helps to develop several aspects of the work of the schools, especially the vocational provision through the medium of Welsh within the LEA.

The school has very good curricular links with Bridgend and Pontypridd colleges of further education. They also have good links with the University of Wales,

Aberystwyth, the University of Wales Newport and the University of Wales Institute Cardiff for initial teacher training.

The school's community library is a useful resource for the village. The school has plans to use the caretaker's house, which is empty, as a further resource to foster links between the school and the village. Many members of the community, including voluntary and charitable agencies, local artists and performers, the fire service and the police share their expertise with pupils and staff and provide good support to the school.

The school gives high prominence to sustainability issues, in particular through its contact with the World-Wide Fund for Nature. As a result, it has created a number of useful links with external agencies.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

The school's partnership with industry is good.

The school has good partnerships with the world of work, particularly in some curricular areas, such as design and technology and vocational courses. It has a **clear** work-related education policy, including aims and objectives. There is also an effective programme of activities from key stage 3 to post-16. Through this, pupils receive broad and varied experiences related to work within many subject areas, in the PSE programme, through arrangements for careers advice and in the work experience programme.

There are close links with a range of industrial and commercial companies in the area. Pupils in every year group have various experiences of business to complement work in the classroom. These include visits to local businesses and business people and industrialists coming to the school to work with pupils.

The small number of staff who have had experience of working in industry use it to raise pupils' awareness of the world of work and business. The school has suitable plans to extend the overall experience of **staff in** this respect.

## 6. Management

For specific comments about the sixth form, please refer to the sixth-form appendix.

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

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory.

The whole-school document for self-evaluation is of good quality. It identifies priorities for improvement on the basis of appropriate quantitative and qualitative evidence, including the opinions of staff, for example through the Investors in People process, the governors and the LEA's advisory service. The self-evaluation is thorough and offers good direction for the school.

One of the outcomes was to establish task teams to develop guidance for important cross-school aspects such as learning, pupils' attainment, **promoting positive behaviour management**, PSE, inclusion, sustainable development and key skills. Involving every member of staff in one of these teams provides an opportunity for each one of them **to be involved in implementing** a whole-school issue.

The school has mapped clearly all aspects of the annual self-evaluation cycle and has set a pattern for departments to follow. This is a comparatively new structure for departments and the quality of their self-evaluation, at present, varies from satisfactory to good. The departments now set targets for cohorts of pupils and analyse performance in their subjects against comparative national and local data. They also compare pupils' performance in examinations with the performance of the same pupils in their other examinations. National benchmarking data is not part of the process at departmental level at present. However, since summer 2003, the school has developed a database, which includes value-added details as a basis for discussions and to target pupils who are in danger of underachieving in year 11. The data is also used to create class profiles and to track the progress of year 7 pupils. In the departments in which self-evaluation is good, the teachers analyse in detail comparative information in order to plan specific strategies for improvement. The majority of the departments produce analyses of satisfactory quality at present, and there is a need to develop further their ability to use the data effectively to target pupils for support.

There is evaluation of plans and schemes of work in the majority of departmental self-evaluations. The best evaluations link pupils' performance and results with review and revision of schemes of work and with the targeting process. There is also evidence of self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' attainment in the minutes of departmental meetings. In a number of subjects, however, the process has not been sufficiently embedded to ensure a direct link between pupils' achievements, the self-evaluation cycle and the DDP. Setting targets for all pupils has not been established consistently across all departments. Also, not all pupils are aware of their personal targets in every subject.

The SDP has been planned carefully and in detail, establishing appropriate priorities, setting a clear implementation timetable and identifying individual responsibilities for implementing and evaluating outcomes. However, the quality of the DDPs varies from satisfactory to good and, generally, they do not make enough reference to some aspects of the SDP. This process has not been firmly established.

Monitoring and reviewing the quality of teaching and learning, in order to aim for excellence, is also part of the departments' annual self-evaluation cycle. Good examples of this include the methods of monitoring pupils' work books in the Welsh department and ensuring the consistency of the quality of teachers' responses to pupils' work in the English department. Focusing on a specific area when monitoring teaching and learning, for example, class work, homework or lesson planning, is also influential. The school makes beneficial use of the LEA's advisory service in this context.

## **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The quality of leadership and efficiency is good.

The Governors contribute well to the leadership of the school through meetings of the whole body and sub-committees. The members are very aware of the changes which face the school and are planning ahead prudently for this, in particular from the financial standpoint. They are making an important contribution to the current review of the school's policies. Their knowledge of curricular matters and the school's examination and test results is satisfactory and **is continually** increasing. A fairly recent step was to give specific responsibilities to governors, such as coordinator for pupils with SEN. The governors undertake these responsibilities conscientiously and they are quickly gaining a good understanding of them.

The headteacher shows good leadership and she has a clear vision of the way forward for the school. She has established a new management structure and arrangement for meetings. The new structure emphasises leadership, rather than management, and the development of the cross-school responsibilities of the teams and their function as departmental contacts. The teams respond well to their new functions and are beginning to **influence the work** of the school positively.

The quality of departmental management is good. In the main, curricular planning is a strong feature, which helps to give clear direction to the work of departments. The departmental staff work together well as teams. Nevertheless, departments, in the main, have not given enough attention to refining their DDPs and using performance data.

The management team and the departmental leaders undertake their functions in relation to monitoring standards of work effectively on the whole. There are clear monitoring procedures, which place appropriate emphasis on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The quality of leadership of the heads of year contributes to a very effective system of pastoral care. Though heads of year are in constant touch with class tutors, there

are few formal visits to classes to monitor tutorial periods, including the PSE programme that is provided in them.

The SDP is a comprehensive, clear document but its role in directing school initiatives has not been fully established.

The school uses its budget well. The deputy headteacher, who has responsibility for the budget on a whole-school basis, manages it efficiently. The governing body also keeps a close and regular eye on the budget and expenditure. The process of tying in the school's priorities to financial planning has commenced. However, uncertainty about the school during the next few years has placed some restrictions on forward planning. The school is extending the sixth-form provision efficiently by working with local further education colleges but there is no Welsh or bilingual provision in the colleges. The school succeeds in remaining within its budget, although there is a great deal of pressure on financial resources at present. The reserves equate to about 1% of the total budget, which is much lower than the percentage recommended by the Audit Commission. The school has responded effectively to suggestions made in the previous report of the Authority's internal auditors.

The methods of allocating funding to different departments is in accordance with a formula that is known to staff. Departments are given the opportunity to apply for additional funding when exceptional demands arise, such as establishing new courses and purchasing new resources. These arrangements are satisfactory.

Day-to-day communication is good. The office staff undertake their responsibilities effectively.

Considering the quality of the life of the school, the quality of education, the pupils' standards of achievement and the results of external tests and examinations, the school provides good value for money.

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

#### **Staffing**

The quality of staffing is good.

The school has suitable staff to meet its curricular requirements and the qualifications of the vast majority of teachers correspond well to the areas in which they work. In a small number of subjects in which teachers teach outside their area of expertise, they receive effective support and this rarely impairs pupils' standards of achievement in the subject.

The pupil-teacher ratio in the school is better than the national average. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and those teachers who are comparatively new to the profession. The school uses peripatetic music teachers effectively for additional instrumental tuition.

Members of staff have clear job descriptions. The allocation of additional salary points is appropriate in relation to the responsibilities of the staff and the allocation of non-contact time, in general, is consistent with responsibilities.

The school is a **Recommending Body** for the Welsh Assembly Government's Graduate Teacher Programme and the one teacher who is following the programme has detailed and appropriate guidance. Two newly qualified teachers have a structured programme, which has been very well designed by an induction tutor and by their mentors. There is an effective procedure for inducting new staff and supply teachers receive appropriate support. Arrangements for performance management are in operation.

The INSET coordinator arranges extensive training and staff from every department attend internal and external courses. The further professional development of staff is beginning to reflect effectively the priorities of the SDP. There are effective means of disseminating information following INSET courses and the evaluation of the influence of INSET courses is developing well, with a number of departments assessing their effect on raising standards. The effect of recent INSET on cross-curricular aspects such as the promotion of key skills has begun to influence positively the work of the school.

Administrative and technical staff make a good contribution to the life and work of the school across a wide range of duties and responsibilities. The site manager is extremely effective. Both caretakers and the team of cleaners maintain the site well.

### **Accommodation**

The suitability of buildings and the availability of facilities is generally good. The condition of the buildings on the large campus is good and they are kept clean and tidy. As a result of installing close circuit cameras to observe the buildings, the school has seen a reduction in vandalism.

