

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

**A Report on the Quality of Secondary Education in**

**Pembroke School/Ysgol Penfro  
Bush  
Pembroke  
SA71 4RL**

**School Number: 6684038**

**Date of Inspection: 30 October 2006**

**by**

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

The inspection of Pembroke School, Ysgol Penfro took place between 30/10/06 and 02/11/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Brian William Medhurst 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:

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection."

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 Pembroke School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school situated between the small towns of Pembroke and Pembroke Dock, maintained by Pembrokeshire Unitary Authority (UA). The school occupies a very large site adjacent to a fully equipped sports complex. There are 1594 pupils on roll compared with 1550 at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are drawn from nearby towns and surrounding rural areas. Most pupils come from English speaking homes. No pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard.
- 2 Less than 1% of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The area is not ethnically diverse, but a number of travellers' children are on the school roll. These pupils are generally educated off site at the Monkton Priory Centre.
- 3 The school serves areas of affluence and areas of deprivation, with the balance weighted towards deprivation. According to Welsh indicators of multiple deprivation, around one-third of the school's geographical catchment area is in the most deprived 25% in Wales. Currently, just over 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals (22.7% in years 7 to 11). These figures are above UA and national averages. Seven pupils are 'looked after' by the local authority.
- 4 There is a full range of ability represented in the school. Around 20% of pupils are identified on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs – a figure close to the national average. Sixty pupils have statements of special educational needs. Many pupils have reading difficulties on entry to the school. Over half of the current intake's pupils have reading ages below their chronological age, with a quarter reading at least two years below. Twenty-eight pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
- 5 The senior management structure of the school has changed since the previous inspection. The Leadership Team now comprises the headteacher, two deputy headteacher, seven assistant headteachers and the business manager. Three of the assistant headteachers are designated as heads of school and have pastoral roles that also focus on monitoring progress and achievement.
- 6 The school was inspected previously in November 2000.

### The school's priorities and targets

- 7 The aims of the school, as determined by the staff and governors, are:
  - "to help all children to reach their full potential – academically, culturally, socially, morally, physically and emotionally – respecting and ensuring equality of opportunity;

- to create a caring, supportive and safe environment where children can learn and feel secure, confident and happy; an environment in which learning is a stimulating, varied and enjoyable experience, which engages all learners;
- to develop the skills and attitudes needed for adult life, especially self-confidence, communication, initiative, self-organisation and the ability to learn independently;
- to encourage good behaviour, good manners, politeness, a positive attitude to work, and respect for others, the environment and for our community; and
- to encourage students to develop self-esteem and the emotional skills to deal with the learning and social environment; we want students to develop self-motivation, resilience and high expectations of success.”

8 The school's priorities for development, to raise standards of achievement, include:

- improving consistency in assessment arrangements;
- further developing pupils as independent learners;
- improving challenges for the higher attaining pupils;
- improving attendance and punctuality; and
- strengthening the link between departmental and whole school targets.

## Summary

### Table of grades awarded

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

9 The grades in the above table agree with the grades in the school's self-assessment for key questions 2, 5 and 6. In each of key questions 1, 3, 4 and 7, the grades are one grade lower than managers awarded.

## Standards

### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Key stage 3	Key stage 4	Sixth form
Mathematics	3	3	2
Science	3	3	3
Design and technology	2	2	1
Geography	2	2	3
Music	3	2	2
Religious education (including religious studies)	2	1	1

- 10 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that pupils and students achieved, at different stages, in the six subjects inspected in depth:

87 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	3	48	40	9	0
Key stage 4	6	52	39	3	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Sixth form	19	43	38	0	0
<b>Whole school</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 11 These figures for pupils' achievement are below national targets. Nonetheless, they indicate an improvement in standards observed in lessons since the previous inspection.
- 12 We compared pupils' performance in national tests and external examinations with those of pupils throughout Wales and of pupils in similar schools<sup>1</sup>. In many respects, pupils' performance is below the average performance of pupils in the comparison groups. There are, however, some good features. These are:
- in key stage 3 in 2006:
    - the average level of attainment of all pupils in science matched the school's target figure;
    - the proportion of pupils who gained at least level 5 in each of mathematics, science and English exceeded the school's target; and
    - girls performed much better than estimates had predicted.
  - and in key stage 4:

<sup>1</sup> 'Similar schools' refers to other schools in Wales that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The Welsh Assembly Government places Pembroke School in the group having between 15% and 20% of pupils with entitlement to free school meals. The school has data to show, and contests, that it should be in the 20% to 30% group.

- for most aspects of GCSE results, pupils' performances exceeded the school's target levels; and
  - in over half the subjects, GCSE results were better than those indicated by pupils' key stage 3 test results.
- 13 Pupils who have special educational needs do particularly well and so too do some gifted and talented pupils. Not all these higher attaining pupils, though, are given sufficient opportunities to show how well they can achieve. Average ability pupils sometimes fail to realise their potential in key stage 4.
- 14 In almost all respects in key stage 3, girls achieve higher standards than boys. For a good number of years, boys have outperformed girls in the GCSE examinations, contrary to the national trend, but over the past two years the girls have performed better than the boys.
- 15 Pupils generally communicate well in English and their bilingual competence is good. However, too few opportunities arise on a daily basis for pupils to use Welsh across the curriculum. Most pupils have good number skills and use computers competently in a good number of subjects.
- 16 Most pupils cooperate sensibly and work productively in pair, group and class activities and they use their imagination well. Given the opportunity to do so, many review their own progress and take appropriate action to improve their own learning.
- 17 A few pupils, though, are immature in their attitudes and do not act responsibly with others, and some are reluctant to think for themselves and rely heavily on their teachers for ideas.
- 18 The majority of pupils are well motivated in lessons and respond positively to the tasks set, but a significant minority of pupils find it difficult to focus and to meet the demands made of them in lessons and in the completion of written tasks.
- 19 The figures for overall attendance at the school in the last year were well below local and national averages. Recent initiatives have already had a beneficial effect on attendance. Figures are around 1% better than they were previously.
- 20 Most pupils behave well, both in classes and around other areas of school, but a few pupils disrupt lessons.

### **The sixth form**

- 21 In the 2005 A level examinations, students' average point score matched that for students throughout Wales. The percentage of awards at grades A to C and A to E were above both local and national averages.
- 22 The 2006 A level results were not quite as good as those achieved in 2005, but for many students they represented good progress from key stage 4.
- 23 Students' communication skills are good, as are their numerical skills. Many of them use information and communication technology well in research aspects of their work and to enhance presentation of their findings. Most students are competent in solving

problems and they are often highly creative. They are gaining good skills as independent learners and their attitudes to learning are often very good.

- 24 Students generally have a good understanding of how well they are doing.

### The quality of education and training

- 25 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons observed during the inspection:

145 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	6	55	33	6	0
Key stage 4	11	59	28	2	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
Sixth form	28	50	22	0	0
<b>Whole school</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 26 These figures for the quality of teaching show a substantial improvement since the previous inspection. Most teaching has many good features. In the best cases, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and pupils live up to them.
- 27 Where there are shortcomings, they are often related to teachers' low expectations and slow pace of lessons, causing pupils to lose interest.
- 28 Across the curriculum, too few opportunities occur for pupils to take the initiative in their learning. They are not often encouraged to become independent learners.
- 29 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the quality of assessment. Teachers, and middle and senior managers all play their part in trying to ensure that assessment informs pupils and their parents of the progress they are making, and makes departments aware of how well they are working. Practice, however, does not always match intentions. There is inconsistency in such activities as marking pupils' work and providing feedback for them.
- 30 Systems to make pupils more aware of what they need to do to achieve higher standards are underdeveloped overall.
- 31 The curriculum ensures breadth and balance in pupils' study and is effective in promoting pupils' communication skills. There is a suitable range of courses in key stage 4. There are many good and outstanding features in the extracurricular provision.

- 32 The school's provision for promoting learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has good features that outweigh shortcomings. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all learners.
- 33 There are strong partnerships with parents, the local community, partner primary schools and other education providers, including initial teacher training colleges.
- 34 The school is a caring community and the quality of care, support and guidance for learners has many good and some exceptionally good features.
- 35 The quality of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs also has several good and very good features. The programme for integrating the many pupils from the Learning Support Centre and the Autistic Centre into the main school is an exceptionally good feature.
- 36 The outstanding feature in the quality of provision of equal opportunities is the integration of all special needs pupils into the full life of the school.

### **The sixth form**

- 37 The figures in the table show that teaching is best in the sixth form. In general, the teaching is rigorous, thought provoking and motivating. Teachers do much to help students prepare for external examinations and encourage them to become responsible for their own learning.
- 38 The arrangements for monitoring students' performance and the quality of the guidance that students receive are good. Teachers thoroughly understand students' strengths and weaknesses and give them detailed and helpful guidance on how to improve.
- 39 The curriculum offers an extensive range of courses at AS and A levels to cater for all students' needs. There is also a good range of vocational courses and good provision for improving students' key skills. There is an effective partnership with Careers Wales, and a well-planned careers education and guidance programme.

