

**Inspection under Section 10 of the
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Olchfa School
Gower Road
Sketty
Swansea
SA2 7AB**

School Number: 670/4032

Date of Inspection: 3rd – 6th May 2005

By

**Mr. T. O'Marah
17193**

Date: 29 June 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/37/04

© Crown Copyright 2005

This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the Report specified.

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

Olchfa School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. A copy of the summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Olchfa School took place between 3rd and 6th May 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr. T. O'Marah 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

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years 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 attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
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

Contents		Page
Context		1
Summary		2
Recommendations		6
Standards		7
Key question 1:	How well do learners achieve?	7
The quality of education and training		12
Key question 2:	How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	12
Key question 3:	How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	17
Key question 4:	How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	21
Leadership and management		24
Key question 5:	How effective are leadership and strategic management?	24
Key question 6:	How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	26
Key question 7:	How effective are leaders and managers in using resources?	28
School's response to the inspection		30
Appendices		32
A	Basic information about the school	32
B	School data and indicators	33
C	National Curriculum assessments results	34
D	Evidence base of the inspection	37
E	Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	38

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Olchfa School is a large 11-18 mixed comprehensive school situated in a suburban area to the west of the City of Swansea. There are 1891 pupils on roll, compared with 1946 at the time of the previous inspection in 1999. There are 434 students in the Sixth Form.
2. The school's intake represents the full range of ability. Reading scores on entry are significantly above average overall, but with a significant number of pupils whose reading scores are below average. There are 30 pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 155 pupils are on the SEN register. The school houses a Specialist Teaching Facility (STF) for Hearing Impaired Pupils. 173 pupils (9.1%) come from homes where English is not the first language and 72 of these receive individual teaching support for English as an additional language. No pupils are registered as being from homes where the predominant language spoken is Welsh.
3. The school serves an area which is predominantly economically advantaged with a relatively small number of children coming from homes that are economically disadvantaged. Just over 5% of pupils are currently registered as being entitled to free school meals.
4. There have been changes in the school's headship team since the last inspection. Four of the existing team remain and three have been appointed over the last three years, including the headteacher.

The school's priorities and targets

5. The school's mission statement is:

'To sustain and enhance the highest quality of education provided to all pupils and enable individuals to achieve their full potential within a secure and caring learning environment.'
6. The school's main priorities are outlined in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2004-2007. Five key areas are outlined:
 - The School as Employer
 - The School as a Learning Environment
 - The School's Fitness for Purpose
 - The School as a Reliable Institution
 - The School as a Community
7. Departmental Improvement Plans mirror the key school themes and also pursue individual departmental priorities.
8. The school has set challenging targets for future performance which seek to further increase the value added to pupils' achievements as they progress through the school.

Summary

Tables of grades awarded

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

Standards

9. The overall ability of the intake into the school at Y7 is significantly above the average for Wales and has improved slightly over recent years.
10. In key stage 3 (KS3), results in National Curriculum tests are significantly higher than the average scores for Wales. Results are improving year on year. Whilst girls achieve higher results than the boys, the difference is smaller than nationally.
11. In key stage 4 (KS4), the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C in 2004 was well above the average for Wales and the Unitary Authority (UA) and shows a small but consistent annual improvement. In the individual core subjects, results over the past four years have been well above the national average, and are improving. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at grades A*-G has improved since the previous inspection. Overall, girls achieve better results than boys.
12. At Advanced level, both the average points score for students taking two or more A level examinations, and the proportion of students gaining A-C grades are significantly above the average figures for Wales and the UA, and are improving.
13. Compared with similar schools in Wales, Olchfa is consistently in the top quarter of schools at KS3 and top half at KS4.

14. Communication skills are good with no important shortcomings at KS3 and KS4, and are outstanding in the sixth form. Across the school pupils' and students' numerical and ICT skills are good and are occasionally very good.
15. Pupils' bilingual skills and awareness are insufficiently developed.
16. The attitude of the vast majority of pupils in KS3 and KS4 towards their work is good, and often has outstanding features. It is outstanding in the sixth form.
17. Pupils' behaviour, is generally of a very high standard, and is particularly so in the sixth form. There is a small minority of pupils in both KS3 and KS4 who are inattentive and disruptive in a small number of lessons.
18. Overall attendance at school for the last year, at over 92%, was above both the local authority and the national averages. In comparison to the previous inspection there has been a strong positive change in overall figures.
19. Problem solving and creative skills are good, with outstanding examples in a number of lessons. An outstanding feature of the school is the ability of pupils and students to work effectively together in pairs or in small groups.
20. Pupils and students make very good progress in developing their social and personal skills. They have a very good understanding of moral issues and are developing the skills they will need to maintain lifelong learning, or to participate effectively in the workplace

The quality of education and training

21. Overall, four-fifths of lessons in KS3 and KS4 were at least good with no important shortcomings, and a quarter was good with outstanding features. In the remaining fifth of lessons the good features outweighed any shortcomings.
22. The quality of teaching in the sixth form was good with outstanding features in two-thirds of lessons and almost all the remaining lessons had good features with no important shortcomings.
23. The overall quality of teaching significantly exceeds the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).
24. Across the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils' and students' performance. Relationships between teachers and pupils or students are almost always good, and are often outstanding.
25. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most lesson planning is appropriate for the pupils in the classes. Teachers actively and effectively promote equality of opportunity, and discuss issues of gender, race and disability.
26. The school has a new computerised system for the collation, analysing and sharing of assessment data. It is used to increasingly good effect.

27. The school meets statutory requirements for assessing and reporting pupils' achievements. Whole-school target setting is particularly accurate.
28. The quality and regularity of the marking of pupils' work is usually good at KS4, but at KS3 there are inconsistencies in both its quality and regularity. In the sixth form the quality of assessment is regular, accurate and fair.
29. Interim and annual reports represent good practice in informing parents and carers of pupils' progress against agreed learning goals.
30. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) are fully involved in the review process.
31. The curriculum, overall, meets the needs of all pupils and reflects the aims set out in the Education Act 1996. It is appropriately broad and balanced in each key stage. In the sixth form, students can choose from an extensive programme of AS and A2 subjects and some vocational courses at both AVCE and GNVQ levels.
32. The school is successful in giving pupils of all abilities equality of access to the curriculum. The alternative provision in KS4 successfully caters for pupils at risk of disaffection.
33. Religious education is timetabled for the sixth form, but all students exercise their right to withdraw.
34. The school takes good account of employers' needs through close partnership with Careers Wales and its Education Business Department.
35. For pupils and students, the operation of their Charity Committees in organising extremely successful money raising ventures, involving large numbers of pupils, shows outstanding enterprise.
36. The school is successful in ensuring that pupils and students acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to progress, and to develop as independent learners.
37. The school has been successful in establishing a caring and congenial community that is outstandingly inclusive for pupils from different backgrounds.
38. There are outstanding relationships with an extensive range of outside agencies.
39. Heads of year have good knowledge of the performance of individual pupils and identify effectively pupils who are showing a change to their pattern of standards in achievement, effort or behaviour.
40. Parents and pupils note that there are hardly any instances of bullying. The CHAT support scheme, run by Y10 pupils, is outstanding in offering other pupils support and counselling on any issues that are of concern to them.

41. Good induction programmes are provided to help pupils transfer from one key stage to the next.
42. Health and safety issues and risk assessments are undertaken conscientiously and child protection procedures operate effectively.
43. The provision for additional learning needs is good with outstanding features. Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into the life of the school. Statements are reviewed effectively, with all parents attending their child's meeting.
44. The specialist teaching facility (STF) offers outstanding support for hearing impaired pupils.
45. The school purposefully creates a climate where discrimination or harassment is not tolerated and where all pupils are treated fairly.
46. The school has a good range of strategies to ensure pupils are supported if they experience difficulty in school, home, or the community.

