

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10
INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS ACT 1996**

**Ysgol Gyfun Maes Yr Yrfa
74 Heol y Parc
Cefneithin
Llanelli
SA14 7DT**

School number: 669 / 4061

Date of the Inspection: 29 March – 2 April, 2004

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Registered Inspector: WO19 / 17166
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under ESTYN contract number: T/20/03**

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CURRICULUM AND KEY STAGES NOMENCLATURE

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through the school was introduced in 1989. It is intended that this system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory education until the age of 18 should facilitate communication amongst schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of progression.

The term "Reception" (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) whose fifth birthday will occur during the academic year. "Year 1" (Y1) is used for the year group of pupils whose sixth birthday will occur during the academic year and so on until Y13 - the year group whose 18th birthday will occur during the academic year:

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Age	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 (KS) 1 of the National Curriculum includes Y1 and Y2; KS2 includes Y3 to Y6; KS3 includes Y7 to Y9 and KS4 includes Y10 and Y11 (the last year of compulsory education).

GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

The following five point scale is used to represent the main opinions in the report as follows:

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

CONTENTS

1. CONTEXT	6
The School and its Priorities	6
2. MAIN FINDINGS	7
The Main Findings of the Report	7
3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	10
3.1. Standards achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning	10
3.2. Standards achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum	11
4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL	13
4.1. Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development	13
4.2. Behaviour and Attitudes	14
4.3. Attendance	14
5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION	15
5.1. Teaching	15
5.2. Assessment, Recording and Reporting	16
5.3. Curriculum	16
5.4. Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare	17
5.5. Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)	18
5.6. Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions	19
5.7. Partnership with industry	20
6. MANAGEMENT	21
6.1. Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement	21
6.2. Leadership and Efficiency	21
6.3. Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources	23
7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING	25
Standards achieved by Pupils	25
Welsh	25
English	26
Mathematics	27
Science	28
Design and technology	29
Information technology	30
History	31
Geography	31
Modern foreign languages	32
Art	33
Music	34
Physical education	35
Religious education	36
Personal and social education	37
Business studies	37
Child care	38
Drama	38
Health and social care	39

Land Studies	40
8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	41
8.1. Progress Since the Last Inspection	41
8.2. Key Issues for Action	42
APPENDIX	43
A. Basic information about the school	43
B. School data and indicators	43
C. Results of NC assessments and public examinations	44
D. The evidence base of the inspection	46
E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	47
SIXTH FORM APPENDIX	48

1. CONTEXT

The school and its priorities

Ysgol Gyfun Maes Yr Yrfa is a designated bilingual community comprehensive school for pupils age 11-18 maintained by the Local Education Authority [LEA] of the Carmarthenshire Unitary Authority [UA]. There are about 655 pupils on roll, including about 104 in the sixth form (Y12 and Y13). The school was established in 1983 to serve Cwm Gwendraeth and the neighbouring areas; it is a former industrial area. The catchment area was changed in 2003 and it now includes an area to the north of Llandeilo and a part of the town of Ammanford. A quarter of the pupils come from small towns and three-quarters from rural areas.

The school declares that there are distinct privileged and under-privileged groups among its pupils. Pupils come from economically disadvantaged areas, including an area that is part of an 'Objective One' area of the European Community. Five percent of the pupils have been registered as being eligible for free school meals, which is lower than the percentage for Carmarthenshire and Wales.

The school admits pupils from the full range of ability. Fourteen pupils (about 2% of Y7-Y11 pupils) have a statement of special educational needs [SEN]. This percentage is slightly lower than the national percentage. In addition, 67 pupils (about 12%) are on the action stage of the SEN Code of Practice. This percentage is also lower than the national average. No pupil has been disapplied from the National Curriculum [NC] but the curriculum has been modified for two pupils. There are no pupils under the care of the Local Authority.

All pupils belong to the white ethnic group. 54% of the pupils come from homes where the main language is Welsh and 46% from homes where the main language is English. (At the time of the previous inspection in 1997, 70% of the pupils came from Welsh-speaking homes.) Every pupil follows the Welsh home language examination course. Welsh is the main teaching medium at the school. Every pupil in Y7 is expected to follow a Welsh medium curriculum in all subjects except science, where there is a choice of Welsh medium and English medium lessons, and mathematics where the teaching is bilingual.

A) *The school's main priority for the period 2003-2004 is to maintain and improve standards by:*

- continuing to improve pupil attendance;
- improving pupils' standards of literacy;
- improving the systems and effectiveness of monitoring pupils' progress, faculty and department performance and the effectiveness of the Leadership Group [LG];
- raising the quality of teaching and learning;
- raising pupils' standards in ICT;
- improving the support and provision for sixth form students together with improving the results of A-level and advanced supplementary [AS] external examinations;
- continuing to improve the quality of the buildings.

B) *The school's quantitative targets for 2003-2004 are as follows:-*

Key stage	Subject etc	% on level 5 or higher at the school	County target (%)	Target for Wales (%)
KS3	Welsh	84	71	70-80%
	English	70	73	70-80%
	Mathematics	74	75	70-80%
	Science	89	77	70-80%
	Key subjects indicator	69	60	50
KS4	5 GCSE subjects gaining A*-C grades	67	63	54
	5 GCSE subjects gaining A*-G grades	94	95	91
	Core subject indicators	50	49	50
	% leaving without a qualification	0	1	2.7
	% unauthorised absences	0		

The school was previously inspected during the autumn term 1997.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of the report

Introduction

This is a good school. There are obvious strengths in the standards achieved and the classroom teaching. The results of external examinations and assessments are often good. The school is well led and the head's personal leadership is very good. The support and guidance provided for pupils and students are very good and this is also true for the provision for pupils with SEN. The school is a singularly civilised, caring, family and inclusive community and pupils' behaviour and their attitude to work are very good.

The standards achieved by pupils in their subjects and in the key skills

Standards are good. Standards were satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed during the inspection; they were satisfactory in 15%, good in 63% and very good in 22% of them.

The table below gives the standards of achievement observed during the inspection.

Subject	KS3 standards	KS4 standards	Sixth form standards	Notes
Welsh	Good	Good	Very good	
English	Good	Good	Very good	
Mathematics	Good	Good	Very good	
Science	Good	Good	Good	AS and A-level biology good, chemistry good, physics good
Design and technology	Good	Good	Good	
Information technology	Satisfactory	Good		
History	Good	Good	Very good	
Geography	Good	Good	Very good	
Modern foreign languages	Good	Good	Good	Spanish Y7, Y9, Y10, Y11, Y13 and French Y8, Y10- Y13
Art	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Music	Good	Very good	Very good	
Physical education	Good	Good	Good	NB KS4 GCSE examination course good standards
Religious education	Good	Good	Good	
PSE	Good	Good	Very good*	*Y12 only
Drama	Very good	Very good	Very good	

Other subjects studied at KS4 and Y12 and Y13

Subject	KS4	Sixth form
Child development, child care	Good	-
Land Studies	Good	-
Business studies	Good	Good
Health and care	Good	Good
Law	-	Good

The standards achieved by pupils with SEN are good.

The school succeeds to a significant degree in its objective of promoting its pupils' Welshness and bilingual skills.

The school's formal system to promote the key skills across the curriculum is good. The school has gained the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark. The tables below show the standards for the key skills and for the wider key skills.

The key skills

Key skill	KS3		KS4		Sixth form	
	Welsh	English	Welsh	English	Welsh	English
Speaking	Good	Good	Good	Good	Very good	Very good
Listening	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
Reading	Good	Good	Good	Good	Very good	Very good
Writing	Good	Good	Good	Good	Very good	Very good
Numeracy	Good		Good		Good	
ICT	Satisfactory		Satisfactory		Good	

The wider key skills

	KS3	KS4	Sixth form
Problem solving	Good	Good	Very good
Working together	Very good	Very good	Very good
Improving their own learning	Good	Good	Very good

Examination results

The percentage of pupils attaining level 5 or higher in the four key subjects at KS3 was higher than the percentage for the Authority and Wales in every subject between 1996 and 2003 (with the exception of mathematics in 2002 and English in 2003). This percentage varies between 5% and 16% above the percentage for Wales or the county. It reflects a significant improvement on the pupils' initial standards at the school based on their results at KS2.

Over the past three years, the percentages attaining level 5 or higher have risen in science and also the CSI¹ is higher. There has been some inconsistency in the mathematics results; results in Welsh have been consistent but results have deteriorated in English. Except for mathematics, the girls achieve better than the boys and a large gap remains between the results for the boys and girls, particularly in English.

With the exception of English in 2003 and mathematics in 2002, KS3 results indicators show that the school obtains results that often place it in the upper quartile for schools in Wales and for Welsh-medium schools.

At KS4, the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades is higher than the percentage for the Authority and Wales in all core subjects over a number of years. However, the results in mathematics were significantly lower in 2003, though 2% better than those for Wales. This means

¹ The percentage of Y9 pupils attaining level 5 or higher in a combination of either Welsh or English, mathematics and science. At KS4, it means the percentage of Y11 pupils gaining grades A*-C in the same combination of subjects.

that the CSI was much lower than the percentage over the previous years. The gap between girls' and boys' results remains and this was significant during 2002 and 2003 in Welsh and English.

The percentage of pupils gaining grade A*-C in five or more subjects has been consistently higher than the LEA and Wales percentages by about 17% over five years. Pupils' average score (which depends on the grades gained by pupils and the number of subjects in which they sit examinations) is significantly higher than that for Wales and the Authority. The WJEC 'added value' analysis has been positive. A number of KS4 examination indicators place the school in the second quartile for schools in Wales but the number of pupils attaining the CSI in 2003 was lower because of the relatively low results in mathematics. Pupils' average points score in the GCSE examinations place the school in the upper quartile for schools in Wales.

Since only modular results are available for the AS examinations, it is difficult to make any meaningful comparison with other Authority schools and schools in Wales. Results have been good.

The average score for students following A-level courses in two or more subjects was two points lower than those for the Authority and Wales in 2003. Over a three year period, namely 2001-2003, the results were quite similar to those for Wales and the Authority.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is one of the school's most prominent strengths. A number of teachers gave very good individual lessons and the teaching of two teachers was consistently very good. The quality of the teaching was satisfactory in 13% of lessons, good in 58% and very good in 28% of them. The quality of the teaching was unsatisfactory in 1% of lessons – a very low percentage. Sixth form teaching is an obvious strength. The teaching is characterised by a very positive relationship with the pupils, good support for them and a good range of learning and teaching techniques. In addition, lessons are very well planned and the teachers' expectations are high, irrespective of pupils' ability.

Management, leadership and self-evaluation

Leadership and efficiency at the school are good. The self-evaluation system is good and the quality of departmental self-evaluation is good.

A purposeful work ethos is created and clear aims and objectives are set that give a clear direction to the life and work of the school. The head manages the school very well.

The leadership is reinforced by the co-operative relationship that exists between the governing body and the head. The governing body is very supportive of the school. Individual members know the school well and take an interest in its life and work. They know about its strengths and development needs.

The Leadership Group [LG], the school's senior management team, is effective as a team in undertaking their responsibilities. They all contribute substantially to the school's development. The middle management teams carry out their academic and pastoral duties well. School procedures ensure that the staff have ownership of school management and a commitment to its aims and objectives. This has promoted the development of middle management although there is some variation in its quality and in the ability of heads of departments to evaluate their own work.

Link members of the LG carry out their role of supporting and monitoring departments sensitively and there is a good system for monitoring the provision and the standards by direct classroom observation. The school analyses data from several sources well, and makes good use of it.

A number of whole-school strategies, such as developing the quality of teaching, SEN, literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum, have had a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement.

The school development plan [SDP] is of a very good quality and the teachers and governors have good ownership of it; there is a quite close relationship between the department development plans [DDP] and the SDP.

The school manages its budget effectively although the finance in reserve is slightly lower than the percentage recommended by the Audit Commission. The governors make financial decisions in line with the aims of the school. The school administrative officer, who is answerable to the head, systematically administers the budget from day to day. Bearing in mind, the quality of external examinations and tests, pupils' standards of achievement and their progress, the quality of the teaching, the special ethos created and the dedication of the staff, the school ensures good value for money.