### **Leadership and management**

- 40 The leadership and management of the school have many good features. The headteacher, governors and most members of staff share a vision of all learners reaching their full potential.
- 41 Senior staff and governors provide clear leadership and perform their duties effectively. Governors make a substantial contribution to strategic planning.
- 42 The robust and rigorous performance management system operated in the school works well. It gives senior and middle managers a clear view of quality and standards in the areas for which they are responsible and allows appropriate professional development activities to be provided where necessary.
- 43 Many middle managers have a clear vision of the direction of developments within their areas of responsibility.

- 44 The quality of self-evaluation is good overall. The outcomes of the self-evaluation report are similar to many of the judgements in our report. The school rightly seeks the views of staff, pupils, parents and other interested parties.
- 45 Not all middle managers are equally rigorous in their self-evaluation practices. There is too much inconsistency in this sphere of operation in the school.
- 46 Improvement planning takes good account of Welsh Assembly Government priorities, but in respect of extending the use of Welsh across the curriculum and promoting the Welsh dimension, there is room for improvement.
- 47 Staffing arrangements are good in all areas. The quality and quantity of learning resources in the six subjects we inspected are good. However, there are a few times during the day when pupils do not have ready access to computers. The accommodation has good features, but there are shortcomings, particularly in design and technology, where rooms are sometimes too small for the large classes using them.
- 48 Managers and governors manage the budget well. Despite the shortcomings highlighted in areas of this report, the school provides good value for money, especially in the provision made for pupils with additional needs.

### **Progress since the previous inspection**

- 49 Overall, the school has made good progress in dealing with the key issues of the previous inspection. Standards have improved in a number of subjects across the curriculum, especially in information and communication technology across the curriculum. Progress has been made in using target setting, and teaching has improved overall. The improvement in the accommodation for science is outstanding. Religious education is now provided for sixth form students.
- 50 The school still does not satisfy the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, so this remains as a key issue.

### **Recommendations**

- R1 Satisfy the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
- R2 Continue to seek ways of raising standards in all subjects, and especially in those where shortcomings have been highlighted.
- R3 Improve the quality of assessment, recording and reporting across the curriculum so that common practice matches the best that already exists in the school.

- R4 Improve the Welsh ethos of the school by ensuring that Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is more firmly embedded in schemes of work and that pupils are given more opportunities to hear and use Welsh in their daily lives in school.
- R5 Improve pupils' learning skills by giving them more opportunities and guidance to become better independent learners.
- R6 Middle managers should eliminate the inconsistencies in self-evaluation practices, so that all departments adopt and effectively coordinate uniform systems that match the best already operating in the school.

All the above recommendations have been recognised by the school as areas for development and are listed accordingly in the school development plan.

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

## Standards

### Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

**Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 51 The grade we awarded is one grade lower than the grade 2 that the school awarded in its self-evaluation report. Managers did not give enough weight to how pupils' attainment compares with that of pupils in similar schools or to the quality of pupils' achievement in some classes.

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 52 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that pupils achieved in key stages 3 and 4 in the six subjects inspected in depth:

66 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	3	48	40	9	0
Key stage 4	6	52	39	3	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

- 53 Targets for the whole of Wales are that, by 2007, standards should be grade 3 or better in at least 98% of lessons and grade 2 or better in at least 65% of lessons. Overall, in the six subjects we inspected, pupils' standards of achievement do not meet these targets. Nevertheless, pupils' standards, as observed in lessons, have improved since the previous inspection.

### Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 54 We evaluated pupils' performance in public examinations and national tests by comparing their attainment with:
- the attainment of all pupils in Wales; and
  - the attainment of pupils in similar schools throughout Wales.
- 55 In selecting similar schools, we used the group of schools where between 15% and 20% of pupils are entitled to free school meals (called the FSM group).
- 56 On nearly all these measures, pupils' attainment in key stage 3 tests and in GCSE examinations is below average
- 57 A number of pupils who are on the school's roll have their entitlement to free meals registered at a different establishment. Because of this, the school has data to indicate that the FSM group within which the school should be placed is effectively 20% to 30%. The Welsh Assembly Government has not yet authorised this change.

- 58 We considered pupils' results in 2005, since this is the latest year for which national figures are available. We also compared pupils' attainment in 2006 against the Welsh results in 2005.
- 59 We found that in key stage 3 in 2005:
- in English, science and the core subject indicator<sup>2</sup> pupils in Pembroke School did less well than pupils in three-quarters of other schools in the FSM group; and
  - in mathematics, they did less well than half of the pupils in the same group of schools.
- 60 In 2006, in key stage 3:
- pupils' attainment was lower than in 2005 in English and mathematics and therefore in the core subject indicator;
  - in science, pupils' attainment was very much the same as in 2005;
  - overall, pupils did less well than pupils in three-quarters of similar schools;
  - pupils' performance in English fell below the school's target figure;
  - pupils' performance in mathematics fell well below the school's target figure;
  - pupils' performance in science matched the school's minimum ('must do') target;
  - the core subject indicator fell between the school's minimum target and the ambitious figure; and
  - girls performed much better than estimates had predicted, whilst the boys underperformed slightly.
- 61 In key stage 4 in 2005:
- pupils in Pembroke School did less well than pupils in about half of the other schools in the FSM group, in terms of those achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C, the core subject indicator and the average GCSE points scored;
  - pupils did less well than about three-quarters of pupils in the similar schools in respect of those achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to G; and
  - for most aspects of GCSE results, pupils' performances exceeded the school's minimum target levels.
- 62 In 2006:
- the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C improved slightly on the 2005 figure. Overall, though, comparisons with FSM group schools remained the same as those for 2005; and
  - GCSE results were better than those indicated by pupils' key stage 3 test results in over half the subjects entered.
- 63 Actual GCSE figures and comparisons with Pembrokeshire and all-Wales data can be found in Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

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<sup>2</sup> The core subject indicator in key stage 3 is the percentage of pupils who gain level 5 or better in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in key stage 4 is the percentage of pupils who gain at least grade C in each of these three subjects in GCSE examinations.

- 64 In key stage 3, boys generally do not do well in the English tests and thus the core subject indicator for them is lower than that for girls.
- 65 The gender difference at GCSE level has for many years been the opposite of the national trend – boys have performed better than girls. That is, until recently. In 2005 and 2006, the proportion of girls attaining 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C was better than the proportion of boys doing so. Likewise for the core subject indicator in 2006, girls outperformed boys by about 8%. This ‘success’ can be attributed partly to the school’s strategies to correct the gender imbalance in achievements and partly to boys’ underachievement.
- 66 Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve well in the school.
- 67 Because of the open access to all aspects of learning provided by the school, learners have opportunities to achieve, regardless of their backgrounds and/or prior attainment. Some Romany pupils who are educated off-site, however, are not entered for any external examinations.
- 68 While the levels of pupils’ attainment have naturally fluctuated from year to year, the figures show that, in the six years since the previous inspection, the school’s achievement, as measured by external assessment data has remained static.
- 69 As can be seen in the subject-specific reports that follow later in this report, inspectors found that, in some subjects, pupils are achieving high standards.
- 70 Most pupils listen attentively. They respond willingly to questions. In small groups, they prepare and make effective presentations of their work and are able to explain and justify their opinions. Many pupils use subject vocabulary well.
- 71 However, some pupils do not learn so well through speaking and listening because they respond to questions briefly and do not develop their ideas. They use talk less effectively to explore and explain ideas in a larger group.
- 72 A few pupils, in some lessons, do not listen consistently and this restricts their progress.
- 73 Most pupils have a good understanding of what they read, can locate information and ‘read between the lines’. Older and higher attaining pupils can read critically and appreciate writers’ styles and intentions. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who find reading difficult, make good progress. The school’s basic skills programme has been particularly successful in improving pupils’ reading ages in key stage 3.
- 74 Standards of writing are variable. Older pupils are able to write at length and to improve the structure and accuracy of their writing through re-drafting. The writing of many pupils at all stages has avoidable inaccuracies of spelling and grammar. A renewed focus on improving the writing of younger pupils is beginning to have good results.
- 75 Pupils’ bilingual skills develop well over key stage 3, as the time allocated to Welsh is generous. This progress continues in key stage 4 where results in the full and short GCSE Welsh courses are consistently above the national average. There are,

however, too few opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in other areas of the curriculum.

- 76 Overall, pupils' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. In subjects across the curriculum, there is evidence of some good standards.
- 77 A small minority of lower ability pupils lack confidence when applying and using number in everyday situations. A minority of pupils have limited numerical skills. In key stage 3, pupils' mental mathematical skills are underdeveloped.
- 78 For subjects across the curriculum, the school has a numeracy policy and a co-ordinator. However, over the last three years, there have not been any initiatives to implement, develop and monitor such work in departments. This has not been a priority of the school. Consequently, there is room for improvement in the standards of pupils' numeracy in some areas of the curriculum.
- 79 Information and communication technology skills across the curriculum are good with no important shortcomings. Pupils and students are able to use information technology equipment together with a range of peripheral devices well.
- 80 They show good skills in obtaining, preparing, processing and presenting information and can communicate their ideas clearly with a good understanding of the required impact on their audiences.
- 81 During the inspection, pupils were observed using search engines very effectively to access the Internet to research and develop their work. This was a particular feature in a number of English, science, music, Spanish, business studies, sports studies, religious education and design and technology lessons.
- 82 Overall, pupils make good progress in their wider key skills.
- 83 The majority of pupils are able to:
- cooperate sensibly and work productively in pair, group and class activities;
  - use their imagination and enterprise to generate ideas to investigate and solve a range of subject specific problems; and
  - review their own progress and take appropriate action to improve their own learning.
- 84 However, a minority of pupils are:
- immature in their attitudes and do not act responsibly with others;
  - reluctant to think for themselves and rely heavily on their teachers for ideas; and
  - insufficiently interested in their work to independently take the necessary steps to advance their own progress.