Leadership and management

47. The headteacher and his headship team, supported by the governors, give a very clear direction and sense of purpose to the work of the school.
48. Overall, heads of department and heads of year share fully the aims of the school and demonstrate good leadership and management, although there are a small number of instances of less rigorous and consistent approaches.
49. An outstanding quality of the school is the priority given to the equal value of all pupils and students, which is demonstrated both through teaching and the relationships between pupils and pupils and between teachers and pupils.
50. There is an outstanding process for the setting of school targets which challenge staff and pupils and which contribute significantly to the continuing trend for improvement at the school.
51. The governors are fully committed to the success of the school and they fulfil all their regulatory and statutory requirements.
52. The school monitors the quality of education it provides effectively and has accurate knowledge of its strengths and shortcomings, although there is occasionally a lack of rigour and consistency. Additional value would be possible if monitoring was more directly linked to planning for improvement
53. The school actively seeks the views of pupils, parents and staff. Surveys reveal that the school has reason to be happy with most of its activities.
54. The school improvement plan is a clear and detailed document that identifies appropriate priorities, and the required resources for improvement.

55. The school has made good progress in addressing the Key Issues identified in the previous inspection.
56. Overall, the staffing is an outstanding feature of the school. Teachers are appropriately and well qualified. There is a balance between experienced and new teachers. The professional development of staff is very well co-ordinated.
57. There is a good range of support staff, enabling the school to run smoothly. Classroom support assistants give good support to a number of pupils with learning, behavioural and physical difficulties in KS3 and KS4.
58. The school is well provided with computers for use by pupils, but the provision of ICT equipment to be used to enhance teaching is less widely available.
59. There is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils currently on roll.
60. Resources outside the school are used well to enrich the curriculum, for example, visits to museums and theatres, and field trips.
61. The displays of pupils' work and subject material in classrooms and in corridors are a very good feature.
62. The school is clean and well maintained.
63. The financial management of the school is an outstanding feature. The headteacher, bursar and the governing body's committee for finance manage the available budget effectively.
64. Both the standards of achievement and the quality of teaching in the school are good with outstanding features, as is the financial management. The school therefore gives very good value for money.

Recommendations

65. In order to continue to raise standards of achievement the school should:
 - R1: improve the quality and consistency of assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress to the level of best practice in the school;
 - R2 continue to develop and refine the existing quality assurance procedures;
 - R3 and further develop Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, and pupils' bilingual skills and awareness.
66. 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 1: Good with outstanding features

67. In its self-evaluation, the school judged this key question as grade 1. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school.

KS3 and KS4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

68. The overall ability of the intake into the school at Y7, as measured by standardised tests, is significantly above the average for Wales and has improved slightly over recent years. Boys and girls show broadly equal ability.
69. In KS3, the proportion of pupils attaining level 5 or above in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects) is significantly higher than the average scores for both Wales and the Unitary Authority (UA). Results are improving year on year. The proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator (CSI) is also significantly above the national average, and whilst girls achieve higher results than the boys, the difference is smaller than nationally.
70. In KS4, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C in 2004 was some 20 percentage points above the average for both Wales and the UA, and is improving faster than the national figure. This is also true of the proportion of pupils attaining the core subject indicator. In the individual core subjects, results over the past 4 years have been well above the national average, and in all three, the rate of improvement is above the national trend. In 2004, pupils could enter for examinations in a total of 34 subjects, and in all but two of these the A*-C pass rate was above the average for Wales. Similarly in the vast majority of subjects, the pass rate at the top two grades, A* and A, was above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more passes at grades A*-G has improved since the previous inspection, so that in 2004 this was achieved by 94% of pupils, and just 2% of pupils did not achieve a pass at GCSE, short course GCSE or equivalent qualification.
71. Overall, girls achieve better results than boys. Whilst both boys and girls attain results above national averages, the proportion of girls gaining the top two grades (A* and A) shows a continuing trend for improvement whilst that for boys does not. The overall pass rate at A*-C grades shows a slight trend for improvement, and is also higher for girls. For the CSI the difference between the performance of boys and girls is greater than the national average.
72. Performance data indicates that the school adds value to the performance of pupils between entry and KS3, and between KS3 and the GCSE examinations.

Most subjects achieve results which are at least at a statistically predicted level, and which frequently show positive added value at GCSE.

73. Compared with similar schools in Wales, the school is consistently in the top quarter for all indicators except science at KS3, and is consistently in the top half of schools for performance at KS4.
74. The school is successful in ensuring that all its pupils, regardless of ability, or their social, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds, make good progress and achieve well.
75. There is a newly appointed basic skills co-ordinator. No audit of the curriculum has taken place so that it is unclear how departments contribute to the development of communication skills. A whole school approach is yet to be planned and implemented. Communication skills are, however, good with no important shortcomings. In most lessons, pupils listen attentively to teachers, to each other and to video. They respond to and pose questions. Many give extended responses and subject terminology is used with confidence. In many lessons very good collaboration in pairs and groups supports independent learning.
76. Reading skills are outstandingly good. Pupils have a very good understanding of what is read in texts and on screen. Reading aloud is accurate and fluent. Able pupils read with expression. Many pupils make good use of the library and the Internet for research purposes. Pupils demonstrate very good skills of information retrieval. Y7 pupils read for pleasure during tutor periods. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress in reading as a result of the Better Reading Partnership and the literacy and learning group. There is effective support from learning support assistants (LSAs), sixth form students and the special needs department.
77. Writing skills are good. Pupils in both key stages write for a range of purposes and audiences. Writing is usually improved by drafting and extended writing is usually well presented and often technically accurate. By the end of each key stage good progress is made by most pupils of all abilities.
78. The school does not have a specific policy for numeracy in subjects across the curriculum. Overall, pupils' numerical skills have good features with no important shortcomings. There is evidence of good standards. Across the curriculum, most pupils use arithmetic and algebraic skills in calculations. They are able to weigh, measure and draw accurately in practical subjects. They can collect and analyse data, and draw various types of graphs for illustration. Pupils have spatial awareness and can calculate areas and volumes of figures using appropriate units.
79. A very small minority of pupils lack confidence in their application and use of number in everyday situations.
80. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) have good features with no important shortcomings. In discrete ICT lessons at KS3 and

across the curriculum, pupils learn essential skills and produce good work using word processing and desk-top publishing software. They can analyse and illustrate data using appropriate graphs. They are able to record and save information including the use of spreadsheets and databases. They use CAD / CAM for design and control, PowerPoint for presentation, data-logging to capture data, and for composing.

81. Most pupils use computers confidently and the Internet is effectively used for research. The more able produce a good quality of work which enhances presentation. Apart from the subject ICT, there is no formal strategy to co-ordinate and collate pupils' ICT progress and achievement in subjects across the curriculum at KS3.
82. Pupils' bilingual skills and awareness are insufficiently developed.

Pupils' progress in learning

83. Pupils readily acquire new skills, knowledge, concepts and understanding, and are usually successful when they try to apply these in new and challenging situations. They do this with equal effectiveness individually or in groups.
84. The majority of pupils, particularly at KS4, make informed decisions and use their initiative well to actively seek to improve their own learning and performance.
85. The great majority of pupils make good progress. They make the transition to the next stage in their learning smoothly and with little pause in their rate of development.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills.

86. The attitude of the vast majority of pupils towards their work is good with no important shortcomings and often has outstanding features. Most make very effective use of their time in lessons.
87. Pupils' behaviour, whether in class or elsewhere in and around school, is generally of a very high standard. They are courteous to one another, to teachers, other staff and to visitors. The good support they give each other embraces linguistic, ethnic and other groups in school. School records show and pupils acknowledge that a little bullying occurs, but that it is uncommon and swiftly dealt with; none was seen during the inspection.
88. A very small minority of pupils in both key stages become inattentive and disruptive in a small number of lessons where teaching is uninspiring. Usually proper application of the school's good procedures for containing poor behaviour prevents disruption to learning but that is not always so. All pupils understand well the school's expectations for good behaviour and the consequences for themselves and others of non-compliance.