Response to the previous inspection and health and safety issues

The school has responded well to the key issues from the previous inspection. The current and previous SDP refer regularly to the issues identified in the 1997 inspection report. With the close co-operation of the LEA, new buildings of good quality were secured. Some health and safety issues remain, including the potential hazard of allowing cars to enter the school yard.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad curriculum that conforms fully to the statutory requirements. A good, inclusive choice of subjects is provided at KS4 and in the sixth form. Pupils' curricular experiences are enhanced by the very good extra-curricular provision and they are offered very good opportunities to participate in competitive games. However, the total weekly teaching time does not conform to the recommendation of the Welsh Assembly government; it is 20 minutes a day short.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Pupils' spiritual development is good; their moral, social and cultural development is very good. The quality of the communal whole-school assemblies arranged for pupils on four days a week is very good, although the quality of worship in the registration classes is not as consistent. The school's family ethos is promoted. Pupils show respect for each other, their teachers and visitors. Pupils and students are ready to undertake responsibilities and co-operate very well.

3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Standards are good. Standards were satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed during the inspection; they were satisfactory in 15%, good in 63% and very good in 22% of them.

Standards in drama are very good throughout the school and standards in music are good at KS3 and very good at KS4 and in the sixth form. Standards in Welsh, English, mathematics, history,

geography, PSE (Y12 only) are good at KS3 and KS4 and very good in the sixth form. Standards in science, design and technology, modern foreign languages, religious and physical education are good throughout the school. Standards in IT are satisfactory at KS3 and good at KS4. Standards in art are satisfactory throughout the school.

In the optional subjects, standards in the health and care course and in business studies are good at KS4 and in the sixth form. Standards in child development and land studies are good at KS4. Standards in law are good in the sixth form.

The standards achieved by pupils with SEN are good.

Examination results

The percentage of pupils attaining level 5 or higher in the four key subjects at KS3 was higher than the percentage for the Authority and Wales in every subject between 1996 and 2003 (with the exception of mathematics in 2002 and English in 2003). This percentage varies between 5% and 16% above the percentage for Wales or the county. It reflects a significant improvement on the pupils' initial standards at the school based on their results at KS2.

Over the past three years, the percentages attaining level 5 or higher have risen in science and also the CSI is higher. There has been some inconsistency in the mathematics results; results in Welsh have been consistent but results have deteriorated in English. Except for mathematics, the girls achieve better than the boys and a large gap remains between the results for the boys and girls, particularly in English.

With the exception of English in 2003 and mathematics in 2002, KS3 results indicators show that the school obtains results that often place it in the upper quartile for schools in Wales and for Welsh-medium schools.

At KS4, the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades has been higher than the percentage for the Authority and Wales in all core subjects over a number of years. However, the results in mathematics were significantly lower in 2003, although they were 2% higher than those for Wales. This means also that the CSI was much lower than the percentage during recent years. A gap remains between girls and boys' results with a significant gap in Welsh and English in 2002 and 2003.

The percentage of pupils gaining grade A*-C in five or more subjects has been consistently higher than the LEA and Wales percentages by about 17% over five years. Pupils' average score (which depends on the grades gained by pupils and the number of subjects in which they sit examinations) is significantly higher than that for Wales and the Authority. The WJEC 'added value' analysis has been positive. A number of KS4 examination indicators place the school in the second quartile for schools in Wales (below the median) but the number of pupils attaining the CSI in 2003 was lower because of the relatively low results in mathematics. Pupils' average points score in the GCSE examinations place the school in the upper quartile for schools in Wales.

3.2 Standards in key skills

a) Language skills

Standards in speaking, reading and writing in both Welsh and English are good at KS3 and KS4 and standards in listening are very good throughout the school.

Listening standards are very good. Pupils listen intently and with interest. It is rare that the interest of small groups falters.

The standard of pupils' oral language in both Welsh and English is good across the subjects at KS3 and KS4. Pupils have a good understanding of subject specialist terms in both languages as required. Pupils discuss their work naturally and confidently. When they have the opportunity, they respond at length, asking questions and offering purposeful comments. On occasion, however, pupils are reluctant to ask questions and to discuss at length.

Standards of reading aloud are good in both Welsh and English. Usually, pupils read clearly and with meaning; they are aware of the requirements of reading to an audience. The standards of reading for pleasure and classroom reading of texts are very good among pupils of all ability in the two languages. A substantial number of pupils use higher reading skills, such as skimming and scanning and text selection effectively. In subjects such as religious education, history, geography, PSE and drama, their ability to read a text for information and to transfer information from one language to another is also good.

Writing standards are good across the substantial majority of subjects throughout the school. In subjects such as history, geography and religious education, KS3 and KS4 pupils write correctly at length, using appropriate idioms. The standard of paragraphing is generally good across the subjects. On occasion, however, the best standards are impaired by language errors in Welsh, such as mutation and spelling errors. In English, spelling mistakes impair the best standards.

b) ICT across the curriculum

Standards in ICT are satisfactory throughout the school. By using specific software, standards of musical composition at KS4 are very good. In design and technology, standards in control technology, computer assisted design [CAD] and computer assisted manufacture [CAM] are good in the sixth form but pupils at KS3 are given fewer opportunities to use these skills and standards are inconsistent. In mathematics, pupils' ability to use spreadsheets for modelling is good and good use is made of sensors to record data in science.

At KS3, in a number of subjects, pupils use ICT to combine pictures and text when presenting information, with good standards in geography, Welsh, English and drama. In geography, pupils' ability to save, modify and retrieve information from database is also good, and this is satisfactorily done in religious education lessons. However, insufficient progress is seen in the use of databases across the curriculum.

At KS4, the same pattern of strengths and shortcomings in ICT standards are seen in subjects such as geography, Welsh and drama; pupils' ability to find information from the Internet and incorporate it in their work is, however, good.

c) Numeracy

Standards of numeracy across the curriculum are good. Pupils can handle numbers fluently and use calculators correctly and appropriately. In subjects such as design and technology, science and mathematics, pupils measure accurately using appropriate units. Statistical work is good, with pupils in a number of subjects, such as business, geography and science, handling data effectively by using a variety of ways of presenting and interpreting statistics. Pupils' ability to estimate sensibly varies from the satisfactory to the good; generally, it is good.

d) The wider key skills.

Pupils' ability to solve problems is good and this reflects the opportunities provided to do so in a good number of subjects. Pupils work together very well in pairs or groups.

Pupils' standards in the evaluation of their own work is good. Self-evaluation is an integral part of the formal process of departmental assessment. In the best instances, they do this regularly and pupils use the evaluation to improve their learning. On occasion, however, pupils do not take sufficient advantage of the evaluation to improve their work and the targets they set for themselves are too general.

4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The school is a singularly civilised, happy and caring community. All associated with the school co-operate to create a purposeful, congenial atmosphere where pupils are valued as individuals. Pupils' spiritual development is good and their moral, social and cultural development very good.

The curriculum and the daily life of the school give pupils good opportunities to gain knowledge and to create a spiritual awareness. Religious education gives the pupils opportunities to reflect on their experiences, to consider the fundamental questions of life and develop respect for different creeds. A number of other subjects, including English, Welsh, drama, science and music give pupils opportunities to gain an understanding and to develop a sense of curiosity in reflecting on the creative work of other people. The Christian Club provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss their beliefs and values with guest speakers. There is an opportunity for whole-school communal worship on four mornings every week. The quality of the worship is very good. Services have a Christian emphasis; they include good contributions by pupils, congregational singing, an opportunity to reflect and good use of music to create a spiritual ethos. The short period at the end of worship is used effectively to reinforce the school's values and to celebrate pupils' success. On the day pupils do not attend whole school communal worship, they meet as class groups. The best classroom communal worship is characterised by teachers' positive contribution and pupils' meaningful participation. Others are little more than a mechanical process with only a short time to reflect.

The school's emphasis on fostering respect, consideration for others and responsible behaviour is prominent in its daily life and routine. Moral issues are raised regularly during communal worship periods, in religious education and other NC subjects. Pupils respond with understanding in discussion of issues such as racism and human rights, and show respect for people who have different traditions and beliefs to their own. They show respect towards each other, their teachers and other adults. Their friendship and support for pupils with severe SEN who have been integrated into the main stream are very good. Through their support for a substantial number of charities and fund-raising activities, the pupils show concern and care for children and people less fortunate than themselves. Pupils collect for charities every week and a sum of money is earmarked for a local or national charity of their choosing.

There is a strong sense of community within the school and the pupils are proud of their school. The relationship between the pupils themselves and with their teachers is very good. They mix very well socially and work together naturally across the age range. They are friendly, polite and

express themselves clearly. Through a substantial range of activities in the school, in the community and beyond, the school promotes pupils' social awareness. Pupils work effectively in pairs, groups and through role-play. Across the wide range of activities, the pupils show pride in representing the school in local and national events, competitions and games. There are a good number of opportunities for pupils to develop initiatives that contribute to their social development. Pupils with SEN and pupils from different backgrounds are included naturally in the life of the school.

The school ethos promotes pupils' awareness of Wales and its heritage. The school is successful in ensuring daily use of the Welsh language through its courses, social and cultural opportunities and activities it arranges within the school and in the local and national community. There are a very good number of extra-curricular events, including Urdd activities, eisteddfodau, games, concerts and visits to educational and religious establishments. Multi-cultural education is reflected in aspects of life in a number of subjects, for example, art, foreign languages and religious education where pupils have the opportunity to appreciate and study cultures that are different to their own culture. They develop their European and international awareness further through a good number of opportunities to visit different countries beyond Wales. The numerous displays around the school record visits, activities, care for the environment and pupil success; pupils have regular opportunities to obtain an insight into a range of values and cultures.

4.2 Behaviour and attitudes

The standard of pupil behaviour and attitudes is very good. A feature of the school is its congenial, self-disciplined atmosphere, arising from sound and civilised values. Pupils' respect, courtesy, tolerance and neighbourly attitudes permeate the school and all of its activities. The staff's leadership is effective and unobtrusive and pupils' responses to the school's expectations are very good. Without exception, pupils respect staff and this is reflected in the manner in which pupils develop in maturity and responsibility throughout their school career.

A Council has been established in the sixth form and there are plans to extend this system throughout the school. Class tutors play a key role in this process. The school has a wide and comprehensive range of policies on behaviour and attitudes and these are fully realised in its life and mission. Although instances of behaviour that fall short of these standards are rare, exclusions, temporary and for very short periods, have occurred. In these cases, guidelines were closely followed and no appeals were received. The relevant pupils were successfully re-integrated into the life of the school without further re-offending.

The school has a policy and an effective system to prevent bullying and no instances of such behaviour were noted during the inspection. All of this contributes very well to the school's social inclusiveness and acceptance of the notion of diversity.

Pupils' attitudes to their education are consistently good; they are committed to their work and this has a very good effect on the standards achieved.

4.3 Attendance

Attendance levels are satisfactory and show an increase of nearly 2% since the previous inspection. During the three full terms prior to the inspection, attendance was over 93%. Levels of unauthorised absences were too low to appear in the statistics.

The increase in attendance levels is a fair reflection of the school's sound policies and procedures. Daily monitoring is under the direct supervision of one of the deputies. A computer list is produced showing each pupil whose attendance is under 90% and the information is used to identify the absence patterns of individuals, groups or specific families.

There is an immediate response to any matter of concern. The registers in computer form are reliable and are marked according to the requirements of the Welsh Assembly government. The records, telephone calls and letters received from parents confirm the school's effective arrangements for recording and responding to different kinds of absences.

The school is also very aware of the possible links between absence patterns and personal and social problems. Any instance causing concern is investigated. There is good co-operation between the school and the welfare officer. Although there are examples of attendance in the sixth form that fall slightly below 90%, this system is also sound, with the requirement of formal approval for home study. There is also a detailed record of these students returning to school during the day and the system allows the school to locate every student.

Punctuality at the beginning of the day and in lessons is very good.

5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

5.1 Quality of teaching

Teaching is one of the school's main strengths and has a positive influence on the good standards achieved by the majority of pupils.

A number of teachers gave very good individual lessons and the teaching of two teachers was consistently very good. The quality of the teaching was satisfactory in 13% of lessons observed during the inspection, good in 58% and very good in 28%. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The quality of the teaching in the sixth form was particularly good with 9% satisfactory lessons, 44% good lessons and 47% very good.

Very good teaching is characterised by the individual attention given to pupils, the opportunity given to pupils to take responsibility for their learning, perceptive questioning and the opportunities provided within the subjects to develop key skills. The features of good teaching are a good, friendly relationship between pupils and teachers in the lessons. Personal relationships are positive and promote pupil motivation. In the few satisfactory lessons, there was no balance between the teacher's contribution and that of the pupils. The pace of lessons was slower and pupils were not being challenged.

Teachers' subject knowledge is particularly good and their classroom management is good throughout the school.