### **Pupils' progress in learning**

- 85 As mentioned previously, on entry to the school, many pupils' reading ages are well below their chronological ages. Thanks to the good provision made to improve their

literacy skills, most pupils make good or very good progress in this area during key stage 3.

- 86 Most pupils with special educational needs also make at least good progress overall. The integration programme ensures that as many pupils as possible gain accredited awards in external examinations.
- 87 As is to be expected, across the curriculum, pupils make the best progress in those subjects that achieve the best results. Such progress is related to challenging and motivational teaching.
- 88 The higher attaining, gifted and talented pupils do well in a number of subjects, but in others, they are challenged insufficiently to achieve their full potential. It is also noticeable that about half of the middle ability pupils fail to make sufficient progress in key stage 4.
- 89 In just over half of the subjects, pupils' GCSE grades are higher than those they might reasonably expect in the light of their earlier attainment at key stage 3 – in one or two subjects by over half a grade.
- 90 Although there is considerable variation in the quality of feedback given to pupils, many assessments give pupils a good idea of how well they are progressing. Generally, their responses to teachers' comments on their work vary, but higher attaining pupils in particular, take appropriate steps to review and advance their own performance.
- 91 By the end of each stage of learning, many, but not all, pupils have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and level of maturity that they need to do well in the next stage.

### **The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills**

- 92 The majority of pupils are well motivated in lessons and respond positively to the tasks set. These pupils take an interest in their work and work well with each other and with their teachers. Most pupils can concentrate successfully throughout the lessons and are eager to respond positively to challenges.
- 93 However, a significant minority of pupils find it difficult to focus and to meet the demands made of them in lessons and in the completion of written tasks. They are less successful in organising their work and do not always make effective use of their time. While the school is well aware of the needs of these pupils, some subject departments are inconsistent in their response to the whole school strategies that have been designed to help these pupils engage more effectively in their learning.
- 94 Many teachers encourage pupils to develop the confidence to adopt more independent approaches to their learning. In some departments, tasks are provided which require pupils to undertake research, either independently or collaboratively with classmates. However, a significant number of pupils lack the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning and are over-dependent upon guidance from teachers.
- 95 The development of communication, problem solving and decision making skills is appropriately addressed. In the best practice, pupils are challenged well to identify

the skills that they have developed during plenary sessions in lessons. However, procedures to encourage pupils to assess their own progress and that of their peers are inconsistently used. The school recognises the need to focus more closely on developing pupils' skills in this area.

- 96 The school's personal and social education programme helps pupils in key stages 3 and 4 to develop the skills to work independently and to maintain positive attitudes to lifelong learning. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and to identify ways by which they can organise their work and time more effectively. Self-evaluation and target setting by pupils are well used by some departments to enable pupils to raise their standards of achievement.
- 97 Pupils develop well as individuals, gaining in skills, knowledge and self-confidence. They show good awareness of others less fortunate than themselves and of equal opportunities issues. Pupils show respect for the diversity of lifestyles, beliefs and cultural influences in society. The school's work-related education programme makes good provision for ensuring that pupils are made aware of the demands of the workplace and of life in the wider community.
- 98 Most pupils behave well, both in classes and around other areas of school. There is a small minority of pupils in all years of key stages 3 and 4 whose attitudes lead to disrespect of others including staff, disruption in lessons and excessively boisterous behaviour in corridors and the playground.
- 99 The school has recently introduced a wide range of appropriate strategies and support facilities to deal with poor behaviour. Although it is too early to properly assess the effectiveness of these measures, most teachers have reported a reduction in disruptive behaviour in the first half term of operation.
- 100 The figures for overall attendance at the school in the last year were well below local and national averages and indicate a disappointing decline since the previous inspection. School strategies to improve attendance were inadequately staffed and largely ineffective. They were compromised by unreliable performance of the electronic registration system. Staffing and management have now been completely reorganised. Registration data is now reliable, readily and quickly available, procedures are very rigorous. In the first half term in operation the evidence shows an improvement of almost 1% in attendance, and raised confidence among teachers that absenteeism will reduce. The school and support services identify parentally condoned absence as the major factor to address.

### **The sixth form**

- 101 The following table shows the grades awarded for the standards that sixth form students achieved in the six subjects inspected in depth:

21 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Sixth form	19	43	38	0	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

### **Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals**

- 102 In 2005, the proportion of students who achieved at least two A level results at grade C or better was 73%. This compared well with the UA average of 67% and the all-Wales figure of 68%. Similarly, the school's figure for grade E or better at 97% was better than the 94% achieved in the UA and in Wales as a whole. The average score per student matched the UA and all-Wales averages.
- 103 In 2006, results at A level were not as good as those achieved in 2005. The proportion of students who achieved at least two A level results at grade C or better was 63%. This compared unfavourably with the UA average of 69% and the all-Wales figure of 68%. The school's figure for grade E or better at 95% was better than the 94% achieved in the UA and the 94% in Wales as a whole. The average score per student was below the UA and all-Wales averages.
- 104 Girls outperformed boys in 2006 in terms of the higher A level grades and the average points scored.
- 105 These results must be considered in the light of the open-entry policy that operates in the sixth form. The 2006 outcomes represent good progress and achievement for many of the students concerned, when their prior attainment is considered.
- 106 Students' communication skills are good. They display their oral skills strongly in class discussions, where they present persuasive arguments and quote a wide range of evidence to support their line of reasoning. Students write well. They argue their points rigorously and present their material in appropriate forms.
- 107 Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They are able to use and apply these skills competently in various subject areas. For example they:
- handle statistical information competently;
  - represent data well in tabular and graphical forms; and
  - deal effectively with a range of complex calculations.
- 108 Students collaborate effectively with each other. They work positively, engaging well in team and problem solving activities. Outstanding examples were seen in design and technology, religious education and Welsh, where students demonstrate reflective thinking, innovation and creativity in their reasoning and judgement.
- 109 With very few exceptions, students display mature attitudes and a good level of independence in their learning.

### **Students' progress in learning**

- 110 When students' sixth form examination results are compared with their earlier prior attainment at the end of key stage 4, in around half of the subjects, the progress made is better than that predicted by the latter.

111 Students are gaining good skills as independent learners. They respond well to the oral and written comments of their teachers and thus make good progress. Their courses equip them well for study at a higher level.

### **The development of students' personal, social and learning skills**

112 Students gain in maturity during their time in the sixth form. Most are well motivated to study independently, to research and to approach problems with greater confidence. Good relationships with teachers are a positive feature of sixth-form life.

113 Students are engaged in a variety of activities with their peers and in involving younger pupils in school life, making a positive contribution to the school community. They provide good role models for younger pupils and have well-developed personal and social skills, showing respect for others and a good awareness of social and global issues.

114 Students are also aware of the demands of the world of work and of higher and further education. They undertake valuable work experience and many are involved in effective community projects. Many show appreciation of the opportunities made available for them.

115 Many students are involved in and trained for:

- preparing younger pupils for the house plays;
- being 'buddies' for main school pupils;
- organising the anti-bullying crew;
- supporting younger learners in lessons; and
- acting as reading mentors.

116 Attitudes and behaviour are outstanding in the sixth form.

117 The average proportion of pupils who stay on into the sixth form is around 49% - a good figure for this type of school. Of the students who enter Y12, about three-quarters complete a two-year course. About 70% of students go from school into higher education courses; the others enter vocational training or start work.

## The quality of education and training

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

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

118 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade that the school awarded in its self-evaluation report. This grade does not agree with that awarded for key question 1 because inspectors believe that, overall, the good quality of teaching is not reflected fully in external assessment data.

### Key stages 3 and 4

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

119 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in lessons observed in key stages 3 and 4 during the inspection:

109 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	6	55	33	6	0
Key stage 4	11	59	28	2	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

The figures in the table match the 2004/2005 national averages for grade 3 or better, but fall short of the proportion for grade 2 or better. They are, however, a sizeable improvement on those achieved at the time of the previous inspection.

120 Teaching in the school has many good features. For example, most teachers:

- have at least good knowledge and understanding of the subject(s) they teach and they often demonstrate enthusiasm for their chosen fields of study in their teaching;
- plan their lessons thoroughly and present them at a good pace, making effective use of the time available to them, so that pupils are fully engaged in learning;
- arrange that, when planning lessons, they consider the full range of ability of the pupils in the class, so that all have an appropriate level of challenge, especially those pupils with special educational needs;
- use a variety of lesson activities, so that pupils' interest is maintained and they have opportunities to learn in different ways;
- let pupils know what they are expected to learn during a lesson and over time, so that they can gauge their own progress;
- work hard to ensure that pupils acquire the skills of each subject necessary to make progress;
- give pupils many opportunities to use and improve their literacy skills;
- use data projectors and interactive whiteboards effectively to improve lessons;

- enjoy and engender very good working relationships with their pupils;
- are prepared 'to go the extra mile' – to give freely of their own time to offer extra support and guidance for their pupils; and
- offer pupils praise and encouragement when appropriate to do so.