89. Pupils move between lessons in a sensible and orderly fashion. They manage the many areas of congestion efficiently and with tolerance and good humour. Around the school grounds they relax as a happy community, with no evidence of outcasts, ostracised groups or groups in conflict.
90. Overall attendance at school for the last year, at over 92%, was above both the UA and the national averages. In comparison to the previous inspection there has been a positive change in overall figures and the wide variation between years seen previously has been greatly reduced. Unauthorised absence is generally low, below 1%, but increases a little in Y11.
91. Punctuality at the start of the day is good. Whilst the great majority of pupils also arrive promptly to lessons, the large site and the necessary one-way system sometimes results in a few late arrivals.
92. Registration procedures, the follow up of absentees and maintenance of proper records fully complies with NAW Circular 3/99.
93. Problem solving and creative skills are good, with outstanding examples in a number of lessons. Pupils persevere well when presented with a range of challenging problems in class and in extra curricular activities. Here they devise carefully considered mature solutions and develop good analytical and evaluative skills. The presentation of their ideas and outcomes is often creative and innovative.
94. The ability to work with others is good and is outstanding in many instances. Pupils collaborate effectively in pairs or small groups and demonstrate respect, consideration and support to each other.
95. Pupils make very good progress in developing their social and personal skills, they have a very good understanding of moral issues and are developing the skills they will need to maintain lifelong learning, or to participate effectively in the workplace

Sixth form

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

96. At A level, the average points score for students taking two or more examinations is significantly above the average figures for Wales and the UA, and over the past five years has improved at one point per year. The proportion of students gaining A-C grades is also significantly above the Wales and UA average and shows a trend for improvement. In almost all the 27 examination courses taken by students at the school, the A-C pass in 2004 exceeded the national average. Most subjects show added value between GCSE and A Level.
97. About two-thirds of Y11 pupils chose to continue their studies in the school's sixth form in 2004/2005, and just under a third continued their studies at other further education establishments.

98. Students have well-developed key skills. The school gives accreditation for achievements and these contribute usefully to Records of Achievement (RoAs).
99. Communication skills are outstandingly good. Students listen intently and with respect. Many give extended responses, they “turn-take”, are confident and articulate. There are very good standards of discussion in pairs and small groups. Students pose questions, put forward points of view, negotiate and collaborate to good effect.
100. Reading standards are very good in all subjects. There is a very good understanding of a range of challenging texts. Writing is also of a very good standard. Most students produce well-structured extended pieces. The most able have maturity of style, effective expression, confident use of terminology, appropriate references and good skills of technical competence.
101. The standards of students’ numerical and ICT skills are good with outstanding features.

Students’ progress in learning

102. Students make good progress in their learning, and in their abilities as learners. They know how well they are succeeding and understand their weaknesses; they are therefore able to make informed decisions on what needs to be done to improve their own learning.
103. Students are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The development of students’ personal, social and learning skills

104. Students often make outstanding progress in developing their social and personal skills. They have a very good understanding of moral issues and are developing the skills they will need to maintain lifelong learning, or to participate effectively in the workplace. They have excellent awareness of the issues involved in equal opportunities and demonstrate equally good respect for diversity within the school and the community.
105. The attitude of the vast majority of students towards their work has no important shortcomings and often has outstanding features. Most make very effective use of their time in lessons.
106. The ability to work with others is good and outstanding in many instances. Students collaborate effectively in pairs or small groups and demonstrate respect, consideration and support to each other. Students’ problem solving and creative skills are good, and are often outstanding.
107. Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding, and attendance and punctuality are good.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

108. In its self-evaluation, the school judged this key question as grade 1. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school.

KS3 and KS4

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

109. Overall, four-fifths of lessons in KS3 and KS4 were at least good with no important shortcomings, and a quarter was good with outstanding features. In the remaining fifth of lessons the good features outweighed any shortcomings. A very small number (1%) of lessons had some good features, but with shortcomings in important areas.

110. Overall, in the lessons seen, a quarter was good with outstanding features and just over half was good with no important shortcomings. In the remaining fifth of lessons the good features outweighed any shortcomings.

111. The overall quality of teaching significantly exceeds the targets set by the WAG of 95% having good features outweighing shortcomings (Grades 1 to 3) and 50% having no important shortcomings (Grades 1 to 2). The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

112. The quality of teaching in the 78 lessons observed was judged as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	16%	68%	14%	2%	0%
KS4	37%	37%	26%	0%	0%
KS3 + KS4	26%	54%	19%	1%	0%

For an explanation of grades please see the beginning of the report

113. There is more teaching which has outstanding features in KS4 than in KS3 (Grade 1) but overall, there is a higher proportion of teaching which has no important shortcomings in KS3 (Grade 1 + Grade 2). There is a higher number of lessons at KS4 where good features outweigh shortcomings (Grade 3).

114. Across the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance, and pupils at all levels are challenged to achieve their potential. Relationships between teachers and pupils are almost always good and are frequently very good, and this, allied to the good class control, facilitates good teaching and

learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are well informed of developments in their areas of responsibility.

115. Where teaching is outstanding, pupils are challenged to give extended answers to both oral and written questions, teachers provide detailed support to individual pupils, and the pace of lessons keeps pupils motivated and working to the best of their ability. In these classes, teachers have a very good understanding of the progress being made by all their pupils and the standards they have achieved.
116. Many teachers plan and provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and in small groups to develop problem solving and creative skills.
117. There were a variety of shortcomings that held back some lessons from having outstanding features. Some of these were not challenging pupils to give extended answers, over-direction by teachers, insufficient monitoring of individual pupils, some low level disruption (chatting) and insufficiently detailed feedback to pupils to help them improve.
118. Less good lessons (Grade 3) often had more than one of these shortcomings. In a very few classes the behaviour of pupils fell below the good standards elsewhere and this slowed the pace of the lessons.
119. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan lessons which are appropriate for the pupils in their classes. In only a few cases were lessons not well planned. Since the previous inspection the range and variety of approaches to teaching has improved significantly, though progress has been greater in some subjects than in others.
120. Teachers actively and effectively promote equality of opportunity, and discuss issues of gender, race and disability.

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

121. The school has a new computerised system for the collation, analysis and sharing of assessment data. It is increasingly used to good effect. Information gathered in Y7 is based on key stage 2 (KS2) National Curriculum test results, Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs) and reading test scores from which target levels are predicted for each pupil. Further baseline test results and KS3 National Curriculum test results are added to the database so that at the end of KS3, GCSE grades are also predicted. In addition, subject teachers are required to add information on attainment for each pupil once a term. The school's database is thus updated regularly as pupils progress through the school.
122. Information on the school's database is accessible to all teachers. In Y7 it is used effectively to identify pupils with SEN. Heads of year are mainly responsible for monitoring pupil progress. Individuals are tracked, underachievement at all ability levels is identified and appropriate mentoring

follows. An identified group of pupils is mentored in each year group. Mentors include the heads of year, assistant heads of year, assistant heads, volunteer teaching staff and individuals from the world of work. Form tutors usefully discuss progress with pupils twice a year, but there is scope to further develop the role of the form tutor in the monitoring process.

