

**REPORT**

**on the**

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

**LLANISHEN HIGH SCHOOL  
HEOL HIR  
LLANISHEN  
CARDIFF  
CF14 5YL**

School Number: 681/4051

Date of Inspection: 3 – 7 March 2003

**By**

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Registered Inspector W253/3508

Under Estyn contract number: T/19/02

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## **CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES**

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

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

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

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

## **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

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

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

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## **1. CONTEXT**

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

Llanishen High School is an 11 – 18 mixed comprehensive school located in a suburban area on the northern edge of the city of Cardiff. It serves a compact geographical area that includes both relatively prosperous and socially deprived sectors. There are 1666 pupils on role, 265 of whom are in the sixth form.

Pupils are drawn from local primary schools and most of them do not have to travel far to get to school. About one percent of the pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. Welsh is taught and examined as a second language only. Six percent of the pupils come from minority ethnic heritages. Eight pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language.

Nine percent of the pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals, well below both the unitary authority (UA) average of 22.2 percent and the national figure of 19.5 percent.

The school's intake represents the full range of ability. There are 34 pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) [22 boys; 12 girls]. There are a further 111 pupils designated as having SEN within the terms of the code of practice. The school also has a support centre for deaf pupils and those with impaired hearing.

The school aims to meet each individual's educational needs, both social and academic, and to prepare him/her to become a positive and productive member of society. In the school's development plan (SDP) objectives are written which are intended to achieve these aims. The curriculum is suitably broad, embracing a large number of appropriate subjects. Notwithstanding improvements made to the accommodation since the previous inspection, the unsatisfactory state of many areas of the school is a major cause of concern.

Attendance figures of 88 percent, 91 percent and 90 percent over the past three terms are around the national average of 89.9 percent.

There have been changes in the school's senior management team since the previous inspection. The school has set realistic targets for future success in national tests and examinations.

## **2. MAIN FINDINGS**

### **The main findings of the report**

Most pupils achieve well in Llanishen High School, owing to predominantly good teaching. In the majority of classes teachers and pupils work together purposefully to achieve high standards.

The curriculum ensures equality of access for all pupils and a good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the provision.

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

As shown in the tables below, standards of achievement in most subjects and in the key skills are good. These standards are reflected in the results in external national tests and examinations, which are better than local and national averages.

In the 2002 KS3 tests the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or above in the national tests in the three core subjects, English, mathematics and science, exceeded the national average by a considerable margin. Overall, the 2002 KS3 results are similar to those achieved at the time of the previous inspection save that success at the higher level 7 has increased in mathematics and science.

Examination success at the end of KS4 improved dramatically in the two years following the previous inspection. Since 1998, however, results have been maintained at a lower level overall, but rose again in 2002. Nevertheless, results in these years have been in excess of local and national averages. For example, in both 2001 and 2002 the percentage of pupils gaining at least five subjects at grades A\* to C in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) was above Unitary Authority (UA) and national figures. The figures for those pupils gaining five or more subjects at grades A\* to G in both years also exceed local and national averages. The school is rightly proud of this achievement that justifies its GCSE entry policy to give all pupils the opportunity to attempt these external examinations.

When these results and those from KS3 are compared with outcomes in schools with similar socio-economic backgrounds, they are well below average. On the other hand, if a few more pupils in the school had been entitled to free school meals, the comparisons would have placed the school's results above average.

In 2002, the average points score achieved by students in the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level or equivalent examinations, was 2 points above the UA and 3 points above the national average figure. From class observations, scrutiny of work and from interviews, inspectors found that in most cases, sixth form students were realising their potential for success.

### **Standards in subjects**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS3</b>	<b>KS4</b>	<b>Sixth Form</b>
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Very Good
Science	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Welsh (Second Language)	Good	Good	Good
Design and Technology	Good	Good	Good
Information Technology (IT)	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
History	Good	Very Good	Satisfactory
Geography	Good	Good	Very Good
Modern Foreign Languages	Good	Good	Good
Art	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Music	Good	Good	Good

Religious Education	Good	n/a	Unsatisfactory
Religious Studies (short course GCSE)	n/a	Good	n/a
Religious Studies	n/a	Very Good	Very Good
Physical Education	Good	Good	Very Good
Drama	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Home Economics	Good	Good	Good
Catering	n/a	Good	n/a
Child Development	n/a	Good	n/a
Personal and Social Education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Business Studies	n/a	Good	Good
Sociology	n/a	n/a	Satisfactory
Economics	n/a	n/a	Good
Psychology	n/a	n/a	Good
Leisure and Tourism	n/a	Satisfactory	n/a

### Standards in Key Skills

	KS3	KS4	Sixth Form
Listening	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Speaking	Good	Good	Good
Reading	Good	Good	Good
Writing	Good	Good	Good
Numeracy	Good	Good	Good
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	Good	Good	Good
Working with others	Good	Good	Good
Improving own learning and performance	Good	Good	Good
Problem solving	Satisfactory	Good	Good

### Positive features

- Standards were at least satisfactory in 96 percent of classes observed and good or very good in 72 percent.
- The proportion of good or very good standards is similar in both KS3 and KS4.
- Standards in sixth form classes in most subjects were at least good. No unsatisfactory standards were reported. 86 percent of classes observed were judged as achieving good or better standards, including 20 percent as very good.
- The majority of pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well. The provision made for those for whom the National Curriculum is disapplied is very good.
- Most pupils speak clearly, read well, write to good effect and work well with their classmates.
- Many pupils undertake independent research using a wide variety of sources of information, including the Internet.
- Numerical skills are developed well across many areas of the curriculum.
- In many subjects pupils use ICT advantageously to enhance their learning.
- Standards in drama are very good throughout the school.
- A few Y7 pupils who are gifted mathematically are achieving very high standards.

### Shortcomings

- Girls outperform boys in GCSE examinations. The gap in performance was greater than the national difference in 2002.
- Although pupils use ICT advantageously in a number of subjects, their skills are not developed sufficiently through the taught IT lessons provided in KS3.
- In a minority of lessons pupils do not listen attentively and thus they underachieve.

### **Quality of Education**

Good quality teaching is a strength of the school. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and they plan well to challenge their pupils appropriately. Often they give freely of their own time to provide extra help for pupils. They also provide an appropriate range of other experiences to enhance and broaden their pupils' education.

### **Positive features**

- Teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 percent of classes observed, and good or very good in 74 percent. These figures are well in excess of national expectations for 2002: 95 percent and 50 percent respectively.
- Teaching in the sixth form was good in 65 percent of classes and very good in a further 23 percent. No unsatisfactory teaching was reported in this phase.
- Teachers and support staff provide appropriate and sensitive support to help pupils with SEN to achieve well.
- Teaching is very good throughout in drama.
- The KS4 curriculum is good; the KS3 and sixth form curricula are good in many respects. The school offers a wide and appropriate range of subjects and courses to allow pupils of all abilities to achieve well. The whole curriculum ensures that all pupils have equal access to good learning opportunities.
- There is good planning for and implementation of arrangements for the development of key skills in KS3, KS4 and the sixth form.
- The arrangements made for those pupils with SEN, especially those for whom aspects of the National Curriculum are disapplied, make a very significant and positive impact on their progress and achievement.
- There are good arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements and progress in most subjects. Pupils' work, including homework, is generally regularly and carefully marked.
- Pupils have many opportunities to benefit from a well-planned programme of extra-curricular activities and participation is high.

### **Shortcomings**

- In a small minority of classes, teachers fail to cope effectively with inattentive or disruptive behaviour. In these instances pupils make little progress in lessons.
- Teachers do not succeed in challenging pupils sufficiently well in a few classes. In others, pupils are given insufficient time to work; teachers dominate the lessons inappropriately.

### **The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

#### **Positive features**

- The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Religious education in years 7 to 11 contributes well to pupils' spiritual development.
- Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. In all subjects they are taught to respect living things and the environment. Consideration of contemporary moral issues is widespread.
- Pupils' good social development is fostered in the many lessons that make extensive use of group and pair work.
- Pupils' cultural development is good. Many pupils participate in a wide range of activities including music, drama and sport.
- Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is satisfactorily established in the school and opportunities for its development identified in many departments' schemes of work.
- Through studies in many lessons and from visits abroad pupils broaden their knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
- Charity work is a significant feature of the school's activities.

### **Shortcomings**

- The provision made for RE in the sixth form does not meet statutory requirements.
- The school does not satisfy statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

### **Leadership, Management and Efficiency**

The headteacher's philosophy of leadership and management is realised in a consultative and inclusive system, where all colleagues are considered as professional partners in making decisions. Such a system provides many opportunities for dialogue and full debate about a range of issues, but not all aspects of agreed policies are implemented fully. Because of the unsatisfactory state of much of the accommodation, a disproportionate amount of management time is spent in seeking remedies for regularly occurring building problems. The headteacher receives good support from the deputy and assistant headteachers, who join with him to form an active senior management team.

### **Positive features**

- The school's senior managers work well with heads of faculty and heads of year in a structured support system.
- The quality of departmental management is predominantly good. It is very good in drama, mathematics and physical education. A good team spirit is evident in many faculties and departments.
- The day-to-day administration of the school is sufficiently efficient and effective. Support staff in all areas make valuable contributions to the smooth operation of the school.
- The school manages its budget well. Financial decisions are taken in accordance with the school's educational priorities as identified in its school development plan.
- The governors play an active and supportive role in the school. They are kept informed about the school's work and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and shortcomings.
- The improvements in some areas of the accommodation since the previous inspection have helped provide pupils with a better learning environment. The new accommodation for science is very good.
- The library functions well as a central facility and a learning resource centre.

- Teachers' qualifications and experience match the requirements of the national and wider curricula. In most subjects, deployment of staff ensures that individual teachers' knowledge and skills are used most effectively to the benefit of pupils.
- In many faculties procedures are in place to monitor performance and to plan for improvement.
- A well-managed programme of continuing staff development helps all staff to focus upon ways of raising standards in all aspects of school life.

### **Shortcomings**

- Tutorial time is not used to best advantage.
- Rigorous and consistent data analyses are not fully developed as features of the school's self-evaluative procedures.
- Many areas of the school's accommodation remain shabby and poorly decorated.
- The accommodation provided for mathematics, RE, languages, music and PSE in particular is inadequate for the departments' needs. Pupils and staff work well despite the undue burdens placed on them by these unsatisfactory conditions.

### **The effectiveness with which the issues identified in the previous report have been addressed**

Seven key points for action were identified in the previous inspection report. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made in addressing them, but a number of areas of concern remain.

- Most pupils are now challenged appropriately, but not in every lesson. The school has rightly continued to focus upon improving teaching and learning further in its continuing professional development programme.
- Standards have improved in RE and PE and more subjects are using ICT effectively. Nevertheless, IT at KS3 is underdeveloped.
- Monitoring processes have improved overall. They involve middle managers and other staff, but practice is not consistent across the school.
- Development planning has improved, but there is still a lack of detailed cost implications and quantitative targets.
- There has been little progress in addressing the issue of statutory RE in the sixth form and the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
- Despite substantial improvements in the accommodation, many problems remain.
- The school has included time for movement between lessons in its daily routine. However, a minority of pupils often arrives late to lessons and the remaining teaching time does not always allow pupils to gain maximum benefit from the curriculum.

### **3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The school's intake represents the full range of ability and overall is slightly above average. This is confirmed by KS2 test data and other standardised assessment information.

Standards were at least satisfactory in 96 percent of the classes observed. They were good, and occasionally very good, in 72 percent. Standards were highest in the sixth form where they were judged as good or better in 86 percent of the classes, with 20 percent very good. Those in KS4 were similar to those in KS3, being predominantly good, but there was a higher proportion of very good standards in KS4. These statistics are better than those recorded at the time of the previous inspection. The figure for satisfactory or better standards has moved from around 90 percent to 96, and the percentage of good or better standards has increased from around 40 to 72 percent.

In the NC tests at the end of KS3 in 2002, 62.3 percent of pupils gained at least level 5 in all three core subjects, English, mathematics and science, (the core subject indicator), compared with the all Wales figure of 50 percent. The proportion in each of the three subjects for level 5 or above was well above the national average.

Over time, in comparison with local and national data, the school has maintained a good level of success in the GCSE examinations, but there is some variation year on year. Following the previous inspection, the percentage of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A\* to C rose from 57 percent in 1996 to 65 percent in 1998. Since then the figure has fluctuated, averaging at about 58 percent. The 2002 score of 59.6 percent represents an improvement on the 1996 figure. In many subjects the proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades A\* and A in 2002 was well above local and national averages. For pupils gaining five grades A\* to G, the school's figures are always in excess of the comparators for the UA and the principality. The proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in all three subjects, English, mathematics and science (core subject indicator) in 2002 was 43 percent. This figure also exceeds local and national comparators.

When the KS3 and KS4 test and examination results are compared with those achieved in other schools in Wales having ten percent or fewer pupils entitled to free school meals, the school falls below average on all counts. If, however, a few more pupils were entitled to free meals, the school would compare very favourably with these other establishments.

In 2002 the A level (or equivalent) examinations results achieved by students were an improvement on those attained at the time of the previous inspection. In 1996 the percentage of students achieving at least two A level grades A to C was 68, and the corresponding figure for grades A to E was 89. These rose to 72 percent and 92 percent respectively in 2002. Likewise the average points score per candidate rose from 17 to 22, from one point above the national average to two points above. Many students leave school to take up places in higher education establishments, including Oxford and Cambridge.