121 Additionally, many teachers:

- have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, communicate these to pupils and enjoy seeing them respond accordingly;
- ask questions that are challenging and demand accurate and clearly-explained answers;
- plan learning programmes to ensure progression across the key stages; and
- sometimes make lessons fun to attend, so that pupils enjoy learning.

122 In those lessons where there are shortcomings, they may occur because:

- teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high and, consequently, tasks are not challenging enough, the pace of lessons is slow and pupils lose interest;
- teachers ask superficial questions and accept feeble answers;
- teachers do not plan well enough to improve pupils' numeracy in lessons;
- higher attaining pupils are not encouraged to make the rapid progress of which they are capable;
- in a few classes, a minority of pupils are disruptive, take little part in lessons and disturb other pupils; and
- teachers do not readily encourage pupils to use both Welsh and English.

123 Across the curriculum, too few opportunities occur for pupils to take the initiative in their learning. They are not often encouraged to become independent learners.

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

124 The school has recently established an effective system for collating and analysing assessment data in key stages 3 and 4. This means that pupils' progress can be regularly monitored and graded in all subjects. The data collected are designed to be shared regularly with teachers, pupils and their parents so that individual performance can be tracked and areas requiring improvement can be addressed more effectively.

125 The recently appointed assessment co-ordinator has rightly placed emphasis upon setting pupils appropriately challenging targets to raise standards of achievement. The school also intends to involve pupils themselves more fully in evaluating their own progress and in meaningful target setting. Whilst this system promises to be effective in addressing problems of inconsistency, monitoring and accuracy of assessments, it is not yet fully embedded in whole school practice.

126 The school meets statutory requirements for assessing and reporting pupils' achievements.

127 Assessment is generally accurate and fair. However, the regularity and quality of marking are inconsistent within and between subjects. Where there is good practice, teachers' comments on pieces of work are informative and helpful, but in other cases

there is insufficient information on how pupils can improve their standards. Standards of assessment vary widely across the school; there is very good practice in some departments, but this is not shared effectively.

- 128 The quality of the targets, which are set to challenge pupils to raise their standards, varies within and between subjects. There are some examples of well focused, subject specific and measurable targets, but in other cases the targets set are too broad and do not provide pupils with sufficient guidance on the next step forward in their learning.
- 129 The school encourages pupils to evaluate their own performance and to identify areas of their work that require further attention. However, the quality of pupils' self-assessment is inconsistent and remains an area for further focus. Where there is good practice, pupils are made aware of the level that they have achieved and of the steps required to reach the next level. However, this awareness of their progress is also inconsistent within and between departments.
- 130 The school has introduced a new format for reports, which identifies a pupil's target grade, the current grade and an assessment of effort and quality of work. Parents receive a full report and an interim report on progress each year. While these are useful in tracking pupil progress and in identifying underachievement, the comments are insufficiently subject-specific and do not always match the grades awarded. In addition, parents are offered valuable opportunities to discuss their child's progress in extended interviews with teachers on the two annual closure days arranged for this purpose.

### **The sixth form**

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

- 131 The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in the sixth form lessons observed during the inspection:

36 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Post 16	28	50	22	0	0

(For an explanation of the grades, please refer to the beginning of the report)

- 132 These figures are above the 2004/2005 national averages for all stages in secondary schools and are an improvement on the figures recorded at the time of the previous inspection.
- 133 All of the good features of teaching in key stages 3 and 4 are present in the sixth form. In addition, teachers do much to help students prepare for external examinations and encourage them to become responsible for their own learning.
- 134 Students commented positively about being treated as young adults and said they appreciated the opportunities provided for individual research. They also indicated that teachers worked hard to 'keep them on their toes'.

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

- 135 Assessment is used well to monitor students' progress. Detailed marking of written work and informative comments help students identify ways of improving their standards.
- 136 The expectations of the examining boards are fully met.
- 137 Students are made aware of the minimum target grade that they are expected to achieve. Their progress is regularly monitored and recorded on a database. Reports generally contain good quality advice on how improvements can be achieved in the quality of work.
- 138 Students are encouraged to evaluate the quality of their own achievement and to identify ways in which they can raise their standards. As they mature, they become more confident in setting themselves realistic and achievable targets.

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

<b>Grade 3:</b> Good features outweigh shortcomings
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- 139 In its self-evaluation report, the school awarded a grade 2 for this key question. The findings of the inspection team match most of the judgements made by the school. However, the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all learners. This is a breach of a statutory requirement and is thus an important shortcoming.

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

- 140 The curriculum:
- meets pupils' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996;
  - provides appropriate breadth, balance and progression of study;
  - gives equality of opportunity and access for all pupils and students; and
  - provides personal, social and health education, work-related education, and careers education and guidance in accordance with national guidelines.
- 141 There are a number of good features in the curricular provision, which include:
- all pupils in key stage 3 studying a course in drama and information and communication technology;
  - opportunities for pupils to study two modern foreign languages;
  - a good range of vocational courses in key stage 4 and the sixth form; and
  - other learning pathways that begin in Y9 and cater for the wide-ranging needs of pupils at the school.

142 There are many good features in the development of basic and key skills. These include:

- the school gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark;
- the support programmes for pupils in key stage 3;
- the initiatives to promote literacy and information and communication technology across the curriculum; and
- many students in Y12 gaining national accreditation.

143 At present, opportunities to develop numeracy are not fully embedded in the teaching strategies of a number of subjects.

144 There are many good and outstanding features in the extracurricular provision, which broaden learners' experiences and promote their personal and social development. These activities involve a large number of pupils and students. There are many opportunities to:

- represent the school in sporting activities, with many pupils gaining county and national honours;
- take part in musical activities: to join choirs, orchestras and bands;
- take part in house plays and the school production;
- visit theatres, museums, galleries and business organisations, both locally and further afield;
- make visits abroad for art, modern foreign languages and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme;
- participate in field study visits; and
- extend learning in a number of after-school support clubs and in the school library.

145 The school's provision for promoting learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has good features that outweigh shortcomings. The good features are that:

- assemblies are of a very good quality and give pupils opportunities to develop an understanding of beliefs and values;
- pupils' spiritual development is promoted in some subjects;
- pupils show concern for others by raising considerable sums of money for charities and good causes;
- the vast majority of pupils and all students show courtesy and consideration in their social interaction with peers and adults; and
- most pupils and students are caring and helpful, and are aware of other cultures and most respect diversity.

146 The shortcomings are that:

- pupils in some tutor groups do not have the opportunity to participate in a daily act of collective worship;
- a minority of pupils show a lack of respect for other pupils and their teachers;
- the spiritual dimension is not planned for across all subjects; and
- the culture of Wales is not promoted strongly in some subjects.

147 There are strong partnerships with parents, the local community, partner primary schools and other education providers, including initial teacher training colleges. Some of these links, such as the joint Y6 and Y7 activities, library lessons for Y6 pupils, and canvassing of parents' views at all levels are particularly useful for targeting learning support appropriately.

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

148 Work-related education is good at all levels. Assisted by an effective partnership with Careers Wales, the school provides:

- well-structured formal careers education and guidance;
- appropriate and effective work-experience placements for all key stage 4 pupils and sixth form students;
- ample opportunity for pupils and students at all levels to make visits to or engage with visitors from potential employers; and
- outstanding opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills through a very wide of enterprise activities in key stages 3 and 4.

149 The links that underpin work-related education also provide the school with a good understanding of the needs of employers. Managers use this knowledge effectively in modifying school provision.

150 Activities are organised by the Welsh department for pupils to further develop their bilingual competence. However, the language and culture of Wales are not actively promoted in the life of the school. Appropriate use of the language across the curriculum is rare, but there is good practice in the design and technology department. There is no policy to plan opportunities for pupils to use their bilingual skills in other areas of the curriculum. The use of Welsh in assemblies, tutor groups and around the school is infrequent.

151 A recent audit identified that different aspects of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig are addressed at different levels across the curriculum. There is room for improvement in this aspect of provision.

152 The school has a policy for, and many schemes of work include a number of references to, sustainable development and global citizenship. Pupils are involved in a number of recycling activities and in the 'Woodland' project. As yet, the school has not gained any Eco-awards.

153 Overall, the school has planned a curriculum that reflects many of the national priorities. The school provides a good range of experiences for pupils and students, but there are shortcomings in the opportunities to:

- promote learners' bilingual skills and reflect the language and culture of Wales; and
- develop learners' independent learning skills.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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154 The grade we awarded does not agree with the grade 1 that the school awarded in its self-evaluation report. Our grading reflects shortcomings in some aspects of this key question and the resultant shortcomings in standards achieved by a number of pupils.