Departmental rooms are located together as effective learning units. This facilitates departmental arrangements for sharing and exchanging learning resources, and the number of staff who have to move rooms is very small. Departments make good use of most of the rooms but some rooms in the **art, history, Welsh and MFL** departments are limited in size for large groups and practical activities. The teachers make a good effort to overcome the difficulties and there is no evidence that these impair pupils' education significantly.

There is a stimulating learning environment in a good number of the departments but some of the classroom displays do not make sufficient use of pupils' work. There are some effective displays around the school, which reflect its life and activities but not all of the departments take advantage of the opportunity to celebrate success by displaying their work in this manner.

A fire drill is held regularly and fire-fighting and electrical equipment is checked annually. Appropriate attention has been given to health and safety matters which were noted in the previous inspection. There is a need for a new surface on the **Redgra** and this is one of the priorities of the SDP. The quality of the surface of the

running track is unsatisfactory. The gymnasium floor is also uneven in some areas. At times, the swell from some of the pupils' toilets is unsavoury.

A comprehensive study was undertaken of the suitability of the school's buildings for disabled pupils. **Some modifications have been made but disabled pupils cannot gain full access to all parts of the school.**

### **Learning resources**

The school has a good supply of basic learning resources across the subjects, which, in general, are of good quality. There is a shortage of resources in a few departments, for example, design and technology, business, drama and media departments. Almost without exception, teachers and pupils make good use of the resources which are available across the departments.

The fitness equipment in the physical education department is good but a lack of space impedes its use. The MFL department uses satellite equipment well for teaching the sixth form.

Some pupils make good use of the library in their free time, by using the computers located within it. It includes a satisfactory number of non-fiction and fiction books and the English department makes regular use of it. However, the library, which also serves as a community library, is too small for the size of the school and this restricts its use. The Welsh department make very good use of class libraries and most of the departments use books and other reference materials appropriately and regularly. The sociology department makes too much use of photocopies.

Most departments produce worksheets of good quality and they make sensible use of photocopied material. At times, the worksheets that have been prepared are not appropriately differentiated for pupils of different abilities within the same class.

The quality of the computer equipment for use by staff and pupils is good in the three specialist rooms. Some subjects make good use of these resources. In some cases, departments do not forward plan in a purposeful way in order to gain access to specialist rooms and, in other cases, there are insufficient opportunities to gain access. In the few teaching rooms in which computers are linked to interactive white boards, departments make good use of them. The internet connection is slow and, at times, this has an effect on pupils' work rate. The school has continued to invest in computer hardware and software but the provision generally across all subjects is satisfactory. There is a lack of computer equipment in business, media studies and music in key stage 3, and the ICT resources across most subjects, apart from geography and design and technology, are inadequate.

## 7. Subjects and areas of learning

### Standards achieved by pupils

#### Welsh

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and key stage 4.

#### Good features

#### KS3 and KS4

- Pupils listen well to teachers' presentations, respond readily to their questions and give extended answers. They also listen well to other pupils, when they read each other's work and give feedback. They respond well to each other in pair or group activities.
- The pupils' confidence to discuss and converse in Welsh is developing well, especially when responding to literary topics. The pupils can use a range of literary appreciation terms when expressing an opinion about the effectiveness of style, and empathise with the feel and atmosphere of the excerpt.
- Reading standards are generally good and most pupils can read aloud meaningfully. In key stage 3, the best pupils compose polished reviews and less able pupils respond well to fiction. Periods of independent reading and the reading a class novel nurture in pupils a taste for reading.
- Pupils respond well to a variety of literary materials. Year 8 pupils have a good awareness of the features of a soliloquy. By year 9, the pupils recognise the features of a range of creative and factual forms. By key stage 4, the best pupils respond perceptively and sensitively to literary subjects. These pupils can also discuss extended topics, by responding to the content and style in a mature manner and using polished language. Pupils of lesser ability are able to respond to literature in terms of content and style.
- The standard of written work is good. The majority of pupils present their work well. They write in a variety of styles and for different purposes; and the practice of redrafting has been well established by year 9. In key stage 4, many pupils of all abilities are able to produce sensitive and descriptive creative writing and express an opinion by using sound evidence.

#### Shortcomings

- The expression of some pupils is **inaccurate in** discussion and conversation.
- Incorrect syntax and mutation are features of the written work of a number of pupils of average and lower ability.

## English

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and key stage 4.

### Good features

#### KS3 and KS4

- The vast majority of pupils listen well, with the best pupils and a significant percentage of those of average and low ability giving extended responses to the teachers' careful questioning. As individuals, in pairs and in small groups, they respond well to literature and discuss the authors' literary and linguistic techniques well. Pupils of higher ability respond well and with confidence to oral tasks, especially in role play. In key stage 4, a number of abler **pupils respond** in a mature and sensitive manner when discussing the author's literary style and language, and show a good understanding of purpose and **mode**. These pupils work together well within groups to analyse poetry successfully, through discussion and reaching a consensus when comparing poems.
- The standard of reading aloud among **more able** pupils is good, with the best ones reading confidently, fluently and expressively. The perceptive reading skills of pupils are generally developing well, through discussion of a wide range of literary material. A good proportion of pupils also develop confidence and mastery in identifying and analysing authors' techniques when reading a challenging variety of factual and fictional material.
- The extended writing skills of pupils are developing well. The best pupils can write with increasing maturity, a good mastery of language forms and a variety of **modes**.
- Pupils with SEN show an improvement in their ability to write more extendedly and in their grasp of mechanical skills such as spelling, syntax and punctuation.
- Most pupils show an increasing awareness of the importance of the accuracy of **tone** and form when redrafting their work. Some pupils improve their work significantly by responding to the instructions of their teachers.
- A significant number of pupils present their work neatly when using ICT, although there are few computers in the department.

### Shortcomings

- The lack of self-discipline of a few pupils, especially boys in key stage 3, hinders their own and other pupils' progress, especially during class question sessions and feedback.
- The contributions of a number of pupils in whole-class discussions are too brief and those of higher and average ability are too subdued in group discussions.

- A significant percentage of pupils in key stage 3 do not make enough use of their 'Talk Diary' and 'Reading Log' as a means of recording oral activities and reading in order to help them reflect on their performance. Pupils in key stage 4 also do not record their personal reading sufficiently.
- A lack of fluency and accuracy in reading impairs the standards of a number of pupils in key stage 3.
- A number of pupils of average and below average ability do not respond consistently enough to their teachers' suggestions to correct and improve their work, and they repeat spelling and syntax mistakes.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and satisfactory in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3 and KS4**

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well when doing basic calculations.
- Pupils can deal with mental work confidently and accurately, as a result of regular practice.
- Work on geometric shapes is good. Pupils are also able to conduct appropriate research on the characteristics of these shapes according to their ability.
- A good number of the most able pupils succeed very well in algebra.
- The standards of practical and investigative work are good. This is especially true in key stage 3, but the vast majority of pupils in key stage 4 also achieve good standards.
- All pupils can gather and display statistical data successfully in different ways. The most able pupils are able to interpret data well in the form of graphs and charts.
- The work on probability is good across the range of abilities, and pupils are confident when dealing with the concept.
- The most able pupils achieve well in trigonometry in key stage 4.
- Pupils with SEN are making good progress and complete work to a good standard.

## Shortcomings

- Despite the good features above, too many pupils, especially in key stage 4 and amongst those of average ability, do not achieve their full potential.
- Pupils do not make sufficient use of ICT to enhance their learning.

## Science

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and satisfactory in key stage 4.

## Good features

### KS3 and KS4

- Many pupils' knowledge and understanding, across the three attainment targets, are good.
- Pupils are able to follow instructions, handle instruments and equipment safely, observe and measure, and record results well by using appropriate means of display.
- Many pupils' investigative skills are developing effectively across the subject.
- A good number of pupils achieve well and respond appropriately in question and answer sessions, using scientific vocabulary and terminology **appropriately**.
- The pupils make good use of ICT in some areas, for example, sensors and data records.
- The pupils' scientific thinking skills are developing well.

## Shortcomings

### KS3

- A small minority of pupils have difficulty in recalling previous work.
- Pupils do not make **consistently good** use of ICT across the faculty to improve their understanding of science.

### KS4

- Many pupils do not take a sufficiently prominent part in the lessons.
- Pupils do not give extended answers or justify standpoints, in many lessons.

## **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils' develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a very wide range of materials including wood, plastic, textiles and food.
- Pupils show a good understanding of the design process and they can evaluate their products effectively. Their making skills, when using a wide range of tools and equipment, is good.
- When using food, pupils prepare the ingredients and plan well in order to ensure products of a good standard. Pupils have a good understanding of the nutritional values of food and they can explain the chemical changes which occur when food is cooking.
- Most pupils show a good understanding of the mechanical movement that they succeed in incorporating in their mobile toy projects.
- Pupils' skills in using computer aided tools to make goods are developing well. Pupils explore a range of innovative methods to apply their skills, for example, when engraving ski hats.