The 2002 difference between boys' and girls' performances in the GCSE examinations is most marked and well in excess of national differences. Seventy-two percent of the girls gained 5 or more grades A\* to C, whereas only 48 percent of the boys achieved this standard.

The difference is also common across most subjects. The situation was not so pronounced in previous years.

Abler pupils make good progress and achieve well in almost every subject. This is particularly so in drama, history in KS3 and KS4, art in KS4 and the sixth form, and mathematics, RE, music and PE in the sixth form, where they achieve very high standards. In no subject were standards for abler pupils adjudged to have major shortcomings. Where standards are very good, as in music for example, abler students are accomplished and experienced performers, and they do so with conviction and a good sense of style. In mathematics, sixth form students are very confident when handling complex mathematical processes and they recall and apply accurately a wide range of previous work. In Welsh, these pupils are confident when discussing a range of topics in that language. In a good number of subjects many pupils and students use ICT effectively to access the Internet and use other sources of data to extract information. They then analyse this and incorporate it to good effect in their work, undertaking this research independently. In many subjects these able pupils not only cope with current work well, but also pose demanding questions to consolidate or extend their knowledge and understanding. Most make good progress through each key stage, achieving good standards, many exceeding expectations for their age and ability.

Most pupils of average ability achieve good standards in the majority of subjects. In history, for example, they are willing to share ideas and participate in discussion at an appropriate level as they develop historical terminology and use it progressively more accurately. In science they make accurate observations and measurements, using the appropriate units more often than not. In design and technology (DT), pupils demonstrate their ability to innovate and create in their drawings and sketches. In many other lessons, most of these pupils participate well in the good range of learning experiences provided for them. Many are keen to make progress in lessons by answering teachers' questions, working conscientiously in class and through completing homework tasks. There are, however, instances when some of these pupils and others of lower ability disrupt learning by inattentive and/or noisy behaviour. In these cases valuable time is wasted and opportunities to make progress are lost.

Most of the less able pupils also make good progress and achieve well in the majority of subjects. However, there are shortcomings in a few areas. In English, for instance, a number of pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration and their writing is occasionally erratic and spellings are incorrect. In science, their understanding of key concepts is, at times, insecure. Where less able pupils' standards are good, as in home economics and catering they prepare good work plans, cost outcomes and evaluate using sensory and dietary analysis. In child development too, pupils' investigative work is well focused and they prepare some good visual presentations. In a range of subjects, good standards are maintained through appropriate use of support staff and careful selection of tasks well matched to pupils' prior achievements. In mathematics these pupils are encouraged to enjoy the subject, and in doing so they cope well with algebra and other more complex aspects.

The majority of pupils with SEN achieve good standards in the core subjects and in a number of other subjects across the curriculum. Standards are never less than satisfactory. Very good provision is made for those pupils for whom the National Curriculum is disapplied. Appropriate emphasis is placed upon developing pupils' literacy so that they can access the wider curriculum as they progress through the school. These pupils are helped to realise their potential by the very good learning environment provided by the SEN staff, who work

effectively with their resources and accommodation. In addition, pupils are helped to achieve well by withdrawal from lessons for extra help with many aspects of learning, and by the good support provided in mainstream classes.

Reflecting the difference in boys' and girls' GCSE examination performances, in class, girls are often more conscientious, better motivated and better organised than boys, and more systematic in their approach to investigative work.

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

Across the curriculum, standards in speaking, reading, writing, the use of ICT and numeracy are good overall. In listening and they are satisfactory. Pupils are also mostly good at working with each other, improving their own learning and performance, and solving problems. These good standards contribute substantially to the generally high standards achieved in subjects.

Policies for key skills across the curriculum are effective and the Key Skills Qualification scheme in the sixth form is achieving a good measure of success.

#### **Listening, speaking, reading and writing**

Not all pupils are fully attentive in lessons. A minority of average and less able pupils in particular lack concentration and disrupt learning by chatting in lessons. On the other hand, in the best classes pupils listen well to teachers' exposition, guidance and questions. They then respond well, showing that they clearly understand much of the work and what it is they are required to do. Often they also listen courteously to classmates' contributions to lessons. In music, Welsh and modern foreign languages listening is the best-developed skill.

In most subjects, encouraged by good teaching, pupils are confident when speaking and often articulate when answering questions. Average and higher ability pupils are also quite forceful when giving or defending opinions in class or group work. Because teachers generally emphasise correct language usage in lessons, most pupils have a good command of the terminology associated with subjects such as business studies, mathematics, design and technology, geography and science, but less able pupils often have limited vocabulary and lack precision when trying to explain their thoughts. In all years, a few pupils are reluctant to participate verbally, but sensitive questioning by teachers helps them to participate more fully.

Across the curriculum, pupils read well. In English, in particular, they read aloud in lessons and do so accurately and with meaning. In drama they read scripts aloud very well. Pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure too, and they do this through making use of the library's facilities and in some 'quiet reading' sessions in tutorial time. In many subjects pupils extract significant information and use it in their work.

Most pupils cope well with writing for a wide variety of purposes in a range of subjects. Over time they learn to plan, organise and produce extended pieces of writing, culminating with GCSE coursework in many subjects and more challenging styles in the sixth form. Many pupils make good use of word processing and/or desktop publishing to redraft their work and to enhance its presentation. Written work in many subjects is well organised and well presented. Average and less able pupils, however, often have problems with grammar,

punctuation and, in particular, spelling. In one or two subjects pupils are given insufficient opportunities to make their own notes; too much is provided by teachers. Occasionally, too, a few sixth form students write too much narrative at the expense of analysis and evaluation.

## **Numeracy**

Standards in numeracy across the curriculum are good overall, but in a substantial minority of subjects, there are some shortcomings and in these, standards are satisfactory only. Standards are good in mathematics.

Outside the mathematics department best practice occurs in science, geography, design and technology, business studies, home economics and child development. In home economics for example, pupils measure accurately, calculate costs and analyse data associated with their work. In a number of subjects, such as business studies, they interpret and construct graphs of various types from a range of information and present their analyses in an appropriate range of forms and contexts.

Where standards are satisfactory, shortcomings include incorrect calculations and lack of confidence, such as when entering formulae in spreadsheets.

All teachers have been made aware of current practice in mathematics, and this has helped ensure that pupils' mathematical experiences are reasonably consistent across the curriculum.

## **Information and communication technology**

Although pupils use ICT to good effect in many subjects, they do not have sufficient opportunities to consolidate and improve their skills in IT specific lessons in KS3. Nevertheless, standards across the curriculum are good. Best practice occurs in English, mathematics in Y7, geography, art, design and technology, physical education examination classes, business studies, leisure and tourism, home economics and child development. In physical education, for instance, pupils use ICT effectively to enhance their GCSE coursework, including the use of digital photography. Sixth form students use the facilities to analyse movement.

Until recently, access to good computer equipment has been limited and this has constrained developments in many areas. For example, in business studies, work on databases and spreadsheets has been restricted.

There are missed opportunities in a few subjects for using subject specific software, the Internet or, for instance, using word processing for redrafting pupils' writing.

## **Key Skills qualification in the sixth form**

Through a well-planned scheme, sixth form students are provided with many opportunities to improve their key skills. Good provision is made for using ICT to access information, and students are made fully aware of methods of recording progress through the subjects they study and via other activities both within school and beyond.

Overall standards in the key skills in the sixth form are good.

## **Working with others**

Pupils' ability to work with others is good. In many classes, pupils are given opportunities to work with classmates, for example, engaging in group discussions and preparing presentations. Pupils respond well on these occasions. They often, but not always, co-operate well with each other, listening to classmates' comments and offering alternative suggestions where appropriate.

## **Improving own learning and performance**

Within a number of lessons across the curriculum, pupils are involved at regular intervals in reviewing their achievement and progress. Through a variety of strategies, including good feedback on performance and self-assessment sheets, pupils make informed decisions about the next steps to take. In many cases, pupils seek to improve their own learning by making use of the ICT facilities available in the library/learning resource centre.

## **Problem solving**

Pupils' problem solving skills are good. Good examples occur in many subjects, such as in physical education where outdoor adventures provide valuable experiences to which pupils respond well. In business studies, more able KS4 pupils and sixth form students use their knowledge and understanding well to solve a range of business problems. A few less able pupils are not so successful; they cannot cope well in unfamiliar situations. In art, in KS4 and in the sixth form, problem solving is a strength of the department. Pupils and students solve a wide range of difficult problems. Likewise in geography, the department promotes an enquiry-based approach, which when allied to pair and group work, enables pupils and students to improve their reasoning and decision-making skills.

# **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for their moral, social and cultural development is good. There is no school policy on this area of school life and the contributions made by subjects have not been audited.

Religious education in years 7 to 11 contributes well to pupils' spiritual development. They consider life's fundamental questions, reflect on their own beliefs and values, and learn to understand and respect the beliefs of others. There is no religious education in the sixth form. Provision for spiritual development is not planned for in most subjects although some contribute. The most able pupils recognise the wonder of mathematical patterns, all recognise

the awesome effect of volcanoes on the geographical landscape, and some biology lessons inspire a sense of wonder at the order evident in life forms. Art uses the local landscape to develop pupils' appreciation of the natural world.

Pupils attend two assemblies each week in their year groups. Although they provide some opportunity to celebrate pupils' success and to support pupils' moral and social development, their contribution to spiritual development is very limited. Pupils are occasionally involved, but overall very little time is given to prayer or reflection. Pupils do not have a period of prayer or reflection with form teachers when they are not at assembly. The school is not meeting its statutory responsibility for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. It has not responded sufficiently well to the criticisms of the quality of assemblies or the lack of collective worship of the previous inspection report.

Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. In all subjects they are taught to respect living things and the environment. In religious education lessons they show a keen awareness of the privileged lifestyle that they enjoy. Consideration of contemporary moral issues is widespread – genetics and pollution in science, the use of child labour by multinational companies in business studies, inequality in the global distribution of wealth in geography, abortion and euthanasia in religious education – and pupils respond sensitively. Pupils do not always show concern for their immediate environment, however, and there is considerable litter left in the school after breaks, despite the school's anti-litter campaign, and some furniture is damaged and defaced with graffiti. Pupils show concern for others through their support for a very wide range of charities, raising very large sums of money and providing practical help in the wider community.

Pupils' good social development is fostered in the many lessons that make extensive use of group and pair work. They generally work well together and are confident and co-operative. Some subjects encourage the development of a sense of responsibility and the ability to show initiative. They work independently in art in KS4 and take the initiative in organising their own work and materials. They take responsibility for their own learning in their enquiry-based work in KS4 geography. Pupils create group performances in drama. A large number of pupils in years 10 and 11 act as "buddies" to those in years 7 and 8. There is a school council though not all members feel that their contributions are productive. The sixth form committees however, are actively engaged in organising an extensive range of activities and many sixth form prefects help with supervision of younger pupils during break times. A wide range of extra-curricular activities further enhances the provision for social development.

Pupils' cultural development is good. Many pupils participate in a wide range of activities including music, drama and sport. Numerous extra-curricular groups enhance the work of the music department. In well-attended rehearsals pupils achieve good standards of performance. There are regular visits to theatres, museums and other places of cultural and historical significance. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is satisfactorily established in the school and opportunities for its development identified in many departments' schemes of work. There is a successful annual eisteddfod. Many subjects make a useful contribution to pupils' understanding of multi-cultural issues. The European and wider international dimension is well developed through curriculum projects and through visits and exchanges including annual visits to France and Germany for all year groups and a recent opportunity for Y7 pupils to participate in a singing festival in Norway.

## **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

The overall quality of behaviour in the school is satisfactory. This reflects a balance between good or very good behaviour shown by most pupils, and unsatisfactory behaviour displayed by a minority.

In lessons where a good pace and intellectual challenge are maintained attitudes to learning are good or very good. Where lessons lack such content pupils swiftly lose interest, their behaviour becomes disruptive and interferes with progress made by themselves and others.

Outside the classroom, narrow corridors and insufficient playground space exacerbate some boisterous behaviour, but the large majority of pupils behave well. A small minority, mostly boys, exhibit unsatisfactory confrontational attitudes and instances of violence occurred during the inspection.

Many pupils do not demonstrate concern for their own environment as indicated by the litter around and inside school, and graffiti on furniture. A very small minority of pupils appears to lack self-esteem and self-confidence. These pupils are inconsiderate and give little attention to the needs and views of others so create difficulties in lessons. This reduces pupils' own capacity to learn, prevents others from learning as they should and reduces standards of achievement of everyone.

The schools' arrangements for promoting good behaviour are not totally effective. Although there is a well defined, comprehensive behaviour policy that is based on a wide review of tried and tested methods the advised procedures are not rigorously applied by all teachers and sanctions do not function as well as expected as deterrents. Although there are duty lists that allow for the school to be adequately covered by staff, there is inadequate effective teacher surveillance around the school during breaks and lunchtime.

Measures taken to prevent and eliminate bullying are not fully successful. There is a sound anti-bullying policy, and the Y10 and Y11 buddies are used imaginatively to inform and support Y7 and Y8 pupils. When bullying occurs, the school takes swift and supportive action, but pupils of all years cite recent instances in their personal experience, and some parents expressed considerable concern via their parental questionnaires and in correspondence with the registered inspector.

