

**Inspection under Section 28 of the
Education Act 2005**

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Ogmore School
Spout Hill
Bryncethin
Bridgend
CF32 9NA**

School Number: 6724084

Date of Inspection: 26 February – 1 March 2007

by

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Ogmore School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Ogmore School took place between 26/02/07 and 01/03/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Julia Helen Cattle Longville undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

The team was required to report on the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of education provided by the school, the quality of leadership and management and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The five-point scale used to represent all inspection judgements in this report is as follows:

Grade 1	good with outstanding features
Grade 2	good features and no important shortcomings
Grade 3	good features outweigh shortcomings
Grade 4	some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Grade 5	many important shortcomings

There are three types of inspection.

For **all** inspections, there is a written report on seven key questions.

For **short** inspections, there are no subject reports.

For **standard** inspections, there are also reports on six subjects.

For **full** inspections, there are also reports on all subjects.

Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All nursery schools, special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs.

The term 'Reception' (R) refers to the year group of pupils in a primary school who reach the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who reach the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

Key stage 1	Year 1 and Year 2
Key stage 2	Year 3 to Year 6
Key stage 3	Year 7 to Year 9
Key stage 4	Year 10 and Year 11

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ogmore School is an 11-18 co-educational community school in Bridgend County Borough Council Unitary Authority (UA). There are 711 pupils on roll, a decrease of approximately 104 pupils since the last inspection in June 2001. Of these, 107 are in the sixth form, a significant increase since the last inspection.
2. The school is situated in the village of Bryncethin, to the north of the town of Bridgend. Most pupils come from Bryncethin, Sarn and the Ogmore Valley. The area is economically diverse with a significant proportion of pupils coming from economically disadvantaged areas. A few pupils come from socially and economically advantaged areas. Pupils transfer to the school from three primary schools. Just over 19% of pupils are entitled to free school meals, compared to just under 17% nationally. The majority of pupils has English as a first language. Approximately 1% of pupils speak Welsh as their first language. A very small number of pupils comes from minority ethnic heritages.
3. The school's intake includes the full range of ability. There are more pupils of lower ability and fewer able and middle ability pupils. Thirteen per cent of pupils are on the special needs register. There are 94 pupils on school action or school action plus.
4. The headteacher was appointed in September 2003. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is made up of the headteacher, one deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and a finance and personnel manager. The deputy headteacher and one of the two assistant headteachers, were members of the SLT at the time of the last inspection.

The school's priorities and targets

5. The school's vision statement focuses on preparing pupils for life. It's mission statement states that:
6. "The school's purpose is to provide every pupil with a quality education that supports the Welsh Assembly's long-term vision for a better Wales. As a school we are committed to preparing our pupils for life and work as responsible and valued citizens in a changing world."
7. The school has a comprehensive set of aims to promote pupils' academic, personal and social development within the school and the wider community. These aims are to:
 - promote a culture of achievement, effort, success and excellence in all aspects of school life;
 - provide a curriculum that is broad, balanced, differentiated and relevant to meet the needs of every pupil;
 - provide a learning environment that is disciplined, caring, tolerant and fair to all;
 - provide a community that encourages a sense of commitment, loyalty and belonging;

- develop a partnership with parents, schools and colleges, employers and the wider community;
 - be a self-evaluating school that seeks continuous improvement through effective planning; and
 - develop pupils' awareness, understanding, and respect for, the environments in which we live.
8. The school three year corporate plan has two key objectives:
- developing a quality provision of learning and teaching that meets the needs of pupils and improves levels of educational achievement; and
 - developing whole school strategies for effective and efficient management and development of resources.
9. The school's targets for 2007-2008 are:

Key stage 3

The percentage of pupils who should achieve level 5 or above in National Curriculum (NC) assessment	2007	2008
English	68%	67%
Mathematics	70%	66%
Science	70%	66%
English, Mathematics and Science (CSI)	54%	48%
Boys: English, Mathematics and Science (CSI)	52%	46%
Girls: English, Mathematics and Science(CSI)	56%	50%

Key stage 4

The percentage of pupils expected to achieve General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) qualifications	2007	2008
% of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C	46%	49%
% of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G	85%	87%
% of pupils gaining GCSE grade A*-C in English, mathematics and science (CSI)	32%	34%
% of boys gaining GCSE grade A*-C in English, mathematics and science (CSI)	30%	33%
% of girls gaining GCSE grade A*-C in English, mathematics and science (CSI)	35%	35%
% of pupils leaving school with no qualification	4%	4%

Summary

10. Ogmore School is an improving school with many good features. These include:
- clear and purposeful direction provided by the headteacher;
 - a very caring community based on good relationships between teachers and pupils; and
 - an exceptionally high level of respect and mutual support amongst pupils and teachers.
11. In the seven key questions the following grades were awarded.

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	3
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	3
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	2
6 How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	2
7 How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	2

12. These grades match those of the school's self-evaluation report in key questions 2, 4, 5 and 7. They are one grade lower in the other key questions.

Standards

13. The inspection team inspected the standards that pupils achieved in six subjects of the curriculum. The following table shows the grades awarded at Key Stage (KS) 3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

Standards in subjects inspected			
Subject	KS3	KS4	Sixth form
English	3	2	2
Mathematics	2	3	2
Design and technology	3	1	1
Modern foreign languages	3	2	3
History	2	2	2
Music	2	3	3

14. The following table shows the grades awarded for standards achieved by pupils and students at different key stages, in the six subjects inspected.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	3%	50%	47%	0%	0%
KS4	10%	57%	33%	0%	0%
KS3 + KS4	5%	53%	42%	0%	0%
6th form	6%	35%	59%	0%	0%
Whole school	6%	48%	46%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observation of 70 lessons					

15. The sample of lessons seen in the sixth form was very small and therefore comparisons between key stages are not reliable.
16. Standards are slightly better in KS4 than they are in KS3. Overall, these grades are:
- better than grades awarded at KS4 in inspections across Wales when 9% of lessons were grade 1 and 51% were graded 2;
 - below the grades awarded at KS3 in inspections across Wales when 11% of lessons were grade 1 and 52% were graded 2;
 - overall, seven percentage points below the most recent figures for all inspections in Wales, when 65% of lessons were graded 1 and 2; and
 - overall, better than the national target of 98% for lessons graded 1, 2 and 3.
17. The grades awarded in the sixth form are well below the grades awarded in inspections across Wales when 16% of lessons were grade 1 and 68% were graded 2. Overall, these grades are slightly better than the grades awarded at the time of the last inspection, though the sample is different in size and nature.
18. In 2006, the performance of pupils in KS3 in all core subjects combined improved from the previous year. Performance in science matched results locally. In English and mathematics results were below local and national averages. The percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in the three core subjects combined is almost in line with the all-Wales figure of 58%.
19. Overall, there has been improvement since the last inspection, in the performance of pupils in KS3. The rate of improvement is better than it has been nationally and locally. Overall, results compare well with schools with a similar intake.
20. In KS4, GCSE results achieved by pupils in 2006 were generally below the averages locally, nationally and for similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieve five or more GCSE grades A*-C has improved since the school was last inspected.
21. During the same period the percentage of pupils who achieve five or more GCSE grades A*-G has been significantly lower than the average for similar schools. The most recent results, however, achieved in summer 2006, are seven percentage points higher than those achieved at the time of the last inspection.
22. The difference between the performance of boys and girls has narrowed significantly since the last inspection. However, in 2006, the performance of girls was lower than expected in both KS3 and KS4.

23. In the sixth form students' attainment in external examinations is below local and national averages. Results in 2006 were better than in 2005.
24. Throughout the school, pupils and students have good key skills in communication, numeracy and information technology (IT). Standards in key skills have improved since the last inspection.
25. The majority of pupils has a good understanding of the Welsh language, particularly in KS3.
26. In comparison with their attainment on entry, pupils and students across the ability range make generally good progress. However
 - the most able are not always challenged well enough and their predicted grades are lower than expected;
 - middle ability pupils do not always achieve their potential, particularly in KS4; and
 - pupils are sometimes not challenged and have limited independent research skills.
27. Pupils with additional learning needs achieve more when they are well supported in class by Learning Support Assistants (LSAs).
28. The majority of pupils have good personal, social and learning skills. These pupils are motivated and behave well. In a few lessons, the inappropriate behaviour of some pupils disrupts their own learning and that of other pupils in the class.
29. Students in the sixth form gain in maturity and make a valuable contribution to the school community. They have well-developed personal and social skills and are good role models for other learners.
30. Most pupils and students make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most assemblies are of good quality and contribute effectively to development in these areas. In a significant proportion of tutorial periods at the start of the school day, pupils and students do not reflect well enough on the thought for the day.
31. In a few areas, pupils and students understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Overall, there is lack of consistency in the monitoring of pupils' and students' academic progress.
32. The annual attendance rate has improved from less than 87% at the last inspection to the current figure of 91%. This is however just below the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) target.