In the great majority of subjects, schemes of work are good or very good and lessons are very well planned. Lessons have clear aims and objectives, which are conveyed to the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. The content of lessons is appropriate to pupils' age and ability and meets NC requirements and other considerations. A good, wide variety of teaching techniques are deployed which provide opportunities for pupils to receive a variety of experiences. However, on occasion, there is insufficient differentiation for the most able pupils. Resources are well used to promote the teaching. The inter-active whiteboard and ICT are used effectively as a teaching instrument in a

number of departments such as mathematics, science, geography, drama, Welsh and ICT. Good quality worksheets are prepared. Homework is set that extends or supplements the classwork.

Teachers maintain the pace of learning and teaching well and time is well used. In addition, pupils are given opportunities to take an increasing responsibility for their own learning, which enables them to become independent learners, especially in Y12 and Y13.

Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and they are aware of and sensitive to factors that affect their learning, such as linguistic background, social circumstances and ability. Teachers know the pupils very well.

5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting to parents is good.

The school's procedures for assessment and recording pupils' work are good and are managed and administered effectively by the deputy head. The school's assessment policy includes clear principles and aims with emphasis on the use of assessment as an instrument to raise standards rather than merely to collect data. The policy emphasises the consistency of assessment methods within departments. In-service training [INSET] sessions have been held to ensure that teachers use formative assessment to raise learning and teaching standards.

The marking of pupils' work, including homework, is generally good. There are good examples of comments noting how the pupil can raise the standard of a piece of work in subjects such as Welsh, English and drama but this good practice has not permeated through all subjects. However, there are good examples of discussion between teacher and pupil at the end of a unit or module and suitable targets are set.

Individual pupils are offered periods during the year to discuss their work with each subject teacher. A form for this purpose is used that gives the pupil and teacher the opportunity to note comments. This form is effective for giving direction to the discussion in the parents' evening. Parents are very supportive of these evenings and consider them to be valuable and useful.

The departments keep detailed records of pupils' work but the use made of information varies from one department to another. On the whole, good use is made of information to identify pupils who are under-performing. Departments deal with these pupils and the pastoral system makes little input.

Reports are sent to parents twice a year. The layout and form of the reports are good and include much information on attendance, effort, and pupil's contribution to the life of the school and the standard of work in each subject. Pupils are part of this process and contribute to the report. Parents are given the opportunity to respond to the reports and a high percentage, 97%, do so.

The school makes good use of data; results are analysed in detail as an instrument to identify weaknesses and strengths and to set targets for the school and for individual subjects.

5.3 Curriculum

The quality of the curricular provision is good.

The KS3 and KS4 curriculum conforms to statutory requirements. The curriculum is planned over a fortnightly timetabling cycle and the allocation of time to subjects is, on the whole, acceptable. Drama lessons at KS3 are additional to the statutory requirements and enhance the curricular provision for each pupil. The time allocated to music in Y9 is limited, and the time for IT as a subject is also short at KS3. The time given to PSE lessons is inconsistent. The balance of the curriculum is affected by these allocations.

The total teaching time of 23.3 hours a week is substantially less than the 25 hours recommended by the Welsh Assembly government.

The majority of subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh with English, science and physical education (GCSE) being taught through the medium of English. Mathematics is taught bilingually and there is one Welsh medium group in every year. At KS3, various arrangements are used to group pupils - setting, broad setting and mixed ability. Pupils are placed in specific groups on the basis of clear educational evidence. At KS4, the optional subjects are offered in three columns. Two modern foreign languages are included in the options but the numbers choosing to study two languages are small. Two vocational subjects are on offer. The KS4 curriculum reflects parents' aspirations to a great extent.

The provision made for pupils with SEN is very good with an appropriate alternative provision for pupils for whom parts of the NC are disappplied. There is equal access and opportunity for each pupil to the full range of experiences included in the curriculum.

The quality of departmental planning for the development of key skills across the subjects varies from the good to the very good. ICT planning is satisfactory. One specific lesson is timetabled in Y7 every fortnight for IT. After this, other subjects present ICT elements across the curriculum. Good provision is made to meet the requirements of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig (Welsh Curriculum) in all subjects. Homework is set regularly and it supplements well what is achieved in the classes.

The PSE programme, which includes statutory health education and sex education, is carefully structured. There are specific stages where pupils receive careers advice and guidance.

Visits and extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' learning experiences to a significant degree. In several subjects, a large number of the teachers provide opportunities for pupils to broaden their learning, to raise their standards of achievement and foster their personal development through visits. There are various clubs, visits, locally and further afield, games, eisteddfodau and artistic activities of high standard. Pupils take part in mathematics, science and technology competitions. Their activities include chess and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The curriculum provision is also enhanced by inviting individuals and institutions from the local community to visit the school.

The vocal and instrumental instruction provided for one in four pupils on the school roll is of good quality, and there is a substantial number of extra-curricular groups of very good standard that enhance the work of the music department. These, and the musicals regularly staged, make a substantial contribution to the life of the school and the community.

5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The quality of the support, guidance and welfare that the pupils receive is very good.

The school is an industrious, caring and congenial community. There is an open and friendly relationship between the pupils and their teachers. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the pupils and the communication and mutual respect are natural and constructive. The pupils greatly appreciate the care shown for them and are very ready to turn to their teachers when they have a problem or need advice. Parents also have high praise for the care shown for their children.

The pastoral system is based on class tutors, who are responsible in turn to heads of year and then to the Leaders Group. Heads of faculty and department have their own important role in monitoring academic progress. Targets are set and regularly monitored and under-achievement is identified early. As a result, very good supervision is ensured of pupils' care and welfare and their academic progress.

The school has a good PSE programme; it supports and enhances the pastoral work and includes religious education at KS4. Purposeful lessons of good quality are given throughout the school; curriculum subjects also contribute to the programme. External organisations and agencies make additional valuable contributions.

The quality of the provision for career education is very good. A co-ordinated programme is provided throughout the school and Gyrfa Cymru officers make key contributions. Through a combination of information sessions, workshops and one-to-one interviews, pupils' self-awareness is fostered in order to plan their career. The school publishes useful booklets for Y9 and Y11 to help the pupils and their parents to make choices and these and the additional assistance provided are very good.

Y10 and Y12 pupils spend a period on work experience. Through a combination of detailed planning, a variety of placements that offer a very wide choice and effective evaluation on their return to school, pupils derive much benefit from the process and the opportunities provided in the work places. The school won a Quality Award for its careers teaching and guidance and links with the world of work in 2000.

Y12 students and Y10 pupils play a direct part in assisting and guidance of Y7 pupils through the 'Cyfaill Darllen' (Reading Friend) scheme twice a week. This is a valuable, well-structured scheme with the Y12 students and Y10 pupils not only giving constructive help but also fostering good relationship with the younger pupils.

Pupils show their practical concern for others by collecting every week towards good causes. Very worthy sums are distributed annually to different charities.

The school has an appropriate child protection policy and all teachers are familiar with the procedures.

The arrangements for health and safety are generally good. The school takes the appropriate steps to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety during lessons, during the intervals and dinner hour, and on outside journeys and work experience. Fire-fighting equipment is examined regularly and staff with First Aid qualifications are readily available. However, a few health and safety deficiencies were reported to the school during the inspection. At present, cars have access to areas where there are pupils and this could be dangerous.

5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

The provision for pupils with SEN is very good. The pupils are naturally included in the daily life of the school.

Subject departments are responsible for providing appropriate work for pupils with SEN within their curricular area. The special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCO] distributes relevant information together with the pupils' individual education plans [IEP] to facilitate differentiation within the class. Since the previous inspection, the expertise of main stream teachers in the SEN area has developed well. In most subjects, there are IEPs that set educational targets in the subject. There are good examples of differentiated teaching that develops the pupil's knowledge and understanding of the subject. The pupils make good progress. At KS4, these pupils have access to Entry Level and GCSE courses. The great majority succeed in attaining a grade appropriate to their ability, or better. Two pupils with a hearing impediments receive very good cross-curricular support.

In mixed ability classes, learning support assistants [LSA] provide very good support for pupils with SEN. The work is well targeted to ensure effective support and there are good examples of subject teachers and assistants co-operating closely. A record is kept of the effectiveness of the support and the information is shared with the co-ordinator. The expertise of LSA is being developed very well through regular meetings with the SENCO and specific courses.

A number of strategies are deployed to promote the literacy skills of 80 KS3 pupils. They are withdrawn from registration periods to receive additional support in joint reading with sixth form students, Y10 pupils, assistants and teachers. The work is targeted according to pupils' individual achievement in reading. KS3 pupils appreciate the support and make good progress in their literacy skills and their fluency in reading in Welsh and English. The homework club provides good support for a number of pupils.

Appropriate work is prepared for the three pupils with severe special needs. The basis of their curriculum is the life skills course and cross-curricular aspects are successfully interwoven into the work. The work is very well organised. Suitable targets are set and an appropriate record kept, which shows good progress in pupils' life skills. The pupils' social inclusion is very good. On occasion, the number of adults in the class impedes pupils' opportunities to develop independence and effective use is not made of the human resources available to give support elsewhere within the school.

The school's response to the requirements of the Code of Practice is very good. There are 81 pupils on the SEN register. The strategies used to identify these pupils are effective and the register is reviewed regularly. 14 pupils have a statement of SEN. The statements are reviewed effectively. Parents, external agencies and the Education Authority are consulted. The great majority of parents attend the meetings and there are examples where they make substantial contributions to the meetings. Two pupils have been appropriately disapplied from a NC subject to receive the support of a peripatetic hearing impediment teacher and the curriculum has been appropriately modified for the three pupils in the resource centre.

There are 41 pupils on the school action stage and 26 on the school action plus stage. This is near the national average. Every pupil on the SEN register has an IEP of good quality. Relevant targets are included in the IEP which reflect the pupils' individual needs. Copies of the IEP, together with additional information, are given to the departments and this appropriately influences their planning. Good use is made of the IEP to monitor the progress of individual pupils across the curriculum.

The leadership provided by the co-ordinator is very good. She co-operates closely with the departments, parents and external agencies and the LG and the designated governor supports her in the work. The department's policies reflect all the requirements of the Welsh Assembly

government, including modification of the building to allow access to pupils with a physical handicap.

Since the previous inspection, expertise in the SEN field has developed across the departments and access has been ensured for physically handicapped pupils. The school has successfully integrated pupils with severe handicaps into all its activities.

5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions

Partnerships with parents and community are very good. Partnerships with schools and other institutions are good.

Parents are very supportive of the school, and show enthusiastic support for the way in which the school keeps them informed; they find, for example, that the pupil handbook provides good opportunities for contact with the school. Reports to parents are very informative, and they also give parents an opportunity to respond to what is written about their child. The handbooks for parents are very useful sources of information and the parents receive letters about school events through the pupils. There is a simple home-school agreement that fulfils the statutory requirements. A full report is sent to parents annually by the governors. There is an open door policy for parents, and non-Welsh-speaking parents are well supported; they feel at home in the school. There is a swift and effective response to any problems that arise. The Parent-Teacher Association raises money for the school, helps with the school eisteddfod, and plans well for future activities to increase the sense of community among parents. Parents' evenings are held regularly and are well attended. The PTA supports such meetings actively. There is a prize distribution evening; parents are invited. Pupils who are members of the band and choir give concerts in the surrounding villages and in school. The community uses the school during the evenings and at weekends; 'community education' is growing, with local clubs and Menter Cwm Gwendraeth using the new facilities at the school. Almost every school department has good links with the community.

There is a very good relationship with local industry and employers, with a week's work experience provided for Y10 and Y12. There are very good links with local sports clubs, which enhance pupils' development in this area. There are useful links with the local churches, where pupils are welcomed on visits, and ministers contribute very effectively to morning assembly. Other speakers come in to enhance the provision in curricular areas such as health and social care. There are workshops in both Welsh and English, and local businesses contribute advice in design and technology to help pupils and students organise their projects. The National Botanical Garden of Wales and Llyn Llech Owain are very important resources for field studies.

There are now 30 feeder primary schools within the new catchment area. There are very good pastoral links with these schools. Both staff and pupils visit to speak to Y6 pupils; the success of these strategies is shown by Y7 pupils expressing how happy and confident they feel in the secondary school. Curricular links with many primary schools are also developing well; the file sent from Maes Yr Yrfa for use with Y6 is very good, and some teaching techniques in the secondary school have been modified to make the transition easier and to ensure continuity of progress. In addition, the availability of a literacy teacher who has supported some of the pupils previously in primary school and who continues to support them in Y7 is an obvious advantage.

Y5 and Y6 are invited to the school on specific days for very good curriculum-related activities and for special events; for example, they came to see the musical staged by Maes Yr Yrfa. Links with other secondary schools are good; there are sporting and music links, and work with the interactive whiteboard is being developed in partnership with nearby Welsh medium schools.