The school has effective measures for eliminating other forms of discrimination such as sexism, racism or persecution of minorities.

### **4.3 Attendance**

In the last three terms the whole school attendance averaged just above 90 percent, which is satisfactory. This figure is achieved by virtue of higher attendance levels in KS3, those in KS4 being unsatisfactorily below 90 percent. There are substantial levels of unauthorised absence in KS4.

Employment of a part-time administrative assistant to target absentees has helped the school to make satisfactory progress in improving attendance and reducing levels of unauthorised absence. As a result the local authority has recently withdrawn the regular services of a dedicated Education Welfare Officer; the school has not had time to consider how it might

replace the significant support the post gave, particularly in respect to improving attendance in KS4.

Pupils' punctuality to school and to lessons is unsatisfactory. A noticeable number of pupils arrive late for school, congregate at the back of assemblies or go late to tutor periods for registration. Despite the provision of time between all lessons, to permit movement across school through narrow corridors, some lessons were late starting because of stragglers entering the classroom. Tolerance of late arrival, particularly at the extended registration periods in morning and afternoon does not encourage promptness.

Registration procedures and collation of statistics comply with statutory requirements.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The overall good quality of teaching is a major strength of the school. It has a very positive influence on most pupils' learning and attitudes in classrooms, and is thus the foremost contributor to the good standards achieved by most pupils.

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 percent of classes observed, and good or very good in 74 percent. These figures are well in excess of national expectations for 2002: 95 percent and 50 percent respectively. The quality was highest overall in the sixth form where it was good in 65 percent of classes and very good in an additional 23 percent. In KS4 56 percent of the teaching was graded as good with 13 percent very good, and in KS3 the corresponding figures were 61 percent and 8 percent. These figures represent a considerable improvement since the previous inspection.

In almost every subject teachers have at least good knowledge and understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the subjects they teach. Where non-specialist teachers are used, however, as in PSE and IT, there are a few minor shortcomings.

Most teachers organise and manage their classes effectively and use an appropriate range of teaching and learning methods and strategies. Thus they maintain pupils' involvement and ensure that they make good progress in class.

Planning to use the 56-minute lessons effectively is a good feature in most departments, although, in practice, a few lessons were foreshortened during the inspection week, and time was lost at the end of the sessions. Unfortunately, not all pupils are prompt in attending lessons and this leaves insufficient time to complete all planned tasks, thus hindering progress.

Frequently, as in physical education for example, pupils are informed of the learning objectives at the beginning of a lesson, and at the close they are required to highlight the main features of the session. This is good practice. Often pupils are given tight time schedules to complete aspects of the work in lessons, and this assists in moving the learning forward at a good pace.

In the majority of classes relationships between teachers and pupils are good, allowing learning to occur in an agreeable but purposeful atmosphere. In these classes pupils are aware of what constitutes good behaviour and conduct themselves accordingly. In many classes, expectations of success are also clearly communicated, directly as targeted national curriculum levels and/or through challenging tasks. Such practice helps considerably in raising pupils' self esteem and gives them confidence to make progress. In a few classes, though, expectations are not high enough and pupils, the most and least able in particular, are insufficiently challenged.

In many classes, teachers use well-framed questions to probe pupils' understanding and they encourage them to think deeply about their answers before responding. Such practices do much to aid progress in lessons, and add breadth and depth to pupils' understanding.

Teachers know their pupils with SEN well and they provide good teaching, care and support for them. They use individual education plans effectively to provide work appropriate for their needs. Learning support staff also provide good care for pupils with statements of SEN, and others with SEN, and help them to achieve well.

In many subjects teachers take appropriate steps to match the learning activities to pupils' needs. They complement these with appropriate assessment procedures to measure progress and to provide feedback to pupils on how to improve.

In many curriculum areas a small proportion of the teaching, although exhibiting several good features, has a few shortcomings. For example, in home economics, physical education, English, science there are times when pupils are insufficiently challenged. In Welsh, mixed ability classes are not always managed effectively in terms of appropriate activities. In psychology, too little time is provided for students to undertake independent research. In business studies, occasions occur when plenary sessions are omitted and opportunities for reviewing progress are lost. Across many subjects, there are instances when teachers fail to correct noisy and inattentive behaviour in class, and this leads to a minority of pupils underachieving.

Teachers help pupils consolidate and extend their learning by setting homework of appropriate challenge and interest. The homework often includes work to develop pupils' creative and investigative skills as well as to extend their knowledge and understanding. In many subjects, teachers help pupils to make progress through the use of constructive marking that shows them how to improve. There are, however, instances of unsatisfactory or too little homework being set across a minority of subjects. A sizeable minority of parents commented upon this in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

Many teachers give generously of their time outside lessons to help individuals and to offer extra-curricular activities to extend and broaden pupils' learning.

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

The quality of the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements is satisfactory.

There is a whole-school policy on assessment, recording and reporting. The school has undertaken the requirement to set overall targets for attainment, and is commencing the

process of setting individual targets for pupils in subjects, though the process is at an early stage of development.

Pupils' work, including homework, is generally regularly and carefully marked. Assessments for pupils in KS4 and the sixth form are made using the criteria of GCSE and GCE examinations and reported to pupils and parents. At present, however, assessments in KS3 using National Curriculum levels are made in only a small number of subjects, and not used by any subject on reports to parents before the end of Y9. The school is shortly to offer in service training to staff to standardise practice between subject departments. Departments monitor marking to ensure consistency of assessment between teachers and accurate relationship with national standards. Pupils are given helpful and supportive comments in both oral and written feedback. Few subjects give pupils the opportunity for self-assessment, although the new format for school reports offers pupils the opportunity for an overall self-assessment. Subject teachers, form tutors and Heads of Year monitor pupils' progress carefully. The process of monitoring progress, both by subject teachers and pastoral staff will be assisted by the use of computerised data collection, which is at an early stage of development. Pupils with SEN are additionally assessed in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice and individual education plans (IEPs) are in place to support progress in subject areas.

Parents are kept informed of pupils' progress through a yearly report. In addition, all pupils receive a second, brief, statement of standards attained at the end of the year. Parents are able to consult with staff about their children at parents' evenings. The school reports, having been recently revised, are helpful and informative. Pupils in Y11 are also involved in compiling a National Record of Achievement, which they receive at the end of the year.

In the previous inspection, the arrangements for assessment, recording and reporting were judged to be satisfactory, but a key issue was to continue to develop the processes of monitoring pupils' achievement, involving heads of subject departments. There has been some progress in compiling and using data, to assist monitoring and the setting of individual pupil targets, but there is still room for improvement in this area. This is a priority of the current school development plan.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

The curriculum falls short of the 25 hours per week recommended by the National Assembly for Wales. The late start to many lessons further reduces teaching time. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements for the national curriculum and religious education in key stages 3 and 4. Provision is appropriate to pupils' needs, interests and abilities. It successfully promotes their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development and prepares them well for the world of work, family and leisure.

All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. There are good arrangements for social inclusion including an alternative curriculum at a local college for a small number of pupils at KS4. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and supported in mainstream classes together with some appropriate withdrawal for basic skills. The school has a successful unit for deaf and hearing-impaired pupils. Pupils in the unit have been appropriately disapplied from some subjects of the national curriculum. Pupils with literacy problems are withdrawn from lessons for extra specialist support and are given valuable

additional help by sixth form students. Enrichment days are used to support high and low achievers. Eight pupils have good support in English as an additional language.

In KS3, pupils are taught in an appropriate mix of mixed ability and setted groups. Generally, sufficient time is allocated to each subject. All pupils have planned access to ICT within subject areas and as an assessed unit of the PSE provision; in practice the arrangement is ineffective in covering all requirements of the National Curriculum. In Y8 and Y9, able pupils have the appropriate opportunity to follow a second foreign language. There are useful curricular links with primary schools across many areas of the curriculum including linked subject topics and sample lessons for Y6 pupils in the summer term prior to entry.

There is a good range of provision at KS4. All the national curriculum subjects continue to be available, and a number of new subjects are added as GCSE options and as vocational courses. Take up of most subjects is satisfactory. In addition to the statutory core subjects, all pupils have access to a good range of options ensuring breadth and balance plus flexibility and choice. However, the time allowed for physical education in KS4 is below average. There are many large classes in KS4. There is good provision for a small number of pupils to follow alternative vocational courses at a local college. Over 50 percent of pupils stay on in the sixth form and most of the others continue with FE.

A wide and appropriate range of mainly academic AS and A2 level courses are available in the sixth form. The school supports and appropriately advises students of other providers of post-16 education. Provision is made for the key skills of ICT and communication to be delivered within AS courses. Good provision is also made for general studies, PSE, and further education and careers guidance, but too many sixth form students are unable to access physical education lessons because of clashes with other subjects. Other than providing insufficient religious education and the limited access to curricular physical education, the overall curricular provision in the sixth form is good.

Planning for the key skills of ICT, literacy and numeracy is good. Whole school INSET on key skills has had a beneficial effect across the curriculum. Planning for the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is satisfactory overall and is good in a number of departments.

Planning for the delivery of the national curriculum and examination syllabuses is good in most subjects' schemes of work. Although there is no formal homework timetable, each faculty has guidelines. The quantity and quality of homework vary both within and across subjects. This confirms parents' comments about this aspect of school life.

There is a planned rolling programme of PSE meeting the needs of each pupil and conforms to the Qualifications, Curriculum & Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) guidelines. Sex education, citizenship, health education, including education about drug misuse, and careers education and guidance are all appropriately included. Good use is made of a careers company. Work experience is well organised for all pupils in Y11 and Y12.

Extra-curricular provision is good. There is a very good participation rate in a wide range of competitive and non-competitive sporting activities by boys and girls. Additional funding supports the Girls First programme. Musical activities, drama productions, debates, fund raising, fieldwork, subject and other clubs all enrich the quality of provision. Pupils also benefit from Welsh courses held at Glan-llyn and Llangranog, and a wide variety of activities within Urdd Gobaith Cymru. There are good links with local churches, the police, local

industry and commerce. Many teachers give valuable voluntary additional support to pupils preparing for examinations during and after school hours. The school and external agencies offer useful Easter revision courses.

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

The overall quality of personal support and guidance, including careers education and guidance, is satisfactory. The Home School Agreement, publicised to all pupils at the front of their planners, identifies appropriate intentions to achieve the best possible education for all its pupils and clearly sets out what pupils can expect from the school. However, there are some shortcomings in the school's effectiveness in meeting those expectations.

Pupils, including all those with SEN and who are deaf or have partial hearing, are placed in mixed ability tutor groups so that there is good social integration of pupils. They remain with the same form tutor and head of year as they move through the school, to enhance their sense of security and of belonging, in a large school. Form tutors know their pupils well and have responsibility for supporting their personal and academic development. Pupils spend over two hours with their form tutors each week, meeting with them twice each day. Most of this time is not used to good effect. Regulations for the registration of pupils are observed, school notices are read out, and tutors regularly look at and sign pupils' planners. However, tutors look at planners only to check pupils' merits and behaviour reports. Many pupils make little use of their planners for their main intended use – to track pupils' progress – but tutors appear not to follow this up. Parents and teachers sign planners regularly but no evidence was seen of the planners being used for the intended dialogue between school and home. Pupils spend most of their tutor time chatting, often noisily, and some groups are unwilling to remain silent even for the register to be called. Significant numbers of pupils are late for their tutor periods. Some pupils do not attend tutor time and can be observed standing around outside the school instead.

The recently developed buddy system in which large numbers of pupils in Y10 and 11 have been trained to support younger pupils is a valuable help in the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school. They visit the primary schools and are then attached to tutor groups in Y7 and move with them to Y8. They help the younger pupils with any aspect of school life that they may find difficult including dealing with any possible bullying.

Many subject lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social education. In addition there is a carefully structured PSE programme that meets national guidelines, including appropriate provision for health education and careers education and guidance. However, the time allocated to the programme is short. There is no discrete provision in Y7 and there are units of IT in years 7 to 11 that take time from the PSE programme.

Provision for careers education and guidance is good. The PSE programme in years 8 to 11 includes modules of careers education. These are enriched in Y8 by a day and a half of activity organised by the school with the support of the local careers company, in Y9 by assistance from the school careers adviser, in Y10 by working with staff from a local major employer and culminating in Work Experience in the autumn term for Y11. Work Experience is thoroughly well prepared for and pupils undergo the process of applying for and in some cases being interviewed for the placement to make the experience as real as possible. Pupils

who are not appropriately prepared for the placement follow a worthwhile alternative exercise run by the staff of the local careers company.

Support for students' learning in the sixth form is very good. There is a careful programme of induction that begins early in Y11 when every applicant is interviewed by the head of sixth form. Students' academic progress is monitored by regular reviews of their work by the head of sixth form and form tutors. Before reports are issued to parents, students complete a self-evaluation of their progress that is reviewed with students alongside their report. The sixth form PSE programme is good. It includes a complete programme of career choice, employment application and guidance on using the Universities and Colleges Admission Services (UCAS) process, run by the University of Glamorgan and offers several levels of accreditation to students. Work experience for sixth formers, unlike that for pupils in Y11, is related to students' choice of career. It takes place either in July or in holiday periods, at the students' own arranging, so that appropriate placements can be secured.