The quality of education and training

33. There are a number of outstanding features in the:
 - relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst the pupils themselves;
 - curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities;
 - partnerships with parents, employers and other providers in the community;
 - transition arrangements with primary schools;
 - work-related education and development of entrepreneurial skills;

- promotion of sustainable development and global citizenship; and
 - quality of care, support and guidance.
34. The one week intensive Welsh second language course in KS4 is not sufficient to enable pupils to develop their bilingual skills.
35. The following grades were awarded for teaching in the 70 lessons observed in the six subjects, and in the 31 lessons observed in other subjects:

Subjects	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6 subjects	20%	53%	20%	7 %	0 %
Other subjects	26%	39 %	19%	16%	0%
Total	22%	43%	24%	11%	0%

36. These figures compare favourably with those for all inspections in Wales 2005-2006 when 69% of lessons were graded 1 or 2, of which 17% were graded 1. The percentage of lessons graded a 1 represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The percentage of lessons graded 4 is higher than the figure for all inspections in Wales by six percentage points.
37. In just under a quarter of all lessons observed, there were outstanding features. In these lessons there is a very positive working environment created that:
- promotes a high level of engagement by pupils;
 - enables pupils to be actively involved in their own learning; and
 - allows teachers to monitor carefully the learning in lessons.
38. In a minority of lessons, the teacher dominates with long explanations making the pupils passive learners. In these lessons:
- there is a lack of pace and challenge which, coupled with low expectation prevents pupils making sufficient progress; and
 - work is not suitably matched to the ability of the pupils.
39. A culture of research is developing in the school and the Learning to Learn programme and the informal Teaching and Learning Creatively Programme both support teachers to trial new strategies, to further learning in classrooms.
40. Assessment is used well in planning and improving learning. Despite this, there is inconsistency in the quality of written and verbal feedback and the use of self and peer assessment.
41. The curriculum at all key stages meets the needs of learners very effectively. The school is successfully implementing the WAG priority for 14-19 learning pathways.
42. The joint sixth-form provision with Ynysawdre Comprehensive School and Bridgend College have substantially increased the options available in the sixth-form. These options include an extensive vocational programme available to both KS4 pupils and students in the sixth form.
43. The provision for personal and social education (PSE), work-related education (WRE) and careers education and guidance meet the WAG requirements. The programmes are very well embedded in the work of the whole school and have a significant impact on pupils' and students' academic and personal progress.

44. Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is outstanding. In recognition of this provision, the school has recently been awarded the Green Flag award, the Eco silver award and been named as the Eco Secondary School of the Year for 2007.
45. In subjects other than Welsh, pupils receive few opportunities to develop bilingual skills. Only 13% of KS4 pupils follow a full Welsh second language course at GCSE.
46. The school has successfully renewed its Basic Skills Quality Award.
47. Staff know their pupils very well and provide very effective pastoral support. They have established a very caring community based on very good personal relationships and high levels of respect between staff and pupils.
48. Overall, provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. There are, however, shortcomings in the number of LSAs and in the quality of individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils.
49. The school has established a number of successful initiatives to provide for more able and talented pupils. Whilst individual pupil plans lack detail, there has been effective strategic planning resulting in a successful programme of enrichment lessons.

Leadership and strategic management

50. There are a number of good features. The headteacher leads by example and provides clear and purposeful direction to staff. There is a clear determination to raise standards by developing a culture of continuous improvement. Raising standards is a fundamental feature of the corporate plan.
51. Most senior and middle leaders have a clear understanding of their role and implement it with good effect. They have a very clear commitment to improve the standards that pupils and students achieve. Despite this, there are shortcomings in the way in which:
 - leaders and managers strategically and continuously monitor the academic performance of pupils and students in the school;
 - a few middle managers monitor the work of their department; and
 - leaders and managers use the outcome of reviews to set targets for improvement that are linked to standards achieved by pupils and students.
52. The governors have a close relationship with the school. They provide good support and their individual expertise is used well. Most governors are pro-active and knowledgeable. They use their expertise well in helping the school to set its strategic direction.
53. The self-evaluation process is comprehensive, inclusive, and transparent and links directly with team planning and performance management. Arrangements are becoming increasingly embedded and are beginning to have positive outcomes in some areas of learning and whole-school initiatives.
54. At present, the self-evaluation process does not fully impact on standards across all subjects.
55. Staff are well qualified and highly committed. There is a good balance of experienced teachers with those who are relatively new to the profession. Highly

capable and experienced administrative and technical support staff are deployed well to ensure the school functions efficiently. The professional development needs of staff are matched closely to the school's priorities for development.

56. The school has been given the 'Investors in People' award.
57. Information communication technology provision for pupils, teaching, support and administrative staff is good. It provides learning resources for pupils as well as contributing to the efficient and effective running of the school.
58. The accommodation provides a suitable and pleasant working environment for staff and pupils. Some of the classrooms are small and corridor space is cramped. Students in the sixth form do not have adequate common room space.
59. Robust systems are in place to monitor and review the school budget rigorously and frequently to ensure best value for money. The very close links between the school's spending decisions and the corporate plan are an outstanding feature.

Progress since the last inspection

60. The school has made very good progress, since the last inspection, generally, and in the following key issues from the last report:
 - attendance;
 - resources and provision for ICT;
 - spiritual education;
 - physical education in the sixth form; and
 - cost effectiveness of the sixth form as a result of the partnership with Ynysawdre Comprehensive School and Bridgend College.
61. The school meets statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form, a daily act of collective worship for pupils and inclusion of data on SEN provision in the annual governing body report to parents.
62. However, although there has been some improvement, there remain shortcomings in pupils' attainment in teacher assessments in KS3 and external examinations in KS4.
63. Despite the introduction of a Welsh week in KS4, provision for second language Welsh remains an issue. Plans are in place to rectify this situation.

Recommendations

In order to improve standards, the school needs to continue to:

- R1 Improve attainment in teacher assessments in KS3 and examinations in KS4 and the sixth form.
- R2 Improve attendance.
- R3 Use existing good practice in teaching, learning and assessment to ensure consistency of practice across the school.

R4 Improve the effectiveness of senior and middle managers in monitoring and evaluating rigorously the standards that pupils and students achieve.

R5 Develop pupils' bilingual skills.

R6 Improve provision for pupils with additional learning needs by:

- increasing the number of support staff; and
- improving the quality of IEPs.

Aspects of recommendations one, two, three and five are addressed in the corporate plan.

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving this report, showing what the school is going to do about the recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

64. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than that awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

65. In the 53 lessons observed in the six subjects at KS3 and KS4, the following grades were awarded:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	3%	50%	47%	0%	0%
KS4	10%	57%	33%	0%	0%
KS3 + KS4	5%	53%	42%	0%	0%

66. Standards are slightly better in KS4 than they are in KS3. Overall these grades are:

- better than grades awarded at KS4 in inspections across Wales when 9% of lessons were grade 1 and 51% were graded 2;
- below the grades awarded at KS3 in inspections across Wales when 11% of lessons were grade 1 and 52% were graded 2; and
- seven percentage points below the most recent figures for all inspections in Wales, when 65% of lessons were graded 1 and 2 in both KS3 and KS4 combined.

67. In both key stages, the percentage of lessons in which the highest grade was awarded is the same as that reported in the last inspection. Overall, they are

slightly better than the grades awarded at the time of the last inspection, though the sample is different in size and nature.

68. In the most recent year for which comparative data is available (2006), the performance of pupils in KS3 in each of the three core subjects improved from the previous year. Performance in science matched results locally. In English and mathematics results were below local and national averages. Over the last three years, performance in science and mathematics has been better than in English. The percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in the three core subjects combined is in line with the all-Wales figure of 57%.
69. Improvement, since the last inspection, in the performance of pupils in KS3 has been better than it is nationally and locally. Overall, results compare well with schools with a similar intake.
70. At KS4, GCSE results achieved by pupils in 2006 were generally below the averages locally, nationally and for similar schools. The percentage of pupils who achieve five or more GCSE grades A*-C has improved since the school was last inspected.
71. In the last three years, the percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-G was significantly lower than the average for similar schools. The most recent results, however, achieved in summer 2006, are seven percentage points higher than those achieved at the time of the last inspection.
72. In the core subjects, pupils' attainment is better in English than it is in science and mathematics. The number of pupils entered for GCSE examinations has improved.
73. Pupils following vocational courses at KS4 are making good progress. More pupils are entered for examinations on these courses and attendance has improved.
74. The difference between the performance of boys and girls has narrowed significantly since the last inspection. However, in 2006, the performance of girls was lower than expected in both KS3 and KS4.
75. In the six subjects inspected, standards in design and technology at KS4 are good with outstanding features.
76. Standards are good with no important shortcomings in:
 - mathematics, history and music at KS3; and
 - English, modern foreign languages and history at KS4.
77. Good features outweigh shortcomings in:
 - English, design and technology and modern foreign languages at KS3; and
 - mathematics and music at KS4.
78. The standards achieved by pupils in the key skills of communication, numeracy and IT are good overall. They have improved since the last inspection. Most pupils listen purposefully to their teachers and each other. They speak confidently and sometimes give extended answers that demonstrate their understanding of their work. The most able pupils use correct punctuation, spelling and grammar accurately. In a few subjects, pupils write at length and present their work neatly. Pupils' reading skills, particularly those with additional

learning needs, improve significantly and are good overall. Many pupils read aloud with confidence in class.