123. The school meets statutory requirements for assessing and reporting pupils' achievements.
124. Whole-school target setting is particularly accurate. The school compares results over time against national, UA and internal data. The mentoring of pupils with SEN is also good and the work set for these pupils ensures progress towards appropriate targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs).
125. The school policy of requiring rigorous marking of pupils' work once each term is effective, accurate and fair. Subject teachers write comments on pupils' work that are helpful in identifying strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement. Pupils are aware of these procedures and most know what they need to do to improve. The quality and regularity of day-to-day marking is usually good at KS4, but at KS3 there are inconsistencies in the quality and regularity of marking between subjects and teachers. In the best practice, teachers' comments are helpful in identifying strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement. Monitoring by senior managers and heads of department is insufficiently rigorous at KS3 to ensure that the best practice is consistently implemented by all teachers.
126. Some teachers give good verbal feedback to pupils, inform them of the criteria for success and involve them in self-assessment. The school recognises the need to develop further these good practices across the curriculum and particularly in KS3.
127. In addition to the comprehensive database, heads of year, heads of department and subject teachers keep records that are manageable and helpful. Assessments usually inform planning. Interim and annual reports represent good practice in informing parents and carers of pupils against agreed learning goals. Annual reports require subject teachers to report current levels and grades against those predicted. Explanations of levels and grades are included for parents and carers. There is good practice in summary comments made by subject teachers. Heads of year add a helpful overview of performance. Parents are appropriately involved in the reporting process and are contacted if there is a cause for concern. Parents of pupils with statements of SEN are fully involved in the process of review.

Sixth form

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

128. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good with outstanding features in two-thirds of lessons and almost all the remaining lessons have good features with

no important shortcomings. Teaching quality has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

129. The quality of teaching in the 32 lessons observed was judged as follows:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	66%	26%	9%	0%	0%

For an explanation of grades please see the beginning of the report

130. Where teaching is outstanding, students are challenged to give extended answers to both oral and written questions, teachers provide detailed support to individual students, and the pace of lessons keeps students motivated and working to the best of their ability. In these classes teachers have a very good understanding of the progress being made by individual students and the standards they have achieved.

131. Relationships between teachers and students are very good and students respond well to this. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well using appropriate resources and teaching styles, so that students are challenged to achieve their maximum potential.

132. The attitude of the vast majority of students towards their work is very good and is often outstanding. Most make very effective use of their time in lessons. Students have an outstanding understanding of issues relating to both equal opportunities and diversity within the school and in society.

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

133. The quality of assessment is regular, accurate and fair. It represents very good practice and reflects examination board criteria.

134. Subject teachers regularly share with students the objectives of learning, the criteria for success and examination requirements. They have a good knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses. They support students with helpful diagnostic written comments on work, in the setting of targets for improvement and in verbal feedback. Students understand how improvements may be made. Subject teachers are aware of each student's predicted grade and monitoring of progress is ongoing. There is good liaison between subject teachers and heads of year and the head of sixth form.

135. Data on predicted grades are held on the school's database. Once each term grades are added to the database as part of the procedure of formal monitoring of progress. Heads of year and the head of sixth form monitor overall performance, individuals who need support are identified and parents are contacted.

136. Records kept by subject teachers and pastoral staff are helpful and manageable.

137. The good quality interim and full annual reports continue the process of identifying strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvements. They are discussed with students, parents and carers.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
--

138. In its self-evaluation, the school judged this key question as grade 1. Whilst findings of the inspection team match most of the evaluations made by the school, they judged that there are some shortcomings.

The extent to which learning experiences meet learners' needs and interests

139. The curriculum, overall, meets the needs of all pupils and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996.

140. The curriculum is accessible for all pupils including those with SEN. All pupils have opportunities to gain an appropriate range of qualifications. Access to the sixth form is open to all students.

141. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced in each key stage. It provides effective continuity and progression between years and key stages.

142. The curriculum in KS3 meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. Pupils study French throughout the key stage with German being offered as a second foreign language in Y8 and Y9. All pupils study information technology and drama as discrete subjects throughout the key stage. Pupils in Y7 and Y8 are time-tabled for one lesson of personal and social education fortnightly; the limited time curtails the breadth of coverage of the programme of study.

143. Pupils in KS4 continue to study the statutory core subjects in addition to a good range of optional subjects. A minority of pupils follow an alternative curriculum which includes GCSE and vocational courses at the school, and pre-vocational programmes at local establishments for part of the timetable cycle. Although Welsh is timetabled for all pupils in the key stage, there is a shortcoming in the amount of time allocated for the majority of pupils.

144. In the sixth form, students can choose from an extensive programme of AS and A2 subjects and some vocational courses at both AVCE and GNVQ levels. A small number of students follow a limited range of other subjects in other establishments as part of the Swansea Sixth Form Schools Consortium. Personal and social education and religious education are timetabled in both Y12 and Y13; all students exercise their right to withdraw from statutory religious education. The school has stated its intention to extend the personal and social education programme in the sixth form to include aspects of religion and ethical issues.

145. The development of key skills across the curriculum in KS3 and KS4 is good overall. The lack of planned co-ordination in numeracy and ICT prevents the

development of key skills being a strong feature in the school. The school has been successful in gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

146. In the sixth form, students are encouraged to record opportunities where they experience key skills in subject areas, and a minority have gained accreditation.
147. The range of extra-curricular activities available for all years is a good feature of the school. In sport, school teams are successful and a number of pupils have gained county and national honours. The school operates a very successful Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme with a large number of pupils and students gaining the bronze, silver and gold awards; this is an outstanding feature. In addition to a number of clubs that meet during the lunch-hour and after school, there are visits off-site to places of interest, and to venues such as galleries and theatres. A number of visits abroad take place for a range of valuable curricular and social purposes.
148. Pupils' and students' moral development is good with outstanding features and their spiritual, social and cultural development has good features and no important shortcomings.
149. The school pays outstanding attention to moral issues, such as respect and consideration for others. The pupils are very aware of sensitive issues such as prejudice, the right of the individual to make choices, responsibility and honesty.
150. Good opportunities are provided in the curriculum and in acts of collective worship to develop their own ideas and consider the fundamental questions of life.
151. Pupils show respect for each other, their teachers and visitors and work well with each other in lessons. They are willing to undertake responsibilities such as the school council, the CHAT support group and the Better Reading Partnership.
152. Multi-cultural education is evident in aspects of the work of many subjects where pupils and students are given the opportunity to appreciate the traditions and cultures that are different from their own. Welsh culture and ethos is not sufficiently prominent around the school.
153. Parents are generally well informed about school matters through school publications. Parents receive constructive reports on pupil progress and good numbers take advantage of the opportunities to discuss issues with teachers at parent evenings. Parents' opinions have been surveyed by questionnaire and the school generally reacts positively to these findings. Nevertheless, these surveys, and the response to the Inspection survey indicate that a significant minority of parents remain uncertain about what is taught in school. There is an active Home/School Association giving good support to the school. Parent governors contribute positively to the work of an effective governing body.
154. There is a mutually beneficial partnership with the community. The school is used for adult education classes. Local residents are entertained by school productions, and gain from the community service elements of the Duke of

Edinburgh scheme and school charitable activities, both of which are outstanding. Local community services and businesses provide good support for work related education and opportunities to develop the vocational curriculum.

155. Established and well organised pastoral links with primary schools ensure a smooth transition from KS2 to KS3. There are also helpful cross phase curriculum projects in a few subjects but these practices are underdeveloped. Good partnerships with local secondary schools have informed management practices and have enlarged the range of the sixth form curriculum. Links with local further education colleges and other agencies have offered limited but useful opportunities for KS4 pupils to take vocational courses.
156. The school has established links with initial teacher training (ITT) colleges and gains very good benefit from the breadth of view the regular supply of students bring. Students in school are well mentored and experience a very good introduction to teaching.
157. The curriculum overall meets legal requirements. The programmes for personal, health and social education, work related education and careers education and guidance meet national guidelines and are well planned in the teaching programmes in KS3 and KS4.

