

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

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

**Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School  
Coed Cae Ddu Road  
Pontllanfraith  
NP12 2YB**

**School Number: 6764032**

**Date of Inspection: 13 – 16 November 2006**

**by**

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8205**

**Date of Publication: 2 February 2007**

**Under Estyn contract number: 1201306**

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- \* secondary schools;
- \* special schools;
- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
- \* adult community-based learning;
- \* youth support services;
- \* LEAs;
- \* teacher education and training;
- \* work-based learning;
- \* careers companies; and
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Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School took place between 13/11/06 and 16/11/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Miss Glynis Owen 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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Report by Miss Glynis Owen  
Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School, 13/11/06

## **Context**

### **The nature of the provider**

1. Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School is an 11-16, mixed, community school maintained by Caerphilly County Borough Council. There are 845 pupils on roll, a similar figure to that of the previous inspection in October 2000.
2. Pupils come from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds; the overall profile is very close to that nationally. Seventeen per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, compared to 16.6% nationally, and compared to 21% of pupils at the school at the time of the last inspection.
3. Pupils represent the full range of ability. On site, there is a secondary specialist resource base (SSRB), which caters for about 50 pupils with statements of special educational need (SEN), from across the borough. These pupils are registered at the school. Thus the number of pupils with statements of SEN (67) is higher than the proportion in most schools. An additional 104 pupils, in the main school, have been identified as needing some support.
4. The vast majority of pupils comes from English-speaking homes; a few pupils speak Welsh as their first language. A small number of pupils comes from minority ethnic groups. Three pupils currently receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
5. Vocational pathways are being formed with other providers in the area and the school works closely with tertiary colleges for students' education post-16.
6. Since the last inspection, there has been a change of leadership. The headteacher took up her post in September 2004, having previously been deputy headteacher at the school since 2000. The deputy headteacher, appointed from outside the school, took up his post in January 2005. The three assistant headteachers were in post at the time of the last inspection.
7. There have been two periods of industrial action at the school in recent months. From 28 April – 7 June, there was non-strike action and from 2 October – 23 October, there was strike action which closed the school for six days.

### **The school's priorities and targets**

8. The school has five aims, to:
  - provide a safe, secure and happy environment for learning;
  - recognise and value each individual's abilities and maximise their potential;
  - promote individuals' self-worth and confidence and celebrate their success;
  - create enthusiastic learners for life; and
  - develop a strong sense of community, both inside and outside the school.

9. Its school transformation plan is based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework.
10. Numerical targets are set, that in 2007:
  - 56% of pupils should reach at least level five in all three core subjects combined, in the national curriculum (NC) tests at the end of key stage (KS) 3; and
  - 53% of pupils should achieve at least five grades A\*-C, and 88% at least five grades A\*-G in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations.

## Summary

11. Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School has shortcomings in important areas, in standards of achievement, in the quality of education and in leadership and management.
12. The school is currently not moving forward corporately, nor at an appropriate pace, to eliminate these important shortcomings.
13. In accordance with the Education Act 2005, I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.
14. However, it has outstanding features in its provision in the SSRB and in physical education, for the school and community. It has predominantly good features in some other aspects of provision and practice.

### Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
1. How well do learners achieve?	4
2. How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	4
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?	4
5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?	4
6. How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	4
7. How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	4

15. These grades are lower than those which the school awarded itself, in its self-evaluation report, in each of the seven key questions, by one, two or three grades.

### Standards of achievement

16. Results in the NC tests at the end of KS3 have been better than results in the GCSE examinations. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement, at the same rate as nationally, in the percentage of pupils reaching at least level five in all three subjects combined.
17. Results have been below the national average, but in comparison to schools with a similar intake, results have ranged from below to above average.
18. However, at GCSE, results have fluctuated since the last inspection and have declined in the percentage of one or more and five or more grades A\*-C and A\*-

G. Results are now below national and local averages, and in the lowest quartile compared to similar schools, in most indicators.

19. Ten out of just over 160 pupils in each year group are based in the SSRB. Whilst their achievement is outstanding, their attainment level impacts slightly on the above comparisons, but not to the extent that it explains the school's underperformance at GCSE.
20. The percentage entered for one and five subjects at GCSE, and for the core subjects, is well below that locally and nationally. Consequently, the percentage gaining any GCSEs, five GCSEs and success in the core subjects is much lower than in similar schools. Expectations are not high enough. Too many pupils leave school without GCSE, Entry-level or equivalent qualifications, especially boys.
21. The good feature is the percentage of grades A\* and A, which has been above the national average in most years. Also, results in some foundation subjects have been good.
22. In the six subjects inspected, the following grades were awarded:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>KS3</b>	<b>KS4</b>
English	2	3
Mathematics	3	4
Design and Technology	2	2
History	3	2
Modern Foreign Languages	3	2
Art	3	3

23. There are no important shortcomings in English and design and technology at KS3, and in design and technology, history and modern foreign languages at KS4. Good features outweigh shortcomings in other subjects and key stages overall, except for mathematics at KS4, where there are shortcomings in important areas. However, in some classes in subjects and key stages graded 3 overall, there are shortcomings in important areas.
24. The following grades were awarded for standards of achievement in the 65 lessons observed in the six subjects:

<b>Key Stage</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	0%	36%	49%	15%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	0%	46%	46%	8%	0%
<b>KS3 &amp; KS4</b>	0%	40%	48%	12%	0%

25. These grades fall well short of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) targets for 2007, that 65% of lessons should be graded 1 or 2, and 98% should be graded 3 and above. They are also well below those in the latest national

comparison. In all inspections in Wales, in 2004-2005, 60% of lessons at KS3 and KS4 were graded 1 or 2, and 94% were graded 3 and above.