#### **KS4**

- The standard of design, which is fit for purpose, is good, and in the best project files it is very good.
- Pupils show a good understanding of principles and processes and are able to discuss their projects intelligently and confidently, using the correct terminology. Most pupils use computers well to investigate and research their work by using the internet. They use a range of presentation software confidently to present their design ideas.
- Standards in textiles are very good, with the most able pupils producing exceptionally good work. The coursework folios show that most pupils use a wide range of fabrics. Pupils explore, experiment, plan and evaluate their work well. Pupils make very good use of sewing machines and computerised cross-stitching to make or improve products to a high standard. The standard of graphical communication skills in textiles is very good and includes a good range of imaginative techniques.
- In resistant materials, pupils design and make a range of products, at times using sophisticated computer aided tools to decorate the work to a good

standard. In the best projects, there is a polish to the finished work, which includes very effective use of a range of materials.

- In the best examples of graphical communication, pupils produce sketches that are of good quality.

## **Shortcomings**

### **KS3 and KS4**

- Pupils in some work do not pay enough attention to refinement techniques and this leads to projects of a low standard.
- Standards of computer graphic skills are weak in some pupils' work folders. These pupils do not pay enough attention to detail. There is not enough flair and imagination in their presentations and there is a lack of realism in terms of shape and proportion in too many sketches. The use of unsuitable colouring techniques, at times, also impairs the quality of the work.
- Absence affects the work of a number of pupils.

## **Catering**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

- Pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of the catering industry, the function of a kitchen and restaurant, and relevant hygiene and health and safety regulations.
- Pupils show a good understanding and knowledge of nutrition and they can apply it effectively, when producing menus and suitable meals for a variety of situations.
- Pupils prepare a variety of dishes and recorded evidence shows that the standard of their practical work is good.
- Pupils wear appropriate clothing for food production and distribution sessions and they understand the reason for doing so.
- Pupils also have a clear understanding of the different types of dangers which are relevant in the preparation and storage of food.

## **Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings.

## **Child development and Child care**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

- Pupils are very aware of the function of play in the stages of a child's development. The most able make perceptive observations on the contribution that play makes to linguistic and social development.
- Pupils have good knowledge of a child's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development, as is shown by their theory work and their observation of children.
- Most pupils use ICT well for different purposes, including presenting their finished work, which is usually to a good standard.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Information technology**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in key stage 3 and good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils develop effective skills by using a variety of standard software packages and some additional ones, including an animation package.
- They are able to use a word processor to create and format tables, and to combine text and graphics for a purpose. Able pupils achieve work of a good standard.
- Pupils use relevant software effectively in order to handle images and create specific effects in Celtic patterns.
- A significant number of pupils succeed in following complex lines of enquiry effectively in an information handling package.
- Pupils are able to input and modify formulae effectively in a spreadsheet model for simulating specific events and create graphs to demonstrate the results of an experiment.

## **KS4**

- Pupils of all abilities show good skills, when using various software packages.
- Many of the pupils show good mastery of the use of formulae and formatting. They use a spreadsheet package to create an interactive quiz.
- Pupils evaluate their progress well to ensure that they meet the requirements of the syllabus.
- Most pupils annotate or describe their portfolio work thoroughly to show developments.
- Pupils also use on-line notes effectively and independently to help them to answer theory questions in revision lessons and as a resource reference.

## **Shortcomings**

### **KS3**

- Pupils do not apply the skills they learn adequately, especially in information handling work.
- Pupils do not make sufficient use of their skills to transfer information, create websites and use the Internet.

### **KS4**

- A minority of pupils do not have adequate knowledge of the theory elements of the GCSE short course.
- A number of pupils are too passive in lessons. They work slowly and their understanding is weak.

### **KS3 and KS4**

- A minority of pupils do not always achieve their full potential.

## **History**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3 and KS4**

- Pupils have a good understanding of chronology.
- They are able to trace the main characteristics of the period being studied. They have a good background knowledge and they can recall knowledge learned previously.
- Pupils can trace changes over time, and the cause and effects of events in the period in question.
- Pupils' grasp of historical evidence is good. They are able to analyse and cross-reference and the best are able to interpret the reliability and usefulness of a source well, for example, the value of a film in history. In key stage 4, they are developing an increasingly critical approach when studying historical evidence and the best pupils can develop differing interpretations and arrive at a balanced opinion.
- Pupils' oral skills are good. On the whole, they are able to discuss confidently, and use subject-specific vocabulary correctly.
- Pupils can conduct independent research into a variety of topics, for example, the First World War.
- The achievement in written work is good. Pupils can write for different purposes, such as compiling reports and answering questions. They can write extendedly when completing a variety of tasks. The best pupils produce very good extended written work in each year. By the end of key stage 4, some of the best pupils show significant maturity in their writing.
- Pupils make effective use of ICT by using the Internet as a valuable resource, for example, to prepare extended work on the First World War.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3 and KS4**

- Some pupils of average and lower ability do not always complete their tasks. At times, their work lacks detail and is presented poorly.
- A few pupils have difficulty working independently.

- Some pupils do not engage in discussion enough in lessons. This impairs the standards achieved.
- Some pupils do not concentrate fully on their work.

## Geography

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and key stage 4.

### Good features

#### KS3

- Pupils can use geographical terms correctly and very confidently.
- They are able to use atlases, maps, pictures and diagrams very effectively.
- Pupils' graphical skills are good when illustrating and interpreting data. Pupils' annotated diagrams are clear, relevant and **very accurate**.
- They adopt an investigative approach, where relevant, and produce very good extended work, for example, individual studies of the River Ogmere and a project on the microclimate of the school.

#### KS4

- Pupils are able to discuss geographical concepts very confidently and use terms correctly.
- Pupils are aware of the effects of physical processes on the environment and on people.
- Pupils are able to offer possible explanations and solutions for environmental problems effectively.
- They produce mature extended work on a number of subjects such as Ecosystems, The Savannah and deserts.
- Pupils' individual studies are relevant, carefully prepared and show detailed analysis and interpretation.

### Shortcomings

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Modern foreign languages (French and Spanish)**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in key stage 3 and good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Most pupils show an understanding of the language they learn and respond appropriately according to their ability.
- They are beginning to understand how a language works. A number of them use the knowledge effectively to create written work that is appropriately detailed and extended.
- A number of the most able pupils are able to recall language that they have learnt previously and to recycle it, by using the past tense confidently.
- Pupils respond keenly to the challenge of solving problems. They complete short tasks such as games, which lead to improved understanding of the target language.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils make increasing use of the language that they learn. They are eager to talk extendedly and respond well to unanticipated language.
- They show a firm understanding of grammatical rules and are able to use a range of tenses and language patterns, especially in extended written work.
- Pupils can combine two or more skills effectively, such as listening or reading and responding.
- Pupils work well in groups, and refer purposefully to dictionaries to assist them in extending their answers.
- Pupils, in a number of classes, have a good awareness of the culture of foreign countries.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Too many pupils' responses are too brief when speaking and they do not use the language they are learning for normal class activities, including asking questions.
- Too few pupils are able to learn aspects of the language and then reuse it and develop it further in an active way.

- Sometimes, pupils do not extend their use of the language sufficiently.
- Pupils do not develop sufficiently the habit of responding to structured reading tasks and expressing an opinion orally.

#### **KS4**

- The achievement of a small number of pupils in oral tasks is too low.

#### **Art**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in key stage 3 and good in key stage 4.

#### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils show a good understanding of visual language such as using line, colour, tint, texture, pattern, shape and form, and applying these effectively in their work.
- Pupils select and use confidently a range of appropriate resources, materials and techniques in order to present ideas through two- and three-dimensional work.
- Pupils review their creative work regularly. They make changes that lead to improvement.
- In some work units, pupils show a good understanding of the way in which studying art within history and the present is able to inspire and influence their creative work.
- A number of aspects of the work in all years shows the pupils' strong grasp of creative and design processes.
- Less able pupils and those with SEN achieve well in mixed ability classes.
- Pupils create interesting and very expressive work.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils build significantly on the foundations laid in key stage 3. They quickly learn more challenging skills.
- Pupils acquire a firm understanding of art, craft and design in a good range of different contexts.
- The great majority have a secure command of technical and design processes, and an increasing ability to work logically in order to research and experiment

with techniques and materials.

- A high percentage of pupils succeed in creating fresh and original work through creative methods such as printing on material, painting on silk, collage, coloured glass, pottery and three-dimensional models.
- The methods of design and painting, in which experiments are undertaken with the effects of paint, fabrics and mixing media, is a significant strength in pupils' work. Less able pupils frequently achieve above expectations.
- A small number of pupils use information technology imaginatively to create new images and patterns.