Links with other outside bodies are good. The contribution of advisers is helpful. The school makes full use of the local educational psychology service and of social services and other services.

5.7 Partnership with industry

The partnership with industry is very good. The structured policies successfully link work experiences and careers and also enhance the curriculum. In addition, the links and partnership that have been developed with businesses and large and small industries are wide and very balanced, and include the media and culture. These links have also been developed for work experience and careers. In these matters, the school has very good vision. The perception of career and work experience is broadened to a very good range of businesses, and to industries that vary in size and opportunities.

Institutions, such as Careers Wales, Education and Business Partnership, Carmarthenshire Youth Forum Board and others play a key role in the school's partnership with industry. Also, pupils' perception of entrepreneurship and the possibilities of developing businesses are very constructive. The co-ordinator, who is partly responsible for this partnership, is very aware of further possible developments. Speakers from different professional and vocational backgrounds have improved pupils' awareness of the world of work. The school has also started on the process of seeking the Careers Wales Quality award for careers education and advice and links with the world of work.

A number of teachers, including the head, have been on placements in industry. The school received Investors in People recognition sometime ago and has renewed it for the third time.

6. MANAGEMENT

6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

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

The school has established a very good cross-school structure in order to evaluate its work and the work of departments. It is based on an annual cycle that begins in April as the strategic focus areas of the SDP are discussed and evaluated. Departmental reviews follow in May with the LG forming part of the process, observing lessons and gathering evidence. Suitable criteria have been developed to ensure consistency. The DDP is completed in July and these include funding bids.

The standard of the DDP varies but is generally good and usually feed into the SDP. Subjects set targets and review them but quantitative targets are not always set and this is a shortcoming. The initial allocation of funds to the subjects is based on historical funding but applications can be made for additional funding through the DDP.

The LG evaluates the previous year's SDP during July to September. It is presented to and approved by the governors in October before final publication; this is good practice. Appropriate targets and methods of implementation are set. The SDP is of very good quality.

The school has developed a system of regular analysis of external results, comparing them with national and county norms, best value information and Welsh Assembly government benchmarks. A number of departments also make appropriate use of data and analyse these effectively, but some subject evaluations are not incisive enough to ensure enhancement of standards.

The LG members observe lessons as part of the annual review of subjects and a number of departments ensure that teachers observe each other's lessons regularly. This practice has not been extended to every subject to allow all teachers to take advantage of the opportunity for direct classroom observation and share good practice.

The school implements the statutory Performance Management Plan fully and teachers' targets are fed into the INSET programme.

6.2 Leadership and efficiency

The school is led effectively and efficiently.

The LG and governors lead the school very well and also the quality of leadership in a number of departments is good or very good.

The LG are successful in creating a good, purposeful ethos and clear aims and objectives are set that give a clear direction to the life and work of the school. The head's leadership is very good. He has an inclusive vision and he shows respect for the pupils and teachers. There are concise, but clear, policies, guidelines on strategic planning, monitoring and support for departments and a clear system for deciding on SDP priorities. The management of this school at all levels is characterised by personal relationship rather than written policies.

The leadership is reinforced by the co-operative relationship that exists between the governing body and the head. The strong governing body is very supportive of the school. Individual members know the school well and undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. They know about its strengths and development needs.

The LG is enthusiastic and effective. They contribute substantially, as individuals and as a team, to the school's development. School procedures provide an opportunity for staff to gain ownership of school management and a commitment to its aims and objectives. The pastoral teams carry out their duties well. The development of middle management was furthered in a good number of instances, such as Welsh, music and drama, but there has been insufficient development in others such as art and modern languages.

A number of whole-school strategies, such as the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, and learning and teaching strategies, have had a positive influence on pupils' standards of achievement.

The SDP is of very good quality. It has a positive influence on the development of the school. It contains clear priorities, including references to the key issues from the previous inspection. Definite responsibilities are denoted to individuals and an implementation timetable has been drawn up. The SDP is related to financial costs and there is detailed and definite procedure for evaluating its effectiveness annually. There is a close relationship between the DDP and the SDP. The school's self-evaluation system inter-relates well with school management.

The school manages its budget effectively. Governors make financial decisions that match the aims of the school. The school administrative officer, who is answerable to the head, administers the budget systematically from day to day. The school drew up an appropriate action plan in response to the most recent county financial audit report in 2003. The school expects to be within its budget for the 2003-2004 year and it foresees 3.5% in reserve at the end of the same financial year. The

percentage in reserve is slightly below the sum recommended by the Audit Commission, namely 5%. A good effort was made to ensure value for money, for example with the school dinner contract. Although there are some small classes, the cost of the sixth form curriculum is reasonable since a good number of subject groups are large. These costs are very closely monitored to ensure that they do not deprive other sections of the school of the necessary budget. Good quality bilingual education is provided in the sixth form for a former industrial area.

After consideration of the general quality of the results of external examinations, pupils' standards of achievement, the quality of teaching, the ethos created and the commitment of the staff to extra-curricular activities, the school ensures good value for money.

Day-to-day communication is clear and the daily administrative procedures effective. With one exception, noted in the report, the school conforms to the statutory requirements and recommendations of the Welsh Assembly Government.

6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

a) Staffing

The school has a staff that is suited to curriculum requirements and the qualifications of the great majority match the curriculum areas they teach. In the rare exceptions when teachers teach outside their expertise, they receive suitable support and pupils' achievement in the subject is not impaired. The pupil-staff ratio is similar to the national average. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and teachers comparatively new to the profession. Each member of staff has a detailed job description that notes their curricular, pastoral and management roles, and their non-contact time corresponds to their responsibilities. Almost three-quarters of the teachers have crossed the pay threshold, which is a substantial number.

INSET is very well organised by the deputy head and it includes both teaching and support staff. INSET requirements are identified in whole school schemes, subject schemes and also through the performance management system. Individual staff are fully consulted. There are effective examples of INSET raising pupils' standards of achievement across the curriculum subjects. The school was successful for the fourth time in achieving the National Investors in People Standard.

Recently qualified teachers receive very good support. The guidelines and pastoral support received by supply teachers are effective. The school has good links with initial teacher training institutions and a number of prospective teachers receive good help and guidance.

The administrative and technical staff, the librarian and the SEN assistants make a very good contribution to the life of the school. They provide very good support in science and ICT, design and technology, and in the library as well as in the classrooms. The caretaker and his assistants undertake their work with enthusiasm and commitment.

b) Buildings and classrooms

The quality of the buildings and classrooms is good, although there are some health and safety issues, related mainly to the grounds and site.

In close co-operation with the LEA, a new wing has been built for the school to replace the cabins used as classrooms. The quality of the new building is very good.

The buildings are very well maintained and are clean and tidy. Usually, there is enough room for pupils in the rooms and the small but delightful library with adjacent computer room adds to the facilities. The school has a large hall where services and social and cultural activities are held. The facilities for drama in the old building have been refurbished and these are also of good quality. However, the school is short of at least one laboratory, and there are constraints on facilities for teaching physical education.

There are a number of health and safety issues relating to the grounds. The drainage problems on the playing fields remain and a ditch across the field causes problems. The narrowness of the parking area on the school grounds is also a matter of concern since vehicles and pupils share the same area at times. There is also a traffic problem in the car park outside the school when buses drop off and pick up pupils. This car park is very restricted but is very strictly supervised by teachers on duty. LEA contracted buses provide safety belts and have restrictions on standing while travelling, while there are no similar expectations on public service buses. This is a matter of concern for the school.

c) Learning resources

The quality of resources for learning is good.

There has been a substantial investment in ICT equipment since the previous inspection and extensive use is made of the computers located in ICT rooms. Although single computers are located in classrooms, pupils made little use of them during the inspection. On the other hand, teachers in whose normal classrooms an interactive whiteboard is located, made good use of the equipment and in some instances pupils used the equipment, and this is also good practice.

There has also been significant investment in design and technology equipment. The use made of this is satisfactory. So far, little use is made of the satellite equipment by the modern languages department.

All electrical and fire-fighting equipment is inspected regularly.

Usually, there are enough textbooks for the use of pupils and they are of good quality, and the quality of the materials that the teachers also produce is also often good in its presentation, reflecting the ICT training that they have received. Although differentiated material is often available for pupils with SEN, the availability of materials for the most able pupils is more limited.

The library contains a satisfactory number of books in Welsh and English and is supplemented by departmental libraries. Pupils make good use of the books available to read for pleasure and also to gather information. Since the computers located in a room next door to the library have an Internet link, pupils are provided with further opportunities to undertake investigative work and to complete projects or individual tasks.

The school makes very good use of the local community as a learning and teaching resource. There are references to these in sections of this report referring to extra-curricular activities, links with the community and links with industry.

7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

7.1 Standards achieved by pupils

Welsh

Standards of achievement are good across the skills in both key stages. Some pupils, particularly the most able, reach very good standards.

KS3 and KS4

Good features

- Pupils listen well to the teachers' observations and questions. They respond very well to each other in pair and group work.
- Pupils contribute orally with confidence in a range of activities. From Y7 onwards, they express their opinions and support them with reasons, and by Y9 they can maintain their viewpoint and respond to different points of view effectively. By Y11, more able pupils succeed in expanding their contributions maturely and sensibly, using sound syntax and a copious vocabulary.
- Reading standards are good but vary according to the age and ability of the pupils. The majority of the pupils can read aloud fluently and with meaning. A good number of pupils in each year read widely and gain great enjoyment from reading a variety of books. The Reading Friend scheme where Y12 students assist Y7 pupils to improve their reading skills is very effective.
- Pupils' appreciation skills develop well throughout the two key stages from Y7 onwards. In discussing plot and analysis of characters at an elementary level, by Y11 the majority can provide effective detail, identify with characters and quote evidence to support an opinion. In the same way, understanding of literary texts develops well with purposeful quotation and use

of appropriate terminology in the best answers. Pupils succeed in gathering relevant information effectively from print and electronic sources.

- All pupils write in a range of different forms and for different purposes. There is clear progress from year to year in terms of length of work, its content and the standards of expression. More able pupils achieve very good standards when composing stories, monologues, portrayals, writing reviews and analysing poems. By KS4, the concepts that they offer are mature and original and the expression is polished and accurate.
- Standards of work of pupils with SEN are generally good and show progress from year to year. Orally in particular, they talk enthusiastically about a range of different topics that are of interest to them.

Shortcomings

- The oral language of a significant number of middle and lower ability pupils is punctuated by English words and expressions. The expression of these pupils displays faulty syntax at times, orally and in writing, and they have difficulty with spelling.

The high standards achieved in the last inspection have been maintained.

English

KS3 and KS4

Standards are good at both key stages.

Good features

- Pupils work well in pairs and groups, listening to each other's point of view and co-operating well. They talk to each other in language that is suitable and which helps them to analyse and understand the task in hand. Pupils respond to opportunities for role-play with enthusiasm. They are able to present group work orally to the rest of the class with confidence and style.
- The best pupils use a wide vocabulary and handle complex sentence structures well in both oral and written work, using adjectives and verbs skilfully to create particular effects.
- Reading is good throughout both key stages, and at all levels of ability: they read widely for pleasure and read aloud well. They can convey character and mood. They begin to develop good research skills through the use of both the library and ICT.
- Pupils at all levels of ability produce neat work either in good handwriting or in well-presented word-processed documents.
- The whole ability range at KS3 write good imaginative creative work, both poetry and prose. Through the use of well-designed writing frames, Y7 pupils of all abilities succeed in producing well-structured written work of good length. There is particularly good autobiographical writing.
- At KS4, pupils demonstrate good drafting skills when preparing coursework for GCSE. This work shows good analysis of literature, both prose and poetry; the best pupils use quotations

well, and the great majority of pupils respond sensitively to the set texts, particularly to Shakespeare's plays, analysing character, theme and motivation confidently. Their creative work is imaginative with good selection of vocabulary to create atmosphere; their factual and persuasive pieces show a clear sense of audience.

- Pupils with SEN make very good progress at both key stages. They respond well to Shakespeare.
- They are able to analyse video clips purposefully.

Shortcomings

- The work of less able pupils, especially at KS3, has errors of sentence structure, punctuation and particularly spelling.

Standards have been maintained and consolidated since the last inspection.