##### **The quality of care, support and guidance for learners**

155 The school is a caring community and the quality of care, support and guidance for learners has many good features, including:

- a clearly defined and effective pastoral care system;
- the effective co-operation with and the use made of a wide range of outside agencies;
- good arrangements for the transfer of pupils from primary schools;
- helpful guidance for pupils and students when they transfer to Y10, the sixth form and further or higher education;
- the good use made of the 'pupil's diary' that facilitates a regular dialogue between home and school;
- strong relationships with parents and the community;
- the School Council, which actively contributes in a positive manner to the life of the school;
- the prompt and sympathetic way that most incidents of bullying are dealt with;
- the support offered to younger pupils by those senior pupils who have been trained in counselling;
- the guidance for pupils provided by teachers and careers officers;
- the detailed monitoring of pupils' attendance;
- the school's pastoral work, which is enhanced and supported by the personal, social and health education programme;
- the effective procedures to deal with child protection issues;
- the clearly documented procedures for assuring pupils' well-being, and health and safety issues; and
- the good pastoral arrangements that have led to no pupils being permanently excluded in the last three years.

156 There are a few shortcomings, which include:

- minor issues related to health and safety reported to the school during the inspection;
- the new systems to monitor attendance, punctuality and behaviour that are not as yet fully embedded and are therefore not at their optimum effectiveness; and
- a feeling among a few pupils that there is pressure from other pupils not to try to achieve well.

### **The quality of provision for additional learning needs**

157 The quality of provision for additional learning needs has a number of good features, which include:

- the effective implementation of the Special Needs Code of Practice;
- a range of provision to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of special educational needs;
- good links with parents, primary schools and outside agencies;
- procedures that identify pupils who need extra help;
- individual educational, behavioural and pastoral plans that reflect well the pupils' identified needs and ensure that appropriate tasks are set;
- the successful monitoring and review of these plans;
- good basic literacy and curricular support;
- effective use of a computerised learning programme and other reading strategies to develop pupils' literacy skills;
- extensive and effective deployment of learning support assistants;
- opportunities for all pupils on the special educational needs register to gain external accreditation, through which the vast majority succeed;
- measures and support that enable pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties to come to terms with their special circumstances; and
- the school's inclusion unit that is used effectively to avoid excluding pupils and to give them opportunities to reflect on their behaviour.

158 Shortcomings in the effectiveness of the provision for additional learning needs are:

- the behaviour of pupils with emotional difficulties sometimes affects the progress of other pupils in some lessons;
- some large teaching groups that restrict progress; and
- support for developing number skills is not as well developed as that provided for literacy.

159 The Learning Support Centre and the Autistic Centre provide very well for pupils' individual needs. The integration programme for all these pupils is an outstanding feature. There are also many good features, which include:

- providing the highest standards of care and support;
- good links with parents and outside agencies;
- providing suitable individual educational programmes that include personal and social skills; and
- providing very good opportunities for external accreditation.

### **The quality of provision for equal opportunities**

160 The outstanding feature in the quality of provision of equal opportunities is the integration of all special needs pupils into the full life of the school.

161 The good features are that:

- all curricular provision is available to all pupils;
- pupils from ethnic and minority groups are happy and well integrated;

- all subject options at key stage 4 are open to boys and girls, and the school attempts to challenge stereotyping when advising pupils on their options;
- the school regularly monitors and compares the results of boys and girls, and a number of strategies are used well to respond to any situation that might arise;
- every pupil and student is given sensitive and effective support if problems arise in school or in the community;
- the school recognises pupils' varied social backgrounds and special educational needs, and provides a broad and flexible curriculum for them;
- the school provides good support and guidance for pupils who are in the care of the local authority;
- teachers and support staff respond quickly to any unfairness, discrimination or abuse suffered by pupils;
- the Progress Centre and the Anti-Bullying Crew Project do much to eliminate bullying;
- subjects in the curriculum successfully provide opportunities for pupils to learn about and discuss issues related to racism and human rights; and
- appropriate modifications to the buildings, to accommodate less mobile pupils, have been identified and most have been completed.

162 There is a shortcoming in that a few of the pupils who were interviewed indicated that bullying was a concern for them.

## Leadership and management

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

**Grade 2:** Good features and no important shortcomings

163 The grade we awarded matches that awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. Although this grade does not match the grade 3 awarded for key question 1, we felt that leadership and management had been more effective in raising standards in recent months and especially so since being restructured.

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

164 The leadership and management of the school have many good features. These include:

- the commitment of the headteacher to pursue his vision for the school: to help all learners to reach their full potential;
- regular reviews of the school's aims by staff and governors to ensure that they are appropriate for all concerned with the school;
- the promotion of these aims and values of the school by the headteacher and other members of the leadership group, through regular briefings, the full management forum, the learning forum and staff training sessions;
- the manner in which pastoral leaders and most heads of department promulgate a clear direction through regular team meetings;
- clear policies for equality of opportunity, the effectiveness of which can be seen in the inclusive ethos of the school and the exceptional provision for pupils with a very wide range of special educational needs;
- the robust and rigorous performance management system operated in the school;
- the professional development activities provided that are linked closely to performance management objectives;
- the strong links between some individual governors and departments;
- the clear vision of some heads of department for the direction of developments within their area of responsibility;
- a well-organised line-management system that uses senior personnel to best advantage;
- regular reviews of various whole school themes by the leadership team;
- a planned calendar of departmental monitoring activities, led by heads of department, that results in in-depth discussions with line managers;
- the thoroughness with which some middle managers engage in this annual cycle and the commitment they show in managing their departments;
- target-setting processes at whole-school, departmental and individual levels that are based upon a wealth of data and indicate 'must do' and more challenging targets;
- the governing body's increasingly effective role as a 'critical friend'; and
- the good relationships between all in the school that help make the school a pleasant environment in which to work and learn.

- 165 The quality of leadership and management at middle management level varies widely: from departments that are good with outstanding features to others where good features outweigh shortcomings.
- 166 The shortcomings include:
- lack of rigour in evaluating, managing and improving the performance of staff and pupils;
  - aiming for too easily achievable targets; and
  - failing to embed the Cwricwlwm Cymreig fully in schemes of work and to use Welsh incidentally in lessons and elsewhere in the school.
- 167 Senior managers and governors have set challenging aims and objectives for the school. They pursue these well and, together with most staff, have created an environment in which most pupils:
- are encouraged to achieve highly in all aspects of their work;
  - have opportunities to investigate issues of morality and to consider some aspects of spirituality; and
  - acquire many of the skills they need to play a full part in society locally, nationally and internationally.
- 168 The organisation of the curriculum and classes ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities and support to achieve to the best of their ability and commitment. No pupil is disadvantaged on the grounds of linguistic or cultural backgrounds.
- 169 Leaders and managers have taken good account of most national priorities, but the school's efforts to promote pupils' bilingualism are limited. The school enjoys some very good links with local primary schools. Links with other educational establishments, too, are often very successful. A good example is the collaborative teaching of a minority subject with local schools via video-conferencing and Internet links.
- 170 The annual performance management cycle provides a comprehensive review of the quality of the work of departmental teams and individuals. The development needs that are identified help to shape departmental development plans, and these, in turn, influence the school development plan. These systems of appraisal and monitoring generally work well, but their effectiveness in terms of raising standards of achievement is underdeveloped.
- 171 The school development plan focuses appropriately on priorities for improvement in standards and provision. Amongst these, areas for development are highlighted that match the recommendations we make in this report. Governors ensure that the school's spending is apportioned appropriately according to developmental priorities.
- 172 The restructuring of the workforce and the reorganisation of teaching and learning responsibilities have been completed successfully. The new arrangements have the support of the staff. The organisation of planning, preparation and assessment time is flexible and effective.

### **The extent to which governors meet their responsibilities**

- 173 The local community is well represented on the governing body. Governors bring a thorough understanding of local issues to the discussions on what the school should provide. They share with the headteacher and senior staff the high aspirations for teachers and pupils. They have helped set clear aims and objectives for the school. They understand their roles well and contribute effectively to strategic planning.
- 174 Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher of school performance and factors that affect it. Link governors are expected to monitor and report on issues from their assigned departments but this generally good arrangement does not always operate effectively. A range of appropriate committees addresses different aspects of school business, but this efficient system is occasionally hampered by difficulties in obtaining a quorum at some meetings.
- 175 The governing body provides a sense of direction for the school and has an important role in the school's self-evaluation. Whilst it is aware of its statutory obligations and works hard to ensure they are met, it has not yet succeeded in securing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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- 176 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade that managers awarded in their self-evaluation report.

### **How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated**

- 177 The systems that managers have organised to monitor how well the school is doing have many good features. These include:
- self-evaluation procedures that are linked with departmental development planning and performance management cycles;
  - a clear calendar of events for internal departmental monitoring;
  - a culture of data collection by senior managers and of using such information to evaluate change;
  - monitoring of whole-school themes by senior managers, outcomes of which are reported back to all staff and the governing body, with the intention of raising standards and improving provision;
  - evaluations based on first-hand evidence obtained during monitoring of departments by senior staff and occasionally through teachers observing each other's lessons;
  - a rigorous analysis of pupils' national test and examination results by senior managers;
  - the involvement of year councils and the sixth form leadership team in the process of listening to the views of learners;

- seeking the views of parents and carers to shape the development of a range of policies, such as those associated with drug abuse and the home-school agreement;
- considering the views of parents and carers via questionnaires on a wide range of topics;
- using the full management forum and the learning forum (now merged) to seek the views of all staff on major strategic decisions;
- the impact that the views of learners have had on school policy and practice, even including the funding of bids;
- the allocation of fair and realistic resources by the governing body to support developments; and
- the governing body's five-year strategic plan that has been developed in full consultation with staff at all levels.