## **Shortcomings**

### **KS3**

- Pupils' do not use sketch books enough as a means of improving their observation and recording skills.
- Pupils do not explore and respond sufficiently to the ways in which artists and craftsmen in various cultures see and represent the world.
- Pupils' awareness and study of Welsh artists, craftsmen and designers is weak.
- Pupils do not make enough use of computers to encourage and enrich their creative work.

### **KS4**

- The quality of the still life drawing work of a significant minority of pupils is weak.
- Pupils do not pay enough attention to historical or contemporary art and craft in Wales in their research work. Their knowledge of Welsh artists is insecure.

## **Music**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils show a strong awareness and understanding of the basic elements of music such as tempo, beat, form and dynamics.
- Pupils respond positively to musical stimulation and undertake the tasks set enthusiastically.

- Pupils perform confidently on electronic keyboards with technical accuracy **that** is appropriate to their age and ability.
- Pupils use appropriate musical terms, when they appraise their own music and the music of others.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils achieve consistently good standards in every part of the GCSE course.
- Pupils appraise their own music and the music of a wide range of different styles and cultures well, including music from Wales.
- Pupils make good progress, when taking a direct role in practical activities in class.
- Pupils include what they have learnt in previous lessons well, when undertaking new work.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils do not make enough use of computers to encourage and enrich their creative work.
- When performing as a member of a duet or a class ensemble, some pupils are unable to play in time to a common beat and show a lack of empathy with other performers.
- A small number of pupils show a lack of commitment to the work and find it difficult to concentrate for long periods.

#### **KS4**

- A small number of written and oral appraisals are too brief and do not display sufficient musical imagination.
- A few of the compositions are mechanical and immature and show a lack of musical interest.

## **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils listen attentively, respond enthusiastically to instructions, organise themselves effectively into groups and sustain their interest when undertaking practical tasks.
- Pupils understand the importance of preparation for exercise and are aware of the effects of exercise on the body. They also appreciate the importance of healthy eating.
- Pupils work hard physically during practical lessons.
- Pupils are able to evaluate their own, as well as each other's work well.
- Most pupils are able to perform, repeat and refine skills and techniques to improve performance, and they use the teacher's feedback in a positive way.
- Pupils display a very good standard in gymnastics.
- They have the skills to sustain their movements effectively and accurately with good physical tension.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils' knowledge of physical education terms is very good and they use them effectively in practical, as well as theory, lessons.
- Pupils participate well in activities that develop strength, resilience and suppleness.
- Pupils' attitude to hard physical work is especially good, particularly in circuit lessons. They show maturity by working conscientiously and independently of the teacher.
- Pupils' physical skills increase significantly during the key stage.
- Pupils are able to evaluate their own and each other's work, in order to improve their performance effectively.

### **Shortcomings**

There are no important shortcomings.

## Religious education

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and key stage 4.

### Good features

#### KS3

- Pupils across the range of ability, including those with SEN, develop a good knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices, together with those of Hinduism and Judaism.
- Pupils become aware of the important questions, which arise from day-to-day experiences. They explore well the ways in which different religions deal with these questions and consider and express their own responses.
- They can participate in periods of **quiet reflection** on their personal experiences and then express their feelings orally and in writing. Pupils use their own experiences effectively to deepen their understanding of religious beliefs and practices.
- Pupils across the range of ability are able orally to express their observations confidently, and many of them can expand significantly on their answers.
- Pupils across the range of ability are making good progress in conveying religious ideas and responding to them in a variety of written forms. By year 9, pupils of higher ability are able to write extendedly and perceptively.

#### KS4

- The majority of pupils see the relevance of the course to their everyday lives. They can discuss sensibly the religious and moral issues in question, in pairs, groups and as a whole class. Year 10 pupils, for example, show maturity and sensitivity when discussing issues about racism and justice.
- Pupils' appraisal skills are developing well throughout the key stage, both orally and in writing. All pupils are able to appraise religious and moral standpoints. By year 11, pupils of higher ability can justify their opinion by using valid evidence and reasons and by considering the standpoint of others.

### Shortcomings

#### KS3 and KS4

- Pupils of higher ability do not always fulfil their potential.
- In key stage 4, the written answers of some pupils, when discussing aspects of religion, are too superficial.

- In year 11, a minority of pupils demonstrate a lack of commitment when considering religious and moral issues. This has an adverse effect on their achievement.

## **Sociology**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

- Most pupils gain a strong understanding of sociological concepts.
- These pupils use their conceptual framework effectively to make sense of everyday experiences.
- Pupils are steadily adding to their awareness of social processes and structures in the wider world.
- Pupils understand the significance of sociological research and are able to use research techniques independently.
- A significant number of pupils debate logically, and use correct and suitable sociological terms.
- Pupils interpret statistics on sociological phenomena perceptively and reach appropriate conclusions on their basis.
- Pupils make links that help them to understand issues in other subjects.

### **Shortcomings**

- A number of pupils, of all abilities, develop an over-simplistic perspective on some aspects of social processes.

## **Business studies**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

- Pupils have a good grasp of the meaning and significance of marketing.
- Most pupils of all abilities use subject-specific language and terminology and they speak knowledgeably about previous work.
- Pupils show a good understanding of business uses of market research.

- Pupils understand business concepts well and are able to relate them to examples of local and national industries.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

### **Drama**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 3 and very good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3 and KS4**

- Pupils respond enthusiastically to their tasks, listening well to instructions and working well in pairs and in groups.
- In class discussions in key stage 3, pupils show that they are developing the ability to understand and use appropriate terms. By key stage 4, pupils' extended reports show an intelligent understanding of the features of performing.
- Throughout key stage 3, pupils' ability to present a variety of characters is developing well. Pupils show a growing confidence and understanding of suitable stage techniques. In year 7, pupils, through mime, develop the creative use of physical gestures to musical accompaniment, in order to communicate effectively with an audience. They use timing appropriately. By year 9, pupils experiment well with classical acting techniques, by focusing on creating dramatic tension, when interpreting excerpts from Macbeth.
- In key stage 4, pupils of all abilities interact energetically. They develop their performances with perseverance and imagination by planning inventively, jointly experimenting with characters and applying a variety of dramatic styles and techniques. Pupils produce performances of a very good standard.
- Throughout key stage 3, pupils' awareness of various features of genre develops effectively. In years 8 and 9, some pupils can write meaningful original scripts, including stage directions. By key stage 4, pupils can write reflective and extended monologues.
- In key stage 4, **pupils produce intelligent written work**. They display a mature understanding of aspects such as themes, the motivation of characters and their relationship with each other, together with visual and technical elements. Pupils justify their opinion clearly by using appropriate quotations.
- Pupils' ability to evaluate their work develops effectively during key stage 3. By key stage 4, detailed and constructive observations, which show pupils'

understanding of the requirements of the task set, contribute to raising standards.

- Pupils with SEN are making good progress in the subject.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some pupils in key stage 3 slip back into their own personalities rather than use physical gestures and movement jointly to sustain a character.
- In key stage 3, when appraising, some pupils do not extend their observations and develop their opinion, orally or in writing.

### **Media studies**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS4**

- Pupils show a good knowledge of a variety of media topics and techniques and an understanding of the concepts that form the basis of the subject.
- Most pupils develop a good understanding of the characteristic elements of various media, and use appropriate terminology, when making detailed analyses and identifying prejudice.
- Pupils analyse the effectiveness of news programmes, advertisements and magazines well, and show an understanding of audience expectation and an awareness of marketing strategies. The best pupils in year 11 engage in extended, intelligent discussion of the effectiveness of specific techniques.
- Pupils respond with flair and imagination to practical tasks, such as producing a short film. They show a good understanding of the medium. Pupils plan their work carefully, and show a sound grasp of specialist skills.
- Pupils' ability to appraise their productions is developing well. They consider the effectiveness of the process and the research undertaken, as well as the suitability of the medium.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS4**

- When analysing a topic, some individuals' responses, orally and in writing, are brief and too descriptive.

- When completing specific tasks, some pupils have difficulty in adapting their knowledge of different media. Pupils' ability to plan their work, and to structure their observations in an orderly way, has not been developed enough.

### **Vocational courses**

Standards of achievement are good in key stage 4 in foundation awards in construction, the wonder of work, beauty, office skills, social health and care, and tourism and leisure.