79. Standards in numeracy are good. However, pupils' do not use their skills well enough outside of mathematics lessons.
80. Pupils' skills in IT across the curriculum are good overall. They use these skills well in their independent studies and in preparing presentations for their work in a range of different contexts. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
81. In many lessons, pupils enjoy the opportunities to work as a team. Boys and girls work well together when solving problems and reporting back to other members of the class. They use these skills extremely well in the many extra-curricular opportunities that they have available to them. Pupils across the year groups collaborate very well.
82. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of the Welsh language, particularly in KS3.

Their progress in learning

83. In comparison with attainment on entry, pupils across the ability range make progress. Pupils have the opportunity to succeed regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background.
84. The high levels of entry for GCSE in all the core subjects exemplify the school's determination to maximise the potential of all pupils. In 2006, 91% of pupils achieved an A*-G grade, two percentage points above the national average. A particular strength is the high level of entry in English.
85. In the subjects inspected, pupils across the ability range make generally good progress. However, the most able are not always challenged well enough and their predicted grades are lower than expected. Middle ability pupils do not always achieve their potential, particularly in KS4. Where there is evidence of underachievement, pupils:
 - have limited independent research skills; and
 - all work on the same task at the same pace, resulting in many pupils completing work quickly and wasting time in class.
86. Pupils with additional learning needs generally achieve standards that are well matched to their ability. Their progress in modern foreign languages and design and technology in KS3 is slower than in the four other subjects inspected.
87. In a few subjects, pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

88. The majority of pupils develop good personal, social and learning skills. These pupils are motivated, work hard in lessons and achieve well. In the best lessons and when given opportunities, pupils:
 - work very well with other pupils to reflect on and discuss aspects of their work;

- are very enthusiastic about what they are learning and are keen to share their knowledge with others in the class; and
 - research elements of their work independently in order extend their knowledge and understanding.
89. The school makes very good efforts to improve attendance. The annual attendance rate has improved from less than 87% at the last inspection to the current figure of 91%. This is, however, just below the WAG target of 93%.
90. The behaviour of most pupils in lessons and around the school is good. Most pupils show respect for each other, their teachers and visitors to the school. However, in a small proportion of lessons, the inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils disrupts their own learning and that of other pupils in the class.
91. Most pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most assemblies are good quality and contribute effectively to pupils' development in these areas. In a significant proportion of tutorial periods at the start of the school day, pupils do not reflect well enough on the thought for the day.
92. An extensive work-related education programme starts in Y8. The programme includes projects and work experience that prepare pupils very well for the world of work.

Sixth form

Their success in attaining agreed learning goals

93. The standards achieved by students in the six subjects inspected are good with outstanding features in design and technology, good with no important shortcomings in English, mathematics and history. Good features outweigh shortcomings in music and modern foreign languages.
94. Results in external examinations are below local and national averages. Results in 2006 were better than in 2005. Overall, boys achieved better results than girls. Data provided by the school suggest that in a number of subjects students underachieved.
95. In the small sample of 17 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected, the following grades were awarded.

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6%	35%	59%	0%	0%

96. These grades are well below the grades awarded in the sixth form in inspections across Wales when 16% of lessons were grade 1 and 68% were graded 2.
97. Students achieve good standards in the key skills of communication, numeracy and IT. Many use these skills well to enhance their work. They work with increasing independence in lessons and in the variety of voluntary work they do in school and in the community. They demonstrate high levels of skill when working with others.
98. Students have well-developed personal and social skills and are good role models for other learners. Many have outstanding leadership skills. Most students are highly motivated and respond positively and with enthusiasm in all

aspects of their work. As a result, they are prepared well for future learning beyond the school.

99. Students gain in maturity during their time in the sixth form and make a valuable contribution to the school community. Many students readily accept the responsibility of being a prefect, doing voluntary work and supporting younger pupils.
100. Students are well supported by their teachers. Their academic performance is monitored quite carefully. However they are not always clear about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.
101. A growing number of Year (Y) 11 pupils continue their education in the sixth form. The majority make good progress with just over 40% going on to university.
102. Most students understand the need to attend in order to achieve success. However, attendance in both Y12 and Y13 last year, across the three terms, was below 90%.

The quality of education and training

Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

103. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

How well teaching meets learners' needs and the curricular or course requirements.

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

104. The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 53 lessons observed in the six subjects and 27 lessons in other subjects, at KS3 and KS4.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6 Subjects	23%	45%	25%	7%	0%
Other subjects	30%	37%	15%	18%	0%
Total	25 %	43%	21%	11%	0%

105. Teaching has good features with no important shortcomings in 68% of all lessons. In a quarter of all lessons observed there were outstanding features. Good features outweighed shortcomings in 21% of lessons, and, in 11%, there were shortcomings in important areas. The percentage of lessons graded a 1 represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection.
106. Outstanding features in the quality of teaching in the school include the:
 - very good relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst the pupils themselves that produce a conducive environment for learning;
 - ways in which teachers check the learning in lessons at regular intervals; and

- high level of pupils' engagement in lessons where they are actively involved in their own learning.
107. There are also many good features in the quality of teaching in the school. Teachers are well qualified for the subjects they teach and have good knowledge of their subjects. This is reinforced by continuing professional development provided both within the school and by external courses.
 108. A culture of research is developing in the school and the Learning to Learn programme and the informal Teaching and Learning Creatively Programme both support teachers to trial new strategies to develop learning in classrooms.
 109. Teachers' planning is a strength and learning objectives for lessons are clear and made explicit to the pupils. The best teaching is characterised by enthusiastic well-structured lessons where time is well managed. There is a brisk pace to lessons and a wide range of teaching and learning strategies are employed to motivate pupils.
 110. There is a friendly and supportive environment in these lessons, which impacts positively on learning. The pupils are respected as individuals, regardless of their ability, gender, race or disability.
 111. In those lessons where there are shortcomings, lack of pace and challenge, coupled with low expectation, prevents pupils making sufficient progress. The work is not suitably matched to the ability of the pupils.
 112. In these lessons, the range of teaching and learning methods is limited. The teacher dominates with long explanations making the pupils passive learners. This limits the opportunities to engage with learning in an active way.
 113. In a small minority of lessons the behaviour of some pupils is inappropriate and reduces the amount of learning and progress that pupils make.
 114. Pupils' access to bilingual teaching, beyond that which occurs in Welsh lessons at KS3, is limited in scope and nature.

The rigour of assessment and its use in planning and improving learning

115. Assessment for learning was successfully launched in 2005 and the target is to have the processes of formative, self and peer assessment embedded in the practice of all departments by summer 2007. The process is therefore incomplete and the quality of formative assessment practice across the school is variable.
116. Assessment for learning is outstanding in design and technology and history. It is good in music. Good or outstanding practice is characterized by:
 - meticulous planning;
 - thorough and diagnostic marking; and
 - extensive use of portfolios to ensure consistency and systematic monitoring of pupils' progress against pre-set targets.
117. The clearest indicator of outstanding practice, however, is the extent to which pupils are involved in the process, through self and peer assessment. In history, for example, all assessment tasks contain three sets of formative comments, one from the pupil, the second from another pupil and the third from the teacher.

Pupils understand these comments, take them seriously and use them effectively to improve.

118. Constant exposure to self and peer assessment gives these pupils a clear idea of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. It also gives them insight into why tasks are set in particular ways and how they need to adjust their learning to cope with this.
119. However, there are inconsistencies in assessment practice between subject departments. Weaknesses can be seen in the range and variety of marking. Teachers' comments are:
- encouraging but not diagnostic;
 - descriptive rather than evaluative; and
 - lacking in advice on what pupils can do to improve their work.
120. Whilst detailed, formative monitoring of pupils' progress takes place in some subject areas, there is no systematic, whole-school approach to the monitoring and analysis of pupils' performance that is consistent with raising standards.
121. Whilst arrangements for the reporting of pupils' performance and progress meet statutory requirements, teachers' comments are too often superficial or generalized. There are relatively few comments that precisely define pupils' strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to improve.
122. There is little evidence of pupils actually responding to teachers' comments by making improvements to their subsequent written work.

Sixth form

How well teaching meets learners' needs and the curricular or course requirements.

123. Overall grades for the quality of teaching in the lessons observed in the sixth form were:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
14%	68%	14%	4%	0%
These grades are based on the observation of 22 lessons				

124. The good and outstanding features judged in KS3 and KS4 continue to be so in the sixth form, namely, that:
- there are good working relationships established in lessons;
 - teachers show good subject knowledge;
 - planning is effective and learning objectives are shared with pupils;
 - lessons are well structured and move at a brisk pace; and
 - a wide range of teaching and learning strategies are employed to engage pupils in their learning.
125. In the best lessons, teachers' knowledge of their subjects and the requirements of Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) level examinations are used to good effect in providing focus to lessons. Examination assessment criteria and exemplar grade materials are shared with students, which coupled with careful questioning, develop students' creative and independent thinking skills. There

are opportunities for students to develop their independent learning through the use of homework. Teachers use notes and handouts well to support and further students' learning.

126. In a few lessons where there are shortcomings:

- teachers spend too much time explaining and leading discussions where students become passive learners;
- learning objectives are imprecise, which makes the focus of the lesson less clear; and
- students are occasionally over-reliant on teachers' notes and classwork as they make little effort to research and investigate topics in their own time.