Mathematics

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- In carrying out mathematical investigations the pupils are able to arrive at logical conclusions on the basis of statistical evidence. Pupils are able to give clear and accurate justification to support their answers, and use a variety of forms to present their results.
- Pupils can calculate fractional and percentage parts of quantities and measurements with confidence.
- At KS4, pupils understand and use proportional changes.
- At KS3, pupils are able to construct, express in symbolic form and use simple formulae involving more than one operation.
- The most able pupils are able to sketch and interpret graphs of quadratic functions. Following this they can solve quadratic equations using graphical intersections as well as by using formula.
- Pupils understand how to enlarge shapes by a positive whole-number scale factor. They also appreciate the importance of the co-ordinates of centre of enlargements and co-ordinates of centre of rotation.
- At KS3, pupils can use a range of skills within the single task, such as handling angles, time, bearings and fractions within one exercise.
- Pupils understand how to apply Pythagoras' theorem when solving problems in two dimensions [2D].
- KS4 pupils can use trigonometric relationships in right-angled triangles.

- They use the appropriate formulae accurately to find the circumference and area of circles.
- Pupils recognise the type of correlation that exists between two variables by looking at a scatter graph. They can draw a line of best fit, and understand the importance of the value of the mean of the data for each variable. Pupils also understand how to apply scatter graphs in order to make predictions.
- At KS3, pupils can draw frequency diagrams and pie charts using paper and pencil as well as by using ITC.
- High ability pupils at KS4 can understand when it is appropriate to apply the methods for calculating the probability of compound events.
- Pupils use calculators proficiently where appropriate.
- Pupils complete their tasks and organise their work well. They display evidence of steady progress across the sections of the programme of study.
- At KS3 and KS4, pupils who have SEN make good progress and achieve correspondingly high standards.

Shortcomings

- Middle ability pupils are slow to recall numerical facts.
- Some individuals are uncertain with algebraic notation when substituting numbers in simple formulae.
- Low ability pupils have difficulty in choosing the correct units of length.
- A number of pupils fail to appreciate that it is possible at times to verify if their answer to a question is a sensible one.

Since the last inspection the department has made progress.

Science

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

KS3

- The vast majority of pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes in the NC.
- Pupils make good progress from Y7 to Y9 and develop their scientific knowledge and skills well.
- Pupils demonstrate responsible attitudes towards safety during the practical lessons.
- Pupils can use scientific terms with accuracy, orally and in writing.

- Pupils can relate the work to everyday life.
- The majority of pupils can recall previous knowledge.
- On the whole, pupils' written work is tidy and well-organised.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their ability.

KS4

- Pupils remember previous work well and can apply their knowledge in unfamiliar situations.
- Pupils can make systematic observations and measurements and record them in a scientific manner.
- Pupils are very aware of safety in the laboratory and show respect towards the environment.
- The majority can communicate their understanding of scientific concepts effectively using diagrams, graphs tables and charts.
- Pupils can analyse data, come to conclusions and make judgements on the basis of their scientific knowledge.
- Pupils can choose and use scientific equipment correctly.
- The standard of course work is good and pupils can recognise and control variables so as to ensure a fair test.
- Pupils keep a tidy record of the work in units prepared by the department and these notes form an useful revision booklet.

Shortcomings

KS3 and KS4

- A small number of lower and lower-middle ability pupils have difficulty in recalling previous knowledge and understanding parts of the work, thereby losing interest in the work.
- Some Y7 pupils are not confident in choosing the scale and type of graph to use to display data.
- Pupils' investigational skills have not developed fully and this reflects the lack of opportunity for them to plan, analyse and evaluate investigations at KS3.

Since the last inspection, the department has made progress.

Design and technology

At KS3 and KS4, standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils have a good knowledge of the design and make processes and they apply these across a range of aspects.
- Pupils understand health and safety requirements related to production activities and pay due regard to them.
- Research work is good, especially at KS4. Pupils analyse information from a wide variety of source material, including interviewing users and searching relevant web sites.
- There are examples of pupils using a range of ICT skills effectively when communicating, researching, handling data, modelling, controlling and manufacture.
- Pupils' understanding and use of technical terms is good. They use an appropriate technical vocabulary when expressing their views orally and in writing.
- Practical work shows a range of making skills, including appropriate choice of materials, equipment and production processes. Pupils make good use of faculty resources.
- Design folios show that the majority of pupils have developed skills of designing, communicating ideas and presenting work effectively. Graphic work is a particular strength of some KS4 pupils.

Shortcomings

- There is inconsistency in the design work. The most able pupils develop original ideas, taking advantage of a wide range of graphical skills but creativity in KS3 pupils' work is limited because of the prescriptive nature of some tasks.
- Pupils do not give full consideration to the details of their designs, such as accurate dimensions, properties, step-by-step production processes and the cost of materials and components.

The faculty has made good progress since the previous inspection, particularly in ensuring that pupils take full advantage of the substantial investment in ICT equipment, CAD CAM and improvements to the building.

Information technology

Standards are satisfactory at KS3 and good at KS4.

KS3 and KS4

Good features

- At KS3 and KS4, pupils learn a variety of skills while taking advantage of the use of a number of different software packages. They do so confidently and to a good standard.
- At KS3, pupils can combine information, such as text and picture, from different sources and present it well for different audiences.
- At KS3, pupils develop and refine their skills of data handling and modelling across the curriculum to a satisfactory standard.

- In the GCSE groups, pupils plan thoroughly, design a solution rationally and choose appropriate software in the coursework. They take advantage of regular and constructive feedback to produce good quality course work and portfolios.

Shortcomings

- Pupils' modelling and data handling skills are not polished sufficiently in Y8 and Y9.
- Pupils do not take sufficient advantage of opportunities to improve their information communication skills in Y8 and Y9.
- Pupils are not fully aware of their progress across KS3 and as a result they are not certain enough about their achievement in the subject.
- At KS4, more able pupils' skills are not sufficiently developed.

History

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- At KS3, pupils' factual knowledge about personalities and events of the historical periods that they study is good and they have a grasp of the key vocabulary and the basic concepts of the subject.
- By Y9, the great majority of them demonstrate good standards in summarising the contents of a variety of historical sources to present a point of view, for example when studying the development of the coal industry in the Gwendraeth Valley. Examples of very good work are found here.
- At KS4, the great majority of pupils reach good standards in tackling historical problems and they can search carefully for relevant information and make cross-references with understanding across a range of sources. Individuals produce very good work in this context.

Shortcomings

- At KS3 and KS4, a minority of pupils produce work that is no better than satisfactory, since they tend to expound factually and descriptively at the expense of interpretation and they are over-dependent on reproducing teachers' notes and the contents of text-books in their written work.

The department has maintained standards noted in the previous inspection.

Geography

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- KS3 pupils' good geographical knowledge is based on features of the local area and the school environment and is extended to encompass national and international aspects in accordance with the NC.

- Pupils' understanding enables them to offer informed observations and explanations for geographical events and situations.
- They use a very good range of skills to present and interpret evidence accurately and effectively when handling a variety of sources. The use of these skills is highlighted particularly when a pupil undertakes individual work or a project.
- Pupils learn appropriate terms to describe processes and patterns such as location and impact of volcanoes.
- At KS4, they develop the ability to research into a topic making good use of previously learnt information. They can apply it and relate it to unfamiliar situations when they study worldwide population distribution and density.
- They explain how environmental catastrophes happen, where human and physical factors are often combined.
- They come to valid conclusions in discussions about energy supply and demand.
- They demonstrate their skills of literacy and numeracy in their course work assignments which are often of a very good standard and which show the influence of the valuable field work visits locally and on a wider scale in Europe.

Shortcomings

- A minority fail to apply terminology accurately. They are not as fluent in extended writing as they are orally but there are others who are lacking in confidence when communicating their ideas.
- The progress of a small minority is held back by their lack of concentration in the class.

The department has made very good progress since the last inspection and has successfully tackled the matters noted in the report such as the development of IT as a source of information.

Modern Foreign Languages

Standards are good in French and Spanish at KS3 and KS4.

KS3 and KS4

Good features

- KS3 and KS4 pupils can ask and answer questions orally in French; they express an opinion using an appropriate range of verb tenses and constructions. Pronunciation, especially of Spanish, is good.
- Pupils usually understand the details of authentic pieces of foreign language that they read and hear, with the most able pupils selecting and interpreting information. Standards of reading aloud are good and the standard of reading for pleasure is satisfactory.
- Pupils can write in the foreign language using a suitable variety of verb tenses and constructions. They express a simple opinion well and, with encouragement, the most able can justify their opinion.
- Pupils can re-use the language content that they learn in several different language skills.

- Pupils make very good progress in the express course in Spanish in Y10 and pupils in Y11 who follow the GCSE express course in French make satisfactory progress in all the language skills.

Shortcomings

- At times, pupils do not answer in a sufficiently extended fashion orally.
- Lack of vocabulary impairs the oral and written expression of a significant number of Y11 pupils.
- Written standards are impaired by lack of accuracy in spelling, gender and verb forms.

Since the last inspection standards are more consistent; they are now good.

Art

Standards of achievement are satisfactory at KS3 and KS4.

KS3 and KS4

Good features

- At KS3 and KS4, pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress.
- Pupils possess the ability to deal with the basic elements of art namely tone, line, colour, form and pattern to a satisfactory standard. In Y7, this is reflected in the portraits of faces.
- There is appropriate emphasis on other cultures. In Y8, pupils study Islamic art as part of a project on buildings in the environment. They produce interesting 2D patterns with geometric shapes and 3D Islamic towers made of clay. They also produce lino prints of buildings.
- KS3 and KS4 pupils make good use of ICT as a medium for finding information and transforming pictures.
- Pupils' ability to model their work in the style of traditional and contemporary artists is satisfactory, for example the work of Seurat in Y7, John Piper in Y8 and Kandinsky in Y9.
- The majority of pupils can compare methods and techniques they have used with those of some well-known artists, including Welsh artists. They generally do this well both orally and in writing.
- Observation work, in Y8, of satisfactory, standard is based on a visit to the National Botanic Garden. This provides a foundation for the extended work in 2D and 3D carried out back in the school.
- The element of research and experimentation is seen in every unit of work. This is very strong in the work of the majority of Y10 and Y11 pupils. The most able pupils carried out 2D and 3D work of a very good standard on the theme "flowers and shells".
- Pupils use their sketchbooks well to record ideas, plans and to gather visual and written information before starting on the final composition. They also write critical notes on their work.
- At KS4, a great number of pupils can deal with the art of another culture in an original manner. A number benefited from a visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London to study objects from places such as China.

Shortcomings

- Some KS4 pupils depend overmuch on copying pictures from magazines and they carry out very little direct observation work in Y10 and Y11.
- 3D work in different media has not developed enough through KS3 and KS4.

Since the previous inspection, the department has made progress.

Music

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and very good at KS4.

Good features

KS3 and KS4

- Despite of insufficient contact time, which limits full progress across KS3, pupils accomplish good standards in performing, composing and appraising music.
- Pupils sing confidently in up to four voices giving appropriate attention to musical detail and expression.
- They perform on various instruments with a strong element of accuracy and create a good sense of ensemble when performing together.
- Many of the 'sound pictures', created in response to different stimuli when composing, show imagination. Pupils investigate and combine different sounds effectively. Some melodic work, including improvisations work, is well shaped.
- The majority of the pupils have a good awareness of the musical elements. They appraise purposefully when listening to recorded musical quotations. Some pupils make perceptive comments when appraising their own practical work.
- By KS4, the majority of pupils are capable and experienced vocal and instrumental performers and achieve very good standards.
- The choice of idioms in the composition work often reflects the personal interest of the pupils. Many of the compositions display imagination in the treatment of musical sounds and a good awareness of style and structure. Good use is made of ICT to add to the quality of the work.
- Pupils can perceive features well when they appraise different pieces of music from their different areas of study.

Shortcomings

- At times, in a few classes at KS3, the quality of singing is not adequately refined. Some of the pupils are a little uncertain when performing together in instrumental groups.

- A number of the melodic efforts of KS3 pupils are short and limited in their musical interest. In general, the skills in this element of the work have not been so well developed.

Considerable progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards have improved and are more consistent across the different elements of the courses at KS3 and KS4.

Physical education

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and KS4.

KS3 and KS4

Good features

- Pupils listen intently, respond enthusiastically and enjoy contributing to the activities.
- Pupils show sound knowledge and understanding that is appropriate to their age and ability across all aspects of the subject.
- Pupils use the technical terms of physical education accurately in both languages, orally and in writing.
- They prepare their bodies consistently for physically demanding activities and know what the effect of exercise is on their bodies in terms of fitness and health.
- Pupils consider and assess risk by following appropriate rules, practices and systems that are relevant to different activities.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in the subject at a level that is appropriate to their ability and understanding.
- In Y7 hockey, pupils have mastered the basic skills of the game very successfully in a short time and are aware of how to use space when attacking.
- In the GCSE examination course, Y10 pupils have a good understanding of the principles of play and the ability to analyse the skills that are appropriate to invasion games.
- Y11 girls have a good understanding of the principles of fitness and they work conscientiously in groups to improve personal fitness standards.
- In gymnastics, Y7 pupils can plan and develop a series of movements that show tension, clear shapes and flow.
- The department provides a broad programme of extra-curricular activities of a good standard. Pupils consistently bring credit and honours to the school through county and national competitions.