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

158. Work related education is good, with some outstanding features and no important shortcomings.
159. Throughout KS3 and KS4 good careers education and guidance provides a thorough understanding of the workplace. A very useful audit across the curriculum identifies links between subject teaching and the workplace and this enables pupils to match their talents to employment. Good use of mentors from local employers develops further pupils' understanding of the needs of the workplace.
160. A useful two-week work-experience placement is undertaken by all Y10 pupils. Pupils are encouraged to select their own placements and a large number successfully negotiate their own contracts. They receive good briefing from professional advisers prior to employment and a collective debriefing afterwards broadens their understanding of the workplace.
161. In Y12, work-experience is part of the curriculum needs in vocational subjects but other students are also encouraged to undertake work experience. There is a high uptake, with some outstanding opportunities to work in Europe.
162. The school does not have a policy for the promotion of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and does not monitor how the different aspects are addressed across the curriculum. Timetable constraints restrict many pupils' opportunities to develop their skills in the Welsh language. Bilingual signs and displays are not visible in

all areas of the school and Welsh is not often heard in gatherings such as assemblies.

163. The school is successful in enabling pupils of all abilities equality of access to the curriculum. They are encouraged to achieve success in each key stage and to participate fully in the life of the school. The alternative provision in KS4 successfully caters for pupils at risk of disaffection.
164. The school has developed an appropriate policy for sustainable development and global citizenship. Pupils' awareness and understanding are developed in some subject areas including geography, science and personal and social education. At present there are some recycling projects involving paper, printer cartridges, mobile phones and computer equipment.
165. The school takes good account of employers' needs. There is good local knowledge and understanding of community needs among the governors. Close partnership with Careers Wales and its Education Business Department ensure that the broader local and national employment needs and trends are considered in the provision of careers education and guidance. The partnership with local employers prepared to consider employing post-16 students, in both permanent and seasonal jobs, is particularly innovative.
166. Exposure to visiting entrepreneurs through the Dynamo project and events such as Industry days provide basic understanding of enterprise skills in KS3 and these are reinforced in the sixth form. In KS4, such opportunities do not exist and is a shortcoming. For pupils and students the operation of their Charity Committees in co-ordinating extremely successful money raising ventures, involving large numbers of pupils, shows outstanding enterprise.
167. Problem solving skills are well taught across the curriculum at all levels. Young Enterprise activities are well subscribed in Y12 and the school competes successfully with other institutions, but only at local and regional level.
168. KS4 pupils participate in the charitable activities organised by the sixth form but have very few other opportunities to develop their enterprise skills.
169. The school is successful in ensuring that pupils and students acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to progress. Through a range of activities and experiences they are developing as independent learners.
170. The overall breadth of the curriculum, extra-curricular opportunities and elements of work-related education promote learning experiences that reflect national priorities and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features
--

171. In its self-evaluation, the school judged this key question as grade 1. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school.

The quality of care, support and guidance for learners

172. The school has been successful in establishing a caring and congenial community that is outstandingly inclusive for pupils from different backgrounds. Parents and governors show obvious appreciation of this.

173. The school has an effective pastoral care system. Form tutors, heads of year and the headship team ensure that behaviour, attendance and the general welfare of each pupil are given due attention.

174. Heads of year have good knowledge of the performance of individual pupils across the subjects, and identify effectively pupils who are showing a change to their pattern of standards in achievement, effort or behaviour.

175. Pupils and students are afforded appropriate opportunities to convey their opinions and suggestions for improvements through a very active school council.

176. The school makes effective use of the support services available both in school and outside.

177. Parents and pupils note that there are hardly any instances of bullying. The CHAT support scheme run by Y10 pupils is outstanding in offering pupils support and counselling on any issues that are of concern to them.

178. Relationships with parents are good. A useful and frequent link is the homework diary. Information is shared with parents through the school handbook as well as the school's termly newspaper. Parents' evenings are held regularly and the School's Home Association raises substantial amounts of money every year.

179. Good induction programmes are provided to help pupils transfer from primary schools to Olchfa. Pupils in Y9 and Y11 are supported well and offered guidance to help them choose the course that is right for them; an experienced careers adviser, employed by the school, supports the work; this contribution is relevant and very effective.

180. The school gives detailed attention to the national frameworks for personal and social education and careers education and guidance. The programme for KS3 and KS4 is well planned with appropriate content and continuity.

181. Pupils' attendance in school is good. The system used to record attendance and punctuality is very effective, and relevant and appropriate action is taken to follow up pupils' absences.
182. An effective discipline and reward system to support appropriate behaviour is in place. Good use is made of the Behaviour Support Unit to give pupils the opportunity to reflect on their own actions.
183. Health and safety issues and risk assessments are undertaken conscientiously. A small number of health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection week. The school has a good number of staff with first aid qualifications.
184. Child protection procedures operate effectively, and all staff have received training and written instructions on how to respond to issues or incidents that might arise.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

185. The provision for additional learning needs is good with outstanding features.
186. Pupils in Y7 are thoroughly assessed each September, and when this information is matched to information provided by the primary schools, it provides effective identification of pupils with SEN.
187. The school pays due regard to the requirements of the SEN Code of Practice. Pupils' statements are reviewed effectively, with all parents attending their child's meeting. Eight pupils are appropriately disapplied from a subject of the National Curriculum.
188. All pupils on the register of SEN have outstanding individual education plans (IEPs). Pupils understand the plans, and the targets set are realistic and achievable. They also include appropriate strategies to help mainstream teachers plan lessons appropriately.
189. Since the previous inspection there has been a substantial increase in the number of learning support assistants (LSAs). Their work is targeted well to ensure effective support. For the most part teachers and LSAs work closely together.
190. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are well supported. They are making good progress in their literacy skills and in how to organise their work.
191. The special teaching facility (STF) offers outstanding support for eight hearing impaired pupils. Where appropriate they are well integrated into mainstream classes with additional support when required.
192. Several appropriate strategies, including the Better Reading Partnership, are used to enhance pupils' literacy skills in KS3. By the end of Y7 the vast majority of the pupils have become competent readers.

193. The school achieves a good level of success in enabling pupils with emotional or challenging behaviour to come to better terms with their SEN. All those identified have appropriate individual behavioural plans (IBPs). Heads of year and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) work closely together to ensure appropriate support.
194. Social inclusion measures are particularly effective. Regular meetings with outside agencies together with rewards and sanctions contribute to good improvement in attitudes and behaviour of individual pupils.
195. The school has a caring environment where pupils with SEN are well supported. They are fully integrated into the life of the school and all have access to accredited courses in KS4.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

196. The school creates purposefully a climate where discrimination or harassment is not tolerated and where all pupils are treated fairly.
197. The school monitors and compares in detail the examination results of boys and girls.
198. Racial equality is promoted by the school's personal and social education programme and within a number of subjects. Most pupils from minority ethnic groups have been brought up in the same community as the other pupils and integrate naturally with their peers.
199. The school has procedures which would deal very incisively with any racial or bullying incidents. There are outstanding relationships with an extensive range of outside agencies.
200. All current pupils have access to all parts of the building. However, there are areas within the school building that are inaccessible to pupils in wheelchairs.
201. The school works closely with the Social Services to provide effective support for pupils who are looked after by the UA. Appropriate care plans are in place to ensure support and continuity.
202. The school has a good range of strategies to ensure pupils are supported if they experience difficulty in school, home, or the community. The school is successful in ensuring that no pupil suffers from less favourable treatment than others.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

203. In its self-evaluation, the school judged this key question as grade 1. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school.