The rigour of assessment and its use in planning and improving learning

127. In the best practice, the processes of peer and self-review continue into the sixth form. In design and technology, for example, students are given A-level marking criteria and they work in pairs to review, analyse and mark work of a good, middle and low standard. They also make very good use of a progress review sheet to monitor their own progress. In history, students also work in pairs, using A-level assessment criteria to write sections of an essay, collate the sections and collectively analyse its strengths and weaknesses.

128. Where such practices are well embedded, students become confident in using assessment in all aspects of their work. Teachers and students work together well to use the outcome of assessment in a reflective and critical way, to improve the quality of students' work.

129. Overall, there is inconsistency in the quality of marking across subjects. For example, not all teachers' comments contain advice on how students can improve their work.

Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

130. This grade is one grade lower than the school's self-evaluation grade. This is because of the shortcoming in the provision and development of the bilingual competence of pupils in KS4.

131. There are, however, a number of good and outstanding features in the extent to which learning experiences fulfil pupils' needs and interests and the extent to which the learning experiences respond to the needs of employers and the wider community.

132. The outstanding features are the extent to which:

- curricular provision at all key stages meets the needs of individual learners;
- learning experiences provide balance, breadth, flexibility and progression;
- the school has established effective partnerships with other providers; and
- the effective links with a large number of employers and the work-related education programme helps develop pupils and students' entrepreneurial skills.

133. There is outstanding practice in the promotion and awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These are featured below:

Outstanding feature

134. Education for sustainable development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) is thoroughly embedded and strategically planned across the whole school. A very pro-active ESDGC committee, divided into different sub-committees, has been established. The groups are led by interested pupils and sixth-form students. They report in detail to the full committee comprising of pupils, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff and members of the local business community, and this contributes to the development of pupils' key, personal, social and learning skills.
135. The committee was established following a thorough survey of existing practice across the curriculum. This was used very effectively to educate staff and pupils and to produce a strategic ESDGC policy. The mapping survey posted on the school intranet encouraged cross-subject links, including joint-subject field trips.
136. Students and pupils are involved in a number of projects including, litter, waste management, energy, water, healthy living, global citizenship, school grounds and transport. ESDGC is fully embedded in the life of the school. Pupils and staff are kept very well informed of ESDGC activities. Action days for pupils in Y7 and Y11, with activities and workshops led by staff and sixth formers, promoted further interest.
137. In recognition of this outstanding provision, the school has recently been awarded the Green Flag award, the Eco Silver Award and has been named the Eco Secondary School of the Year for 2007.

The extent to which learning experiences fulfil pupils' and students' needs and interests

138. The KS3 curriculum is enriched by offering drama and information technology as subjects additional to the NC requirements. In KS4, pupils gain a wide range of qualifications at GCSE level, Entry level and in a number of vocational courses. Access to the sixth form is open to all students and the numbers staying on has increased in recent years. Links with Ynysawdre and the local college have substantially increased the options available to sixth-form students. Extensive vocational programmes in KS4 and the sixth form, provide opportunities for progression in many subjects. This supports the WAG priority for 14-19 learning pathways.
139. Transition arrangements are strong with a close working relationship between the head of Y7, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and primary schools. There are established transition programmes which cover pupils' academic and personal needs and involve pupils from Y7. The weekly provision of French teaching in three primary schools, provided by staff of Ogmore School, develops basic understanding and skills before transfer to

secondary school. The TALENT project and the science project contribute to continuity and progression in pupils' learning.

140. The learning experiences of pupils are enriched by the school's partnership with parents, the community and other education providers. The school has canvassed opinions of pupils and parents through questionnaires. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a small but effective organisation which supports the school in many ways.
141. The school is very involved in the community and supports sporting as well as educational projects, such as the successful Communities at One bid for funding for a homework and ICT club. The school works very closely with local businesses and the Education Business Partnership (EBP) to support careers, work-related education, vocational subjects and mentoring of pupils.
142. The links with other schools and colleges provide breadth to the vocational subjects and the sixth-form curriculum. The Comenius project, linking to schools in Spain, France, Italy and Denmark involving a project on ESDGC, received recognition for its quality by winning second prize in a WAG competition. The quality of the provision and the links with initial teacher education and training (ITET) institutions is a strength of the school.
143. The curriculum meets legal requirements. The provision for personal and social education, work related education and careers education and guidance follow WAG guidelines.
144. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). It has undertaken a full and detailed audit of SMSC provision across all subjects and year groups. An outstanding feature is the care and thoughtfulness towards those less fortunate which is demonstrated by the work of the Charity committee, ably led by sixth-form students. They organise a wide range of fundraising activities taking into account specific needs and interests of pupils in the school. There are many good features in the personal and social education programme which incorporates enrichment lessons on alternate weeks in KS3. These contribute well to pupils' SMSC development.
145. A large number of pupils and students benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular activities available at the school and from the trips and visits organised both at home and abroad. These broaden and enrich their experiences and promote their personal and social development. Collective worship contributes to pupils' spiritual development and conforms to statutory requirements.
146. The school has successfully renewed its Basic Skills Quality Award. A rolling programme has been introduced to address weaknesses in the key skills provision in KS3 with a focus on communication in Y7, ICT at the end of Y8 and application of number in Y9. Pupils in KS4 are involved in the DYSG project and can achieve external accreditation in the wider key skill of problem-solving. Portfolios of pupils' work held on computer demonstrate good ICT skills.
147. Pupils are given variable experiences in the daily act of collective worship in classrooms.

148. Mapping of key skills has been undertaken. However, there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of this provision across the curriculum. Strategies for the development of key skills are not sufficiently embedded. There has been a large reduction in the number of entries for external accreditation in key skills in the sixth form.

The extent to which learning experiences respond to the needs of employers and the wider community

149. There are long-standing, successful partnerships with a large number of local employers and businesses to develop learning activities in school and elsewhere, and to provide for the extensive work-experience placements in KS4 and the sixth form. Very strong partnerships exist between the school and EBP as well as Careers Wales. These links provide invaluable support for pupils and students in the form of mentoring, mock interviews and work experience.

150. The school's development of vocational courses responds to the needs of employers and the wider community.

151. A significant number of EBP activities, involving all year groups, support and link various enterprise activities with PSE and WRE programmes. Activities such as the Real Game, Dynamo Project, Enterprise in Action, Young Enterprise and Team Building Events enhance pupils' understanding of business and entrepreneurial skills.

152. The school is generally successful in ensuring that learning experiences reflect national priorities such as improving transition between primary and secondary school and transforming provision for 14-19 year olds.

153. There is a clear equal opportunities policy and it is reflected in the equality of access to the curriculum and other activities.

154. In subjects other than Welsh, pupils receive few opportunities to develop bilingual skills. Only 13% of KS4 pupils follow a full Welsh second language course. Most pupils in KS4 have an inadequate amount of teaching time during the intensive one-week provision in Y10. As a result, there is a lack of continuity and progression in the development of pupils' bilingual skills. This provision does not support the WAG target to raise standards of bilingualism.

155. There are bilingual signs around the school, but there is little evidence of incidental Welsh being used. No audit has been undertaken of subject contribution to the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* within schemes of work.

Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
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156. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

157. There are several outstanding features in the way learners are cared for, guided and supported in the school. These include:

- a well-established and effective pastoral system which provides a very high level of support for its pupils;
- a very caring community based on very good personal relationships between staff and pupils, where staff give freely of their time to support all pupils;
- an exceptionally high level of respect and support amongst the pupil population for each other; and
- a detailed prevention strategy for children perceived to be at risk.

Outstanding feature:

158. The Pupil Support Officer, a non-teaching post, provides exceptional support and guidance for all pupils at KS3 and 4, and specifically for those pupils in danger of disengagement with learning. A wide programme of inclusive opportunities, including the Get Active course, enables an identified group of underachieving pupils in Year 9 to re-engage with their learning and as a result return to mainstream classes in Year 10, to complete successfully their options at the end of KS 4.

159. A very efficient school council, works very effectively with the headteacher for the benefit of all pupils. This gives learners the forum to express their opinions about a wide range of issues on aspects of school life and the national agenda for learning. An example of this is seen in the discussions that the school council have had with the catering providers to promote healthy eating.

160. There are several good features in the way learners are cared for, guided and supported in the school. These include:

- good relationships with parents;
- well-established child protection procedures;
- a comprehensive careers guidance and WRE support programme;
- good use of outside agencies to support pupils' welfare;
- effective strategies to monitor attendance;
- a successful rewards system which promotes a culture of achievement; and
- clear policies and procedures to identify and respond to health and safety issues.

161. There are close links with contributing primary schools to ensure effective transition arrangements. This is followed by good quality induction programmes in Y7 and Y12 and option programmes in Y9.

162. The personal and social education programme is a particular strength. It is based on national guidelines, delivered by teaching staff and outside providers and allows difficult issues to be addressed in a caring atmosphere.