178 As in key question 5, the shortcomings apparent in this area are due mainly to the variation in the quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation at departmental level.

179 These shortcomings occur because:

- there is no consistent mechanism to report on the internal monitoring of departments nor on its impact on learners; and
- middle managers are inconsistent in the way in which they monitor their individual of responsibility.

180 It is no surprise that those departments operating the best self-evaluation procedures tend to achieve the best standards in the school.

181 The school recognised that the format and manageability of pupil attainment data were not best suited to the school's requirements. It has, as a result, introduced a new and more informative system to support self-evaluation practice.

### **The effectiveness of planning for improvement**

182 There is a positive culture of improvement throughout the school, but it is not uniformly strong enough in all subject areas to promote higher standards overall. In-service training addresses the aspects of provision that managers seek to improve. Managers encourage teachers to improve their teaching and to help pupils to become more independent in their learning, but there is still room for improvement in this important aspect of teaching.

183 The school's self-evaluation document is detailed and comprehensive. It looks in depth at each of the seven key questions of the Estyn Framework. In each key question, managers:

- indicate an extensive list of sources from which they took their evidence;
- highlight what are considered to be the best aspects of standards or quality of provision; and
- identify aspects that need to be improved.

184 The features that are seen to be outstanding and good, together with areas needing improvement are summarised well in a short report.

- 185 The conclusions that the self-evaluation report reaches about the school are similar in most respects to the judgements we make in this report. There is, however, some variation in respect of the interpretation of the terms 'outstanding' and 'good'. The document usefully and accurately sets out what the school does well and in which respects it needs to develop.
- 186 The findings of the school's self-evaluation report, in terms of comments made, and of the inspection team match each other closely. Our grading was the same as that of the school in three key questions. However, in key questions 1, 3, 4 and 7, we differed by one grade, reasons for which are explained at the beginning of each section of the report.
- 187 Overall, the school has made good progress in dealing with the key issues of the previous inspection. Standards have improved in a number of subjects across the curriculum. Standards in information and communication technology have improved markedly across the curriculum. Progress has been made in using target setting to involve pupils more fully in their learning, but there remains room for further progress in this aspect. Teaching has improved overall and work is more effectively matched to pupils' prior attainment in many areas. The improvement in the accommodation for science is outstanding. Religious education is now provided for sixth form students, but, as indicated in the relevant sections of this report, the school still does not satisfy the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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- 188 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one lower than the grade 1 awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. The findings of the inspection team did not match a few of the judgements made by the school, with respect to the minor shortcomings in accommodation and in providing very good value for money.

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

- 189 The **staffing of the school** has good features and no important shortcomings.
- 190 There are sufficient members of staff for the school to run efficiently. Under 40% of the teaching staff have ten years experience or less. There are four newly qualified teachers. Good features of staffing can be summarised as:
- most teaching staff are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects and subjects to meet the needs of the curriculum ;
  - the business manager and administrative staff ensure that the office, reception and reprographics areas run efficiently;
  - technician support is good in science, design and technology, and information and communication technology;
  - forty-nine learning support staff provide good assistance in the special units and for the number of pupils with learning and behavioural problems. They make a

positive contribution, including monitoring pupils' attendance and pastoral needs, and work very effectively with teachers;

- four cover assistants look after classes for absent staff, otherwise they are deployed to support pupils in lessons;
- an outstandingly effective librarian ably promotes, co-ordinates and supervises the use of the library; and
- the business manager and the caretakers efficiently and effectively contribute to the maintenance and daily routines of the school.

191 The one shortcoming within staffing is that the school has experienced great difficulty in finding suitably qualified and capable staff to cover for those members of staff on maternity or long-term sickness leave. This has had an adverse effect on the continuity of learning experiences for a minority of pupils.

192 The quality and quantity of **learning resources** for key stages 3 and 4 have good features and no important shortcomings.

193 The good features include:

- a wide range of text books and equipment across the subject areas;
- more than seventy interactive white boards, which are used to enhance classroom teaching;
- the very good use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum, including visits abroad, trips to museums, art galleries, theatres, and field study trips;
- a comprehensive range of visiting speakers who enhance pupils' learning experiences; and
- the overall good provision of information and communication technology equipment throughout the school.

194 The shortcomings in resources for learning include:

- limitations in work with computer aided manufacturing because of the lack of a laser cutter; and
- the limited access to the information and communication technology rooms for some subjects across the curriculum.

195 In the sixth form, there is a good range and supply of textbooks and equipment.

196 The library is a very good learning resource centre with a wide range of facilities and is a strength of the school. The librarian ensures that the library supports the curriculum as a whole, and the development of literacy in particular, very well. It is open before and beyond the school day and is used by pupils well for independent learning and research, including at lunch and break times. However, the book stock is only about half that recommended for the size of the school roll.

197 The school occupies a very large open site adjacent to a sports complex. It is a sprawling series of inter-connecting buildings built on a hill, with several floors at varying levels and many staircases. Closed circuit television cameras aid security.

198 The **accommodation** has good features and no important shortcomings. It is adequate for the numbers of pupils and students on roll. It caters for the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum. The good features include:

- a new science block that has greatly enhanced the facilities;
- corridors and classrooms that have displays of pupils' work and subject information providing an effective, and sometimes stimulating, learning environment;
- a modern dining hall;
- subject based teaching rooms arranged in close proximity whenever possible;
- a number of previously unused areas that have been used creatively to provide extra facilities for both staff and pupils; and
- school grounds and buildings that are kept clean, well maintained and mostly litter free.

199 The shortcomings in accommodation (already recognised in the school's premises development plan) include:

- certain parts of the school that are dark and drab. Some of these areas do not have emergency lighting, which is a potential health and safety issue; and
- some rooms and workshops in design and technology, that are too small for the larger classes timetabled to use them, restricting the range of teaching methods and practical work.

200 Accommodation for the sixth form is adequate for both the academic and pastoral curricular needs. Students use a large study area within the library for independent learning and research, and have a new common room for their own use. Students also have study areas for independent work that have been created within subject suites.

### **How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money**

201 Overall, the deployment, management and development of staff have good features and no important shortcomings and are very effective. The good features include:

- the deployment of staff that makes good and efficient use of their time, expertise and experience;
- training activities that are well co-ordinated and linked to the professional development of staff, in line with performance management criteria, the school development plan and the needs of departments and individuals;
- courses that are attended, are evaluated and used to benefit the school; and
- programmes and support for newly qualified teachers and for initial teacher training colleagues that are very good, detailed and thorough.

202 The school has successfully completed plans for the workload agreement and has made provision in the timetable for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment.

203 The headteacher and leadership team have consulted all interested parties and, with the governing body's approval, have finalised their structure for the new teaching and learning responsibilities.

204 The financial management of the school is very good. The headteacher, business manager and the governing body's finance sub-committee manage the available budget effectively. The following good features are evident:

- the finance sub-committee meets regularly and receives detailed up-to-date reports from the business manager;
- financial decisions are well focused on the school's curricular needs and educational priorities as identified in the school's development plan;
- the school effectively pursues all available grants and sponsorships;
- the distribution of capitation to subject areas is effective and there are opportunities to bid for extra funds to introduce initiatives;
- the business manager handles the day-to-day running of the finances well;
- the headteacher and heads of department have spending commitments and current balances immediately available from the business manager, ensuring spending is closely and effectively monitored; and
- the minor recommendations of the last auditors' report have been addressed.

205 Overall, the school uses its finances and resources competently and achieves good value for money. One of the very good features is the achievement of pupils in the special units within the school structure. However, there are shortcomings in standards in some subjects – as highlighted within this report.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Mathematics

Key stage 3:	Grade 3	Good features outweigh shortcomings
Key stage 4:	Grade 3	Good features outweigh shortcomings
Post 16:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

#### Good features

##### Key stage 3

- 206 In recent years, the proportion of pupils gaining at least a level 5 in the national curriculum tests has been consistent. It is, however, below national averages.
- 207 Most Y7 pupils have a good basic knowledge of line symmetry and symmetry about a point. They can apply this knowledge to a variety of shapes.
- 208 In Y8, pupils have a clear understanding of the concepts of probability and can apply this to simple everyday situations. They are learning to deal with both positive and negative numbers.
- 209 Higher attaining Y9 pupils can express numbers in prime factor form and can apply this to find both the lowest common multiple and highest common factor of a group of numbers.
- 210 Most pupils have a sound knowledge of whole numbers, fractions and percentages, and the relationships between them.