### **Good features**

#### **KS4**

- Pupils have a good understanding throughout the range of courses.
- Pupils' folders and coursework are well-organised and well-presented.
- The standards of written reviews of work experience projects are good and correspond well to the requirements of the syllabuses.
- Pupils are able to link theory and practical work well and are developing a good understanding of the requirements of industry. Most of them also have a good understanding of industrial production processes and quality control procedures.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of economic factors, when discussing and interpreting statistics.
- They use suitable tools and equipment with good levels of confidence and competence to produce outcomes of a good standard. The final projects are well planned and are in accordance with original planning specifications.
- Pupils make good use of ICT when completing work. Their course work demonstrates originality and care when selecting case studies which, in turn, are well-planned and researched.

### **Shortcomings**

- In some courses, a small number of pupils have not completed their work. In the weakest work folders, pupils are over-dependent on the teacher's work sheets. As a result, there is a lack of the planning, organisation, research and setting of individual targets, which are expected in written work at this level.
- Pupils on the construction skills courses do not pay sufficient attention to their planning folders. The sketching and the development of ideas are rushed and have not been implemented thoroughly. Spelling and syntax errors impair the standard of much of the written work.
- Continual absenteeism impairs the quality and progression of the work of a

minority of pupils.

## **Personal and social education (PSE)**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in key stage 3 and good in key stage 4.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3 and 4**

- Pupils respond well when discussing a range of personal and social matters. They are able to appreciate different standpoints, be self-critical and offer sensible personal ideas.
- In key stage 4, pupils are able to work together and reach an agreed opinion, when considering matters such as sustainability and citizenship.
- In key stage 4, pupils contribute enthusiastically in class discussions. They are willing to respond sensitively to other people, question perceptively and show a mature approach, when discussing personal responsibilities and issues such as forms of contraception.
- Pupils respond well to advice and instructions for making decisions about work experience in year 11. Their independent research to support decisions is good.
- The older pupils are aware of the importance of preparing a good quality curriculum vitae and what it should include. When preparing for careers' interviews, they are increasingly aware of the expectations in the workplace.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Pupil discussions of topics are not sufficiently deep.
- Pupils do not express their impressions and thoughts sufficiently, either individually or in collaborative tasks.
- Pupils do not fully address the topics of discussion.

#### **KS4**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## 8. School improvement

### Current

#### 8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The school has made good progress in relation to most of the issues but some aspects still require attention.

**Key Issue 1: Maintain the good standards and raise standards in those subjects and aspects, which are at present satisfactory, by eliminating the shortcomings noted.**

The school has maintained good standards in a number of subjects and raised the standards from satisfactory to good in a number of others. In a few subjects, the standards remain satisfactory either in key stage 3 or in key stage 4. Therefore, the challenge remains to improve consistency across the provision.

There are also a number of whole-school aspects whose quality has improved from satisfactory to good, for example, assessment, recording and reporting, pupils' spiritual development and partnership with industry. Pupils' moral development has risen from good to very good.

**Key Issue 2: Raise the standards of high ability pupils at KS3 in the subjects where they do not reach their full potential.**

Recent work, especially the focus on improving lesson planning and raising the quality of learning and teaching and monitoring their effect, has, in conjunction with the ESIS advisory service, assisted departments in raising standards. Whilst the fruit of this work can be seen in a number of subjects, the provision of appropriate work to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities in the same class remains a challenge for the school.

**Key Issue 3: Improve the SDP to promote whole-school ownership of it, fully develop the management role of the faculty heads and expand monitoring to include, more specifically, the quality of the education and the standards of work in class.**

The revised SDP is a good document, which establishes appropriate priorities and gives clear direction to the work of the school. There has been an improvement in the quality of departmental management but there are aspects that need to be strengthened further. Some of the departmental development plans are not yet good enough. The school's emphasis in its monitoring plan on improving the quality of the teaching and learning is leading to improvements.

**Key Issue 4: Continue to improve attendance levels and ensure an effective system of collecting and summarising data so that appropriate members of staff can follow up the pattern of absences quickly.**

Pupils' attendance has improved from unsatisfactory to satisfactory since the last inspection. The school has strengthened systems for gathering and summarising attendance data and continues to work diligently to improve attendance. However, attendance remains satisfactory only, at present.

**Key Issue 5: Ensure consistency in the implementation of some aspects of the school's assessment policy.**

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting has improved since the last inspection. It is now good.

**Key Issue 6: Conform with statutory requirements by ensuring that religious services take place daily.**

The school has made much progress by developing further a combination of year morning assemblies and 'Pause for Thought' sessions at the start of morning registration periods. However, the school does not comply fully with statutory requirements, as collective worship does not always feature during registration periods.

**Key Issue 7: Pay due attention to the health and safety matters referred to during the inspection.**

All these matters have received attention.

<b>8.2 Key issues for action</b>
----------------------------------

The school should:

- (1) raise standards, especially where they are only satisfactory;
- (2) develop and disseminate good practice in terms of teaching methods, especially to ensure that every pupil, whatever his or her ability, reaches their full potential;
- (3) improve attendance;
- (4) provide a clearer focus on the specific needs of individual pupils by strengthening individual education plans and the links between the special education needs department and subject departments;
- (5) establish effective methods of self-evaluation and planning for improvement on a departmental and school level;
- (6) develop strategies to promote and monitor key skills across the school in key stages 3 and 4;

- (7) comply fully with statutory requirements in respect of collective worship and post-16 religious education; and
- (8) implement the recommendations contained in the sixth-form report.

The school is already giving attention to aspects of key issues 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7.

## Appendix

### A. Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari
Type of school	LEA Maintained
Age range of pupils	11-18
School address	Llanhari, Pontyclun, Rhondda Cynon Taf
Post code	CF72 9XE
Phone number	01443 237824

Headteacher	Ms T Anne Morris
Date of appointment	April 2003
Chair of governors	Malcolm Bennett
Lead inspector	Alun Charles
Dates of inspection	26 April 2003 - 30 April 2003

### B. School data and indicators

Number of pupils in each year group								
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	156	194	169	186	212	86	58	1061

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent
Number of teachers	68	5	70.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher ratio (fte) (excluding special classes)	15:1
Average size of teaching groups	20.7
General contact ratio	73%

Attendance percentages for the three full terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Summer 2003	92.8	90.6	89.8	86.6	96.8	82.7	88.7	90.4
Autumn 2003	93.1	92.9	90.8	89.6	89.9	85.0	85.7	90.4
Spring 2004	93.7	93.5	93.4	90.3	88.6	82.9	86.0	90.7

Number of pupils excluded during the 12 months prior to the inspection	Temporary: 34 Permanent: 0
--	-------------------------------

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

Results of KS3 National Curriculum Assessment: 2003															
Number of pupils in Y9: 188															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 +
English	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	10	20	40	23	6	0
		National	0	1	1	-	0	0	2	9	22	34	21	8	0
	Test	School	0	1	3	0	-	-	-	6	12	32	29	17	-
		National	0	4	2	2	-	-	-	8	23	31	21	9	-
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School	0	1	1	-	0	0	2	8	8	43	28	9	0
		National	0	0	2	-	0	0	1	6	19	33	28	10	0
	Test	School	0	4	2	2	0	0	0	5	9	43	25	10	0
		National	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	5	20	33	27	10	0
Maths.	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	6	29	23	30	11	1
		National	0	1	1	-	0	0	1	9	21	26	27	13	1
	Test	School	0	3	1	0	-	-	-	5	21	25	32	13	-
		National	0	6	1	1	-	-	-	8	22	23	27	12	-
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	9	22	34	29	6	0
		National	0	1	1	-	0	0	1	9	22	32	24	10	0
	Test	School	0	2	1	0	-	-	-	8	26	28	28	7	-
		National	0	4	0	1	-	-	-	7	20	32	24	11	-

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either Welsh (first language) or English			
according to teacher assessment		according to test	
in the school:	57	in the school:	59
In Wales:	52	In Wales:	53

- D – Pupils excepted under statutory arrangements from a part or all of the National Curriculum  
A – Pupils who have failed to register a level due to absence  
N – Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence  
B – Pupils not entered for the tests because they are working outside the levels of the test  
W – Pupils working towards level 1

Report by H M Inspectors  
Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari – April 2004

GCSE and GCE results for 15 year old pupils			
Number of 15 year old pupils on the school register in January 2003: 199			
In 2003, percentage of 15 year old pupils that:			
	School	LEA	Wales
registered to sit 5 or more GCSEs	94	84	87
achieved 5 or more GCSEs, grades A*-C	49	46	51
achieved 5 or more GCSEs, grades A*-G	91	81	85
achieved GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science and English or Welsh (first language)	26	32	38
entered at least one entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	96	97
achieved one GCSE grade A*-C or more	82	70	74
achieved one GCSE grade A*-G or more	99	90	93
Did not achieve any GCSE grade	1	10	7
achieved at least one entry level qualification or more only	1	4	3

A-Level/AS Level results of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18			
Number of pupils who were 17 years old in January 2003:			
Number of pupils registered for 2 GCE A/AS Level examinations or more or an equivalent qualification in 2003: 88			
	School	LEA	Wales
Percentage of pupils registered who achieved 2 or more A-C grades	67	61	68
Percentage of pupils registered who achieved 2 or more A-E grades	92	93	94
Average points score of candidates	19	18	20

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

Twenty two inspectors spent a total of 68 days at the school, and met as a team before the inspection.