163. There are shortcomings in the:

- systems to ensure continuous monitoring of pupils' progress to raise academic achievement; and
- induction programme at the start of Y10.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

164. Temporary arrangements are in force, on a part-time basis, for administering the provision for pupils' additional learning needs. The school has a policy for Special Educational Needs (SEN) which is in line with the recommendations of the Code of Practice for Wales.
165. Overall provision is good but there are shortcomings relating to staffing and to the quality of IEPs.
166. An effective range of diagnostic procedures identifies pupils with SEN. These include:
- very good liaison with partner primary schools;
 - access to detailed primary school records;
 - screening tests on admission and retesting annually;
 - referrals by subject teachers; and
 - follow-up of issues raised by parents.
167. There is very good liaison with the UA's Educational Psychologist who visits the school at least fortnightly and has a strong diagnostic input.
168. The UA's Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) specialist teacher visits twice weekly and provides very good support for two pupils.
169. In line with Local Education Authority (LEA) policy, no pupils are in a receipt of a statement of SEN. The IEPs for those pupils at school action and school action plus do not have appropriate, or sufficiently detailed, targets. Although records of pupils' progress are kept, they do not appear on the IEPs. Each department has subject-specific IEPs, but these also lack detail.
170. However, there are good links between subject departments and the SENCO who has provided them with effective pen-portraits highlighting pupils' strengths and weaknesses. These are used very effectively in teachers' planning. Each subject department has a SEN representative; these meet regularly to exchange information.
171. Two LSAs provide high quality and very effective support both in class and for some pupils who are withdrawn from lessons for individual help. There is very good liaison between LSAs and subject teachers, enabling good support plans to be implemented. LSAs arrange the withdrawal support on a rolling programme, so as not to adversely affect any particular subject.
172. A recent arrangement, disbanding a Y8 group, has enabled a considerable number of Y8 classes to receive effective in-class support from a second teacher.
173. The school has established a number of initiatives to provide for more able and talented pupils. Whilst pupils' individual plans lack detail there has been effective planning at a strategic level and a successful programme of enrichment lessons implemented.

174. The appointment of the Pupil Support Officer has enabled the school to target support more effectively for pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties. A variety of successful strategies has been employed which includes:

- clear identification of the cohort;
- pupil tracking through lesson observation and monitoring of reports; and
- contact with parents and effective liaison with teaching staff.

175. The implementation of the behaviour policy, together with the very good pastoral support programmes, has significantly contributed to the reduction in fixed-term exclusions over the past year.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

176. Provision for equal opportunities is good with outstanding features.

177. The school has effective policies and outstanding procedures for recognising and respecting others through an outstanding ESDGC policy and strategy, led by pupils, with the support of staff.

178. There are very distinctive procedures for dealing with bullying that are understood and well implemented so that pupils are confident that any problems such as bullying are dealt with quickly and successfully to eliminate bullying.

Outstanding feature:

179. The Guardian Angels group comprises of a specific group of Y12 students who have undergone training to support pupils at all ages in danger of social exclusion and bullying. This group meets weekly with the head of KS3 to identify issues, target hot spots or vulnerable pupils. They report back to the head of KS3 who then devises a multi-agency strategy to resolve the issue. The key to its success is that no-one knows the identity of the Guardian Angels. This allows them to operate without detection and due to the nature of their work, they frequently identify other issues before they become a concern. They are a very effective preventative tool for pastoral management.

180. There are good features in the way in which:

- the clearly defined and effective behaviour management policy and strategy for pupils in need of support are implemented to improve behaviour;
- the more able and talented policy and framework support successfully enrichment and improve learning; and
- a recently-established peer-mentoring scheme led by pupils in Y11 and students in Y12 successfully supports younger pupils in the school.

181. There are good measures in place to promote racial harmony, gender equality and diversity in the community through the curriculum, particularly noted in religious education, English and history, and through thematic days, for example the Chinese New Year.

182. However, the nature of the school site makes it difficult for disabled learners to gain access to all areas

Leadership and management

Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

183. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

How well leaders and managers provide clear direction and promote high standards

184. The grade awarded is one grade higher than the grade awarded in key question one. This is because the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels is demonstrated by the progress made since the last inspection. Standards of achievement have either been maintained or improved.

185. The school is managed well. The headteacher leads by example and provides clear and purposeful direction to staff at all levels. As a result of this, a culture of continuous improvement is evident throughout the school. The leadership team and extended leadership team support this clear direction well. The good features of leadership and management include:

- comprehensive corporate planning that enables staff to produce well-focused development plans;
- clear vision for improvement as identified in the school mission statement, aims and objectives;
- effective communication at all levels;
- clear evidence of teamwork between staff and pupils;
- comprehensive policies that are scrutinised by governors before they are implemented; and
- open and transparent management of staff at all levels.

186. The headteacher is determined to raise standards in the school by providing strategic and well-focused support to all staff. He encourages and empowers staff at all levels to take on and implement initiatives that are clearly linked to improving the quality of education for pupils and students. This is exemplified in the working groups where staff use their specific skills and expertise to good effect. In these forums staff are expected to plan, implement, evaluate and review initiatives and share outcomes with staff and governors.

187. Leaders and managers have addressed the WAG priorities very well. Particularly good features include, education for sustainable development and global citizenship, healthy living and the 14-19 curriculum. The school has established good links with local schools and colleges. This has successfully extended the curriculum for pupils and students.

188. Most senior and middle leaders have a clear understanding of their role and implement it with good effect. The work of the senior leadership team is reviewed thoroughly every year.

189. The senior leadership team manage quite well the work of middle leaders. Middle leaders are generally well supported by their line managers. The work of departments and other middle managers is reviewed regularly. Recent reviews have focused successfully on quality of leadership and management. The outcome of these reviews is linked well to school priorities for improvement.
190. Annual performance reviews successfully identify targets for improvement for most teaching staff. These are linked well to training and development. A few senior and middle leaders have a very clear commitment to improve the standards that pupils and students achieve. However this is not consistent across the school. This is because senior and middle managers focus more on the care and support of pupils and students than on their academic performance.
191. Performance management is well embedded and is linked clearly to individual staff needs and school priorities.
192. Despite the many positive aspects of leadership and strategic management there are shortcomings in the way in which:
- leaders and managers strategically and continuously monitor the academic performance of pupils and students in the school;
 - a few middle managers monitor the work of their department; and
 - leaders and managers use the outcome of reviews to set targets for improvement that are linked to standards achieved by pupils and students.

The extent to which governors meet their responsibilities

193. The governors have a close relationship with the school. They provide good support and their individual expertise is used well. Most governors are proactive and knowledgeable. They use their expertise well in helping the school to set its strategic direction.
194. Termly reviews, as well as the annual report, enable governors to oversee rigorously all aspects of the school's performance. They monitor the quality of provision in the school effectively, scrutinising reviews, reports and policies. They have a good understanding of the self-evaluation process and, as critical friends, challenge information they are given. This includes a rigorous appraisal of the headteacher.
195. Governors fulfil all the legal duties placed upon them.

Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

196. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade below that awarded by the school in its own evaluation.
197. Although the self-evaluation process is well planned, with comprehensive systems, at present the process does not focus well enough on improving standards.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated.

198. There are outstanding features in the way that leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the school's performance. These include:
- a very good self-evaluation policy, documentation and practices; and
 - an inclusive, transparent self-evaluation process that links directly with team planning and performance management.
199. The school has produced a self-evaluation document that is comprehensive and evaluative identifying the school's strengths and the areas that require further development. The staff are very well informed about individual, team and whole-school performance.
200. The process is supported by effective external support from specialists. At all stages the evaluation and judgements made are closely related to measurable performance outcomes and the analysis of trends over time.
201. The school uses a broad range of evidence, including classroom observations, analysis of performance data, feedback from examination boards and evidence from a range of external providers, to ensure accurate identification of areas of strength and further development.
202. Senior managers attach considerable importance to the views of parents/carers and pupils, as well as the wider community, and their views are at times sought on some issues relating to the school.
203. Self-evaluation is well planned and rigorous. There is a time-tabled annual cycle that includes the corporate strategy, team action plans, regular whole school, team and individual performance reviews.
204. Self-evaluation arrangements are increasingly becoming embedded and are beginning to result in successful outcomes in some areas of learning and particularly whole-school initiatives. The process ensures that all staff are able to participate and there is a strong sense of understanding and ownership by them of the priorities, targets and outcomes.
205. The senior leadership team links with some subject teams and working groups are effective and impact on outcomes. In a few instances there is lack of rigour in the way in which senior leaders link with subject departments.
206. Self-evaluation has made a significant contribution to the development of initiatives such as post-16 partnerships, the Eco-school project and learning to learn. It has also contributed to improving the quality of teaching and developing closer and more effective team-working. Parents and pupils are sometimes effectively involved in evaluation of the school's practices and activities.
207. The work of non-teaching staff is not reviewed rigorously enough.
208. These grades awarded by the inspection team match those of the school's self-evaluation report in key questions 2, 4, 5 and 7. They are one grade lower in the other key questions.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

209. The school's planning for improvement has many good features, particularly the rigour of the planning for improvement at all levels and the close links between

performance management, planning for improvement, staff development, self-review and evaluation.