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

204. The school has very clear aims and priorities which are shared with staff and which give clear targets to both the school and subject improvement plans. The headteacher and the headship team, supported by the governors, give a very clear direction and sense of purpose to the work of the school. Significant and recent improvements in teaching and learning, recognised by parents, pupils and teachers, exemplify this clarity of purpose.
205. Overall, heads of department and heads of year share fully the aims of the school and demonstrate good leadership and management although there are a small number of instances of less rigorous and consistent approaches.
206. An outstanding quality of the school is the priority and emphasis given to the equal value of all pupils and students, and which is demonstrated both through teaching and the relationships evident between pupils and pupils and between teachers and pupils.
207. There is an outstanding, well developed, accurate and rigorous process for the setting of school targets which challenges staff and pupils and which contributes significantly to the continuing trend for improvement at the school.
208. The school responds appropriately and fully to national initiatives and takes a full and active role in local consortia on aspects such as curriculum development at 14 to 19.
209. Senior managers analyse examination results in detail and monitor the performance of the various subject departments effectively. Appropriate measures are taken where improved performance is required.
210. The Performance Management of staff is in place and there are effective links with the school's continuing professional development policy to ensure that identified training needs are met wherever possible. Overall the school is effective at improving the performance of its staff both individually and where they operate in teams.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

211. The governing body is both effective and supportive. Individual governors provide a wide range of expertise and a useful familiarity with national and local issues that impinge on the school. Governors understand their roles in school management and are centrally involved in strategic planning. There is an appropriate range of committees to deal with specific areas of responsibility and both these and the whole body meet regularly.
212. Comprehensive reports from the headteacher keep the governors informed about school performance and needs. These are analysed effectively by governors with reference to the school aims and objectives and their agreed improvement plan, and used to set realistic but challenging targets for the future.
213. The governors provide a clear sense of direction for the school and communicate this clearly to staff and to parents through their annual reports. They fulfil all their regulatory and statutory requirements.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
--

214. In its self-evaluation, the school judged this key question as grade 2. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

215. There is an effective range of processes for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided by the school. This includes annual class observation of all teachers, and the detailed analysis of performance data. Additionally, each subject area undergoes a comprehensive Departmental Review triennially, which includes significant and helpful contributions from a specialist from outside the school. Departments also complete a full self-evaluation report in alternate years, which complements the format of the school's self evaluation. Heads of department monitor the work of their departments throughout the year, and each department has a designated link person from the headship team. All teachers and support staff are involved in contributing to the self-evaluation process.

216. Overall, these processes give an accurate reflection of the strengths and weaknesses of departments and of the school. These quality assurance measures would be even more effective if they were more closely integrated and additional value would be possible if they were more directly linked to the improvement planning cycle.

217. Both senior and middle managers have a good understanding of those aspects of the school for which they have responsibility. Occasionally the analysis of the quality of education provided lacks the necessary rigour and consistency, and data analysis is not always fully developed.

218. The school actively seeks the views of pupils, parents and staff through surveys of their views and opinions. These reveal that the school has reason to be happy with most of its activities. These views are supported by the survey conducted for this inspection. Pupils feel their opinions are taken into account through the work of the School Council. The school is also evaluated annually by the UA who, in 2004, awarded it their top grade.

219. The school has established 'Key Groups' of teachers who review important aspects of the school's work. These groups, informed by the self-evaluation, prepare the school's strategies for continued improvement.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

220. The school improvement plan is a clear and detailed document that identifies explicit and appropriate priorities for improvement, and the resources required to implement them. Subject improvement plans are mostly good and reflect the

overall school priorities; some, however, are less clear and realistic. Overall, the school ensures that it provides the resources necessary to deliver its priorities for improvement.

221. The school has made good progress in addressing the Key Issues identified in the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G has risen from 88% to 94% and a wider range of courses is available. Attendance has improved. Pupils have been successfully encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning and are involved in self-assessment and respond positively to improved reporting and formative assessment. All pupils, regardless of ability, now have access to all aspects of the curriculum, and pupils with SEN are integrated into the mainstream curriculum. The range of teaching styles and strategies has improved. The school has made good progress on developing KS2 to KS3 links but has made limited progress in developing the Welsh Dimension. There have been significant improvements to the accommodation, and some £500,000 from the school's budget has been spent on refurbishment.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

222. In its self-evaluation, the school judged this key question as grade 1. The findings of the inspection team match those of the school.

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

223. Overall, staffing is an outstanding feature of the school. The school is well staffed with a full time equivalent of 110.6 teachers and a pupil / teacher ratio of 17.1 to 1, which is close to the national average. Teachers are appropriately well qualified. There is a balance between experienced teachers and those new to the profession. Staffing difficulties in the teaching of Welsh have now been overcome.

224. There is a good range of support staff, enabling the school to run smoothly. The administrative staff ensure that the office, reception and reprographics areas run efficiently. The caretakers contribute effectively to the daily routines of the school and are responsible for site maintenance and the school grounds. Technician support is effective in design technology, science, and information technology.

225. Learning support assistants give good support to a number of pupils with learning, behavioural and physical difficulties in KS3 and KS4. These assistants work effectively with teachers.

226. The professional development of staff is very well co-ordinated. It is in line with the present level of performance management, the school improvement plan and the needs of departments and individuals. The performance management process includes all school staff. A feature of the development programme is the number of courses that are organised and led by school staff.

227. The support for newly qualified teachers and for initial teacher training students is an outstanding feature of the school.

228. The school has recently achieved the 'Investors in People' award.

229. The quality and quantity of textbooks and equipment for all subjects across the curriculum is a good feature of the school and there are no obvious shortages. Sixth form learning resources are also a good feature of the school, enabling students to have a thorough reference base.

230. There are a high number of computers in the school, giving a computer / pupil ratio of less than one to five. Ten rooms, mainly used for the teaching of IT and business studies, each have approximately 24 computers. Classes in other

subject areas have access difficulties in using the ICT rooms to enhance the learning of pupils. Provision of ICT equipment to be used to enhance teaching is less widely available.

231. There are small banks of computers that are appropriately used in other subject areas across the curriculum. All classrooms have a networked computer that is used to record attendance and can be used in lessons.
232. Resources outside the school are used well to enrich the curriculum. They include visits to museums and theatres, and field trips.
233. There is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils currently on roll. The accommodation includes a decreasing number of demountable classrooms. There are difficulties in wet weather. Overall, the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum are met. As far as possible, rooms for subject areas are clustered, sometimes more than one cluster per subject. For a majority of subjects the classrooms provide good learning environments and teachers use them well. A number of rooms are small and cannot comfortably accommodate the larger classes. The standard of decoration in rooms throughout the school varies.
234. Recent beneficial additions and improvements have included the construction of a new reception area, the provision of teacher work areas and fencing to secure the school.
235. The displays of pupils' work and subject material in classrooms and in the lockable boards in corridors are a very good feature. They are bright and colourful, and provide a stimulating learning environment.
236. The library is well resourced with both fiction and reference books. It is well used by pupils at break, lunchtimes and after school. During lessons, classes and small groups of pupils use the library effectively for research.
237. The library has a bank of 16 networked computers mainly for the use of the sixth form. Generally, sixth formers use the library profitably.
238. Accommodation for the number of students in the sixth form is good. There is a large common room which has a small room with 12 networked computers. The students are responsible for their room and for the sales from vending machines. Profits are used to improve their common room and for donations to charities.
239. The school is clean and well maintained. The large hard-standing area for pupils is well used by pupils during break and lunchtimes. In some parts the tarmac is uneven. The grounds are well maintained and kept free of litter.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