The inspectors visited:

- 220 lessons or part lessons; and
- a cross-section of registration and tutorial periods, acts of collective worship and extra-curricular activities.

Members of the team had meetings with:

- the headteacher, governing body, parents and staff, before the inspection began;
- members of the senior management team and a wide range of teachers, support staff and administrative staff; and
- groups of pupils and students representing each age group.

The team also considered:

- a selection of pupils' work, ensuring an appropriate range in terms of age and ability;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school both before and during the inspection;
- responses to a parents' questionnaire; and
- comments from a wide range of pupils about the school.

### E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Name</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Whole-school aspects</b>	<b>Subjects</b>
R Alun Charles	Reporting inspector	1: 2; 3.1; 6.2; 8.1 8.2	
Janice Davies	Lay inspector	4.2; 4.3; 5.6; 5.7	
Manon Wyn Sion	Core team	3.2, 6.3	Drama; media studies
Delyth Molyneux	Core team	5.4; 6.1	English; personal and social education
Dr Emrys Price Jones	Core team; Assistant reporting inspector	Sixth-form annex	Mathematics
Marian Thomas	Core team	5.1; 5.2	Welsh
Mary Parry	Core team	4.1 5.3	Religious education; religious studies;
Thomas Briggs	Team inspector		Science (physics)
Dr Jeff Jones	Team inspector		Science (chemistry)
Catherine Woodward	Team inspector		Science (biology)
Robert Nicholls	Team inspector		Music
Mark Jones	Team inspector		Information technology
Edwyn Williams	Team inspector		Geography, tourism and leisure
Christine Henshaw	Team inspector		Modern foreign languages
Roger Williams	Team inspector		Modern foreign languages
Ifor James	Team inspector		Art
Esther Thomas	Team inspector	5.5	
Keith Hopkins	Team inspector		Design and technology; coordinator for vocational subjects health and safety
Gwyn Thomas	Team inspector		Business studies
Bethan Whittall	Team inspector		History; law
Paula Thomas	Team inspector		Physical education
Paul Morgan	Team inspector		Sociology

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, staff and pupils of Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari for their co-operation during the inspection.

## Sixth form appendix

### Background

There are 144 students in the sixth form, 73 boys and 71 girls, out of a whole-school total of 1061 pupils. Although 97% of students come from homes in which English is the main language, they can speak Welsh to a good standard, and they follow the vast majority of courses through the medium of Welsh.

The school offers 30 A, AS level and vocational courses. The partnership arrangements between the school and Pontypridd and Bridgend colleges of further education enable the school to offer more extensive provision to the students. In addition, the school offers a law course by means of a video link, together with tutoring in the school.

The school has a guide for sixth-form entry: a minimum of four GCSEs at grade C or better for AS/A level courses, and a minimum of four GCSEs at grade E or better for intermediate vocational courses. It is only a guide and discussions are held with pupils who are marginally below these targets.

### 1. Standards of achievement

In the classes inspected, standards were very good in 23%, good in 64% and satisfactory in 13%. Standards are very good in geography, drama and **health and social care**. They are satisfactory in information technology and they are good in all other subjects.

The main features of students' good or very good work are:

- their firm understanding of subject concepts and secure grasp of relevant terminology;
- the ability to explore and investigate effectively for various purposes;
- good practical skills, including experimental work, and the ability to express outcomes and conclusions clearly; and
- disciplined, well-structured written work and the ability to deal with a topic in an orderly and confident manner.

In the 2003 examinations, 92% of sixth-form students who were registered for two GCE A/AS levels or an equivalent qualification obtained two or more grades A-E. Sixty-seven percent of them gained A-C grades, which is one percentage point lower than the percentage for Wales but six percentage points higher than the percentage for the LEA. The average points score for students, 19, was the same as for the previous year which continues to be slightly lower than for Wales but a little higher than for the LEA. Judging by the achievements of students in year 11, the progress they have made is similar to that made by students throughout Wales.

Standards in the key skills are good. Most students use plain language to express their ideas maturely and to analyse and justify a point of view. A small number find difficulty in understanding and using technical language. Students use a variety of information sources well as a basis for their personal and background research. Students also use translingual skills intelligently from English to Welsh. They express their ideas clearly and extendedly and structure their work well. A significant number of students use a variety of ICT packages confidently and independently. In a number of subjects, students use word processors well and combine text, illustrations and tables to communicate ideas. Students make good use of the Internet to research and download material to improve the quality of their subject work, particularly in mathematics and geography.

The coordinator and a team of tutors operate a detailed and effective plan to develop key skills. The plan includes individual interviews with every student at the beginning of year 12 and specific preparatory lessons for tests. This leads to most students leaving school with a qualification in at least one of the key skills.

The school has not been complying with statutory requirements for religious education for sixth-form students. Therefore, there is no discernible progress in their understanding of the subject. Recently, the school has put an arrangement in place to provide religious education during the tutorial period in the morning, with the head of the religious education department preparing a unit of work for class tutors. It is too early to evaluate the quality of this provision or its effect on students' standards.

The personal and social education programme (PSE) is also delivered during the morning tutorial period. The programme content **and the guidance** and instruction for students are good. Often, during the year, guest speakers reinforce the core provision. However, the time during the morning period is too short to do full justice to the programme and the school needs to give further consideration to the time allocated for PSE.

Students make a very good contribution to the day-to-day life of the school and the community, thereby developing personal and interpersonal skills. Students assist the younger pupils of the school, for example, by implementing a programme to promote reading and by assisting with the mathematics and science clubs. Childline has trained a team of students to provide a support service for the school's younger pupils who face problems or difficulties in school and students also help to counteract bullying. Some students visit feeder primary schools in order to share their experiences with parents and year 6 pupils. This establishes an important relationship between the younger pupils of the school and members of the sixth form. Students also apply their key skills, when preparing presentations.

The sixth form council, which is democratically elected, meets regularly. Members have opportunities to contribute to improving the school's environment. The council has specialist committees whose responsibilities vary from information technology to updating the literature in the study centre.

The retention and completion rates in the sixth form are very good. This reflects the good advice given to students prior to commencing in the sixth form and the support given to them throughout their course. The vast majority of students succeed in

completing their courses. A small number choose to give up one AS course, but students seldom give up their study programme as a whole.

Student attendance is monitored effectively. Where there is a pattern of absenteeism, parents are contacted quickly. Despite the continued efforts of the school, however, the attendance of students for the three terms prior to the inspection was below 90%. Absenteeism impairs the progress of a small number of students. The school provides good facilities for studying. In general, students make good use of them and use their free time wisely.

## **2. Quality of education**

### **Teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. In the classes observed, the teaching was very good in 30%, good in 60%, and satisfactory in 10%. The teaching is very good in geography, design and technology, vocational subjects and drama. It is good in English, Welsh, mathematics, science, history, religious studies, modern foreign languages, art, music, media studies, and satisfactory in information technology and business studies.

In the very good teaching:

- a variety of teaching methods is used which includes opportunities for students to enhance their thinking skills, take a prominent part in class and contribute on the basis of their own preparatory work; and
- appropriate, challenging expectations encourage students to express their points of view, express ideas, reason intelligently, analyse and evaluate and justify opinions.

Usually, the following features characterise the teaching:

- the teachers' strong grasp of their subjects;
- clear aims, objectives and structure to lessons, including effective summing up at the end of the lesson;
- the use of various resources, including the occasional use of the interactive white board;
- thorough preparation for external examinations, with constant reference to the examination criteria and the requirements of questions; and
- strong and supportive relationships between teachers and students.

In a small number of lessons, the range of teaching techniques is too narrow. In these, the students' part in learning is often passive. In addition, teachers do not take sufficient advantage of the opportunities to use ICT.

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good in most departments, and very good in geography, art, music, sociology, media studies and drama. The school's assessment policy provides clear and appropriate guidelines and departments adhere to these well. Teachers mark work regularly and constructively

and include comments on how work could be improved. All students receive an annual report on their progress, together with an interim mid-year report. The quality of these reports is consistently good and detailed.