210. The school's strategic-planning processes are very well implemented, involving all staff and ensure effective outcomes. The priorities identified at whole-school and team levels are relevant to fulfil the aims, objectives and vision of the school and they have realistic timescales.
211. Extensive use is made of a range of data to set whole-school, departmental, individual staff and targets for pupils and students. There is regular review of progress at all levels and revised targets are then established in line with the progress being made. There is clear evidence to indicate that actions taken as a result of effective planning have resulted in measurable improvements in areas already identified.

Progress since the last inspection

212. The school has made very good progress, since the last inspection, generally, and in the following key issues from the last report:

- attendance;
- resources and provision for ICT;
- spiritual education;
- physical education in the sixth form; and
- cost effectiveness of the sixth form as a result of the partnership with Ynysawdre Comprehensive School and Bridgend College.

213. The school meets statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form, a daily act of collective worship for pupils and inclusion of data on SEN provision in the annual governing body report to parents.

214. However, although there has been some improvement, there remain shortcomings in pupils' attainment in teacher assessments in KS3 and external examinations in KS4. Despite the introduction of a Welsh week in KS4, provision for Welsh second language remains an issue. Plans are in place to rectify this situation.

Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

215. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the grade awarded by the school in its own evaluation.

The adequacy, suitability and use made of staffing, learning resources and accommodation.

216. Staff are well qualified and highly committed. There is a good balance of experienced teachers with those who are relatively new to the profession. The number of teachers is sufficient to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively and efficiently.
217. There are enough highly capable and experienced administrative and technical support staff to ensure the school functions efficiently. The school has achieved the 'Investors in People' award.

218. The small number of LSAs provides extremely effective support. They are directly involved in working with teachers to plan effectively for most individual pupils' needs. However there are too few LSAs for the 94 pupils on the SEN register.
219. The school fully meets the statutory requirements for workload and remodelling issues. All members of the teaching staff are allocated appropriate planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and resources. These arrangements give good value for money.
220. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are completed for all staff and volunteers.
221. All learners have access to appropriate learning resources. Provision for ICT is particularly good. There is, for example, a computer in every teaching room and a further five designated computer rooms, 17 data projectors and a mobile trolley with 30 laptops. ICT provision for teaching, support and administrative staff is also good. This impacts positively on the provision of learning resources for pupils as well as contributing to the efficient and effective running of the school.
222. The potential of the Library Resource Centre is not fully met. It is under-used as a reading base, the inventory is incomplete and there is no analysis of usage rate.
223. The accommodation provides a suitable and pleasant working environment for staff and pupils. The buildings are well maintained and free of litter and the quality of displays throughout the school is good.
224. Facilities in physical education, dance and drama have improved considerably since the last inspection. The sports hall has been upgraded and includes a very good space for dance and drama. There is also a well-utilised all-weather pitch. There are sufficient toilets available throughout the school.
225. Some of the classrooms are small and corridor space is cramped. There is limited:
- accessibility for those with problems of mobility;
 - wet-weather space for pupils, especially during the winter; and
 - space for students in the sixth form.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

226. The outstanding feature is the very close link between the school's spending decisions and the Corporate Plan. This is linked to the rigour with which the school keeps its resources under review to ensure best value for money.
227. The finance and personnel manager is a member of the senior leadership team and works very effectively alongside the headteacher to monitor and review the school budget rigorously and frequently. The headteacher is proactive in accessing a number of external funds and resources, in accordance with government initiatives, in order to enhance provision for the school.
228. The post-16 partnership arrangement with nearby schools, instigated by the school itself, represents a highly effective and efficient means of utilising staff whilst offering more choices and opportunities for students.

229. The school makes good use of the small amount of money made available to them by the UA for pupils with additional learning needs.
230. Subject departments receive a capitation that is formula driven and transparent to all. Departments may also bid for further funding at the discretion of the headteacher and the governing body. This procedure ensures that school priorities are met.
231. All members of staff are deployed efficiently and recent changes to teacher workloads and workforce remodelling have been completed in line with statutory requirements. All staff have job descriptions.
232. There is a very good recruiting and appointments procedure. The professional development needs of staff are matched closely to the school's priorities for development. Performance management objectives set in the autumn term are reviewed annually.
233. There is a good induction programme to support newly-qualified teachers and teachers new to the school, and the arrangements for initial teacher training students are detailed and comprehensive.
234. The headteacher has a very clear vision and strategy for planning for the future of the school. To this effect, the school holds suitable contingency funds and the governing body plays a full and responsible role in the review of spending.
235. The school has plans in place to continue to improve standards of achievement including examination and test results. In other aspects, the school achieves value for money. This is indicated by the:
- clear and purposeful direction provided by the headteacher;
 - exceptionally high level of respect and mutual support amongst pupils and teachers; and
 - effective partnerships in the sixth form.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

Key stage 3 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 3

Good features

236. Most pupils work well with partners, share ideas and come up with valid responses. They work collaboratively to complete focused tasks.
237. Pupils answer questions posed by the teacher and both boys and girls are generally willing and eager to offer responses. For example, many pupils are able to give accurate definitions of strategies used in the composition of persuasive texts.
238. Most pupils read aloud clearly, accurately and with reasonable expression. When carrying out tasks that rely on reading for meaning, pupils generally show persistence and good understanding. They show an increasing ability to explore

texts for implicit as well as explicit meanings and respond to their reading in a range of ways, both oral and written.

239. When given the opportunity pupils write at length. They are often confident and imaginative. They draft and develop initial ideas into sustained pieces of work.
240. Pupils use writing to respond to a range of stimuli and develop a good understanding of the characteristics of various types of text. In the best examples pupils draw explicitly on skills that they have learned in earlier lessons.
241. The response of pupils to some writing tasks allows them to display a clear sense of appropriate register and to produce writing which is humorous and energetic.

Shortcomings

242. There is a lack of sustained discussion of issues raised by texts. Pupils' speaking and listening is focused on short, sharp tasks, which prevent them exploring and developing their thinking and oral responses.
243. The work of some pupils is marred by poor spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. They do not know how to remedy these difficulties.
244. Some pupils in Y9 have made little progress and are working at levels lower than those at which they entered the school. In Y8 pupils work on very similar tasks, and to very similar standards, as those in Y7. These pupils make limited progress.
245. There is little evidence of pupils reading widely for pleasure.

Key stage 4

Good features

246. Pupils of all abilities take part constructively in classroom discussions on issues raised by texts that they are reading.
247. Pupils work together in pairs and larger groups to explore concepts in a sustained way. Discussions extend their understandings. They report back to the class fluently and, in the best cases, at significant length. Middle and lower ability pupils are willing to contribute to class and group discussion, and the great majority listens well. Some of these discussions are of a very high standard.
248. Most pupils show good understanding of a range of texts, of which some of them reflect cultures beyond their own. They develop greater understanding, not only of content but of the strategies and approaches used by writers. They understand the concept of `quoting` from texts and make reference to details in their discussions of what they have read.
249. Most pupils apply what they have learnt from their reading when they produce their own writing. They show a clear understanding of concepts such as `presentational features` and `appropriate register` and produce sustained work in a range of formats.
250. Pupils of all abilities produce coursework files of substance. They understand the process of revising and re-drafting and, in many cases, use ICT to produce coursework of good quality.

251. Most pupils have a good understanding of the criteria for different grades, show an awareness of the level at which they are working and can talk about what they need to do to improve. In some cases, pupils show the ability to use peer marking effectively.
252. Pupils of all abilities, including the most and the least able, make significant progress. They show persistence in completing their courses and achieve well.

Shortcomings

253. A significant minority of pupils lacks the experience of dealing with literary texts. Consequently they sometimes struggle to understand the kind of sophisticated literary vocabulary employed by writers.
254. A small number of pupils lacks commitment and carries out classroom tasks in a perfunctory way.

Sixth form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

255. The great majority of students have good factual knowledge of the texts they are studying.
256. Students explore texts in pairs and small groups and are able to scan for relevant information and supporting quotation. They share their ideas with energy and enthusiasm.
257. Students respond to the issues raised by texts and are keen to engage with these issues.
258. Students are increasingly able to draw information from across more than one text. They use one text in order to reflect on issues raised in another.
259. Students are able to write fluently and generally appropriately. They absorb information quickly and are able to refer to, and summarise, what they have learned, in their writing.
260. Students produce extended coursework, often of good quality. They are increasingly able to use evidence from texts to support their arguments and judgements. Many Y13 students use elements of individual research in order to develop their thinking.

Shortcomings

261. Some students in Y12 lack the confidence to respond to open-ended questions about sophisticated texts. They rely on the teacher for explanations and do not explore their reading independently.
262. Many students find it difficult to understand and respond to the literary techniques used by authors. They discuss issues but are less aware of the conventions of particular literary genres.