Shortcomings

- In Y7 gymnastics, pupils do not take sufficient opportunity to evaluate their own work in lessons and the most able pupils in the class do not set sufficiently challenging targets for themselves.

Since the last inspection the department has made steady progress with standards being consistently good in most activities.

Religious education

Standards are good at KS3 and KS4. At KS4, standards are reinforced by elements in the PSE course.

KS3

Good features

- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the units of work studied and these reflect the requirements of the agreed syllabus.
- They make good progress in their knowledge of how and why believers from different religions worship, reflect and celebrate their faith.
- By visits to local places of worship, their knowledge and understanding of why Christians celebrate their faith in different ways, is good.
- They have a good understanding of the way in which the Jewish religion affects the way of life of believers.
- Pupils possess a bank of technical religious terms and use them confidently, orally and in writing.
- Pupils with SEN have good knowledge of the topics that they study.

KS4

- Pupils have a good knowledge of the content of the short course and this fosters their understanding of current moral issues.
- They have an understanding of the reasons why some things are 'right' or 'not right' and how moral values are drawn up in rich and poor countries and the religious attitude to this.
- In studying the lives of Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa, they develop their awareness of the importance of religious belief in the formation of the individual's identity, which leads to giving help and support to others.

Shortcomings

KS3 and KS4

- Good oral standards of achievement are not always reflected in the written work.

- A minority of pupils produce satisfactory work; they have an appropriate grasp on the content but there is a lack of detail and care in some of the work.

Standards at KS4 are higher than during the previous inspection. A short course has been provided and results over the past two years have been good.

Personal and Social Education

Standards are good at KS3 and KS4.

Good features

- Pupils' interpersonal skills are very good. They listen intently to others and work well in pairs and groups. They show sensitivity to the opinions of other people.
- Pupils develop knowledge and understanding that enables them to cope with social and physical changes.
- Pupils are aware of the connection between diet and health.
- They develop their ability to make important decisions such as choosing possible subjects, training and careers.
- Pupils show positive attitudes towards care for the environment. This is reflected practically in the respect they show towards the school site and their efforts to recycle different materials.
- Pupils have a good knowledge about matters relating to sex, drugs and alcohol.
- They offer valid reasons for their personal responses to current moral and social issues; they come to conclusions based on their discussions and their personal inquiries.
- They know about different creeds and the values and practices associated with them, and how they affect people's way of life.

Shortcomings

- At times, groups of pupils are reticent when discussing PSE issues and some of the answers on their files are too short.

Since the last inspection, standards have become more consistent; they are now good.

Business Studies

Standards are good.

KS4

Good features

- In Y10, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of fixed costs, variable costs, total costs and total receipts

- Pupils can complete a recoupment of costs chart accurately and understand the purpose and usefulness of the chart.
- A substantial number of pupils offer good, sensible answers when they are questioned about their work.
- The majority of pupils use business terms correctly when they discuss their work.
- Pupils complete course work of a good standard and it is used effectively to reinforce work in class.
- They make effective use of ICT to gather up-to-date information and for presentation of coursework.
- Pupils' oral work, written work and graph and data work is good.
- Pupils relate the work satisfactorily to the real world of business.

Shortcomings

- Not enough use is made of the local economy to ensure more meaningful discussion.
- Not all pupils complete every piece of work set.

Child Care (Entry Level Certificate)

Standards are good at KS4.

Good features

- Pupils, including those with severe SEN, respond positively and reach a good standard.
- Pupils use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss their experiences within and outside the school.
- Pupils succeed in using ICT to gather ideas and to evaluate the work.
- Course work is produced in detail and is well planned. A good understanding of child development is shown.
- Pupils produce attractive items that will interest and teach young children.

Shortcomings

- A few pupils do not work on sufficiently challenging tasks to extend them throughout the lesson.

Standards are more consistent than in the previous inspection.

Drama

KS3 and KS4

Standards of achievement are very good across both key stages.

Good features

- Throughout both key stages, pupils, without exception, commit themselves energetically to the tasks set for them, greatly enjoying every aspect of the course.
- From Y7 onwards, pupils can prepare scripts of a very good standard. They know how to set out a script and include references to stage directions together with various dramatic techniques. In preparing to perform their scripts, they practise thoroughly and in a disciplined way, even without supervision. Often they practice outside the formal lessons, unprompted.
- Pupils' performance skills are very good. These develop naturally as pupils move through the school. They use a range of dramatic techniques, timing appropriately and identify with the characters very effectively. They develop discipline and self-confidence through working in co-operation with others.
- Pupils' understanding of the texts that they study develops well through KS3 and by KS4 they can discuss themes giving appropriate examples.
- A high number of pupils produce course work of a very good standard. It is well organised, including detailed research work and a clear understanding of theatre skills. The work includes sensible reports of practical work, which explains the process of production, an understanding of the motivation of characters, their relationship with each other and the visual and technical elements.
- Pupils' ability to evaluate their own performances and those of others orally and in writing is very good. They understand the criteria for the tasks set and develop a mature response to what they see.
- Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into the subject. They make good progress and derive great benefit from the opportunity.
- Pupils use ICT effectively to create programmes for their performances.
- The wealth of extra-curricular activities, including drama clubs, musical shows and Eisteddfod presentations offer additional opportunities for pupils in the subject. This is an important element that contributes to the success of pupils and fosters important personal skills.

Shortcomings

- There are no obvious shortcomings.

There has been a further improvement in the good standards noted in the previous inspection.

Health and Social Care

KS4

The subject is a Y10 choice for the first time this year.

Standards are good, with pupils producing work that corresponds to their ability.

Good features

- Y10 pupils have a developing knowledge and understanding of the reasons why people are the weight they are. They can work out the 'body mass indicator' and understand its significance.
- They have a good understanding of the significant events in life and their effect on life development.
- Pupils relate the work well to real-life situations in the local community. Pupils make good, constructive use of the local health and care community and this ensures much more meaningful class discussion.
- Pupils complete assignments successfully and to a standard that corresponds to their ability.
- The standards of oral and written work, number work and ICT of pupils is generally good.
- They take responsibility for their own learning; they possess self-confidence and their initiative is developing.

Shortcomings

- Not every member of each class contributes fully and effectively in the class.

Land Studies (Entry level Certificate)

KS4 standards are good.

Good features

- Pupils including those with severe SEN, respond positively and reach a good standard.
- Pupils discuss their work with understanding and express their opinions clearly.
- Pupils display a high level of co-operation in completing practical tasks.
- The folio work of the majority is detailed and shows a thorough understanding and knowledge of the subject.

Shortcomings

- An occasional pupil is uncertain in responding to the requirements of practical work.
- A few pupils do not work on sufficiently challenging tasks to extend them throughout the lesson.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

8.1 Progress since the last inspection

The school has responded very well to the issues raised in the previous inspection through writing and executing an action plan, which dealt sensibly and very effectively with these key issues:

1. Maintaining the civilised ethos and high standards by consolidating current policies.

The school has revised policies conscientiously and has created new ones in response to contemporary demands and new initiatives by government. These policies are well thought out and useful.

- *Continue current policies, which provide a basis for the good pupil behaviour generally seen.*

The behaviour of the pupils continues to be very good. Strategies used are successful in ensuring well-behaved pupils who enjoy the ambience of the school and who are helpful to each other, to staff and to visitors.

- *Continue to implement good teaching practices.*

The school has continued to research and to develop teaching techniques. Discussions have taken place with all departments to ensure continuity of good practice from KS2 to KS3. There has been whole staff INSET on methods of enhancing the quality of teaching. Thinking skills, the use of ICT, group work, writing frames and independent learning have all been developed within the school.

- *Appoint qualified staff for art*

The school has appointed a fully qualified art teacher.

- *Continue to improve general monitoring methods*

The school now monitors the work of all departments, analysing data carefully. Lessons are also observed by the LG and feedback is given to staff. Pupils are tracked and underachievers identified in order to raise standards.

- *Continue to improve methods of monitoring absences*

The school now has an electronic system for registration that enables any absence to be monitored quickly. Attendance has improved further since the previous inspection.

2. Continue to campaign for additional capital funding

- *in order to extend the permanent school buildings*

The school has succeeded in building a new teaching block, refurbishing a theatre for drama, and providing music rooms. There has been considerable investment in technology. The school still lacks sufficient good facilities for physical education, but the work of providing such has now gone out to tender. The school field is scheduled to be drained in the near future.

- *in order to improve the technological resources*

The school has spent £200,000 on technology and ICT equipment, which is now good.

8.2 Key issues for action

The school needs to:

- *raise the satisfactory standards to good, while maintaining the good and very good standards in the subjects and fields of study with continuing attention to closing the gap between boys and girls' results in assessments and external examinations;
- *continue to develop management and self-evaluation skills of the departments as an instrument to further higher standards of work, sharing good and very good practices that already exist in the school;
- give due attention to the Welsh Assembly government recommendation on the necessary number of teaching hours per week for KS3 and KS4 pupils;
- *give appropriate attention to the health and safety issues noted in the body of the report, including ensuring pupils' safety on the yard during school hours;
- attend appropriately to the recommendations noted in the sixth form appendix.

*the school is already paying attention to these matters.

APPENDIX

School Data

A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	Ysgol Gyfun Maes Yr Yrfa
Type	Comprehensive, designated bilingual, in the care of the LEA
Pupils' age range	11 – 18
Address of the school	74 Heol y Parc Cefneithin Llanelli
Post code	SA14 7DT
Telephone number	01269 833900

Name of the Headteacher	Mr Iwan M Rees
Date of Appointment	1 st September, 1997
Chairman of Governors / Appropriate Authority	Mr Keith Lewis / c/o the school Caerfyrddin Education Dept Pibwrlwyd Caerfyrddin SA32 2NH
Registered Inspector	Gareth Wyn Roberts
Date of the Inspection	29 March – 2 April, 2004

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	131	84	108	96	132	54	50	655

<i>Number of teachers</i>			
	Full time	Part time	Full time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	38	5	39.96

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil: teacher ratio, except special classes	16.1 :1
Average class size	20.5
General contact ratio	80%

<i>Attendance percentages during the three full terms before the inspection</i>								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	The whole school
Spring 2003	95.1	93.1	91.6	92.7	91.2	89.1	88.6	91.9
Summer 2003	95.1	92.2	92.8	92.4	93	88.8	89.9	92
Autumn 2003	95.8	94.2	92.0	93.8	91.2	90.3	90.8	92.9

<i>Number of pupils excluded during the previous 12 months</i>	
7 temporarily, 0 permanent, none from ethnic minority	

C. Results of NC assessments and public examinations

Results of National Curriculum KS3 Assessment: 2003																
Total Y9 pupils: 96																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8/EP	
EN	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	0.0	0	-	1.0	1.0	3.1	3.1	20.6	37.1	29.9	4.1	0.0	
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	9	22	33	22	9	0
	Test	School	3.1	1.0	0	0	-	-	-	-	4.1	24.7	44.3	17.5	5.2	-
		National	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	8	21	31	23	10	0
WE	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	1.0	1.0	1.0	7.2	10.3	25.8	43.3	10.3	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	19	34	29	10	0
	Test	School	3.1	1.0	0	1.0	-	-	-	-	5.2	9.3	23.7	45.4	11.3	-
		National	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	19	35	28	10	0
MA	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	2.1	0	0	3.1	20.6	29.9	30.9	13.4	0	
		National	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	20	25	29	14	0
	Test	School	2.1	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	5.2	14.4	24.7	40.2	13.4	-
		National	0	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	7	19	21	32	14	0
SC	Teacher Assessment	School	0	0	0	-	2.1	0	1.0	5.2	6.2	33.0	28.9	23.7	0	
		National	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	21	32	25	11	0
	Test	School	2.1	2.1	0	0	-	-	-	-	3.1	4.1	39.2	28.9	20.6	-
		National	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	19	31	25	14	

Percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either Welsh or English			
According to teacher assessment		By test	
In the school:	70%	In the school:	73%
In Wales:	54%	In Wales:	54%

D – Disapplied

A – Failed to register a level due to absence

N – Failed to register a level for reasons other than absence

B – Not entered for the tests because they are working outside the level of the tests