240. The financial management of the school is an outstanding feature. The headteacher, bursar and the governing body's committee for finance manage the available budget effectively.
241. Over recent years the school has undertaken an effective restructuring programme for the senior management team. Deployment of staff makes good use of their time, expertise and experience.
242. The capitation for the school is generous. Its allocation for departments is based on pupil numbers taught and subject weighting. It does not take into account departmental improvement plans which are not costed. Later in the financial year, heads of department can bid for extra funds to promote initiatives and projects. Heads of department receive immediate breakdowns and current balances and they effectively monitor their spending.
243. Procedures are in place so that prudent financial decisions are focused on curriculum needs and the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The school uses all grants that are available to good effect.
244. The bursar is responsible for the day to day running of the finances and the systems used have been approved by the UA auditors. The school uses its own cheque book and bank arrangements. The finance sub-committee meet regularly and it receives detailed up to date reports from the headteacher.
245. The minor recommendations in the most recent auditors' report have been addressed.
246. Both the standards of achievement and the quality of teaching in the school are good with outstanding features, as is the financial management. The school therefore gives very good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

247. The pupils, staff and Governing Body of Olchfa School welcome this very positive inspection report. It is an important confirmation of what we ourselves know; that the school is improving consistently and, in many cases, rapidly from an already strong base. We are grateful that the school's progress against action points from the previous inspection has been judged to be good.
248. We are very encouraged by the findings of the inspection team in relation to the standards achieved by our pupils in relation to their abilities, the strong teaching that they receive and the leadership and management of the school. We are heartened by the fact that pupils develop personal, social and learning skills that are never less than good and are often judged to have outstanding features. We are particularly struck by the very high percentage of teaching in the sixth form that is deemed to have outstanding features. Above all, we are greatly

encouraged that the standard of care and guidance has received such high praise. We are thrilled that our school is seen to be outstandingly inclusive and that we are able to deliver our mission statement in developing the individual potential of all our pupils.

249. We agree with the recommendations of the inspection team. They link with some key themes that the school was already pursuing and they will be incorporated into the School Improvement Plan. The detailed response to these recommendations will be communicated to parents in due course.
250. Olchfa is a self-evaluative school. Overall, we have found the inspection process to be a beneficial one in the sense that we have been given a real opportunity to test our own judgements against those whose experience stretches beyond the school.

Appendix A

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Olchfa School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18
Address of school	Gower Road, Sketty, Swansea.
Postcode	SA2 7AB
Telephone number	01792 534300

Headteacher	Mr. Hugh Davies
Date of appointment	September 2001
Chair of governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr. Roderic Ashley
Reporting inspector	T. O'Marah
Dates of inspection	03/05/2005 to 06/05/2005

Appendix B

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	266	293	296	312	290	215	219	1891

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	105	10	110.6

Staff information	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17:1
Pupil:adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	22.7
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	75.3%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	94.54%	91.84%	90.95%	93.3%	89.82%	92.21%	88.66%	91.7%
Term 2	94.47%	95.0%	94.51%	89.09%	94.2%	91.29%	98.55%	93.6%
Term 3	95.8%	94.3%	91.9%	89.97%	93.9%	93.07%	87.57%	92.1%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	5%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	79

Appendix C

National Curriculum Assessment Results: End of Key Stage 3

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2004															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 310															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	11	33	41	12	0	0
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	9	22	34	22	9	0	0
	Test	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	10	35	29	21	0	0
		National	0	3	4	0	0	0	8	21	31	23	10	0	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	17	37	34	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	8	2	25	29	14	0	0
	Test	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	14	41	32	0	0
		National	0	5	2	0	0	0	7	19	21	32	14	0	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	24	31	37	3	0	0
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	8	21	32	25	11	0	0
	Test	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	29	37	23	0	0
		National	0	4	2	0	0	0	6	19	31	25	14	0	0

D Pupils exempted 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

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualifications, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2005	312
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupils	47

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2004:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	95%	84%	87%
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	72%	50%	51%
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to g, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	94%	82%	85%
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	60%	37%	38%
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98%	96%	97%
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	90%	72%	75%
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	98%	90%	93%
attained no graded GCSE C or the vocational qualification equivalent	2%	10%	7%
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	4%	3%
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-	-	-

For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2004	460
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2004	178
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2004	36

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	80%	71%	68%
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	97%	96%	95%
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	23%	21%	20%
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0	0	0
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0	0	0

Appendix D

Evidence base of the inspection

Prior to the inspection, full discussions were held between the registered inspector and the headteacher based on the school's self-evaluation report and the report of the previous inspection in November 1999. In addition, meetings were held with the staff of the school, with parents and with the governors. 109 questionnaires were returned by parents and analysed by the inspection team. Whole school and appropriate subject documents were collected and reviewed by inspectors. All of this information was used to inform the organisation of the inspection and the deployment of inspectors

As this was a Short Inspection, no subjects were inspected in detail, but all teachers at the school were seen teaching at least once. Formal and informal interviews were held with pupils and the full daily life of the school was observed. The inspection team reviewed pupils' work in exercise books and folders and looked at pupils' work diaries and the school reports sent to their parents.

During the week the inspection team saw twenty-one registration periods and two assemblies, and visits were made to a range of clubs and activities. Interviews were held with a wide sample of heads of department, and with teachers and managers holding positions with whole school responsibilities.

The performance of the school in public examinations and tests was analysed in detail so that trends in performance over time, and comparisons to local and national data could be identified and accounted for.

Appendix E

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
T. O'Marah	Key Questions 1, 2, 5, 6
M. Snow	Lay Inspector: Attendance Behaviour; Care, support and guidance; Governors; Accommodation; Needs of employers
L. Bithell	Core Team: Literacy: Assessment; Resources
S. G. Davies	Key Question 3: Core team; Sixth form:
H. Evans	Key Question 4: Core Team
A. V. Edwards	Key Question 7: Core Team: Numeracy; ICT
M. Crandon	Team member; Bilingualism
S. Gale	Team member
M. Williams	Team member
M. Herbert	Team member
A. Newman	Team member
W. K. Davies	Team Member
A. W. Jones	Team member

Contractor Atlantes Educational Services
Technology House
Lissadel Street
Salford M6 6AP

Acknowledgement

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

Summary Report for Parents

**Inspection under Section 10 of the
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Olchfa School
Gower Road
Sketty
Swansea
SA2 7AB**

School Number: 670/4032

Date of Inspection: 3rd – 6th May 2005

By

**Mr. T. O'Marah
17193**

Date: 29 June 2005

Under Estyn contract number: T/37/04

© Crown Copyright 2005

This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the Report specified.

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

Olchfa School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose 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 more information about their child's school. A copy of the summary is sent to every family with a child at the school. The full report can be obtained from the school.

The inspection of Olchfa School took place between 3rd and 6th May 2005. An independent team of inspectors, led by Mr. T. O'Marah 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

Year groups and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years 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 attain the age of 5 during the academic year. Year 1 refers to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on. Year 13 is the year group of students who attain the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

Year	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Ages	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11

Secondary phase:

Year	Y7	Y8	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
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

Context

The nature of the provider

Olchfa School is a large 11-18 mixed comprehensive school situated in a suburban area to the west of the City of Swansea. There are 1891 pupils on roll, compared with 1946 at the time of the previous inspection in 1999. There are 434 students in the Sixth Form.

The school's intake represents the full range of ability. Reading scores on entry are significantly above average overall, but with a significant number of pupils whose reading scores are below average. There are 30 pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 155 pupils are on the SEN register. The school houses a Specialist Teaching Facility (STF) for Hearing Impaired Pupils. 173 pupils (9.1%) come from homes where English is not the first language and 72 of these receive individual teaching support for English as an additional language. No pupils are registered as being from homes where the predominant language spoken is Welsh.

The school serves an area which is predominantly economically advantaged with a relatively small number of children coming from homes that are economically disadvantaged. Just over 5% of pupils are currently registered as being entitled to free school meals.

There have been changes in the school's headship team since the last inspection. Four of the existing team remain and three have been appointed over the last three years, including the headteacher.