##### Key stage 4

- 211 In recent years, the percentage of pupils gaining A\* - C grades in the GCSE examinations has improved, but is still below national averages.
- 212 Most Y10 pupils have a good knowledge of ratios and can apply this knowledge to everyday situations.
- 213 Generally, pupils have good spatial awareness and can apply this to calculating areas and volumes, using appropriate units.
- 214 Most pupils have a sound knowledge of basic algebraic expressions and can solve simple linear equations.

##### Key stages 3 and 4

- 215 Most pupils use calculators appropriately.
- 216 The majority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

##### Post 16

- 217 Y13 students have a very good understanding of a range of concepts in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics, and can adapt this knowledge to solve associated questions.

218 Y12 students are making sound progress in understanding the basic concepts of pure mathematics and statistics.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stage 3**

219 Pupils' mental mathematical skills are underdeveloped.

#### **Key stages 3 and 4**

220 In a majority of classes across the ability ranges, the higher attaining pupils are not always challenged in lessons and do not achieve their potential.

221 A minority of pupils do not always complete and present their work in a neat, logical way. They do not always correct work that is wrong.

222 A small minority of pupils lack confidence in their mathematical abilities.

223 Low-level chatter in a small number of classes restricts the rate of progress.

224 A small number of pupils do not listen effectively during lessons and this limits the achievement of the class.

#### **Post 16**

225 As a consequence of the open access to Y12, some students have basic weaknesses that have an adverse effect on their progress.

<b>Science</b>
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Key stage 3: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

Post 16: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

### **Good features**

#### **Key stage 3**

226 Just over half of the pupils have secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics.

227 Higher attaining pupils, and a few of average ability, have a secure recall of key concepts.

228 They can apply them to a range of problems in both familiar and unfamiliar situations.

229 Many pupils use scientific terms accurately in response to questions and when reporting on practical activities.

230 Most pupils have a good understanding of the link between scientific principles and applications of science in issues linked to the environment and healthy living.

231 Generally, pupils develop good practical skills, work safely and collaborate well in most situations.

232 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress relative to their ability.

#### **Key stage 4**

233 Higher attaining and a small minority of average ability pupils have good understanding of a range of more complex principles.

234 They have good recall of previous work and apply their knowledge to a range of tasks and applications.

235 A small majority of pupils develop a good understanding of the way that scientific developments have contributed to the development of industry, influenced the economy and affected the environment.

236 Most of the pupils entered for the higher tier GCSE examination produce good quality investigations.

237 Many pupils are able to carry out investigations competently, work systematically and write good quality reports. They use their knowledge and understanding to inform their planning and carry out appropriate preliminary work.

238 Pupils analyse their results using appropriate graphs and some of them rigorously assess the validity of their findings.

239 A small number of pupils have made good progress in the Applied Science course.

#### **Post 16**

240 More than half of the students in biology, chemistry and physics make good progress relative to their ability.

241 Some students have a good recall of key concepts and principles.

242 They are able to apply their theoretical knowledge and understanding to a range of problems across the three subjects.

243 Some students achieve good standards in practical work.

244 A small minority carry out independent work to develop and extend their understanding of the concepts being studied.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **Key stages 3 and 4**

245 In some classes, the unacceptable behaviour of a small number of pupils restricts the progress made by others.

246 A significant number of average and lower ability pupils have insecure recall and understanding of current and previous work.

247 They have difficulties on occasions applying scientific principles in both familiar and unfamiliar situations.

### **Key stage 3**

248 Pupils' investigative skills are not developed fully in many topics.

### **Key stage 4**

249 In reporting their investigative work, a minority of pupils fail to address the skill areas of planning, analysing and evaluating in sufficient depth to access the higher marks.

250 Some of the pupils following the Applied Science course do not complete certain elements of their portfolios in sufficient depth.

### **Post 16**

251 A number of students have insecure knowledge and understanding of current and previous work.

252 They have difficulty applying some of the more complex principles to tasks and practical applications.

253 A significant number of students do not work independently to consolidate their knowledge of the subject and they fail to reach their potential.

## **Design and technology**

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

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

Post 16: Grade 1 Good with outstanding features

### **Outstanding features**

#### **Post 16**

254 Students produce outstandingly innovative designs, reflecting very high levels of flair and imagination.

255 They show outstanding skills and resourcefulness in experimenting with, modifying and combining a broad range of materials in their product designs.

256 Students show outstanding graphical communication skills, using a very broad range of graphical techniques.

### **Good features**

#### **Key stage 3**

257 Pupils understand and apply design processes well in their project work.

258 Most pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating requirements. They can evaluate the properties of food effectively. They show good sensory skills and are developing a clear understanding of the nutritive values of food.

259 Almost all pupils show good practical skills across the material areas. For example, they use sewing machines accurately for seaming. They select and assemble electronic components well to produce good quality and innovative products.

- 260 Most pupils make good use of computers for design and use 2-dimensional design software and computer aided manufacturing equipment well in textiles, food and resistant materials.
- 261 Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and realise their potential.

#### **Key stage 4**

- 262 Pupils make effective use of design processes to guide their project work. Research work is relevant and well directed. The link between design specifications and evaluation is very well developed.
- 263 Most pupils' presentation skills are good in all material areas. Pupils use information and communication technology design packages effectively to enhance the research, design and presentation of their work.
- 264 Almost all pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials, processes and techniques are well developed.
- 265 In graphics products, most pupils have a good understanding of perspective and can use their knowledge and understanding well in designing a product such as a theatre set.
- 266 GCSE project work is often innovative and especially so in food and textiles technology.

#### **Post 16**

- 267 Students' knowledge of design work is good overall, showing an effective use of a design process to guide the development of their chosen products.
- 268 All students skilfully research the work of famous designers and chefs. They analyse and evaluate their design work and critically, but constructively, review their product outcomes to good effect. They effectively analyse the design specifications of commercial products and use their findings well as they plan and develop their ideas.
- 269 Students' projects are very often innovative, showing excellent planning and quality.
- 270 Good use is made of information and communication technology for a variety of purposes, including research, presentation and some embellishments of their products, using basic computer-aided manufacturing equipment.
- 271 Theoretical understanding is good in all areas, and particularly so in food and textiles work.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **Key stage 3**

- 272 A few pupils do not effectively evaluate their design outcomes against the original design specification.
- 273 A very small minority of pupils have limited creative design ideas and their developmental drawing skills are weaker than other elements of their designing.

#### **Key stage 4**

274 Pupils' design ideas rarely incorporate the use of metal and are overly focused on the use of one material, mainly wood, with some use of plastic, and then mostly for embellishment.

#### **Post 16**

275 Students' knowledge and use of computer-aided manufacturing equipment in product design is at a very basic level.

<b>Geography</b>
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Key stage 3:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key stage 4:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16:	Grade 3	Good features outweigh shortcomings

#### **Good features**

##### **Key stage 3**

276 Most pupils have a sound understanding of globalisation as applied to the fashion industry. They have an appreciation of the number and world distribution of countries involved in the manufacture and retailing of a single garment.

277 The majority of pupils have a good understanding of geographical terminology. Pupils in Y7 use terms such as referendum, Senedd and devolution with confidence in the completion of set tasks on the Welsh Assembly Government.

278 Pupils' familiarity with and knowledge of place is good. They can locate Wales on a world map and are able to name and locate the major member countries of the European Union.

279 The study of natural hazards demonstrates pupils' understanding of the relationship between mankind and the environment.

280 Most pupils can distinguish between and describe the three major settlement patterns. They possess a sound grasp of the functions of settlements and can relate this to real places.

##### **Key stage 4**

281 Most pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the processes of erosion associated with the work of rivers. They distinguish accurately between weathering and erosion.

282 Geographical skills such as investigation, analysis and recording are well developed, especially when applied to coursework assignments on the urban patterns and developments within the local area. Pupils' understanding of patterns and processes in human and physical geography is good.

- 283 The majority of pupils have a good knowledge of factors responsible for the large movement of people. The work contributes significantly to the pupils' understanding of issues associated with sustainable development and global citizenship.
- 284 Pupils demonstrate a sound grasp of the influence of factors such as latitude, proximity to the sea and altitude on the temperatures experienced in Britain.
- 285 Pupils understand the relationship between mankind and the environment, especially in relation to the problems caused by rapid population growth in urban areas.

### **Post 16**

- 286 Most students understand the term 'urbanisation' and can apply it accurately to their studies of population movement over time.
- 287 The majority of students have a good understanding of the contrasting pattern of urbanisation profile as applied to more economically developed countries and less economically developed countries.
- 288 Students display a good understanding of the causes of natural phenomena such as flooding, earthquakes, volcanoes and the impact and response of mankind to such disasters. They appreciate the fragile relationship between mankind and the environment in their study of the natural hazards module.
- 289 Many students' coursework assignments demonstrate good skills of investigation, recording, analysis and evaluation.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stage 3**

- 290 The work of a minority of pupils, especially the lower attaining, is often untidy and accompanied by some missing and incomplete work.

#### **Key stage 4**

- 291 The standards achieved by a minority of pupils are hampered by their inability to focus on the tasks in hand, resulting in missing or incomplete work.

#### **Post 16**

- 292 The work of a significant number of students lacks the depth of study and detail expected of AS and A Level students.
- 293 Standards are adversely affected by poor presentational and organisational skills, and in some instances, missing work.
- 294 The standard of work of a number of students is depressed by a lack of a positive attitude and commitment to work.