W – Working towards level 1

GCSE, ELQ (1) and Equivalent Achievements

Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2003: 120

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who:

	Entered 5 or more GCSEs	Achieved GCSE and vocational qualifications equivalent to five or more GCSE grades		Core Subjects Indicator (2)	Average GCSE/GNVQ points score per pupil
	or equivalent	A* to C	A* to G		
School 2002/03	93	64	93	43	47
LEA Area 2002/03	86	54	85	41	41
Wales 2002/03	87	51	85	38	39
School 01/02/03	93	67	93	49	48
School 00/01/02	93	69	93	52	47

	Entered at least one short course, ELQ (1), GCSE short course, GCSE or equivalent	Entered one or more GCSE or equivalent	Achieved GCSE and vocational qualifications equivalent to		Achieved at least 1 GCSE short course - grades A* to G or equivalent	Achieved no graded GCSE or equivalent	Achieved one or more ELQ(1) only	Did not achieve a GCSE, GCSE short course ELQ (1) or equivalent
			One or more GCSEs at grades					
			A* to C	A* to G				
School 2002/03	97	97	87	97	71	3	0	3
LEA Area 2002/03	95	94	77	92	29	8	2	6
Wales 2002/03	97	95	74	93	45	7	3	5
School 01/02/03	98	98	85	97	63	3	1	2
School 00/01/02	99	97	85	97	40	3	2	1

GCSE results in selected subjects

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who:

	Entered any GCSE in	Achieved a GCSE grade		Entered any GCSE in	Achieved a GCSE grade	
		A* to C in English (2)	A* to G in		A* to C in Welsh (2)	A* to G in
School 2002/03	94	72	94	93	73	93
LEA Area 2002/03	88	57	87	82	59	81
Wales 2002/03	90	56	88	63	35	61
School 01/02/03	96	71	96	96	71	96
School 00/01/02	95	69	95	95	73	95

	Mathematics (2)			Science (2)		
	Entered any GCSE in	Achieve a GCSE grade		Entered any GCSE in	Achieved a GCSE grade	
		A* to C in	A* to G in		A* to C in	A* to G in
School 2002/03	94	47	93	97	58	97
LEA Area 2002/03	89	48	86	89	51	87
Wales 2002/03	90	45	86	90	48	87
School 01/02/03	96	53	94	95	61	95
School 00/01/02	95	56	94	94	63	94

Figures include pupils on Youth Access courses and similar schemes

(1) Entry Level Qualification

(2) For information about which syllabuses are included in each subject area see Notes for Guidance.

D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection

18 inspectors spent a total of 55 inspector days at the school and 188 lessons or part lessons were observed. In addition, a cross-section of registration periods, morning services, departmental meetings and extra-curricular activities were visited. Interviews were arranged with members of the LG, heads of departments and form tutors, together with members of staff, including ancillary staff with specific responsibilities.

The work of a cross-section of able, middle and lower ability pupils from Y7 to Y13 was inspected. In addition, further examples of pupils' work were seen when visiting classrooms, workshops and laboratories. Their work was discussed constantly with the pupils and formal interviews were conducted with pupils chosen to represent the different years.

All documentation submitted by the school before and during the inspection was analysed. Pre-inspection meetings were held with the LG, the staff, governing body and parents. 29 attended the parents' meeting and 104 parent questionnaires were returned, together with 3 letters and 5 comments by parents on the questionnaire.

E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

NAME	ROLE	Sections of the report	SUBJECTS (section 7)
Gareth W. Roberts	Registered Inspector	1, 2, 3.1, 3.2, 6.2, 6.3 (resources) 8.2, appendix	Modern Foreign Languages, (French and Spanish.) PSE
Wil Owen	Lay Inspector	4.2, 4.3, 5.7, contribution to 6.3 (buildings)	
Tudur Williams	Core team	5.4, 6.1	Welsh, Drama
Catherine James	Core team	5.6, 8.1	English
Richard Owen	Core team	5.3, sixth form appendix	Mathematics
Gwilym Williams	Core team	5.1, 5.2,	Science, chemistry
Heddwyn Evans	Core team	4.1, 5.5, 6.3 (staffing)	Religious education Religious studies PSE
Rosemary Jones	Team member		Design and Technology, Child studies, Land studies
Ieuan Jones	Team member		Physical education
David Charles	Team member		Information technology
Rob Roberts	Team member		History, Law
Elwyn Bowyer	Team member		Geography
Rob Lewis	Team member		Art
Alan W. Jones	Team member		Music
Margaret Robertson	Team member		Contribution to science (biology)
Gerran Thomas	Team member		Contribution to science (physics)
Richard Williams	Team member		Business Studies, Health and Social Care
Roger Williams	Team member		Contribution to MFL (Spanish)

SIXTH FORM APPENDIX

Introduction

There are 104 students in the sixth form, 62 boys and 42 girls, out of a total of 655 pupils in the whole school. All students speak Welsh fluently. All students study either A-level, AS or GNVQ courses or a combination of these. There is an opportunity to resit GCSE examinations in Welsh, English, mathematics and science.

The school offers 17 A-level or AS courses, including two vocational courses and in addition one further subject at AS only. In addition, there are tutorial, religious education, games and PSE lessons. Y12 students can choose a course in one of the key skills. Entry to Y12 is open to all students who have completed their Y11 course.

The school co-operates with external agencies to broaden choices for the students by offering two subjects through directed distance learning. The school provides placements for teachers under instruction from universities and colleges.

The school noted four development priorities for the sixth form to ensure that standards continue to improve, namely:

- further develop the key skills courses;
- develop and present additional vocational courses to meet the needs of students, according to the availability of finance and resources;
- further develop partnerships with other schools, especially Welsh medium schools;
- review and evaluate the curriculum regularly.

1. How good are the learners' achievements?

Standards are very good.

a) Standards in the subjects

Standards were very good in 40% of the lessons observed, good in 58% and satisfactory in 2%. In the examination subjects, standards are very good in Welsh, English, mathematics, history, geography, music and drama. Standards are good in biology, chemistry, physics, design and technology, French, Spanish, physical education, law, business studies and health and care. Standards are satisfactory in art. In addition, standards are good in the general courses followed by students, and very good in PSE.

b) External examination results

In the 2003 external examinations, 64% of the students gained two or more subjects at A-level or equivalent qualifications at A-C grades, and 96% of the students at grades A-E. This is slightly lower than the national average for A-C but a little higher than the national average at A-E. The students' average score was 18 points, which is two points lower than the national score, but reflects the fact that entry to the courses is open to all students whatever their achievement at GCSE. During the past three years, the measurements of the Wales Examinations Database show an increase on the whole in the 'value added' in the performances of students in the sixth form.

c) Standards in the key skills

The students' standards in the subjects they study are very good in speaking, reading, writing and listening. Standards in numeracy and ICT are good. In the broader key skills, standards in co-operation, problem solving and in pupils' ability to improve their own work are very good.

d) Sixth form role in furthering standards

Sixth form students contribute very well to raising standards within the school. They participate in a good range of communal activities, and they take a key role in a number of extra-curricular activities and school events. They set a good example to the rest of the school.

Staying on and course completion rates are very good in the sixth form. A few students study a one-year course in Y12 and then leave, but the rest, almost without exception, complete a two-year course at the end of Y13. 85% of students starting their courses in Y12, completed them and all Y13 students completed their Y13 courses last year.

The quality of the advice received by students in choosing their courses is very good. Students' academic standards are raised by very good teaching and by the arrangements available to guide them and monitor their progress. Students also have very good support and counselling in preparation for entry to colleges and universities and other career paths.

Students' attendance levels vary from class to class and from lesson to lesson. Owing to the clash that occurs occasionally because of the open choice to the curriculum, not all students can be present in all lessons. Departments have arrangements to ensure that students do not miss out on any of the course. Although there are examples of sixth form attendance dropping to a little below 90%, it is closely monitored and there is a good link between the school and students' homes.

Every opportunity is given for the students to work independently. Every member of the sixth form is appointed a prefect for the period March Y12 to April Y13. The sixth form committee meets every half term. Students show maturity, responsibility and enterprise in their attitude towards the school.

2. How effective are the teaching and instruction and assessment?

a) Teaching and training

The quality of the teaching and training is very good.

The quality of the teaching was very good in 47% of the lessons observed, good in 44% and satisfactory in 9% of the lessons.

The teaching is characterised by:

- very good subject knowledge;
- lessons with clear aims and objectives that form part of sequence and structure and are planned in detail;
- high expectations that provide the students with a substantial challenge;
- regular feedback through thoughtful marking and discussion of the work with the students;
- preparing opportunities for the students to take responsibility for their own learning;
- students well prepared for external examinations;
- very good relationship with the students.

b) Assessment

The quality of the assessment is very good.

The system for assessment, recording and presentation of reports, which is used by all departments, is very good. Each department, tutor and the head of post-16 education use and take action on the assessments to help students to improve the standard of their work. The assessments are used to create individual targets for the students. A detailed report is prepared at least once a year and a parents' consultative evening is held.

3. How well do the learning experiences satisfy the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

The quality and scope of the curriculum is very good. A wide range of academic courses and a smaller number of A-level vocational courses are offered – all providing good progression from KS4. The number of students choosing the subjects is reasonable and there is a good arrangement to ensure that numbers in the core subjects are also reasonable. Initially, Y11 pupils are given the opportunity to choose which subjects they wish to study in the sixth form without any restriction on their choices. Then the school does its best to remove any clashes in the timetable. This is not possible on every occasion.

The statutory requirements for religious education are fully met and students receive a period of communal worship every day. In addition, students follow a good quality PSE course, and also a games period and a tutorial.

A very good programme of extra-curricular activities is provided, which enhances students' experiences. There are several opportunities to co-operate with younger pupils, such as the Welsh department's 'Reading Friend' club and the similar system of 'Buddies' in the English department. Sixth form students visit primary schools to arrange a football competition, and they continue in the company of Y7 pupils during the bridging process from Y6 to Y7. As part of the PSE course, sixth form students give presentations to Y7 pupils on topics such as bullying, smoking and healthy eating. Students from the vocational health and care course work on communication activities with the centre for children with severe problems, by accompanying the children for shopping, swimming and other activities.

4. How good are the care, guidance and support for learners?

The care, guidance and support for learners are very good.

Students receive very good advice in choosing courses for Y12. The induction arrangements for students into the sixth form are very good. Each student has an individual interview with the head of post-16 education during the first week of the autumn term. The key skills co-ordinator discusses the courses provided by the school and advises the students on the courses to follow.

High priority is given to students' welfare. There is a thorough system of guidance and advice for students. A personal tutor is designated for each student who has the responsibility of monitoring students' academic work as well as their personal and social welfare. Tutors interview the students regularly, either individually or in small groups, every half term. In these interviews, there is the opportunity to concentrate on aspects such as study skills, review of progress, setting and reviewing targets, key skills, work experience, writing a CV and preparation for higher education. The advice and careers interviews arranged are of a high standard.

The different activities in which students participate offer good opportunities for their self-development. Students are given help in updating their Record of Achievement document and in creating a 16+ Progress File. All teachers and Y12 and Y13 tutors urge the students to take advantage of every opportunity to work independently.

Sixth form students greatly appreciate the care, guidance and support they receive from the teachers.

5. How effective are the leadership and strategic management?

The leadership and strategic management of the sixth form are very good.

The SDP notes appropriate priorities for post-16 education and training. The school's Leadership Group has definite ideas on how to continue the good provision offered to Y12 and Y13 students. Aims and targets and clear success criteria have been set. The action plan notes who is responsible for all the aspects.

The head of post-16 education, the team of tutors and heads of department, have a clear vision which is well supported by the school's LG. The school's steering committee has an important role in the process of setting appropriate objectives for the sixth form. The sixth form curriculum provision is reviewed regularly to ensure value for money. Numbers in the different classes are acceptable and the school makes effective use of the arrangements with external agencies to extend the curriculum provision. There is evidence that the sixth form has a positive influence on raising standards in the rest of the school.

The leadership and sixth form management responsibilities have been clearly designated and effectively maintained.

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

Leaders and managers evaluate standards well.

The standards of individuals are raised through a detailed monitoring system. Students participate in the self-evaluation arrangements by completing a self-appraisal of their work in the subjects and in updating their Record of Achievement document.

The entire sixth form performance is monitored and evaluated by the LG in association with the head of post-16 education. External examination results are scrutinised, analysing the students' progress by using added value data and noting trends in the results over recent years. The curriculum provision is evaluated by looking at the staying on rates and the numbers following the different subjects.

The performance management system gives due attention to Y12 and Y13 teaching aspects where this is appropriate.

7. How efficiently do the leaders use resources?

Leaders use resources effectively and efficiently.