There are some areas for concern in the school's procedures and practices for promoting the well-being, health and safety of its pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and are used effectively, but not all staff are fully aware of them. There is an appropriate anti-bullying policy and the Buddy system helps deal with bullying incidents among younger pupils. However, a few parents and pupils expressed concerns about an unacceptable amount of bullying in the school that is not adequately dealt with. The dilapidated appearance of much of the school, the incidence of litter and graffiti, and the poor quality of some of the toilets about which pupils regularly and legitimately complain, do not tell pupils or the adults in the building that they are valued as individuals, nor set a standard of concern for the environment to which pupils should aspire. Risk assessments and electrical testing of equipment have been carried out. There are examples of shabby maintenance around the school such as rotting woodwork and wet floors in inclement weather, that are a hazard to pupils.

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

The school's provision for SEN is good and for pupils who are deaf and hearing impaired is very good.

There are 145 pupils on the school's register for SEN, one tenth of the roll of the school and well below the average for Wales. Thirty-four of these pupils have statements of special educational needs, a proportion that is a little above the average for Wales. However half of them have statements of need arising from hearing impairment and deafness and most come from outside the school's catchment to a place in its specialist provision, the Support Centre for the Deaf (SCD).

Most pupils with SEN are identified through information from their primary schools. The primary school SENCOs meet with the school SENCO in the summer term to ensure that pupils' special needs are well known before they arrive at the school and appropriate provision can be made for them immediately. Early in Y7 all pupils take a cognitive ability test and a test of their reading and spelling ages to ensure that all pupils with SEN are identified. Pupils with SEN are subsequently re-tested frequently to monitor their progress and to ensure that appropriate provision is being made. The SENCO usefully identifies a group of pupils in Y7 who have relatively high cognitive ability scores but low reading ages and arranges reading lessons for them. In line with the Code of Practice the school operates a

staged referral system for pupils whose needs become apparent later, including the use of test data and teachers' recommendations.

In key stages 3 and 4 the achievement of pupils with SEN in relation to their ability is generally good. The achievement of pupils in the very small withdrawal groups is very good. The proportion of pupils gaining low grades in KS3 national tests is below the local average. At the end of KS4 only four per cent of pupils fail to gain qualifications, half the proportion in the local unitary authority.

The school's practice of inclusion is good. Pupils with SEN are placed in mixed ability tutor groups and are taught in mainstream classes with their peers, so they enjoy access to the same full curriculum and are taught by subject specialist teachers. Their learning is well supported by learning support assistants (LSAs) who are allocated to particular departments to ensure continuity of provision and development of their subject expertise. Good guidelines for maximising their effectiveness are provided for all teachers. However, as their support is concentrated in the core subjects there is little support available over much of the rest of the curriculum and pupils do not make as much progress as they could with more in class support.

The small amount of specialist teaching for pupils with SEN is very good and pupils achieve well. Most of the rest of the teaching they experience is good. Tasks and materials for pupils are appropriately modified to make them accessible. There is some provision of modified materials and extension tasks for gifted and talented pupils. However, they are not always available and sometimes these pupils complete tasks quickly in lessons then waste time waiting for the next task to be set.

There is effective additional or alternative curricular provision. Pupils are withdrawn from one or two lessons per week to work in small literacy support groups taken by specialist teachers. There are paired reading sessions during morning registration with sixth form students. A number of subjects in KS4 are accredited at entry level so that all pupils can gain qualifications. Pupils in KS4 can also choose to follow a Key Skills option instead of one or two other optional subjects. In Y11 they may attend a local tertiary college for one day a week of vocational training and a small number may have work placements if that is the most appropriate provision.

All pupils on the register for pupils with SEN have individual education plans (IEPs). They are thoroughly prepared, disseminated to all staff and regularly reviewed in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice. The provision made by the school for pupils with statements of SEN meets all the requirements of the statements. The school maintains regular contact with parents of pupils with SEN and sends them copies of their child's IEPs each time they are reviewed. The school is keen to work actively with parents and asks them to monitor progress and work set by the school. To help this the department has produced an attractively presented booklet describing how parents can help at home with literacy, numeracy etc.

The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The SENCO has introduced very effective systems of assessment of pupils and monitoring of their progress. With his colleagues in the department he has been instrumental in the school's recent appointment of LSAs and the introduction of the Alternative Curriculum in KS4. The department is well resourced and specialist teaching takes place in

attractive new accommodation of three dedicated classrooms. Staffing is satisfactory with three part-time specialist teachers and four LSAs. The SENCO maintains contact with all departments through a system of link teachers who meet termly. The school is well supported by a range of external agencies including specialist teachers from the UA who visit weekly to work with pupils with particular difficulties identified in their statements.

The SENCO receives all the literature about gifted and talented pupils and arranges some enrichment days for them and for pupils with SEN. The department arranges some good enrichment provision for some pupils in Y7 who are outstanding at mathematics.

All statutory requirements for pupils with SEN are well met. Governors are kept well informed through a lengthy and detailed annual report presented to governors by the SENCO who also makes regular reports to governors.

Provision for pupils who are deaf and hearing impaired is very good. They are on the roll of the SCD but are taught wholly or mainly in mainstream groups and are members of mainstream tutor groups. 10 pupils have been disapplied from the national curriculum in Welsh and modern foreign languages and receive very good support in the development of basic skills and in their mainstream subjects in the SCD. SCD staff compensate for pupils' disapplication from Welsh by ensuring that they take every opportunity to use Welsh literature and the history and geography of Wales in their language development work. They are very well supported by five LSAs who help by signing when necessary. Resources are very good. There are two acoustically treated rooms in the SCD and pupils have access to a range of amplification systems. Although they are not part of the SEN department, as many pupils in the SCD have a range of learning difficulties the two staffs work very closely together.

Since the previous inspection provision for pupils with SEN and who are deaf and hearing impaired has improved significantly.

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

Parents receive a clearly written prospectus, curriculum booklets and useful newsletters that detail some school policy issues as well as activities and achievements. They have access to a school website, constructive parent evenings and receive useful reports on pupil progress. The quality of information provided is good but the prospectus does not give full details of equal opportunities policies or attendance data. Some parents commented adversely about school reports. New reports in the school are more informative than the previous versions.

Parents make a positive contribution to school life, helping with the library, in art and through the active parent-teacher association (PTA) that raises important funds for the school.

The school has a good partnership with the community. Several departments visit elements in the local community for curriculum linked projects; a local church minister visits to take assembly. Pupils raise money for local, national and international charitable causes, and carry out a much appreciated litter collection in the neighbourhood. The Youth Annexe and Duke of Edinburgh Scheme operate on the school premises to the benefit of the wider community. Members of the local community manage them.

Overall the links with parents and community provide good support for pupils' development and standards of achievement.

Liaison with primary schools is good. Regular meetings with feeder primary schools, coupled with visits by departmental link teachers ensure good information exchange. Cross phase projects in core subjects help curriculum continuity between KS2 and KS3. Taster days, to which prospective pupils from non-feeder schools are invited, and open evenings, further assist transition. Y11 pupils, trained as Buddies, who accompany teachers on primary school visits, and act as hosts on taster days and open evenings, enhance social support.

There are good links with further education colleges and institutes for higher education. For KS4 pupils these inform on post-GCSE courses not available in school, as well as offering alternative curriculum options for the more vocational student. For sixth form students, visits to and from various institutions ensure a full knowledge of course availability and requirements, as well as giving an understanding of the demands of student life.

The school has well-established links with initial teacher training institutions. It hosts several students every year, who benefit from expert mentoring in the school. Whilst in school, they enrich pupils' learning experiences.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

Overall the quality of this partnership is good.

The school policy is usefully designed to link an understanding of the work place with classroom curriculum studies. Formal careers education is well focused on forthcoming study options in Y9. It is sensibly supplemented in several departments during KS4, by links with local enterprises providing speakers, opportunities to visit, and support for curriculum projects. Representatives from business provide mentoring and mock interviews in Y11, and finance management advice to Y13.

Placements in industry are encouraged for staff development. In recent years the level of uptake has been variable. Two placements are planned this year but, whilst generally satisfactory, this facility is under utilised.

Pupils in Y11 and Y12 undertake a good work-experience. They are appropriately briefed beforehand, are expected to keep short notes of their work on a custom designed record sheet and to contribute to a classroom de-briefing that shares experiences. Many pupils arrange their own work experience; others take advantage of placements brokered by an Education Business Partnership (EBP).

The school benefits from a good working relationship with the EBP, and with a career advice company. These links ensure availability of up-to-date information and help broker the work-related initiatives for pupils.

The work-related education has a positive effect on standards of achievement, course provision and pupils' development.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

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

The quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement is satisfactory across the school as a whole and in most faculties.

Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced some good procedures for evaluating its performance and planning for improvement. These are having a beneficial effect in many areas, but a culture of self-evaluation, using robust data analyses, is not clearly evident across the whole school.

Each member of the senior management team is associated, in a line management role, with a group of heads of faculty and a head of year, so that they are involved in monitoring all aspects of school life. Through regular meetings, which are conducted according to a set of protocol guidelines, a wide range of issues are discussed intended to help the school make progress on many fronts. Senior managers also attend some faculty meetings. The outcomes of these meetings cover a range of items, but there are few references to quantitative analyses or detailed comparisons with other local and/or national data.

In addition to KS3, KS4 and sixth form examination information, the school receives value-added and other data from the Welsh Examinations Database (WED), and from the UA. Additionally, the school subscribes to a standardised assessment programme. All this information is used well in a few faculties, such as mathematics, to measure performance, to predict future results, to set targets and to help correct underachievement if it occurs. Such practice is not consistent across the school.

In conjunction with the UA, the school publishes its targets for future public examination success in the governors' report to parents. Recent targets have been over ambitious and following a review, they are now more realistic.

Heads of faculty are expected to analyse and use information as it applies to their subjects, along with planning to meet the needs of all pupils. They are also expected to monitor teaching and learning through a range of activities. Aspects include monitoring of teaching, lesson observations, sharing good practice, ensuring professional development is pertinent to the school's needs and setting targets for future success. The qualitative aspects of monitoring are good overall, but there are a few areas of the curriculum where practice is not structured sufficiently well to be effective.

The school's development plan and the associated faculty and departmental plans are rightly focused upon improving teaching and learning, and the environment. They are not, however, sufficiently specific in terms of quantitative targets, costings and criteria for success.

Governors are well informed, actively involved and supportive. They regularly review the school's performance and have a very good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

### **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The school has a clear set of inclusive aims to provide for all pupils' academic, personal and social development. Teachers encourage pupils to have good attitudes towards their work, to behave well in class and to take part in extra-curricular activities.

The headteacher operates a consultative and inclusive system of leadership and management, where all colleagues are professional partners in making decisions. This system provides many opportunities for dialogue and full debate about a range of issues, but there are a few shortcomings insofar as not all aspects of agreed policies are fully implemented across the school. Because of the unsatisfactory state of much of the accommodation, a disproportionate amount of the headteacher's time is spent in seeking remedies for regularly occurring building problems. He receives good support from the deputy and assistant headteachers, who join with him to form an active senior management team. Regular staff briefings and informative bulletins are effective in maintaining good channels of communication.

In most classrooms the school appears to be an orderly community. In other areas, however, owing to the unsatisfactory nature of the environment and the boisterous behaviour of some pupils, the situation is not so well disciplined.

Governors carry out their duties efficiently. They are involved in all aspects of planning and qualitatively evaluating the school's performance, especially through valuable strategic planning day held off school premises. Consequently they are fully aware of the school's strengths and shortcomings, and the strategies to be employed for improvement. Regular meetings are held of the sub-committees as well as of the full governing body. They are supportive in all areas of the school's life and work. The annual report of governors to parents satisfies statutory requirements, but the school's prospectus has one or two shortcomings.

The quality of middle management is good overall. Best practice occurs in drama, mathematics and physical education, where it is very good. Heads of faculty generally are forward-looking and have created a good team spirit. Faculty development plans and schemes of work are satisfactory overall. Many faculties have clear and appropriate aims, they manage their resources well, and faculty meetings are productive.

The school manages its budget of around £4.5 million prudently and takes appropriate steps to get value for money. The governing body exercises proper oversight of the school's finances, staffing provision and appointments. The annual budget is appropriately set to reflect the school's planned priorities for development, the main focus being on improving teaching and learning. The allocation of available financial resources to different parts of the school, including the sixth form, is equitable. Governors work closely and effectively with the headteacher in fiscal matters. Financial decisions are taken, after due consideration, in accordance with the school's objectives. The latest auditors' report was positive, and the recommendations made within it have been implemented.

The school generally makes good use of most available resources. The new ICT rooms and equipment are not yet used to full advantage, but plans are in place to remedy this. Staff are suitably deployed across the age and ability range, and the provision of a extensive range of A level courses does not make undue demands on staffing. There are some large classes in KS3 and KS4, but this often occurs by design, when less able pupils are placed in smaller groups, with the higher ability pupils placed in larger sets. Time in class is generally well used, except where pupils are late arriving. Allocated teaching time does not meet national

recommendations. Accommodation problems in many areas detract from the otherwise good use of accommodation resources.

Day-to-day organisation and administration run efficiently. Support staff in all areas make a very valuable and positive contribution to the smooth running of the school.

Statutory requirements relating to pupils' entitlement to subjects in the curriculum are met, apart from the provision of religious education in the sixth form and a daily act of collective worship.