Recently, the school has significantly increased the comparative statistical data on examination results, which is distributed to departments. It is an aim for the departments to make more extensive use of the data analyses and to use them when setting targets for students and considering progress in standards of achievement. In the main, the use of data to date is satisfactory but it has not been developed sufficiently.

### **Learning experiences**

The school offers very good curricular provision to students, and gives individuals every opportunity to design extensive and beneficial programmes of study. The provision includes a good number of vocational courses which reflect appropriately some of the main vocational opportunities in the area and the needs of local employers. Year 12 and 13 students have separate lessons and the time allotted to each subject is appropriate. A good range of extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, public-speaking competitions and visits to a wide variety of appropriate places.

Teachers and the Careers Wales officer offer good advice and guidance to students **to enable them** to make sensible decisions about their post-16 future. The advice and guidance for students pursuing vocational courses are very good, and are strengths of the sixth form. The vocational education co-ordinator provides very good guidance and advice.

Every student has work experience in year 12, towards the end of the school year. The school strongly encourage students to find their own placements, but the head of year, the careers teacher, and the Careers Wales officer give them good assistance. Teachers visit the students in the workplace. The students benefit well from the experience.

The school does not provide a sports and leisure option for students.

### **Support and guidance**

The quality of support and guidance is good. Within the school, the sixth form is a caring, family community. The relationship between students and teachers during lessons and socially reflects mutual respect. The school makes a distinct contribution to pupils' welfare. Twelve students are on the SEN list. They have access to a wide curriculum and they receive appropriate attention and advice.

The two-day induction course at the beginning of year 12 provides a good introduction for students to membership of the sixth form. It is held at the University of Glamorgan campus and offers purposeful guidance on a range of relevant issues such as study skills, revision, time management, taking and making notes, employer expectations, interview skills and the importance of key skills.

The head of year and the personal tutors keep a close eye on students' progress. The arrangements include conducting a formal interview with the students twice a year to review individual targets and, if necessary, contact parents.

### **3. Leadership and management**

The quality of leadership and management is very good. The school promotes clear and firm aims and objectives about the life and work of the sixth form. The head of the sixth form, who is a member of the management team, provides effective leadership. In co-operation with departments and class tutors, he monitors all aspects of students' development and provides good care and support.

Teachers' qualifications are very well suited to their teaching duties. The INSET arrangements are effective in terms of updating teachers' knowledge and expertise about syllabuses and the requirements of external examinations.

Classrooms and suitable specialist facilities are available for sixth form teaching and teachers use them purposefully. Students have an appropriate centre for independent study, together with a careers room and a lounge.

Course resources are good overall. There is some shortage of resources in media studies, drama, business studies and design and technology. The MFL department makes good use of satellite equipment for teaching the sixth form.

In general, students take good advantage of the availability of ICT resources in the specialist rooms in order to continue with their work independently. Students also have an opportunity to use their ICT skills in a good number of lessons.

The small size of the library greatly restricts the use students are able to make of it.

### **4. Subjects and areas of learning**

#### **Welsh**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils engage in intelligent discussions. They can compare two films from the point of view of background, characters, language and themes, and individuals are able to quote purposefully from the printed text to support comments. Students work together well in groups.
- When analysing poems, comparing the work of contemporary poets and discussing Medieval Welsh literature, the students show a good understanding of the terms of literary criticism.
- Students' knowledge of the set texts is good.

- Students are able to modify their style confidently to respond to the requirements of different coursework tasks, for example, when scripting a piece of prose for the screen and forming portraits.
- Students' produce thorough essays and are able to deal with fairly complex arguments, when discussing subjects that require them to express an opinion.

### **Shortcomings**

- Some students do not discuss topics in enough depth and their oral and written expression is sometimes inaccurate.

### **English**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students show an increasing understanding of literature, in oral discussion and in written work. They are developing well their ability to cope with analytical methods and techniques, when responding to literature.
- Students discuss the use of language and its purpose with increasing confidence, when they have to express a personal opinion about texts by authors, dramatists and poets. Students discuss characters' motivation with increasing maturity and are able to refer to, and compare them with, characters from wider texts.
- Students research extensively and refer to appropriate background material when undertaking specific tasks.
- A high percentage of students complete detailed, thoughtful and mature written work, when comparing texts and when discussing the significance of issues in a cultural, religious, political and historical context.
- When redrafting, students develop the ability to plan and structure their work successfully and respond well to their teachers' detailed comments and useful recommendations.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- The students achieve well in work which encompasses pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics.
- Students are able to discuss the work in a mature manner. They deal confidently with complex mathematical concepts, and their understanding of the subject is good.
- Students are able to recall mathematical facts that they have learnt lower in the school, and apply them to solve problems at a higher level.

### **Shortcomings**

- Not all students take a sufficiently active role in the lessons.

## **Science**

### **Biology**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students have a good understanding of the concepts of the subject and talk knowledgeably about their work.
- They use their practical skills effectively and work in an organised manner, when collecting and analysing data.
- Students' work files are comprehensive and organised.
- Students use communication and mathematical skills effectively.

### **Shortcomings**

- Students do not make enough use of ICT to enhance their learning.

## **Chemistry**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students' practical skills are good. They plan experiments well, work in a safe and organised manner, and collect data correctly.
- Students have a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics and key concepts.
- Students speak knowledgeably about their work and are able to apply their theoretical knowledge to solve problems, explain and predict.
- Students analyse and interpret findings well by using appropriate scientific theories.
- Students are able to refine their ideas in the light of new information.
- Students use communication, mathematical and ICT skills well.
- Students research and organise information effectively and construct neat files.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Physics**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- The confident answers of students show that they have a good grasp of the subject and a deep understanding of it.
- Students use their analytical and problem-solving skills, for example when dealing with the frequency and wavelength of a particular laser.
- Students also use their communication and mathematical skills purposefully, for example, to solve equations in relation to the use of lasers.
- A number of students use innovation approaches, using the interactive white board, when presenting topics on the physics of health to the rest of the class.

## **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students' designing and planning skills develop well. They base their projects well on real life problems, for example, improving a water pumping system for a well in the third-world. Students produce innovative and imaginative work, for example, when developing a marketing exhibition of hoods for hawks.
- Students undertake detailed research and experiment confidently with a wide range of materials. They use many sources of evidence and methodology effectively, in developing solutions.
- Students use computers well to present their work. Coursework files include several examples of the effective use of sophisticated computer-aided drawing software.
- The practical work is of a high standard. The models of final products are well constructed. Students use their evaluation skills well and thoroughly to modify products when developing them. Students use a powerful computer-aided product-making machine very effectively when producing some aspects of their work.
- Students have a good attitude towards the course and show a willingness to accept responsibility for their work.

## **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Information technology**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- Students show good skills when using various software packages, especially word processing and Internet search engines.
- In the computing course, students make good use of information handling packages, and succeed in creating effective systems for specific purposes.

- Students create user documentation of a good standard, which describes in detail the steps taken in creating solutions.
- Students use on-line notes effectively to help them to answer theory questions and as reference material.

### **Shortcomings**

- A number of students have weak knowledge of theory and have difficulty expressing explanations concisely and formally in technical language. This has a negative effect on examination results.
- Students do not test their systems thoroughly enough with different types of data in the computing coursework.

### **Modern foreign languages**

#### **Good features**

- In year 12, students show increasing maturity and proficiency orally and in written tasks.
- Year 12 students are able to apply grammatical rules and modify and recycle language they have learnt or read in order to create original and unique work.
- They are innovative, when expressing opinions orally.
- In year 13, students use language that they have learnt to speak about themselves naturally, by using a range of tenses and constructions.
- They can also cope well with unanticipated language.
- As a result of researching and reading French articles on the Web and studying literature, they have a good level of awareness of countries in which French is spoken.
- They write effectively for different audiences.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Some students are rather reticent to start a discussion, although they are able to respond to oral questions.

## **History**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students have a good knowledge and understanding of the periods that they are studying, for example, when discussing the situation in the thirties of the last century.
- Students are able to develop mature discussions by using a variety of historical sources of evidence effectively.
- Students are able to analyse information and express an opinion intelligently and articulately, for example, when considering the different points of view of eminent historians.
- The written work shows evidence of background reading, independent research, and careful planning. Parts of it are of a very high standard.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Geography**

Standards of achievement are very good.

### **Good features**

- Students show an extensive understanding of the subject and have a firm grasp of definitions and concepts which are central to geography.
- Students show understanding and originality, when discussing different strategies for sustainability.
- Students can collect and refine information and data to develop firm analyses.
- Group and pair discussions are effective and students are able to offer logical and purposeful arguments and evaluations when solving problems.
- Students present their work and points of view well to the rest of the class, and make effective use of ICT.
- Geographical investigations in individual coursework show maturity and clear evidence of accurate information, with firm explanations, interpretations and conclusions.