Mathematics

Key stage 3 - Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 4 - Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 3

Good features

263. Most pupils show competent knowledge and understanding of current work and make good progress in lessons. They display good standards in number, algebra, shape, measures and handling data. Many use and apply mathematics well in appropriate contexts and communicate their reasoning with confidence.
264. Many pupils have a good knowledge and recall of basic number facts and can calculate mentally with accuracy. They make good use of calculators where appropriate and can give answers to sensible degrees of accuracy. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of simple fractions, decimals and percentages and apply this well to solve problems at an appropriate level for them.
265. More able pupils have a good understanding of probability. They list the outcomes of combined events and use this well in calculating probabilities based on them. They construct pie charts accurately and deduce appropriate conclusions from them in appropriate tasks.
266. Pupils of average ability estimate the strength of correlation between two sets of data from scatter diagrams. They have a good knowledge and understanding of number and many use this competently to find simple percentages of quantities without using a calculator.
267. Lower ability pupils have a good awareness of basic angle facts. Many identify different types of angle, provide a sensible estimate of their size, and use a protractor to draw and measure them accurately.
268. Pupils with SEN have a proficient knowledge and understanding of basic work in number, shape, measures and data handling. They make good progress throughout the key stage and show competence to use appropriate mathematical terminology in their reasoning.

Shortcomings

269. Although there are no important shortcomings a few pupils display some basic misconceptions and errors in some aspects of number, shape and algebra. They are sometimes hesitant in recalling previous work with clarity and understanding.

Key stage 4

Good features

270. Pupils of all abilities work well in lessons and many display good knowledge and understanding of current work.
271. Most pupils of higher ability deduce angle properties of polygons and use this proficiently to solve related problems. They show a good knowledge and

understanding of more difficult concepts in algebra and can apply these well to solve various types of equations. They construct probability tree diagrams and use them appropriately to calculate the probabilities of combined events.

272. Most pupils of average ability have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of algebra. They substitute values into simple formulae correctly and rearrange them into different forms. They use calculators proficiently and have a sound understanding of the use of estimates.
273. Pupils of lower ability and those with SEN have a good knowledge and understanding of basic number, shape, measures and graphical work. They apply these well in solving a range of problems commensurate with their abilities.

Shortcomings

274. A minority of pupils display some confusion in their understanding of current and previous work. They make some fundamental errors and show basic misconceptions in their use of algebra.
275. A significant minority of pupils, particularly of average to lower ability, follows set rules given to them with insufficient understanding. They are unable to explain what they are doing with a secure level of confidence.

Sixth form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

276. Most students progress well in their learning throughout the sixth form. They display good levels of mathematical reasoning and use this well in solving a variety of appropriate problems.
277. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of underlying concepts in pure mathematics and they apply these competently to solve various problems presented to them.
278. Students display good standards in statistics. They have a good knowledge and understanding of probability distributions and are competent in their use of descriptive statistics.

Shortcomings

279. There are no important shortcomings but a few students make some fundamental errors in algebraic manipulation. Occasionally they do not set out their work correctly and display errors in their use of mathematical terminology.

Design and technology

Key stage 3 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4 - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Key stage 3

Good features

280. Pupils understand a design brief and use it well to generate early ideas that they develop through discussion and annotated sketches. They are able to produce

a specification appropriate to the needs of the user and also the purpose and function of the product.

281. Pupils produce appropriate work plans that correctly sequence the necessary processes to manufacture their product, the equipment needed and safety issues to be considered. They demonstrate a good degree of precision and control when using tools and equipment to cut, shape and finish a range of materials, and show a good understanding of safety when working with tools and equipment.
282. Pupils demonstrate good understanding of the range of more complex processes such as vacuum-forming and complete these processes to a good standard. Final design ideas include dimensions and more detailed annotation related to materials and processes.
283. Pupils are able to produce computer-aided designs (CAD) with confidence, which they then use to cut products using computer-aided manufacturing machines (CAM) and cutters to a good standard.
284. Pupils interconnect electronic components correctly to produce electronic circuits for fuse testers and lighting systems to a good standard.
285. In textiles, pupils use sewing machines and the CAD/CAM embroidery machine confidently. They create innovative designs to combine appliqué, machined designs and a variety of stitches to a pleasing effect.
286. Pupils use appropriate finishing techniques to complete their products, that are finished to a good standard. They complete a final evaluation against the specification and can explain the strengths and weaknesses of the finished product.

Shortcomings

287. Pupils do not include measurable criteria in a specification for their design and therefore do not use criteria effectively for on-going evaluation of the product.
288. Pupils do not use formal drawing techniques sufficiently well to communicate their intentions, nor do they make sufficient use of preliminary models to explore and test their design.
289. In Y9, pupils do not explore a wide enough range of sources of information, including those not immediately related to the task. This impacts on the individuality of ideas they can bring to design developments.

Key stage 4

Outstanding features

290. Pupils demonstrate innovative and imaginative contemporary design when developing their products. They produce product outcomes of high quality.
291. More able pupils incorporate a range of materials into their innovative designs. A small number of pupils also incorporates highly-effective electronic and lighting features.

Good features

292. Pupils show a sound understanding of the needs of the users, purpose and function of a product in their design developments. A minority of pupils shows

good communication with manufacturers to add to their knowledge and understanding of design needs.

293. A majority of pupils completes detailed research in the evaluation of available products and identifies features that inspire their creativity. They produce detailed specifications that include measurable criteria for on-going testing and evaluation during product development.
294. Early ideas are presented well by all pupils using annotated sketch-drawing techniques. Final designs are produced to a good standard using CAD software and include dimensions and templates for cutting.
295. Evaluation by pupils is an on-going and detailed process throughout their work, and they explain changes to original plans against the manufacturing specifications.
296. Pupils use a range of tools and equipment effectively to produce innovative shapes and design features in a range of materials. They understand structure well and how to provide strength and reinforcements to their design ideas to ensure fitness for purpose.
297. Pupils understand a variety of finishing techniques, and they thoroughly research and investigate a range of finishes to ensure that their final product is completed to a high quality.

Shortcomings

298. A small minority of pupils produces designs that are simpler and based on a limited range of materials. Portfolio work lacks depth and attention to detail in all aspects required.

Sixth form - Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Outstanding features

299. Students demonstrate a well-researched, in-depth knowledge of users' needs in relation to the purpose and specification for product outcomes.
300. The specifications for design and manufacture are detailed with measurable criteria against which students fully evaluate as an on-going process throughout their work.
301. Students include a range of materials and other design features such as lighting to great effect to produce innovative and imaginative contemporary products highly suitable for a modern market.
302. They pay great attention to detail through all aspects of their work, and in particular the quality of finishing techniques results in a highly professional finish to their products.

Good features

303. Students demonstrate a good understanding of survey questioning of potential customers to analyse users' needs. They build confidently their findings into their design idea developments.
304. Portfolio work is thorough in all aspects and students present their research, drawings and evaluations in a format of high quality.

- 305. All students use a full range of tools and equipment confidently to cut, shape and join a range of materials. They have a sound understanding of structure and how a variety of materials can be incorporated together to create strength and shape in innovative designs.
- 306. Students include electronic systems such as lighting in their final design confidently.
- 307. They investigate SMART materials fully and develop creative ideas to incorporate these materials into products to serve the needs of users.
- 308. They understand the difference between qualitative and quantitative design criteria and how to test appropriately for each.
- 309. Students demonstrate a sound knowledge of finishing techniques and thoroughly test a range of these to ensure a professional quality to the overall finish to their product.

Shortcomings:

- 310. A small minority of students develop products from a smaller range of materials and simpler design features. Portfolio work lacks depth and attention to detail.

Modern foreign languages

Key stage 3 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

Key stage 4 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 3

Good features

- 311. Most pupils work at the appropriate level and many make progress throughout the key stage. By the end of the key stage they are able to read short passages of authentic French and identify the main points and specific details.
- 312. Many pupils write three or four simple sentences with support and substitute individual words and phrases to personalise their writing.
- 313. More able pupils use extended writing and speech accurately.
- 314. Many pupils' accents and intonation are easy to understand.
- 315. Many pupils develop an increasing understanding of the grammar of the target language and are confident in recognising past, present and future tenses.
- 316. In listening, pupils understand short passages made up of familiar language and identify key points. Nearly all pupils understand and respond to basic classroom commands in the target language.

Shortcomings

- 317. Pupils restrict themselves to drills rather than spontaneous speech and a majority struggles to understand 'unpredictable' language.
- 318. Many lower ability and pupils with SEN struggle to understand key grammatical concepts.
- 319. Pupils lack confidence in speaking and respond with individual words or short phrases. They are often hesitant and are reticent to engage in speaking.

320. Pupils struggle to use previously acquired vocabulary and grammar in new contexts. They do not build on the knowledge and skills acquired in KS2 sufficiently.
321. Throughout the key stage, pupils of all abilities continue to make some basic errors in the productive skills of speaking and writing.

Key stage 4

Good features

322. Pupils make good progress from simple to more complex language. They become increasingly familiar with the grammar of the target language.
323. Throughout the key stage pupils increasingly use previously acquired knowledge in new contexts.
324. Many pupils produce coursework of a high standard which is accurate and also contains appropriate idiom.
325. Pupils begin to develop strategies for dealing with unpredictable language in listening and reading.
326. Most pupils speak clearly and confidently, have good accents and are able to take part in more complex dialogues of several exchanges.

Shortcomings

327. A minority of pupils continues to make some basic errors in grammar and pronunciation.
328. Pupils do not initiate exchanges in the target language or use it spontaneously.