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

#### **Staffing**

The school is adequately staffed with the equivalent of 95.8 teachers. This allows the school to benefit from a pupil to teacher ratio of 17.3 to 1, which is, however, above the national average of 16.7 to 1 and the UA average of 16.6 to 1. Overall there is a good balance of age and experience within the staff and their expertise matches the requirements of the national and other curricula. In most subjects deployment of staff ensures that individual teachers' knowledge and skills are used effectively. Teachers who teach in sixth form are suitably well qualified and most of them have good and successful experience of doing so. Additionally, the appointment of some new staff at all levels has ensured a beneficial flow of new ideas and practices into the school.

In the areas of administration and site maintenance the school is suitably staffed. Administration personnel undertake their allotted duties very well, and they willingly respond to other requests, as they occur, to provide the school with an effective and efficient support system. The caretakers, maintenance and cleaning staff often work in difficult conditions, having to cope with leaking roofs, litter and poor decoration.

Technical support is good throughout the school and the personnel concerned help teaching staff provide good learning opportunities for pupils to make progress and achieve well. The support staff provision for pupils with SEN is only satisfactory. There are insufficient learning support assistants for the number of pupils with SEN.

The induction programme for all staff new to the school is good. This, along with other aspects of support for staff, such as monitoring of teaching and learning, where it occurs, do much to provide an ongoing structure for professional development. The school operates a very effective and well-managed continuing professional development system, the outcomes of which are reflected in the generally good subject reports that follow. Most teachers take advantage of a good range of in-house and externally provided programmes to extend their expertise. The school has taken advantage of the financial support available through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) to train all teachers in use of ICT to support the whole curriculum. This has had a significant positive effect on improving the use of ICT across the curriculum in the school.

#### **Accommodation**

The accommodation is unsatisfactory for the number of pupils on roll and the curriculum provided. The quality of specialist accommodation varies from very good to poor. In many

areas the unsatisfactory state of the accommodation has an adverse affect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Since the previous inspection, a number of improvements have been made. A new science block has been erected and it provides very good accommodation for that subject. History and art have benefited from a good refurbishment programme. Recent improvements to facilities for ICT are also proving beneficial in many subject areas.

However, there are still a number of serious shortcomings. The most serious deficiency is music, where the cramped rooms have a detrimental effect on the standards achieved in the subject. In home economics the food study rooms are shabby and outdated, and they still have black chalkboards, which are not acceptable under health and safety regulations. Religious education needs to share two specialist rooms between four teachers. There is lack of storage space in many areas. PSE is often taught in rooms that are not suitable for that purpose. Some modern foreign language lessons, and those in a number of other subjects, are taught in non-specialist rooms. Drama has two working areas, when, in most lessons, three are needed. Poor changing facilities for PE and poor toilet facilities are also other problems encountered by staff and pupils.

The school has tried to arrange most departments in suites of rooms. When this is possible, it enables effective communication and the sharing of resources to take place. However, not all subjects benefit from having rooms in close proximity. The worst cases occur in Welsh, where the teachers are located all over the school.

Despite peeling paintwork, poor plaster and other unsatisfactory factors many classrooms throughout the school are enhanced by interesting displays, which create a subject identity and provide a stimulating environment for learning. A number of corridors in the school contain good quality displays, celebrating the efforts and achievements of pupils in curricular and extra-curricular activities, but there is room for improvement in this respect.

There is a considerable amount of litter around the school after lunch breaks, and some external walls are decorated with graffiti.

## **Resources for learning**

The quantity of resources is satisfactory overall, and the quality is good in most subjects.

In the main, resources are appropriate to support the curriculum, but there are some shortcomings in a few areas that impede learning. Sixth form students have to buy their own texts in a number of subjects. There are insufficient class readers in Welsh, even though the situation has improved recently, shortages of textbooks in science and books need replacing in a number of subjects. In music, there is a shortage of good quality keyboards and too little untuned percussion.

The school has recently made a significant investment to develop computer facilities throughout most of the school.

The library functions well as a central facility and a learning resource centre. It is a pleasant room that is modest in size. The number of books in the library is just adequate for a school of this size. A good number of computers are located in the library and they are used well by many pupils and students. The English faculty frequently uses the library during lessons and encourages pupils to borrow books on a regular basis. Overall, the library/learning resource centre is used well.

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

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **English**

Standards of achievement are good at KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

#### **Good features**

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

- Results in the 2002 KS3 national tests at level 5 or better were above the national and local averages.
- In 2002 the GCSE results for grades A\* to C were above national and local averages.
- Standards of speaking and listening are generally good. Most pupils listen actively and respond to questions willingly and articulately, share ideas sensibly in pair and group work and read aloud quite fluently.
- Pupils develop good reading skills which are equal to the demands of the range of texts and lesson materials. Many volunteer to read aloud and make sense of what they read. They respond to writers' feelings quite perceptively and are able to extract information to support oral and written answers.
- Pupils undertake a wide range of writing tasks and develop an awareness of different purposes for their writing. They are helped by the provision of prompts and frameworks to organise and develop their writing, and by the standard practice of drafting and revising their work.
- Pupils develop the capacity to produce significantly extended writing, particularly in KS4, where many coursework pieces are of a high standard.

### ***Sixth form***

- In the 2002 A level examinations, students performed well; more than half of them achieved the highest grades A and B.
- Students are comfortable in their relationships with staff and each other and share ideas maturely.
- They participate in class discussion quite confidently, and show familiarity with the vocabulary of literary and linguistic analysis.
- Students analyse and respond to a wide range of literary and non-literary texts, showing perception and sensitivity. Their written work is conscientiously completed, displays growing maturity and is informed by research.

### **Shortcomings**

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

- Boys' achievement in KS4 is significantly less than that of girls.
- A minority of pupils of lower ability finds it difficult to maintain concentration and take turns in speaking.
- The writing of a minority of pupils of lower ability is uneven and erratic and there is uncertainty with spelling.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Though they understand the terminology, some students find it difficult to use the language of linguistic analysis in oral answers.

Since the previous inspection the high standards have been maintained.

## **Mathematics**

Standards are good at KS3 and KS4. They are very good in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Results in the 2002 KS3 national tests at level 5 or better were above the national and local averages.
- They handle appropriate aspects of algebra well, even in classes of low ability pupils.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve good standards.
- Pupils' numerical skills are good. Their mental mathematical skills are well developed during regular practice sessions. Many pupils are confident when manipulating figures. They cope well with mental calculations requiring more than two operations.
- In most classes, pupils can explain clearly what they are doing, and show that they understand the mathematical concepts involved.

- They often ask questions to confirm understanding and suggest alternative methods of solution, using correct terminology.
- Nearly all pupils make appropriate and accurate use of electronic calculators.
- Many pupils recall and apply a wide range of previous work and use it well.

#### ***KS4***

- In 2002 the GCSE results for grades A\* to C and A\* to G were above national and local averages. Such achievement represents good progress through the key stage. Results at grades A\* and A were well above national and local averages.
- Many pupils provide extended reasoned answers to questions that indicate a good depth of understanding of the topics involved. They also use correct terminology in context.
- More able pupils cope well with rigorous, very demanding tasks, such as those requiring complex algebraic and trigonometric calculations, or the use of fractional and negative indices.
- Less able pupils and those with SEN often work logically and methodically, thinking well about what they are doing, not just guessing answers.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Results at A level are usually very good, with many students achieving the highest grades.
- Students recall a good range of previous work and they use it well and confidently in new and more demanding situations.
- Most have a secure understanding of algebraic techniques and they use them well in a range of topics, such as when dealing with complex integration problems.
- They often spot ‘short-cuts’ in working before teachers ask what they might be.
- They occasionally challenge teachers and classmates in lively discussions, working beyond the requirements of the examination syllabus.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### ***KS3***

- A few less able pupils sometimes find basic number facts and properties difficult to remember. They also use calculators inappropriately.
- On occasions, pupils’ misbehaviour and idle chat hinder progress for a few of them.

##### ***KS4***

- Misbehaviour and idle chat hinder progress for a few pupils.
- A minority of mainly less able pupils confuse mathematical terms.

##### ***Sixth form***

- One or two students still rely too heavily upon their teachers for guidance; they show little initiative in their learning.

Since the previous inspection, good progress has been made. Standards of achievement have improved, as has the quality of teaching. ICT is now used more effectively.

## Science

Standards of achievement are good in KS3, satisfactory in KS4 and good in the sixth form.

### Good features

#### **KS3**

- In 2002, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in the KS3 national tests was well above the national average.
- The majority of pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics covering all aspects of the NC.
- The more able can apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to problem solving.
- Pupils generally make good progress through the key stage.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their abilities.
- Experimental and investigative skills are acquired and developed throughout the key stage. Pupils are able to identify variables, plan their investigations and carry out experiments. They make accurate observations and measurements generally using appropriate units.
- They can describe and record their results and the majority makes good use of graphical methods in their analyses. Pupils carry out practical work safely.
- Scientific vocabulary is carefully introduced by teachers and is appropriately used by most pupils in written and oral work.
- Many pupils make good oral contributions in class, answering questions and making contributions of their own ideas.
- The quality and presentation of written work is often good or very good.

#### **KS4**

- Almost all pupils entered for a GCSE science examination in 2002. The standards reached were in line with the national average.
- Able pupils build upon their KS3 knowledge and have a good recall and understanding of topics covering life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. They can use their knowledge and understanding to solve scientific problems and make good progress.
- Pupils with SEN continue to make a progress in line with their abilities.
- The overall quality of written work is good. Good use is made of the well-produced worksheets and booklets.
- During the key stage, pupils' experimental and investigative skills are developed further. The majority of pupils can plan and successfully carry out an investigation. Pupils make appropriate observations and take accurate measurements. Data are often well used in detailed analyses and in making valid conclusions. The more able pupils are able to link their conclusions to scientific theory and the predictions made. They make reasoned suggestions for improving their methods.
- Throughout KS3 and KS4 pupils are made increasingly aware of the valuable contributions science makes to everyday life. They acquire knowledge and understanding of the social, economic and environmental aspects of the subject.

#### **Sixth form**

- Students have a good and often very good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics and key concepts in biology, chemistry and physics.

- At A level, most students gained an A-E grade and nearly two thirds reached the higher A-C grades.
- Their knowledge, understanding and skills are used well in solving problems.
- Communication and mathematical skills are well used. They research and organise information effectively, building up clear, comprehensive, well-kept files.
- Practical skills are good. Experiments are well planned, students work safely and systematically, they make appropriate observations and collect accurate data. Results are well analysed and interpreted using appropriate scientific theory.
- Most students make good progress during the courses.

### **Shortcomings**

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

- A significant minority of middle and lower ability pupils, especially boys in KS4, has a less secure knowledge and understanding of key facts and concepts. They make slower progress, which in a few cases is hindered by inappropriate behaviour and attitudes in class.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to develop “hands on” ICT skills in scientific contexts.
- In a sizeable proportion of assessed practical work, pupils’ planning often shows lack of scientific detail, inappropriate graphs are used and evaluations are not developed well.

#### ***Sixth form***

- A minority of students has a less secure knowledge and understanding of key concepts. A few have difficulty with scientific calculations.

Since the previous inspection standards of achievement have improved.

### **Welsh second language**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils respond well during listening activities and understand short spoken and recorded items; they are able to select relevant information to answer basic questions both orally and in writing.
- The majority of pupils are confident when speaking individually and in pairs about familiar topics. They use patterns confidently to give explanations on preference and to seek and receive information from others.
- Most pupils have clear speech and pronunciation and more able pupils use sentence patterns accurately.
- Pupils read aloud well and they understand short passages on familiar topics.
- Reading skills are further enhanced through the introduction of an effective class reading scheme when pupils show their ability to discuss and express their opinions on short reading books.
- Middle and higher ability pupils produce written work of a high standard, varying their sentence structures and using a wide vocabulary.

#### ***KS4***

- The 2002 GCSE results were better than the local average for grades A\* to C.
- Most pupils make good progress during KS4.
- Pupils show a good understanding of the target language and they respond well to audio visual tasks and other stimuli; low ability pupils are able to understand short recorded items.
- Able pupils are confident when discussing a range of current issues and are able to express opinions using a range of appropriate language.
- They show an increased awareness of language development and attempt to improve their linguistic skills.
- Lower ability pupils use basic language constructions and vocabulary in a satisfactory manner.
- Most pupils read meaningfully and confidently from a varied range of reading material.
- Pupils are making good progress when seeking and identifying specific information from a variety of text to use in oral and written work.
- They undertake a range of appropriately challenging extended writing tasks as they progress through the key stage and the majority write with accuracy and maturity.

#### ***Sixth form***

- The small number of students who sat the A level examination in 2002 achieved 100 percent success.
- Students have made good progress since KS4 and standards are in line with their ability.
- Students have a good understanding of the target language used by teachers.
- They have made progress in analysing texts and in understanding the contents and style of literary work.
- Students read clearly and respond appropriately to articles, short stories and various other reading material.
- Writing skills show progress and students write at length on various topics. The Y12 student demonstrates maturity and creativity in her work as well as an awareness of grammar and language structure.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### ***KS3***

- Middle ability pupils in mixed ability groups especially in Y9, are making slow progress in their speaking skills and lack confidence to offer responses voluntarily.
- Some low ability pupils, mainly boys, in a minority of classes, are not sufficiently on task to reach their potential; they make basic grammatical errors in oral and written work.