## **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Religious education**

The school does not comply with statutory requirements to provide religious education for sixth-form students and therefore there is no progress to be seen in students' understanding of the subject.

## **Religious studies (Year 13)**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students have developed into independent learners who conduct research into information from different reference books and the Internet. Students are able to choose, select and analyse this material. They present the fruits of their research in a number of ways to fellow students, including the effective presentations using ICT, for example on Mahaiana Buddhism.
- Students can conduct mature and sensible discussions. They work together well and can argue their case and listen to each other's ideas to arrive at a consensus, for example, when discussing Buddhism in Britain.
- The standard of students' written work varies from very good to satisfactory. In the best examples, students are able to sum up different points of view and justify their answers with appropriate evidence.

## **Shortcomings**

- In the written work of students that is of a satisfactory standard, there is insufficient analysis.

## **Sociology**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students are maturing significantly in their awareness and understanding of social phenomena. They use their understanding of sociologists' perspectives to explain critically aspects of the local and wider society.
- Students produce sociological surveys of a high standard, using a good range of effective research skills.

- Students on the A level course confidently express and justify their knowledge and understanding of society.
- They make reference to the points of view of academic sociologists and evaluate them effectively, in offering mature explanations of social phenomena.

### **Shortcomings**

- A number of students do not use sociological texts enough for themselves, in order to develop their understanding of society and add to their research skills.
- Weaknesses in written Welsh **make it difficult for** some students to present clearly their understanding of sociological concepts and social structures.

### **Business studies**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students achieve good standards in their knowledge and understanding of the subject, for example when discussing topics such as the effects of technological change on the business world.
- Students demonstrate progress in their understanding of new concepts.
- Students work together effectively, sharing and respecting different points of view, for example when discussing moral values and their relevance to the business world.
- Students make appropriate use of their mathematical skills when explaining and interpreting different aspects of their work.
- When they research, students work effectively and independently, making intelligent use of sources such as the Internet.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## **Law**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, discuss work intelligently and respond well to tasks.
- Their written work shows consistent progress. They make the most of the detailed comments given on their work.
- They make effective use of comprehensive information booklets to reinforce video-link sessions. They also make good use of the assistance of the contact teacher in the school.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

## **Art**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- The majority of students have a firm understanding of what makes good art and have a critical appreciation, which is developing well, of their own work and the work of others.
- Year 12 students quickly come to terms with the challenge and requirements of the AS course and develop sophisticated skills, when researching into the textures and effects of materials and media.
- Standards of achievement of a good number of the students in painting skills, and applying ideas to printing, textiles, animation, digital photography and 3D work, are very good.
- In year 13, the majority of students achieve well in their coursework and examination work and consistently produce creative work, which compares with standards in higher education.
- A special aspect of the work of these students is the way in which they show innovation and independence, when developing original ideas and experiments in their visual diaries.

- In addition to practical coursework, students write good quality essays, which include mature ideas and firm points of view on a range of art themes. These students also use ICT to acquire information and to present topics.

### **Shortcomings**

- Students' knowledge and understanding of the Welsh dimension in art, craft and design is weak.

### **Music (Year12)**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Students take advantage of increasing opportunities to learn independently.
- The standards of performance and appraisal are good. Students use appropriate musical terms when discussing and writing about music.
- Students produce compositions that show imagination and musical interest.
- Students use their ICT skills well, in order to improve the quality of their compositions and their written work.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

### **Physical education**

Standards of achievement are good.

#### **Good features**

- Students have a mature and positive attitude to their work and make good progress, especially in year 13.
- They contribute constructively in class, by drawing on their personal experiences to highlight important and relevant points, for example when expressing anxiety before performing and competing.
- Students have a good understanding of the subject and they are able to analyse performances effectively.

## Shortcomings

- Students, especially those in year 12, do not always make extended contributions when discussing aspects of their work.

## Drama

Standards of achievement are very good.

### Good features

- Students demonstrate increasing independence and good self-discipline when experimenting with a range of dramatic forms. The students undertake practical work successfully with a sense of pride and ownership.
- They interact together very well when performing, and study carefully the style of their production. They succeed in getting into the character with maturity and sensitivity and create tension, feel and atmosphere and a good range of human emotions. Students apply their understanding of stage techniques and show their ability to appraise, revise and refine their work carefully by producing polished and complete performances.
- In year 13, students' develop their investigative skills by undertaking background reading and show a very good understanding of themes and the historical and cultural context of texts.
- Students have a firm knowledge of the set texts. In year 12, students show awareness of direction by discussing acting styles together with a good understanding of the elements that contribute to the complete effect of a dramatic presentation. By **year 13**, students discuss critically, by reasoning thoughtfully and giving purposeful examples.
- Students develop their written analytical skills intelligently and use terms that are appropriate to theatre studies. By year 13, they analyse perceptively and maturely all aspects of the relevant processes.

## Shortcomings

- There are no important shortcomings.

## Media studies

Standards of achievement are good.

### Good features

- Students' awareness and understanding of forms, representations and debates within the media are developing well.

- Students work together well in pairs and in groups. They reason clearly and justify points of view in discussion.
- In year 12, students are able to analyse video and DVD covers well and study the effectiveness of technical elements and the target audience. Students use specific terminology effectively **in their analyses**.
- By year 13, students display a good awareness of media practices and restrictions. They demonstrate a good understanding of audience theories within specific industries.
- There is good progress in the students' written output throughout the key stage. In year 12, when preparing a media topic, some students research effectively into a good range of sources, analyse the outcomes and evaluate them effectively. By year 13, students succeed in comparing critically media topics within the same genre and develop their work in a logical and coordinated manner.
- Students' production work demonstrates their developing ability to deal well with relevant technology. Some are able to present a strong contemporary and original message by using sophisticated methods and techniques.
- Students' develop ability to appraise effectively through considering audience feedback.

### **Shortcomings**

- In year 12, a limited vocabulary and understanding of sentence construction impair the ability of some students to express themselves extendedly, orally and in writing.
- The written work of some individuals shows a lack of appropriate detail of the researching of a theme and the analysis of a subject. In these cases, the work is not presented in a coordinated way, there is a lack of relevant terminology and **students' comments** are descriptive rather than evaluative.

### **Vocational subjects**

#### **Healthcare**

Standards of achievement are very good.

#### **Good features**

- Students answer questions confidently and well in discussions on health matters. They recall and apply previously learned information to solve problems.
- Students have good numerical skills and make very good use of ICT to search for information and to improve the presentation of their work. The ability of the

majority to complete a health test including blood pressure values and physical index ratios is very good.

- Students show good understanding when evaluating nutrition programmes. They are able to identify the dangers of not keeping to dietary advice. Students show a good understanding of basic food hygiene.
- Students analyse and present various means of cascading information about the health service. Standards of presentation are very good. Students complete their assignments and projects successfully, especially those which are based on the local community. They make effective use of planning and research skills.
- Students show a very good understanding of the assessment criteria and use them well. They evaluate their work and justify very well the changes they make.
- Work experience in hospitals and homes for the elderly has greatly enriched students' skills in the subject. Students' written work contains thorough and detailed reports about their visits and studies.

### **Shortcomings**

- There are no important shortcomings.

### **Travel and tourism, accommodation and catering, retailing and distribution services**

Standards of achievement are good.

### **Good features**

- Students show a good understanding of the requirements of industry and they link theory and practical work well.
- Folders and coursework are well organised. They demonstrate **well developed** presentation skills and good use of ICT. Case studies are generally well planned and researched.
- Students have a good understanding of industrial production practices and a good grasp of methodology and quality control. They show a good understanding of economic factors, distribution and marketing when interpreting relevant statistics.
- In catering, students show good planning skills and a good understanding of health and hygiene matters, when arranging of events. Students give good consideration to nutritional issues.

### **Shortcomings**

- A small amount of work is incomplete.

## **5. Recommendations**

In order to further improve standards and provision, the school should:

- (1) comply with statutory requirements to provide religious education for post-16 students;
- (2) raise the standards of information technology;
- (3) offer a sports and leisure option for post-16 students;
- (4) improve arrangements for the delivery of the PSE programme; and
- (5) refine the use of comparative data as a tool to assist in setting targets and raising standards.

### Public examination results

A-Level/AS Level results of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18			
Number of pupils who were 17 years old in January 2003:			
Number of pupils registered for 2 GCE A/AS Level examinations or more or an equivalent qualification in 2003: 88			
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils registered who achieved 2 or more A-C grades	67	61	68
Percentage of pupils registered who achieved 2 or more A-E grades	92	93	94
Average points score of candidates	19	18	20