Teachers' qualifications to teach the courses provided in the sixth form are good. They are used effectively according to their strengths and there are examples of sharing good teaching practices within departments. Teachers use ICT skills appropriately to reinforce their teaching methods.

The number and range of teaching rooms for the sixth form are good. Special rooms have been allocated for independent study as well as the general lounge for socialising. Comments on the buildings are included in section 6.3 of the main report.

1. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING

Welsh

Standards are very good.

Good features

- When contributing to class discussions and co-operating in groups, students offer mature and perceptive observations. They can analyse set texts and discuss the features of style with understanding, showing good comprehension of elements of literary criticism.
- Students read widely for pleasure, which forms background reading for the texts studied. They can present detailed information about the poets and literary figures, cross-referencing and comparing their work. Original, sensible viewpoints and arguments are revealed as they express their opinions.
- Students produce gripping creative and factual work; the content is original and carefully planned. The linguistic expression is of high quality and shows a firm grasp of the attributes of language.

Shortcomings

- There are no obvious shortcomings.

The high standards achieved in the last inspection have been maintained.

English

Standards are very good in Y12 and Y13.

Good features

- Students' oral work is very good. Their listening skills and their strength in spoken English are demonstrated by the competence with which they discuss the set texts, showing understanding of the use which authors make of rhetorical devices and the effect these devices have. They show very good knowledge of their set texts, and, in discussion, defend their own point of view politely by giving good examples from the work they are studying.
- The best work in Y12 is written in a fluent style, showing very good analysis of set texts. Students demonstrate a deep understanding of the subtext of the novel and of dramatic irony, and also a keen awareness of historical context. By Y13, in the best work the style is mature, with very effective use of textual evidence to support a penetrating understanding of issues within the work being studied.
- There is evidence of very good research to support the essays.
- Lower ability students make good progress during the course of the two years.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Standards have improved since the last inspection.

Mathematics

The standards of achievement are very good.

Good features

- The students follow courses in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics and achieve very good standards in the three areas.
- Students can differentiate and integrate expressions accurately. They understand how to differentiate using the product and quotient rules as well as differentiating functions of functions. Students can also interpret and calculate definite integrals as the area under a curve.
- The work of the students on the co-ordinate geometry of the circle is accurate and shows a full understanding of the topic.
- Students appreciate that it is possible to obtain an approximation of a solution through using simple iterative methods and also through numerical integration of functions using the trapezium rule.
- In mechanics the students understand the dynamics of a particle moving in a straight line. They know what the relationship is between power, driving force and velocity.
- Students can apply the binomial and Poisson distributions appropriately and are able to use both formulae and statistical tables accurately.
- Students can explain their work clearly and logically.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Progress has been made since the last inspection.

Science

Standards are good in the three subjects, physics, chemistry and biology.

Good features

- Students can recall, select and use scientific information in familiar and unfamiliar situations.
- They can use ICT skilfully and purposefully.
- Students can explain phenomena and data in a scientific manner.
- Students can analyse and solve problems.
- The majority of students take responsibility for their own learning and develop to be independent learners.

- On the whole, they are aware of the limitations of hypotheses and scientific methods and can evaluate data and information correctly.

Shortcomings

- Less able students have difficulty in understanding some scientific concepts. This is reflected in the results of some modules.

The department has made progress since the last inspection.

Design and technology

Standards are good.

Good features

- The great majority of students succeed in developing original designs and producing good quality items. They use a wide range of materials and production processes confidently.
- Students evaluate their work regularly while developing a final solution. They take advantage of experiences outside the school and advice of experts in the field.
- They discuss their work with understanding and use a variety of graphical communication techniques very well.
- Design skills are good with occasional examples of very good creative work.
- Students handle equipment and machinery confidently and safely and work in a well-organised way to make good quality finished items.
- The majority of students make effective use of a wide range of ICT resources.

Shortcomings

- Project work does not reflect the ability of the students to plan ahead, to experiment effectively and to prepare a detailed programme of work.
- A minority of students are unwilling to work independently. They are over dependent on teachers' practical assistance and supportive comments.

History

Standards of achievement are very good.

Good features

- Students show the ability to analyse historical evidence effectively, and they can gather information from a variety of sources and weigh the judgement of historians, giving consideration to the bias and background of those historians.

- In their oral and written work, students show the skill of expressing a balanced judgement when presenting viewpoints and arguments.

Shortcomings

- There are no obvious shortcomings.

The department has maintained the standards noted in the previous inspection.

Geography

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Innovative learning situations enable students to make very good use of their learning skills. They make effective use of a wide range of resources, including ICT to collect relevant information.
- They show evidence of independent research and apply their findings constructively to their study of tourism in different places around the world.
- They also respond to opportunities to be responsible for their own learning.
- They come to valid conclusions about the causes of flooding, linking theory effectively with the famous case of Lynmouth half a century ago.
- They show increasing maturity in their responses to challenging tasks, such as presenting explanations of development to younger pupils using Powerpoint on the computer. They draw on their knowledge and understanding of different aspects of the subject.

Shortcomings

- There are no substantial shortcomings.

The department has succeeded in coming to grips with the main matters noted in the report of the previous inspection and has maintained its high standards.

Modern foreign languages.

Standards are good in French (Y12 and Y13) and Spanish (Y13 only).

Good features

- With encouragement, students discuss at some length orally, giving a response and a personal standpoint; they use good vocabulary and a good range of constructions.
- Y12 and Y13 students have good understanding of the authentic pieces that they hear and read and they respond to them appropriately, orally or in writing.

- By Y13, students have a good level of knowledge about countries where French and Spanish are spoken.
- When they have an opportunity, students write well on AS and A2 topics.

Shortcomings

- Grammatical errors affect the standard of accuracy of written pieces and, to a less obvious degree, oral work.

Since the previous inspection, standards that students achieve are more consistent.

Art

Standards are satisfactory.

Good features

- The most able pupils can carry out work of good standard, for example, work on feathers and bags shows a balance between 2D and 3D work.
- Some sketchbooks show detailed research, experimentation with various techniques and clear, relevant notes.
- The pupils can discuss their work in a mature manner using the appropriate terms. They can write essays that display considerable research and personal opinion.

Shortcomings

- A substantial number of Y12 and Y13 students showed lack of sufficient understanding of the basic technical processes.

As there was no Y13 art class during the previous inspection, no separate opinion about sixth form standards was expressed. Y12 standards were good. Now standards in art are satisfactory in the sixth form.

Music

Standards of achievement are very good.

Good features

- Vocal and instrumental standards of performance by students are high. They perform with conviction and a very good sense of style.
- Most compositions reveal the students' personal initiative. Often there is imaginative treatment of core ideas and a good understanding of the medium and the style adopted.
- Y12 and Y13 essays, in their different fields of study, reflect personal research work and a good understanding of the music being studied.
- Students' aural skills are good.

Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

Standards are much more consistent and have improved considerably since the last inspection.

Physical education, leisure and games

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- The majority of Y12 students can express a balanced opinion orally when discussing the scientific principles of the subject.
- Students have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects and understand how to relate these to the practical activities.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcomings were seen.

It is not possible to judge the progress made since the last inspection, due to the fact that the department did not offer the course.

Religious education

Standards are good.

Good features

- Students apply their religious knowledge well to discuss contemporary moral and social problems.
- In discussion, they show that they have good knowledge and understanding of religious matters that affect different societies.
- They respond critically, but still with sensitivity, to the beliefs and opinions of other students.

Shortcomings

- No significant shortcoming was noted.

A suitable course has been introduced since the last inspection.

Personal and social education

Standards are very good in the sixth form (Y12 only).

Good features

- Students develop very good awareness of their responsibilities as parents.
- A significant number of them contribute towards the provision and support for PSE for younger pupils at the school.
- They take good advantage of the advice they receive on choice of educational course or possible career.

Shortcomings

- There are no obvious deficiencies.

No separate comments were made on the standards of PSE in the sixth form during the previous inspection; standards are now very good.

Business

The AS and Vocational A level business courses are provided in Y12 and Y13.

Standards are good.

Good features

- In Y13, students have good knowledge and understanding of costs, assets, commitments, profit and loss accounts and the balance sheet.
- Y12 students show good knowledge and understanding of business structure and organisation.
- Students connect the theory work well with real commercial and institutional situations.
- Students complete assignments successfully and to a good standard using planning, research and investigation skills well.
- The work is discussed using the correct business terms and the students ask intelligent questions.
- Students' oral and written communication, application of number and ICT skills are good.
- Students can work independently, they take responsibility for their work and they develop as confident individuals.

Shortcomings

- Students do not link sufficiently with local business and industry. The department has noted this in the Departmental Development Plan.

Drama

Standards are very good.

Good features

- Students' performance skills are very good. They co-operate effectively to create tension, atmosphere and humour. They succeed in identifying with the characters in a mature way, appreciating the feelings and emotions that create conflict between them. They show discipline when interacting with others, use space well and they have a firm grasp on other relevant theatre techniques.
- Students can discuss aspects of characters maturely, reasoning and justifying their opinions and quoting appropriately from set texts. Their use of theatre studies terminology is very good.
- Students' oral presentations are very effective. They structure the information in an organised manner and show sound reasoning when discussing dramatists' background, their work and themes. They use ICT very effectively to support the presentations.
- Students' course work is very good. They evaluate their own scripts and professional performances to a very high standard. Purposeful background reading enhances their knowledge and their understanding of the historical and cultural context found in the plays that they study. They reveal maturity and sensitivity, together with appropriate quotation and extremely effective cross-reference in analysis.
- The host of extra-curricular opportunities offered to students contribute to the high standards they attain in the subject.

Shortcomings

- There are no apparent shortcomings.

There has been a further improvement in the good standards noted in the previous inspection.

Health and Social Care

AS and A level Vocational health and social care courses are offered in Y12 and Y13.

Standards are good.

Good features

- Y13 students display good knowledge and understanding of the reasons for obesity.
- Y12 students have a developing knowledge and understanding about equal opportunities, the rights of patients and the relevant laws.
- Students relate the work well to real situations in the local health and care community.
- Students' oral and written communication, application of number and ICT skills are good. Good, effective use is made of ICT to gather information.
- Good planning and research skills ensure that students complete their assignments successfully.
- By intelligent questioning, students take responsibility for their own learning.

Shortcomings

- Absence adversely affects standards in Y13.
- Some students have difficulty with some terms.

Law

Standards of achievement are good.

Good features

- Students make good progress in their understanding of the concepts and key vocabulary of a subject that is new to them.
- They show maturity in preparing arguments in favour or against a variety of factors relating to a specific topic.
- On the whole, students' written work gives appropriate attention to the key vocabulary of the topic and they have a wide knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts and hypotheses.

Shortcomings

- At times, the written work is short of interpretation and the relevant information is not presented coherently.

The subject was not on the school curriculum at the time of the previous inspection.

2. Recommendations

There is need to:

- maintain the good and very good standards and improve the satisfactory standards in art;
- attempt to reduce the clashes in the timetable to improve student attendance in the lessons;
- continue to develop partnership with other institutions and extend the collaboration with them.

GCE A level/AVCE or AS level ASVCE equivalent achievements (1)(2)

Number of pupils aged 17 who were entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent: 55

Percentage of pupils aged 17 entered for 2 or more A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent who achieved a points score of:

	0	1 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 or more
School 2002/03	0	4	16	9	25	24	15	7
LEA Area 2002/03	0	2	10	18	17	20	14	19
Wales 2002/03	1	3	10	18	16	18	13	20
School 01/02/03	0	4	13	16	19	22	13	12

Percentage of pupils aged 17 entered for 2 or more A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent who achieved 2 or more A level examinations or equivalent at grades:

	A-C	A-E	Average score per candidate
	Entering 2 or more A levels/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent		
School 2002/03	64	96	18
LEA Area 2002/03	71	96	20
Wales 2002/03	68	94	20
School 01/02/03	64	97	19

Number of pupils aged 17 who were entered for fewer than 2 GCE A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent: 5

Percentage of the pupils aged 17 entered for fewer than 2 A level examinations/AVCE or AS/ASVCE equivalent who achieved a points score of:

	0 to 4	5 to 9	10 to 15	Average score per candidate
School 2002/03	40	20	40	6
LEA Area 2002/03	70	23	6	3
Wales 2002/03	74	22	4	3
School 01/02/03				

- (1) Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) and Advanced Subsidiary Vocational Certificate of Education (ASVCE).
 (2) Figures do not include BTEC National Certificates and Diplomas

The inspectors would like to express their thanks to the school governors head, staff, pupils and parents for their willing co-operation during the inspection.