##### ***KS4***

- Pupils are occasionally reluctant to extend their conversation in whole class discussion; only the more able pupils show initiative.
- Low ability pupils make basic grammatical and punctuation errors in their written work.

##### ***Sixth form***

- When discussing ideas and strategies the weakest linguists sometimes lack confidence to extend their observation.

- Some of their written work contains basic grammatical errors.

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection and standards have risen.

## **Design and technology**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

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

- Examination results reflect pupils' abilities and overall are well in excess of local and national figures.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of the design process and apply it in their project work
- They understand and make use of technical vocabulary on a regular and consistent basis.
- Pupils use research and analysis as useful tools when developing their design and make tasks.
- They make good use of information provided in their study guide booklets and formulate precise specifications that are helpful in their designing and evaluating; written standards are generally good.
- Pupils are reflective when developing their project work and make objective judgements.
- Graphical and presentation skills are good and in some cases very good in Y10 and Y11.
- Pupils design well through formal and informal drawing and through modelling.
- Drawing and sketching skills reveal some useful innovation and creativity; outcomes are supported by informative annotation and a sensitive use of colour.
- Pupils experience and make use of a variety of materials when fulfilling their project work.
- Pupils show knowledge of a variety of skills and processes.
- Practical skills are executed safely and pupils produce some well-made items.
- Accuracy and well finished completed products are strong features of the faculty.
- Pupils in all areas of design and technology are gaining valuable experiences in the use of a variety of ICT applications when developing their projects. There is a good balance between traditional skills and new technologies with examples of good work in KS3.
- Pupils participate well in whole class and group activities, they make good progress and this is well monitored.
- Pupils with SEN receive helpful support from staff and make good progress.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Examination results reflect students' abilities and compare well with local and national figures, with over half the students achieving the higher grades A and B.
- Designing skills are well developed. Students have a good depth of design understanding
- Research and analysis are broad, thorough and detailed.
- Graphical skills are comprehensive and ICT applications are used appropriately, for research and in project development and presentation.
- Modelling skills and experimentation with ideas are positively addressed within project study.
- Students experience and make use of a variety of materials when fulfilling their project work.

- Students show knowledge of a variety of skills and processes.
- There is positive independent working, with much problem solving and decision making.

### **Shortcomings**

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

- There are some examples of incomplete work in pupils, folders in KS3.

#### ***Sixth form***

- A small minority of students in the sixth form are casual in their approach to their work, which is hindering their progress at this stage.

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The quality of designing and making continues to be progressive and innovative and includes the use of a variety of ICT applications, which now form an integral part of pupils' learning experiences in design and technology.

### **Information technology**

Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory in KS3, satisfactory in KS4 and good in the sixth form.

No lessons could be observed in KS3 owing to the rotational nature of the ICT/PSE programme.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS4***

- The 2002 GCSE examination results for grades A\* to C were better than the local average.
- Pupils understand procedures, and are competent and confident in their use of equipment and software and show much capability when integrating a variety of information into their work from a range of sources, including a sensible use of the Internet.
- Pupils make appropriate use of technical terminology in their written work and in conversation and discussion.
- Pupils produce accurate written work.
- Project preparation skills are good and develop well in depth and detail from Y10 to Y11.
- Pupils demonstrate a valid analysis of project briefs and formulate relevant and thoughtful responses in their work some good examples in Y11.
- There is evidence of sound preparatory work and due attention paid to evaluation and modification in pupils' work.
- Pupils produce well-structured project work that has accurate content and is well presented.
- Pupils have a secure appreciation of the role of ICT in everyday use.

#### ***Sixth form***

- In the 20002 A level examinations, students achieved a 100 percent pass rate at grades A to C.

- Students handle information and number effectively through the use of appropriate software packages.
- Students have a sound understanding and knowledge of the basic theory relating to computer systems.
- All students have a positive commitment to developing a comprehensive range of ICT skills through their project development and are confident in acquiring information.
- Students demonstrate good capability in integrating software packages, making use of the Internet and other sources of information when fulfilling their studies.
- Project work demonstrates some sound problem solving. It is well structured and thoughtfully presented.

## **Shortcomings**

### ***KS3***

- The organisation of the discrete ICT course with PSE in the form of modules does not provide an efficient experience for pupils.
- The time allocation of 12 weeks does not allow sufficient time for course content to be fully covered.
- The structure of two six-week rotations at differing times undermines the continuity of pupils' experience.
- The use of non-specialist staff in the delivery of the course limits its coherence.
- Pupils absent within the rotational cycle have no means to catch up and do not gain an equal experience.

### ***KS4***

- A variety of systems difficulties within the department have resulted in a discontinuity of provision and this has limited pupils' opportunity to consistently develop a variety of skills.
- A minority of pupils lack an understanding of and confidence in developing an approach to their work.

### ***Sixth form***

- A few students are insufficiently disciplined in working independently, at an appropriate pace, to realise their potential.

Progress has been made since the previous inspection in terms of the acquisition of specialist staff and new equipment.

## **History**

Standards of achievement are good at KS3, very good at KS4 and satisfactory in the sixth form.

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- Pupils use a variety of source materials well, have a good understanding of historical issues and chronology and interpret and analyse information.

- They have good oral skills, and are willing to share ideas and participate in discussion at an appropriate level as they develop historical terminology and use it progressively more accurately.
- They are encouraged to select, recall and recognise information and they have a good understanding of people and events and the links between cause and consequence.
- Most pupils are able to present their work in a variety of ways, and apply their knowledge, the most able students demonstrating a clear focus in their answers.

#### ***KS4***

- GCSE results in 2002 were very good, being well above both local and national averages for grades A\* to C.
- Pupils build on knowledge, experience and skills acquired at KS3 and become increasingly confident and effective in oral, listening and speaking and writing skills.
- Pupils are able to select, organise and recall historical knowledge of chronology, people, places and events and progressively develop skills in evaluation, analysis and interpretation with the more able having a clear understanding of the pace and impact of change and the fact that it is not uniform.

#### ***Sixth form***

- All students achieved an A - E grade at either AS level or A2 level.
- Students have good oral skills and are encouraged to think about the subject and to work both independently and co-operatively to select, recall and organise their historical knowledge, the most able writing with style and fluency.
- Students have an understanding of chronology, time and place, cause and effect. They develop skills in selecting and recalling information and are given clear guidance on what is required to achieve specific standards in examinations.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### ***KS3***

- A minority of pupils, mostly boys, have limited listening skills and this hinders their ability to access and interpret information, apply concepts, develop their knowledge and ideas and to respond orally and in writing.

##### ***KS4***

- No major shortcomings

##### ***Sixth form***

- Some students have a limited subject knowledge and understanding and sense of historical enquiry.
- Reading and research are restricted by resource constraints that are only partially overcome by teacher-generated material.

Since the previous inspection, standards in KS3 have improved and are now good overall and in KS4 they are very good.

## **Geography**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4 and very good in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the character and identity of their local area and of Wales; they make good use of their knowledge in the study of other peoples and of countries in a widening range of contexts and scales; this extends their grasp of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.
- They demonstrate their familiarity with maps, diagrams and photographs, and make good progress in developing the skills of geographical enquiry; they benefit from a good programme of fieldwork and visits both locally and further afield.
- They build a vocabulary of subject terms; they use key words and terminology with increasing precision.
- Across the key stage, they increase their knowledge of introductory topics in physical and human geography; they understand that movements of the earth's crust can lead to earthquakes and that the level of economic development affects the quality of life in many parts of the world.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils build successfully upon the skills acquired in KS3; their oral and written work shows a growing maturity in the depth of their response and in their insights into the inequalities in the economic development of countries and in the growth of urban areas in different parts of the world.
- Viable explanations are offered for the differing weather conditions experienced in this country; they correctly assign characteristics to periods of high and low pressure and cooperate well in small groups to devise a typical weather forecast.
- They possess the skills to conduct effective independent research and produce coursework assignments that reflect good ability in collecting, recording and evaluating a range of evidence from primary and secondary sources.

#### ***Sixth form***

- In the 2002 A level examinations, students achieved a 100 percent pass rate, with success at grades A to C being above local and national averages.
- Students have extensive and detailed knowledge and understanding and can express their ideas orally and in extended writing of a high standard; their use of relevant information obtained from a wide range of sources is particularly effective and they develop very good analytical and presentational skills in interpreting and evaluating the information gained.
- They work productively as individuals and in small groups to solve problems; they become increasingly aware of the relevance of geography to environmental, social and economic issues when researching deprivation and segregation in urban areas and the sustainability of urban growth.
- They make good use of contrasting case studies to exemplify their theoretical knowledge; beneficial fieldwork enables them to identify how human influence can cause changes in the ecosystem of a small area and how physical processes interact to produce major landform features.

## **Shortcomings**

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

- GCSE results at grades A\* to C in 2002 were below national and local averages.
- The breadth and depth of knowledge of a small handful of pupils, especially in Y9, are limited; their standard of achievement is unsatisfactory, due in no small measure to their deliberate antisocial and distracting behaviour.
- The progress of a small number of pupils in KS3 and KS4, whilst often achieving standards commensurate with their abilities, is hindered by numerous absences.
- Some are more confident orally than in writing; others are reluctant to volunteer answers and to contribute to class discussions.

### ***Sixth form***

- No significant shortcomings were noted in the sixth form.

The faculty has made good progress since the previous inspection with a clear improvement in pupils' standards of achievement in all key stages.

## **Modern foreign languages**

Standards in French and German in KS3, KS4 and the sixth form are good. The small numbers of pupils who study Italian in KS3 and KS4 achieve satisfactory standards.

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- The majority of pupils understand the language they hear spoken by the teacher or recorded on cassette.
- They have a good recall of vocabulary and are keen to answer questions.
- They respond enthusiastically to the variety of language tasks prepared for them, the majority speaking with a good accent.
- Comprehension of reading passages in the textbook is good; pupils can pick out relevant details.
- The majority of pupils write with increasing grammatical accuracy and in Y9 use past, present and future tenses effectively.
- More able pupils write good, extended paragraphs and letters using a range of vocabulary and idiom.
- In Italian, where standards have been affected in previous years by staffing difficulties, pupils have made good progress this year to achieve satisfactory standards.
- Pupils with SEN make progress appropriate to their abilities.

### ***KS4***

- In 2002, results in GCSE examinations in both French and German were well above UA and national averages.
- For the majority of pupils, listening and reading comprehension continues to be good.
- Pupils speak well on topics prepared for the GCSE examinations.
- They take part confidently in prepared dialogues.
- They grasp grammatical rules quickly and the majority apply them in differing contexts.

- They write at length on a range of topics.
- More able pupils in Y11 produce coursework of a very high standard.
- Pupils who study Italian in Y10 have made good progress in all language skills since September.

### ***Sixth form***

- In the 2002 A level examinations all students entered for French and German gained a pass grade.
- Students understand details in complex language.
- The majority speak at length and sustain conversations.
- They understand authentic written passages and access the Internet to read up to date texts.
- Students write in differing registers, develop their own ideas and express their opinions well.
- They have a good understanding of grammar and the majority can transfer this knowledge to their own written work.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils do not use the foreign language in normal classroom exchanges with the teacher and often have to be prompted to answer in full sentences.
- Where tasks are not closely matched to pupils' abilities, a minority do not sustain concentration and underachieve.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils are hesitant when speaking in unrehearsed situations.
- They do not use the foreign language as the normal means of communication in the classroom.

### ***Sixth form***

- A minority of students require encouragement to give extended answers.
- The written work of some students is marred by recurring grammatical errors.

Since the previous inspection the faculty has made progress in raising standards, especially in GCSE examinations.

## **Art**

Standards of achievement are good at KS3, and very good at KS4 and in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils make good progress in developing their drawing skills.
- They are able to paint with skill and use colour well.

- They understand how to use different artists' techniques to improve their own work.
- They are able to use computers successfully to research the work of different artists and to manipulate images.
- They are beginning to know how to use a sketchbook successfully.
- They are able to use a variety of traditional printing techniques with skill.
- They are beginning to look at art and form personal opinions and judgements.
- They are able to use the art and craft of other cultures to enrich their own work.
- Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and achieve good standards.

#### ***KS4***

- In the 2002 GCSE examination all pupils gained an A\* to G grade. The numbers gaining A\* to C grades was very close to the national average.
- Pupils are able to paint representational images with much finesse.
- They are able to further develop their printmaking skills with much verve.
- They demonstrate good problem solving skills in their sketchbook work.
- They are able to combine two- and three-dimensional processes imaginatively.
- They develop an appreciation of Welsh artists and the art of Wales from the department's resources and from visits to galleries.

#### ***Sixth form***

- The 2002 A level examination results were good, with a 100 percent pass rate at grades A to C.
- Students are developing as independent artists who use their skills to express themselves with flair.
- They use computers very creatively.
- They develop an appreciation of Welsh artists, such as Ceri Richards, and the art of Wales from visits to galleries.
- Well-established craft skills are extended in new printmaking techniques.
- Sketchbook work shows much imagination.

#### **Shortcomings**

- At KS3, knowledge of the historical and contemporary art of Wales is limited by the lack of visits to galleries.
- In all years, writing about art is often let down by uncorrected poor spelling.
- Breadth of craft experience is limited by the loss of the previous ceramic facilities.
- Progress in research is limited by the lack of Internet access in all studios.