Sixth form – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

Good features

329. Students are able to read authentic texts and collaborate together to use strategies to understand meaning.
330. Students' accents are generally accurate and always easily understood.
331. Students use language skills in combination and also recycle vocabulary and idioms, learned in reading and listening, in speaking and writing.
332. Students show an increasing awareness of the grammar of the target language.

Shortcomings

333. Students continue to make basic errors in both oral and written work.
334. Students are reticent to take part in oral work in class. Their responses are often one word or short-phrase answers, which impact negatively on standards in speaking.
335. Students do not initiate dialogues in the target language or use language spontaneously and they struggle with unpredictable language.

History

Key stage 3 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 4 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 3

Good features

336. Throughout KS3, but most noticeably in Y7, pupils of all abilities compose well-structured extended writing using key words in the context of the period being studied.
337. Year 9 pupils are able to reconstruct the conditions of life for people in the past, for example, the poor of Merthyr, child workers in factories, or the mining community of Blaenavon.
338. The ablest in Y7 explain the actions of people of the past showing why, for example, people in the Middle Ages were not unwise for treating plague victims in particular ways.
339. Pupils show progress in their understanding of historical explanation. For example, pupils in Y8 can explain why Henry VIII's break with Rome had more than one cause, and those in Y9 can explain how several causes combined resulted in a pit failure.

Shortcomings

340. Use of evidence is less well developed than other areas of understanding. Younger pupils treat sources at face value and use content as information rather than as evidence.

Key stage 4

Good features

341. Pupils build successfully on the range of skills acquired in KS3. Pupils in both Y10 and Y11 exhibit impressive levels of subject knowledge. Pupils of all abilities make confident and critical use of a range and variety of source material.
342. They evaluate sources for reliability and usefulness, showing, for example, how and why unreliable evidence can still be useful. Able pupils also understand how the provenance of a source and the circumstances of its production, can affect its meaning.
343. In their coursework, pupils of all abilities understand that cross-referencing sources for agreement or disagreement is a method of strengthening or weakening a line of argument. They apply this understanding well to actual historical problems.
344. Pupils make good progress in their causal reasoning and critical thinking. They can also test interpretations of the past by reference to evidence from a range of primary sources and reach a balanced judgement.

Shortcomings

345. Most pupils, even those who can confidently evaluate sources for reliability, have a limited understanding of criteria for determining the usefulness of a source.

Sixth form - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

346. Students in Y13 show considerable, critical insight when interpreting and evaluating source material. For example, they:

- appreciate the value of biased evidence, for example a biased Irish view of Peel as indicative of depth of loathing at the time of the Famine;
- evaluate secondary sources, in terms of their relative usefulness for a particular line of enquiry; and
- understand that the circumstances in which a particular source was produced can have a critical bearing on its reliability or usefulness.

347. In their written work, students show that they can construct and sustain an argument and reach a balanced judgement. In class discussion, students engage in debate, ask pertinent questions and express their views with confidence.

348. Year12 students demonstrate a high level of competence in assessing a sample examination answer. They use assessment criteria very well when writing sections of essays, which they eventually collate and review as a whole class.

Shortcomings

349. Whilst students understand that some causal factors are more important than others to an explanation, they generally fail to demonstrate this by direct comparison of factors.

350. Some weaker students persist in confusing reliability and usefulness as criteria for establishing the value of source material.

Music

Key stage 3 - Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key stage 4 - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 3

Good features

351. Pupils sing in tune with good tone and diction. They give suitable attention to musical detail.

352. Pupils learn new melodies and accompaniments quickly on electronic keyboards and tuned percussion. They maintain a sense of ensemble in group and whole class performances. The more able can also perform more challenging parts.

353. Working on their own or in groups, pupils devise and develop their ideas to compose different types of music. Most pupils show a good sense of rhythm and awareness of style when, for example, they compose their own rap pieces.

354. In appraising work, pupils show confidence in using technical vocabulary directly linked to the elements of music. The more able show a good understanding of technical vocabulary and make perceptive comments.

Shortcomings

355. A few pupils are unable to play in time with others and have limited ensemble skills.

356. Comments by some pupils are brief and superficial when they appraise their own and others' music.

Key stage 4

Good features

357. Pupils of all abilities make progress in individual and group performances. A few pupils perform with a sense of style and expression.

358. Compositions generally show a sense of phrasing, style and structure and some pupils produce musically interesting work.

359. Pupils listen attentively to recorded extracts of music and identify instruments, structure and the use of musical elements. A few pupils make perceptive comments using technical vocabulary.

Shortcomings

360. Pupils who have limited instrumental experience lack confidence when performing.

361. Some pupils find difficulty revising and refining their compositions. Consequently these compositions show limited musical interest.

362. A few pupils lack confidence when discussing the detail of the music studied and experience difficulty with some aspects of the listening work.

Sixth form - Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

363. Students, drawn from across the full ability range make progress in their performances. A few perform with a sense of style and expression.

364. Students make progress on their freestyle compositions and some show a sense of style, phrasing and structure.

365. Standards of written and listening work linked to Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra show sound knowledge of the style and form.

Shortcomings

366. A few students have limited instrumental skills which impact on the standards they achieve.

367. Some compositions show limited interest and musical development and refinement.

368. Students' responses to listening exercises occasionally lack knowledge of technical vocabulary.

School's response to the inspection

The governors, staff and headteacher are pleased that the inspection report identifies the very good progress that has been made since the last inspection. The school also welcomes this external endorsement of the outstanding support for learners that the school provides and our very caring community based on good relationships between teachers and pupils and the exceptionally high level of mutual respect that exist in the school.

We also celebrate the recognition of our outstanding curriculum and extra-curricular activities; partnerships with parents, employers and other providers in the community; transition arrangements with primary schools; work-related education and development of entrepreneurial skills; the tremendous work of the Eco-Committee and our promotion of sustainable development and global citizenship.

We are pleased that the report identifies the good features that characterise the work of the school and acknowledges the developments that are taking place through comprehensive corporate planning and clear vision for improvement.

The inspection findings also refer to the school's very good self-evaluation policy, documentation and practices and that our own self-evaluation report has identified the school's strengths and areas requiring further development. We feel confident that we know where we are, where we want to be in the future and the steps we need to take to move the school forward.

Most of the recommendations contained in the report have already been addressed in the corporate plan and self-evaluation report and we are fully committed to responding to all of the findings. Our particular focus in the short term will be to improve assessment policy and practice, ensuring that more effective systems are in place for the purpose of challenging pupils and for monitoring their progress. In addition, self-evaluation processes will be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficiently focussed on raising standards.

A copy of the school's action plan in response to the recommendations will be sent to all parents and guardians and the governors' annual report to parents will report on our progress.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ogmore School
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11 - 18
Address of school	Spout Hill Bryncethin Bridgend
Postcode	CF32 9NA
Telephone number	01656 721515

Headteacher	Nicholas Oaten
Date of appointment	September 2003
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Brian Rees
Reporting inspector	Julia Helen Cattle Longville
Dates of inspection	26 February – 1 March 2007

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	124	115	112	115	149	56	40	711

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	43	4	45.2

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.82 : 1
Average teaching group size	19.58
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	80.75%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	92.2	93.0	91.7	88.3	88.3	90.5	84.7	90.1
Term 2	89.9	89.2	88.6	87.3	84.1	83.9	69.8	86.2
Term 3	88.3	89.5	85.8	85.2	84.8	85.7	67.7	88.1

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	19.3%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	38 temporary 1 permanent

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006														
Total number of pupils in Y9: 116														
Percentage of pupils at each level														
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	16	38	19	6	1
		National	0	0	1	0	0	2	8	21	35	24	8	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	19	30	32	6	0
		National	0	0	1	0	0	1	6	18	24	32	15	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	16	54	21	1	0
		National	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	19	33	27	12	0

- D Pupils excepted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1
EP Exceptional Performance, where pupils at Key Stage 3 perform above level 8

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by Teacher Assessment	
In the school	56%
In Wales	58%

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	129
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	35

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	80	86	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	40	51	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	76	84	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	27	38	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	98	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	65	74	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	93	93	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	7	7	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	1	4	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	0		
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0		

For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2006	59
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006	39
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006	20

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	46	67	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	82	93	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	13	19	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0		

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

13 inspectors spent a total of 41 days in the school and were joined by the school's deputy headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 101 lessons, 70 in the six subjects inspected and 31 lessons in other subjects;
- registrations and assemblies; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

- staff, parents and governors before the inspection;
- senior managers, middle managers, teachers, support assistants and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group; and
- representatives of the school council.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 83 replies to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- samples of pupils' reports; and
- a range of pupils' work.

After the inspection, inspectors held meetings with departments, senior managers and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Julia Longville (Rgl)	Context, Summary, Recommendations, KQ1, KQ5, Appendix
Dylan Gwyer Roberts Alan Kelly	KQ2: Teaching and learning KQ2: Assessment
Keith Davies	KQ3
Susan Gwyer Roberts	KQ4
Paul Donovan	KQ4: SEN English (support)
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector KQ6
Delyth Williams	KQ7
Philip Jackson	English
David Williams	Mathematics
Jane Down	Design and technology
Lynne Meiring	Modern Foreign Languages
Alan Kelly	History
Dylan Gwyer Roberts	Music
Suzanne Halliwell	Nominee

Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy during the inspection.

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