## Music

Key stage 3:	Grade 3	Good features outweigh shortcomings
Key stage 4:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

### Good features

#### Key stage 3

- 295 Pupils sing with pleasing tone, clear diction and secure intonation. Individual instrumental performances are technically accurate and most pupils can maintain a part in ensemble performance.
- 296 Throughout the key stage, pupils improvise and compose simple pieces of music successfully in response to a range of given stimuli. Some completed compositions are musically interesting.
- 297 In appraising tasks, pupils can recognise musical instruments, and some elements of music, and apply this knowledge in their oral and written responses.

#### Key stage 4

- 298 Pupils drawn from the full range of ability, sing and perform confidently on a range of instruments, individually and in ensembles.
- 299 Compositions demonstrate effective use of instruments and voices. They show a sound understanding of form and structure, within which there is a good development of musical ideas.
- 300 In appraising activities, pupils listen to a wide range of music and focus on the musical elements in their responses.

#### Post 16

- 301 Individual performances are of a high standard. They are fluent and convincing and demonstrate a mature understanding of style and period.
- 302 Many compositions show flair and imagination. Students have a good understanding of balance, form and structure. The harmonic language is interesting and there is variety in the instrumentation. All compositions are enhanced by effective use of information and communication technology.
- 303 Students have developed thinking skills through extended listening experiences. They show sound knowledge and understanding and make perceptive comments in their essays on the set works.

### Shortcomings

#### Key stages 3 and 4

- 304 The responses of a few pupils to appraising tasks are brief and superficial and do not focus on the musical elements.

### **Key stage 3**

- 305 In certain Y7 classes, the intonation and diction of boys is insecure and in instrumental ensemble work a few pupils are unable to keep in time to a common pulse.
- 306 Some improvisations and compositions are short and limited in musical interest.

### **Post 16**

- 307 No significant shortcomings.

<b>Religious education (including religious studies)</b>
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Key stage 3:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key stage 4:	Grade 1	Good with outstanding features
Post 16:	Grade 1	Good with outstanding features

### **Outstanding features**

#### **Key stage 4**

- 308 In the full GCSE course, the pace of work is such that progress is rapid, and by the end of the units of work studied, pupils demonstrate very high levels of knowledge and understanding of the concepts underlying major world religions.
- 309 The ability to evaluate and reflect is highly developed, so that pupils express their own views intelligently and at length, and can support their arguments with good evidence.

#### **Post 16**

- 310 Y13 students, in their written work on abstract ideas, show considerable depth of understanding, making very good references to Biblical evidence, examples and scholarly opinions.
- 311 Students are able to select and present relevant factual information, ideas, descriptions and arguments in a highly organised manner.

### **Good features**

#### **Key stages 3 and 4**

- 312 In both key stages, pupils across the ability range have a good knowledge of Christianity and the diversity of the Christian traditions within their own community.
- 313 They have developing knowledge and understanding of other faiths practised in Wales, through exploring living practices and worship patterns.
- 314 Pupils can recognise technical terms in religion and effectively explain their meaning both orally and in their written work.
- 315 Pupils with special educational needs are competent in recalling factual information from previous learning.

- 316 In key stage 4, pupils show increasing ability to apply knowledge of religious practice in different contexts.
- 317 They understand that religions raise moral and social questions within different communities. In responding to these, most show respect to beliefs that often differ from their own.

### **Post 16**

- 318 Students achieve well and are able to articulate their views with confidence.
- 319 They show good understanding and judgement in their critical analysis of the Utilitarianism theory, and evaluate its usefulness as a philosophy for life.
- 320 Y12 students are developing the ability to analyse and evaluate information they have collected from different sources.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stages 3 and 4**

- 321 Pupils do not always extend their knowledge and understanding through discussion.
- 322 Pupils do not develop independent learning skills to explore and evaluate the topics they study.

#### **Post 16**

- 323 A few Y12 students are reluctant to offer personal views or to use independent thought to evaluate effectively views of scholars and various schools of thought.

## **School's response to the inspection**

We are happy with the many positive aspects of the school identified in the report. We were pleased to see that the report highlights many strengths in governance, management, teaching and support systems and praises the great majority of pupils for their considerate, cooperative nature, their good behaviour, their productive work and their positive attitude, particularly towards the inclusion of disadvantaged or vulnerable students.

The school nevertheless recognises from its own self-evaluation that there are shortcomings in the standards achieved by some learners and has put in place a set of strategies to lift performance levels. These include targeted support for middle ability students; changes to the pastoral system to give stronger support for academic attainment; and new arrangements for monitoring the work of departments and students.

We were pleased that our self-evaluation had already recognised the identified shortcomings, and that the recommendations at the end of the inspection report are fully accounted for in the school's development plan and in the performance management targets for teaching staff.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Pembroke School (Ysgol Penfro)
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18
Address of school	Bush Pembroke Pembrokeshire
Postcode	SA71 4RL
Telephone number	01 646 68 24 61

Headteacher	Mr Frank Ciccotti
Date of appointment	September 1997
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs M E Thomas
Reporting inspector	Mr Brian Medhurst
Dates of inspection	30 October 2006 – 2 November 2006

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	246	268	266	319	278	133	84	1594

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	83	8	87.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	18.5 : 1
Average teaching group size	23.8
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	78

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	90.6	89.2	88.1	87.8	89.5	91.6	79.4	88.7
Term 2	90.4	89.4	87.5	84.5	89.2	68.2	65.5	85.2
Term 3	91.0	90.8	89.1	88.0	73.4	91.8	88.1	86.8

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	20.3
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	90

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006														
Total number of pupils in Y9: 286														
Percentage of pupils at each level														
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	32	37	23	2	0
		National	0.2	0.7	1.2	0.4	0.3	1.5	7.5	20.9	35.2	23.6	8.30	0.1
	Test	School	0	14	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	21	25	20	6	n/a
		National	0.3	3.8	2.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.4	19.3	33.9	22.7	10.0	n/a
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	4	0	0	1	11	23	21	30	9	0
		National	0.2	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.7	6.2	17.9	24.5	32.5	15.4	0.4
	Test	School	0	14	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	23	18	27	10	n/a
		National	0.3	5.2	1.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.7	16.7	20.1	34.9	16.4	n/a
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	3	1	0	2	9	25	35	20	5	0
		National	0.2	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.5	6.2	19.2	33.0	27.1	11.5	0.1
	Test	School	0	11	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	7	18	34	22	6	n/a
		National	0.3	4.1	1.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.1	18.1	31.4	27.1	12.9	n/a

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and English			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	47	In the school	42
In Wales	58	In Wales	57

**Public Examination Results:**

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ</b>	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	296
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	33

<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:</b>	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	82	89	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	42	58	53
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	79	87	86
attained GCSE grades A* to C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	30	40	39
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	93	99	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A* to C or the vocational qualification equivalent	67	80	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A* to G or the vocational qualification equivalent	92	96	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	8	4	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	3	3	3

<b>For students aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2006	203
Number of students entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006	78
Number of students entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006	20

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of students entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	63	69	68
Percentage of students entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	95	93	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	17	20	20

UA Unitary Authority

## Appendix 4

### **Evidence base of the inspection**

Sixteen inspectors (including the school's nominee and the peer assessor) spent the equivalent of 51 days at the school.

145 lessons were observed, covering all areas of the curriculum.

Inspectors attended assemblies, tutorial sessions, registrations, and observed a range of extracurricular activities.

Inspectors held many discussions with the headteacher, members of the school's leadership team, heads of department, staff with whole-school responsibilities, and members of support staff.

The registered inspector and a colleague inspector met with the governing body prior to the inspection week and they reported the main findings to them following the inspection.

Work across the curriculum, from representative pupils from each year group, was examined. Pupils' work was also scrutinised elsewhere and during lesson observations.

Inspectors held formal discussions with groups of pupils and students selected from Y7 to Y13. They also talked with many learners informally.

Prior to the inspection, the registered inspector met the staff.

Eleven parents of pupils attended the pre-inspection meeting. Twenty-one replies to the questionnaire were received and analysed. A few parents also wrote to the registered inspector.

Comprehensive documentation, including the school's self-evaluation report, was scrutinised before, during and after the inspection period in school.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
Mr Brian W Medhurst Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 2, 5, 6
Dr Michael H L Snow Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4, 5
Mr Glyn Davies	Key Question 3; Sixth form co-ordination; Science
Mr Alan Edwards	Key Question 7; Contribution to Key Question 1; Mathematics
Mrs Anne Newman	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 3
Mr Heddwyn Evans	Key Question 4; Contribution to Key Question 3; History
Mrs Mary Crandon	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3
Mr Keith Hopkins	Contribution to Key Question 1; Design and technology
Mrs Margaret Herbert	Contribution to Key Question 1; Design and technology
Mr Huw Llewelyn	Geography
Mrs Susan Lloyd Williams	Music
Mrs Elizabeth Hinkley	Support role; Contribution to Key Question 1
Mr David Jones	Support role; Science
Mr Martyn Williams	Support role
Mrs Ann Preece	School's nominee
Mr Robert Davies	Peer assessor

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