There has been good progress since the previous report.

## **Music**

Standards in music are good throughout the school.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils achieve good standards in performing and appraising and satisfactory standards in composing.
- Pupils sing, in small and large groups, in two parts with enthusiasm, secure intonation and clear diction.
- Pupils perform a range of suitably arranged pieces on classroom instruments. They perform confidently with a high degree of accuracy and sensitivity and maintain good ensemble when performing together in groups and as a whole class.
- Pupils compose and improvise in response to a number of suitable stimuli. Individual melodic work and group Gamelan and rhythmic compositions are often well shaped and rhythmically interesting. A few, recently started, Y9 “Advert” compositions show promise with certain pupils combining initial layers of sound imaginatively.
- Pupils focus their listening well in their practical work and purposefully appraise and refine efforts. They demonstrate a good awareness of musical elements and are able to identify features in different recorded extracts and in their own music making.

#### ***KS4***

- GCSE results in 2002 were above the national average with over one-third of candidates gaining A\* or A grades.
- Pupils make suitable progress in vocal and instrumental performing and achieve good standards. They maintain secure ensemble in class group performance.
- Most pupils display a good understanding of melody writing, chords and structure in their compositions. A few works demonstrate imaginative treatment of ideas and good understanding of the chosen medium.
- Pupils are acquiring an appropriate vocabulary of technical terms. Many use these well when describing features in recorded music from different styles and periods.
- Many pupils make effective use of the limited ICT resources in the department to enhance their work in composing.

#### ***Sixth form***

- The 2002 A level results were good and above the national average.
- Students are capable and experienced performers. Many perform with conviction and a very good sense of style.
- Students, in general, have a good understanding of the techniques of “chorale” and “serial” style compositions. Their “free” compositions often show imaginative treatment of core ideas and an understanding of genre, style and structure.
- Student essays on “set-works” and associated topics demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the technical and stylistic features of the music being studied.
- Aural perception skills are uneven and satisfactory overall.
- Many students make effective use of the limited ICT resources in the department to enhance their work in composing.

## **Shortcomings**

### ***KS3***

- Occasionally, pupils' vocal work is lacking in sufficient refinement.
- In general, the ability of pupils to explore and combine different vocal and instrumental sounds imaginatively is limited.

### ***KS4***

- A few pupils in Y11 have yet to develop initial ideas in composing adequately.
- The appraising skills of a few pupils are not evenly developed across a range of musical contexts.

### ***Sixth form***

- The "style" compositions of certain students are basic and not always secure.
- The aural perception skills of certain Y13 students are uneven and rather insecure.

Standards have been consolidated in all key stages since the previous inspection. However, constraints of accommodation are inhibiting pupils' progress and affecting standards.

## **Physical education**

Standards of achievement at both KS3 and KS4 are good, and in the sixth form examination classes, standards of achievement are very good.

It was not possible to inspect the sixth form general provision.

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- Very good standards are achieved in soccer in Y7 where pupils work consistently to the task set and respond imaginatively when devising their own group practices. In Y9 soccer pupils demonstrate good decision making skills and show an understanding of a range of attacking and defending strategies.
- Across KS3 pupils demonstrate appropriate methods of warming up and work independently, they are beginning to use subject specific terminology.
- Pupils improve their technique for example in Y7 hockey, Y8 netball and tennis and are able to make simple judgements about their performance.

### ***KS4***

- Results at GCSE are very good and the number of pupils achieving grades A\*- C is significantly higher than the national and UA averages.
- In both core physical education at KS4 and at GCSE level pupils are capable of working independently and demonstrate an appreciation of the key principles of a health related exercise programme.
- Pupils on the GCSE course are confident performers and project work is detailed and well presented, demonstrating a good understanding of the topic.

### ***Sixth form***

- Results at AS level are above the UA and national averages.
- In A and AS level theory students achieve very high standards. Innovative teaching strategies allow students to acquire good subject knowledge and the ability to develop their analytical skills.

### **Shortcomings**

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

- In gymnastics at KS3 body management skills are under-developed and though pupils work consistently they do not make sufficient progress.
- In some games lessons for example Y9 tennis and Y8 netball pupils do not concentrate on the task set for the conditioned game and do not make progress.
- Pupils are not consistent in making judgements which will improve performance, they repeat their actions but when they do not succeed they are unable to find a solution. This is evident, for example in Y9 basketball where pupils do not adapt to use space well.
- Although pupils are active they do not challenge themselves fully in some Y9 and 10 exercise activities. This does not allow pupils to experience the full benefits of an exercise programme.

An extensive extra-curricular programme extends and enriches the physical education curriculum. Competitive games are developed during inter-form and inter-school matches and links with the community allow pupils to develop their interests further. In team games pupils play fairly and competitively. Some activities previously not experienced by the girls have been introduced within the 'Girls First' initiative and have proved successful.

The department has made good progress since the previous inspection.

### **Religious education**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus. They use their understanding of Christianity well to help secure their understanding of Sikhism and Hinduism. They understand the nature of the sacred.
- They have a very good religious vocabulary that they use well and accurately in their written and oral work.
- They are able to present two sides of a debate, such as whether or not miracles happen, and appreciate how religious belief affects the daily lives and decisions of believers.
- More able pupils write very perceptively, honestly and with empathy. They can see another persons' point of view and have some insight into how others see them.
- Pupils show respect for the beliefs of others and many are prepared to maintain an open mind about their own beliefs. Few take the easy route of rejecting the concept of religious belief.

## **Shortcomings**

- Some pupils of lower ability do not complete written tasks in class or for homework so their knowledge and understanding are incomplete. Many boys are perceptive and thoughtful in their oral contributions in lessons but do not bother to write nearly as well.

## **Religious Studies**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in the short course in KS4, very good in the full course in KS4 that was introduced in 2001, and very good in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS4***

- All pupils follow the GCSE short course and almost all are entered for the examination
- In 2002 virtually all pupils obtained a pass grade. A very high proportion of pupils gained grades A\*-C, above the average for Wales and the UA. Over half of those pupils gained the highest grades, A\*-A. This was a considerable improvement on the results in 2001.
- Girls' achievement in 2002 was exceptional as three-quarters obtained grades A\* or A.
- Pupils display much empathy with the hardship experienced by peoples in many parts of the world and recognise that their own lifestyles are privileged.
- Almost all pupils, including those of low ability are articulate, and able to give cogent reasons for their views.
- Pupils in the full GCSE course have a good understanding of the nature of ethical dilemmas. They can present both sides of a debate about euthanasia and abortion and express a personal opinion sensitively. They know the differences between the views of adherents of different religious traditions on such matters and how these colour people's views. Their writing is mature and reasoned.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Students are achieving very well in transferring from a short course in GCSE to a full A level course, particularly as they have a shorter allocation of time for RS than for other A level subjects.
- Students in Y12 have a good understanding of the concepts of Buddhism. They can apply their learning practically in the construction of a Buddhist shrine and personally in meditation.
- Students in Y13 have a secure knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and worship that they can relate to contemporary and international issues. They integrate significant passages from the Bible effectively into their written work and present and develop arguments well.

## **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS4 short course***

- Boys' achievement was less good than that of girls at GCSE in 2002 and in their work seen during the inspection. Their oral work shows good understanding but their written work is often brief, undeveloped and less well presented than that of girls. Boys across

the ability range frequently waste time in lessons by an undisciplined approach to their work, chatting and playing instead of settling to task.

### ***KS4 full course and sixth form***

- There are no shortcomings.

Since the previous inspection standards have improved at key stages 3 and 4, and at A level. Standards in religious education in the sixth form remain unsatisfactory, as the time available for study does not allow the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus to be met.

## **Personal and social education**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and KS4 and good in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

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

- In lessons across the curriculum, pupils demonstrate self-reliance and concern for others and the environment.
- They have well-developed personal and social skills, can share their ideas effectively with others and can work well in groups.
- Even when the behaviour of their classmates is unsatisfactory, some pupils continue to attend to the task in hand and learn from the activity.

#### ***KS3***

- Some pupils have a good understanding of the requirements in which good revision of schoolwork can be carried out.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the damage that our everyday activities can inflict on the environment.
- Pupils gain good knowledge and understanding of hazards to health such as smoking, alcohol and drug abuse.

#### ***KS4***

- Some pupils have a good understanding of concepts related to crime, such as responsibility, redemption, punishment, and rehabilitation.
- Pupils have a good grasp of such consumer-related matters as the Sale of Goods Act and can apply their understanding to real life situations.
- The active engagement of large numbers of pupils in the Buddy system demonstrates their very good understanding of social responsibilities and their capacity to put their desire to help others to good effect.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Large numbers of pupils are actively engaged in the organisation of charity work in the school, support the needs of other pupils through participating in paired reading programmes and run a Fair Trade fortnight supporting the produce of small producers in less economically developed parts of the world.
- Students work well in pairs to share ideas and learn from each other about such matters as significant personal qualities that are widely valued for employment.

- Students are sufficiently self-confident to challenge teachers' opinions with their own reasonable argument.

### **Shortcomings**

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

- Pupils learn little of value for PSE in the modules on ICT in the PSE programme.
- Many pupils are content to let a small group answer all the questions from their teacher and do not test their own understanding or perception. They are passive learners.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Students content themselves with very brief written comments in PSE lessons when more detailed and specific information would be more helpful to their thinking.

At the previous inspection PSE was not inspected as a separate subject.

### **Business studies**

Standards of achievement are good in KS4 and in the sixth form.

#### **Good features**

##### ***KS4***

- Most pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the structure, organisation and control of the main forms of business.
- They are able to explain their current work on marketing and production in detail using business terms correctly.
- They have a good knowledge and understanding of the changing structure of the local and national economy and can explain clearly the effects of change on areas such as Cardiff and the Rhondda.
- Most pupils appreciate the importance of effective communications within and between businesses and display a good understanding of the methods used.
- They display a good understanding of recruitment, selection and training procedures used in the work place.
- More able pupils show competence and confidence in applying knowledge and understanding to solve business problems in real life situations.
- In 2002 satisfactory examination results were achieved with the majority of pupils gaining GCSE grades in line with their capabilities.

##### ***Sixth form***

- Most students are making good progress and are building effectively on the skills acquired in KS4.
- They have a good recall of key ideas and facts from their previous work on, for example, human resource management and business objectives and planning.
- Their knowledge and understanding of how external factors affect business behaviour and decision making are well developed.
- Most pupils are able to explain clearly and concisely how factors, such as economic growth, new technology and competition have affected the marketing of U.K. businesses.

- They can provide a good evaluation of alternative methods of assessing the financial position of a company.
- They carefully consider and make a good assessment of the reasons why many firms pursue growth as their main objective.
- Good examination results were achieved at A level.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS4***

- A minority of average and less able pupils do not always recall previous work in sufficient detail. They also have some difficulty solving problems.
- Less able pupils and a minority of average ability pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of financial planning and accounts.

#### ***Sixth form***

- The written work of a minority of students relies too heavily on narrative rather than analysis and evaluation.

The department has made good progress since the previous inspection and has addressed most of the issues identified in the previous report.

## **Child Development**

Standards of achievement in this KS4 subject are good.

### **Good features**

- GCSE examination results reflect these standards and grades attained are often higher than local and national figures.
- Pupils have good recall of previous work and display sound knowledge and understanding of babies and young children.
- They show appropriate awareness of cultural and religious influences on family lifestyles.
- Many pupils are able to discuss their work confidently and extract relevant information from resource material.
- Their investigative work is well focused and often presented visually.
- Pupils plan well when they prepare healthy meals for children and produce accurate costings of nursery equipment.
- Perceptive observations are made of individual children and recorded well in their child study folders. Most pupils are able to make meaningful comparisons with statistical norms.
- Examination tasks in Y11 show good research and identification of relevant factors to promote children's learning.
- ICT is used well to improve the presentation of work and for analysing data.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of pupils are passive, content to sit and listen and oral responses are brief.
- A small proportion of spelling errors mar the quality of written work.

This subject was not reported on separately in the previous inspection.

## **Drama**

Standards of achievement are very good at KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

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

- Pupils in KS3 work with interest and enthusiasm. Their understanding is developed systematically by following a good well-constructed scheme of work. Pupils of all levels of ability are able to make a contribution to the processes of group planning, preparation and performance.
- They show good awareness of characters and are able to explain them in hot seat activities. Pupils perform relatively without inhibition but, though they show their enjoyment of the activities, they perform sensibly and with control. They appreciate each other's performance.
- Pupils KS4 show confidence in preparing and performing scripted and devised performance pieces. They show knowledge and understanding of their characters. They work co-operatively discussing aspects of presentation and offer each other supportive critical assessment.
- Pupils perform confidently and without inhibition, moving naturally and showing good sense of the use of stage space.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Students respond with energy and enthusiasm in warm-up activities.
- Students work together cooperatively and appreciate each other's performance in a properly critical fashion.
- They show good skills in the interpretation and presentation of scripted drama.
- They demonstrate a variety of skills, including direction, and sound and lighting design.

### **Shortcomings**

- 2002 GCSE examination results at grades A\* to C were just below national and local averages.
- Preparation for the assessed group performance required by the examinations in KS4 and the sixth form can be affected by absence.

Since the previous inspection the high standards have been maintained, but there remain problems with the availability of suitable accommodation.