The school's priorities and targets

The school's mission statement is:

'To sustain and enhance the highest quality of education provided to all pupils and enable individuals to achieve their full potential within a secure and caring learning environment.'

The school's main priorities are outlined in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2004-2007. Five key areas are outlined:

- The School as Employer
- The School as a Learning Environment
- The School's Fitness for Purpose
- The School as a Reliable Institution
- The School as a Community

Departmental Improvement Plans mirror the key school themes and also pursue individual departmental priorities.

The school has set challenging targets for future performance which seek to further increase the value added to pupils' achievements as they progress through the school.

Summary

Tables of grades awarded

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

Standards

The overall ability of the intake into the school at Y7 is significantly above the average for Wales and has improved slightly over recent years.

In key stage 3 (KS3), results in National Curriculum tests are significantly higher than the average scores for Wales. Results are improving year on year. Whilst girls achieve higher results than the boys, the difference is smaller than nationally.

In key stage 4 (KS4), the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C in 2004 was well above the average for Wales and the Unitary Authority (UA) and shows a small but consistent annual improvement. In the individual core subjects, results over the past four years have been well above the national average, and are improving. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at grades A*-G has improved since the previous inspection. Overall, girls achieve better results than boys.

At Advanced level, both the average points score for students taking two or more A level examinations, and the proportion of students gaining A-C grades are significantly above the average figures for Wales and the UA, and are improving.

Compared with similar schools in Wales, Olchfa is consistently in the top quarter of schools at KS3 and top half at KS4.

Communication skills are good with no important shortcomings at KS3 and KS4, and are outstanding in the sixth form. Across the school pupils' and students' numerical and ICT skills are good and are occasionally very good.

Pupils' bilingual skills and awareness are insufficiently developed.

The attitude of the vast majority of pupils in KS3 and KS4 towards their work is good, and often has outstanding features. It is outstanding in the sixth form.

Pupils' behaviour, is generally of a very high standard, and is particularly so in the sixth form. There is a small minority of pupils in both KS3 and KS4 who are inattentive and disruptive in a small number of lessons.

Overall attendance at school for the last year, at over 92%, was above both the local authority and the national averages. In comparison to the previous inspection there has been a strong positive change in overall figures.

Problem solving and creative skills are good, with outstanding examples in a number of lessons. An outstanding feature of the school is the ability of pupils and students to work effectively together in pairs or in small groups.

Pupils and students make very good progress in developing their social and personal skills. They have a very good understanding of moral issues and are developing the skills they will need to maintain lifelong learning, or to participate effectively in the workplace

The quality of education and training

Overall, four-fifths of lessons in KS3 and KS4 were at least good with no important shortcomings, and a quarter was good with outstanding features. In the remaining fifth of lessons the good features outweighed any shortcomings.

The quality of teaching in the sixth form was good with outstanding features in two-thirds of lessons and almost all the remaining lessons had good features with no important shortcomings.

The overall quality of teaching significantly exceeds the targets set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

Across the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils' and students' performance. Relationships between teachers and pupils or students are almost always good, and are often outstanding.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and most lesson planning is appropriate for the pupils in the classes. Teachers actively and effectively promote equality of opportunity, and discuss issues of gender, race and disability.

The school has a new computerised system for the collation, analysing and sharing of assessment data. It is used to increasingly good effect.

The school meets statutory requirements for assessing and reporting pupils' achievements. Whole-school target setting is particularly accurate.

The quality and regularity of the marking of pupils' work is usually good at KS4, but at KS3 there are inconsistencies in both its quality and regularity. In the sixth form the quality of assessment is regular, accurate and fair.

Interim and annual reports represent good practice in informing parents and carers of pupils' progress against agreed learning goals.

Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) are fully involved in the review process.

The curriculum, overall, meets the needs of all pupils and reflects the aims set out in the Education Act 1996. It is appropriately broad and balanced in each key stage. In the sixth form, students can choose from an extensive programme of AS and A2 subjects and some vocational courses at both AVCE and GNVQ levels.

The school is successful in giving pupils of all abilities equality of access to the curriculum. The alternative provision in KS4 successfully caters for pupils at risk of disaffection.

Religious education is timetabled for the sixth form, but all students exercise their right to withdraw.

The school takes good account of employers' needs through close partnership with Careers Wales and its Education Business Department.

For pupils and students, the operation of their Charity Committees in organising extremely successful money raising ventures, involving large numbers of pupils, shows outstanding enterprise.

The school is successful in ensuring that pupils and students acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to progress, and to develop as independent learners.

The school has been successful in establishing a caring and congenial community that is outstandingly inclusive for pupils from different backgrounds.

There are outstanding relationships with an extensive range of outside agencies.

Heads of year have good knowledge of the performance of individual pupils and identify effectively pupils who are showing a change to their pattern of standards in achievement, effort or behaviour.

Parents and pupils note that there are hardly any instances of bullying. The CHAT support scheme, run by Y10 pupils, is outstanding in offering other pupils support and counselling on any issues that are of concern to them.

Good induction programmes are provided to help pupils transfer from one key stage to the next.

Health and safety issues and risk assessments are undertaken conscientiously and child protection procedures operate effectively.

The provision for additional learning needs is good with outstanding features. Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into the life of the school. Statements are reviewed effectively, with all parents attending their child's meeting.

The specialist teaching facility (STF) offers outstanding support for hearing impaired pupils.

The school purposefully creates a climate where discrimination or harassment is not tolerated and where all pupils are treated fairly.

The school has a good range of strategies to ensure pupils are supported if they experience difficulty in school, home, or the community.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and his headship team, supported by the governors, give a very clear direction and sense of purpose to the work of the school.

Overall, heads of department and heads of year share fully the aims of the school and demonstrate good leadership and management, although there are a small number of instances of less rigorous and consistent approaches.

An outstanding quality of the school is the priority given to the equal value of all pupils and students, which is demonstrated both through teaching and the relationships between pupils and pupils and between teachers and pupils.

There is an outstanding process for the setting of school targets which challenge staff and pupils and which contribute significantly to the continuing trend for improvement at the school.

The governors are fully committed to the success of the school and they fulfil all their regulatory and statutory requirements.

The school monitors the quality of education it provides effectively and has accurate knowledge of its strengths and shortcomings, although there is occasionally a lack of rigour and consistency. Additional value would be possible if monitoring was more directly linked to planning for improvement

The school actively seeks the views of pupils, parents and staff. Surveys reveal that the school has reason to be happy with most of its activities.

The school improvement plan is a clear and detailed document that identifies appropriate priorities, and the required resources for improvement.

The school has made good progress in addressing the Key Issues identified in the previous inspection.

Overall, the staffing is an outstanding feature of the school. Teachers are appropriately and well qualified. There is a balance between experienced and new teachers. The professional development of staff is very well co-ordinated.

There is a good range of support staff, enabling the school to run smoothly. Classroom support assistants give good support to a number of pupils with learning, behavioural and physical difficulties in KS3 and KS4.

The school is well provided with computers for use by pupils, but the provision of ICT equipment to be used to enhance teaching is less widely available.

There is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils currently on roll.

Resources outside the school are used well to enrich the curriculum, for example, visits to museums and theatres, and field trips.

The displays of pupils' work and subject material in classrooms and in corridors are a very good feature.

The school is clean and well maintained.

The financial management of the school is an outstanding feature. The headteacher, bursar and the governing body's committee for finance manage the available budget effectively.

Both the standards of achievement and the quality of teaching in the school are good with outstanding features, as is the financial management. The school therefore gives very good value for money.

Recommendations

In order to continue to raise standards of achievement the school should:

- R1: improve the quality and consistency of assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress to the level of best practice in the school;
- R2 continue to develop and refine the existing quality assurance procedures;
- R3 and further develop Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig, and pupils' bilingual skills and awareness.

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.

Acknowledgement

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