## **Economics**

Standards of achievement in this sixth form subject are good.

## **Good features**

- In 2002 all students achieved a pass grade at either AS level or A level.
- Students show a strong interest in the subject and are able to explain economic concepts, use subject specific vocabulary and terminology and are able to apply their knowledge to real life problems to an appropriate level.
- Students work co-operatively, listen to others and are able to use resource information provided to research, investigate and study.
- Students are able to tackle a range of written work, responding well to questions and ideas and showing an increasing level of understanding and analytical thinking and appreciation of how to improve achievement.

## **Shortcomings**

- Some students demonstrate a limited grasp of graphical techniques.
- Personal research and presentation skills are restricted by the limited access the students have to ICT facilities in school.

At the previous inspection the subject was reported with Business Studies. Good standards have been maintained.

## **Home economics**

Standards of achievement are good at KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

### **Good features**

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

- Recent examination results are good and above local and national figures.
- Pupils develop good knowledge of nutrition, food commodities and safe food preparation.
- They are aware of current food trends and cultural influences on eating habits.
- Pupils understand the link between a balanced diet and good health for individual groups.
- Pupils work well in groups to consider and prepare alternative and healthier solutions to traditional food products.
- Practical work is well executed. Pupils plan carefully and prepare a range of food items for experimental, personal and examination purposes. Completed products are of good quality.
- Pupils use appropriate sensory terminology and star profiles to discuss and analyse their work.
- They apply their numeracy skills well in costing exercises and calculating research findings.
- Class files and coursework projects show good evidence of extended writing.
- ICT is used well to analyse nutritional data and to present work.
- Pupils with SEN receive sensitive support and make good progress.
- Many pupils gain accredited merit certificates for their work.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Recent examination results are good and above local and national figures.

- Students demonstrate a good understanding of the concept of a healthy diet and the need to reduce the risk of developing associated health problems.
- They display good skills of problem solving and decision making.
- Coursework projects show good research skills, scientific testing, sensory evaluation and the production of appropriate food items.
- They understand the importance of technological developments and apply this well in the planning and making of their own products.
- Confident and competent ICT skills are used to carry out in-depth nutritional analysis, research up-to-date information and for presentation purposes.
- Students at both AS and A level take responsibility for their own learning and are able to discuss their work critically.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3, KS4 and the sixth form***

- A minority of work, including coursework is incomplete.
- Not all pupils adhere to strict health and safety procedures.
- A small number of pupils are less focused and this affects their progress.
- Not all written and oral answers are fully developed.

Progress since the previous inspection is good.

### **Catering**

Standards of achievement in this KS4 subject are good.

#### **Good features**

- Recent GCSE examination results are good in relation to pupils' ability.
- Most pupils take a serious approach to the course and show considerable commitment in the preparation of their catering whites and food ingredients.
- They acquire good organisational and team skills when they experience preparing food items on a large scale for school and charity events.
- In coursework assignments pupils demonstrate the ability to choose relevant food items, prepare work plans, cost outcomes and evaluate using sensory and dietary analysis. Completed products are well finished.
- The majority of pupils gain a basic food hygiene certificate and apply this understanding well in class activities.
- They use appropriate catering terminology when they describe aspects of their work.
- ICT is used well for dietary analysis and presenting work.

#### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of pupils are less secure in knowledge and understanding.
- Few pupils experience first hand use of large-scale equipment.

This subject was not reported on separately in the previous inspection.

## **Sociology**

In this sixth form subject, standards of achievement are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- In the 2002 A-Level examinations, all pupils achieved grades A-E and the proportion gaining grades A-C was in line with UA and Welsh averages.
- Students appreciate the diversity and application of sociological concepts, themes and methods.
- The majority of students approach the subject positively and discuss with understanding, a range of topics such as gender, family and research methodology.
- They work together well in paired and group work.
- The quality and intensity of class discussion in Y12 are of a high order.

### **Shortcomings**

- In Y13, some students are insecure in their use of sociological vocabulary.
- These students lack confidence in oral work, and their contributions to discussions are very limited.
- Absenteeism has an adverse impact on continuity and progression of students' work.
- At AS level, of those students who sat the examination, the proportion gaining grades A-C was below UA and Welsh averages.

This was a new subject offered at the time of the previous inspection. Recent changes to delivery styles and growing pupil confidence have raised standards.

## **Psychology**

Standards in this recently introduced sixth form course are good.

### **Good features**

- The majority of students have a sound grasp of key concepts and make good progress.
- In the last AS and A level examinations, results were on a par with UA averages and compared favourably with other results in the school.
- Many students respond well in oral sessions and can correctly explain the major issues and approaches in Psychology.
- Most students maintain neat, well-organised and detailed files of work. The overall standard of written work in assignments is generally good, with students' essays showing an appropriate use of terminology and a good depth of understanding.
- The standard of practical work and related reports, submitted for the 2002 examination was very good.

### **Shortcomings**

- The progress of a significant minority of students is hampered by poor attendance, and unsatisfactory attention to punctuality.
- Only a few students' files showed evidence of independent research and wider reading, and there is an over-dependence on teacher input.
- A significant proportion of students did not achieve a grade at the end of their course.

This subject was not reported upon at the time of the previous inspection.

## **Vocational education**

### **Leisure and tourism**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils make appropriate progress in developing knowledge of the vocational area; the majority complete tasks successfully and appreciate that leisure is one of the fastest growing industries in the UK.
- They are aware of the importance of marketing in the highly competitive field and of how the key elements work together to meet an organisation's objectives.
- They understand that leisure provision has changed over the years and that travel and tourism now encompass a widening range of different types of holidays.

#### **Shortcomings**

- The progress of a number of pupils is restricted by missing or incomplete work in their folders, the result of non-attendance.
- Many use information directly from the text rather than re-arranging the material to suit the question; others are occasionally uncertain and fail to correctly interpret what is asked of them.

## 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress since the last inspection

**Key Issue 1. Achieve and maintain a consistently high and appropriate level of challenge for all pupils in all subjects.**

**Satisfactory progress.** The school's main focus for continuing professional development is upon improving teaching and learning. It has been realised in many subjects and the teaching they receive suitably challenges pupils. There is still room for improvement, especially within mixed ability classes and in groups of highly able pupils.

**Key Issue 2. Raise standards in PE [KS4], RE [KS4 & sixth form], IT across curriculum [KS3]**

**Good progress.** Standards in physical education in KS4 are now good. Standards in RE in KS4 and the sixth form are good and very good respectively (in the examination classes), but statutory RE in the sixth form is lacking. ICT is now used to good effect in many subjects.

**Key Issue 3. Continue to develop monitoring processes so that they focus directly on pupils' standards of achievement and fully involve middle managers.**

**Satisfactory progress.** Monitoring systems are in place, involving members of the senior management team supporting heads of faculty and heads of school, but best practice is not widespread amongst middle managers, nor is there sufficient attention paid to using detailed data analyses in self-evaluation.

**Key Issue 4. Further improve the development planning process.**

**Satisfactory progress.** Development planning has improved, but there is insufficient emphasis upon cost implications and quantifiable measures of success in meeting targets.

**Key Issue 5. Meet statutory requirements with regard to appraisal, acts of collective worship (& raise its quality) and contents of the school's prospectus and its annual report to parents.**

**Satisfactory progress.** The school now has a full performance management policy and it is in operation. The content of the school's prospectus has improved and the annual report to parents satisfies requirements. The daily act of collective worship does not satisfy statutory requirements.

**Key Issue 6. Seek to improve the quality of the accommodation in general and the learning environment in particular.**

**Unsatisfactory progress.** Too much of the accommodation is still unsatisfactory.

**Key Issue 7. Ensure that adequate teaching time is available for pupils to gain maximum benefit from the curriculum.**

**Unsatisfactory progress.** The school's stated teaching time does not match

national recommendations. Although the school has included time for movement between lessons in its daily routine, because of lateness to lessons and other factors teaching time does not always allow pupils to gain maximum benefit from the curriculum.

## **8.2 Key issues for action**

In order to raise standards and the quality of education still further the school needs to:

1. continue improvements in the school's accommodation overall, without further delay;
2. improve pupils' behaviour around the school, and in those lessons where they disrupt learning; also their punctuality in attending lessons;
3. make more effective use of the time tutors spend with their registration classes at the beginning of each session;
4. improve the arrangements for teaching IT to all pupils in KS3;
5. continue to improve the consistency and quality of the school's monitoring systems by involving all staff and by making better use of available data in evaluation procedures;
6. meet statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form and for a daily act of collective worship.

### ***Acknowledgement***

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

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Llanishen High School
School type	County
Age -range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Heol Hir Llanishen Cardiff
Post-Code	CF14 5YL
Telephone Number	029 20 680800

Headteacher	Mr Alan Boxford
Date of appointment	September 1984
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Cllr Dr C Bettison
Registered Inspector	Mr B Medhurst
Dates of inspection	3 – 7 March 2003

### B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>								
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	284	278	290	266	283	150	115	1666

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	88	15	95.8

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.3:1
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average teaching group size	22.2
Overall contact ratio	78.2%

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	90	90	90	89	80			88
Term 2	91	90	88	89	93			91
Term 3	95	92	91	90	90			90

<i>Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.</i>	101
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### C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2002											
Total number of pupils in Y9: 260											
8 Percentage of pupils at each level											
			D	A	Below 3	3	4	5	6	7	8/EP
EN	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.4	0	3.8	21.9	39.6	23.1	10.8	0
		National	0.1	1.5	3.1	9.1	22.6	33.1	22.1	9.1	0.4
	Test	School	0	1.0	n/a	7.3	21.5	38.5	19.6	11.2	n/a
		National	0.1	4.5	n/a	8.5	20.5	31.3	19.7	11.2	n/a
MA	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	3.1	20.0	23.1	35.0	18.9	0
		National	0.1	1.9	2.1	9.2	21.9	24.8	24.7	17.4	0.3
	Test	School	0	3.8	n/a	6.2	16.5	16.5	33.1	23.9	n/a
		National	0.1	7.5	n/a	8.2	21.5	21.3	25.7	13.5	n/a
SC	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.4	0	5.4	17.3	28.9	33.1	15.0	0
		National	0.1	1.2	1.3	10.1	24.9	28.1	23.1	10.8	0
	Test	School	0	2.7	n/a	4.6	18.1	28.9	33.9	11.9	n/a
		National	0	4.0	n/a	9.0	22.0	29.0	24.0	10.0	n/a

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	65.0	In the school:	62.3
In Wales:	51.0	In Wales:	50.0

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

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

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

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, CoEA, GNVQ and NVQ</b>			
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2002: 280			
<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2002</b>			
	School	UA	Wales
were entered for 5 or more GCSEs	94	83	86
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C	59	46	50
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-G	90	81	85
achieved GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language)	43	34	37
entered at least one CoE, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	94	97
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-C	78	69	74
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-G	95	89	92
achieved no graded GCSE	5	11	8
achieved one or more CoE only	0	3	3
achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	0		
achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0		
achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	59		
achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	90		

<b>For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>			
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2002: 113			
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level and AS level examinations or equivalent in 2002: 111			
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2001: 2			
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	72	67	66
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	92	93	94
Average points score per candidate	22	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0		

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

- 21 inspectors spent the equivalent of 60 days at the school.
- 254 lessons, including full and part time sessions were observed covering all curricular areas and, additionally, a sample of PSE lessons was inspected.
- Inspectors attended assemblies, tutorial sessions, registrations, and observed a range of extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors held many discussions with the headteacher, members of the school's management team, heads of faculties and departments, some heads of year, staff with whole-school responsibilities, and members of support staff.
- The registered inspector and a colleague inspector met with the governing body prior to the inspection week. The registered inspector also attended a strategic planning day with the governing body and senior staff.
- Work across the curriculum, from representative pupils from each year group was examined. Pupils' work was also scrutinised during lesson observations.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with groups of pupils selected from Y7 to Y13. They also talked with many pupils informally.
- The registered inspector met the staff and some students prior to the inspection.
- 13 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. 95 replies to the questionnaire were received and analysed. Some parents also wrote to the registered inspector.
- Comprehensive documentation provided by the school was scrutinised before and during the inspection.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Mr B W Medhurst Registered Inspector	Mathematics	Context, Main findings, Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning, Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum, Quality of teaching, Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement, Leadership and efficiency, Staffing, accommodation and learning resources, Progress since the previous inspection, Key issues for action.
Dr M H L Snow Lay Inspector		Behaviour and attitudes, Attendance, Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions, Partnership with industry.
Mr A Woods	Science (chemistry)	Curriculum
Mr G W Leech	English, Drama	Assessment, recording and reporting.
Miss P M Rourke	Religious education, Personal and social education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, Support and guidance, Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
Mr E Bowyer	Geography, Leisure and tourism	
Mrs L Mortell	Welsh	
Dr K Watson	Information technology, Design and technology	
Mrs M Herbert	Design and technology, Home economics	
Mr A Edwards	Mathematics	
Mr D Jones	Science (biology)	
Mr G Davies	Science (physics)	
Mrs G Holland	Modern foreign languages	
Mrs L Meiring	Modern foreign languages	
Mr T Wales	History, Economics	
Mr E Forster	Art	
Mr A Wynne Jones	Music	
Dr W A Evans	Psychology	
Mr R Newsome	Sociology	
Mrs S Steer	Physical education	
Mrs D Williams	Business studies	