26. Whilst the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures are lower. At that time, 99% of lessons were graded 3 and above, compared to 88% now and 50% were graded 1 or 2, compared to 40% now.
27. The long-term or recurring absences of a number of staff is a significant problem. Nine were absent during the inspection. Lack of continuity in temporary staffing arrangements has been another factor in the adverse effects on progress in some classes in English, science, music, drama and modern foreign languages.
28. There were no outstanding features in standards achieved in lessons in the six subjects, in this inspection. In the SSRB, in physical education and in a small minority of lessons in other subjects, pupils make outstanding progress.
29. Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' key skills of communication and numeracy. The school gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are good and the majority of pupils in year (Y) 9 gains accreditation in ICT (key skills), at level 1.
30. Not all pupils at KS4 develop their bilingual skills because statutory requirements are not met for Welsh second language provision. Twenty-two per cent of pupils achieved a grade A\*-G in Welsh second language at GCSE in 2006, compared to 62% nationally. Standards in bilingualism are better at KS3.
31. Pupils are friendly and engage well with visitors. However, standards of behaviour, in class in particular, are an important shortcoming. The excessive number of incidents of misbehaviour, logged during September and October, and standards observed during the inspection, attest to the disruption to learning caused by pupils' behaviour. A significant minority shows a lack of respect for their teachers and for their fellow pupils, who are frustrated by the disruption.
32. Many pupils are not disruptive but there is a significant minority, among these pupils, which is passive and does not devote full attention to learning in class. They also underachieve.
33. The absence rate of a significant number of pupils, particularly at KS4, is another important shortcoming. Whole-school attendance is below the latest national comparator of 90.7%. It is also well below the WAG target for 2007, that absenteeism should be below 7%.
34. Pupils who take part in extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports, visits abroad, and a number of lunch-time and after-school clubs gain much from these experiences, in their personal and social development. Pupils in the SSRB make outstanding progress in personal, social and learning skills.

35. Careers guidance and work-related education prepare pupils well for opportunities post-16, in education or training.

### **The quality of education and training**

36. The following grades were awarded for teaching in the 65 lessons observed in the six subjects, and in the 59 lessons observed in all other subjects:

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>6 subjects</b>	3%	43%	43%	9%	2%
<b>Other subjects</b>	8%	29%	46%	14%	3%
<b>Total</b>	6%	36%	44%	12%	2%

37. Forty-two per cent of lessons were graded 1 or 2, compared to 81% in all inspections in Wales, in the last year for which figures are available (2004-2005). In 14% of lessons observed during this inspection, there were shortcomings in important areas, compared to 3% nationally.
38. Whilst the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures are lower. At that time, 58% of lessons were graded 1 or 2, and 97% were graded 3 and above.
39. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of the interactive-whiteboard facilities in every classroom. Lessons are clearly planned, but the best efforts of teachers are often undermined by the need to control pupils' behaviour. However, in a considerable number of lessons, there are shortcomings in the teaching, in not challenging nor encouraging pupils to do better. Expectations are not high enough.
40. The quality of assessment varies between subjects and classes, with some very good examples of detailed feedback to pupils, and some cursory marking. Targets are set in some subjects, but not in others. In general, pupils are not sufficiently motivated to do better, because they do not receive enough recognition of success, nor have ways forward identified, for further improvement.
41. The curriculum offers a fair range of options at KS4, with good links to other providers to extend choices, but with few vocationally-based courses in school. Links with primary schools are good and ensure smooth transition and continuity in the curriculum. Induction programmes are good for those new to the school. Personal and social education (PSE-citizenship) is well planned. However, homework is not set consistently enough to extend learning adequately in all subjects.
42. The planning and monitoring of cross-curricular provision to develop pupils' ICT skills are good. There is insufficient co-ordination to develop communication and numeracy skills.

43. Pupils' additional learning needs are clearly identified, and provision is generally good. Learning support assistants (LSAs) provide effective support in class. There are good links to external support agencies.
44. However, pupils, in general, do not receive enough individual pastoral care to encourage and support their learning. Relationships between some teachers/form tutors and pupils are distant. Whilst some pupils at KS4 are regularly mentored by business partners in the community, and by the school, pupils in general do not receive enough individual attention, from the school, in monitoring their progress.
45. Pupils' awareness of others' needs is fostered through assemblies, citizenship and a range of lessons. Assemblies seen were of good quality but no act of worship took place in some tutor groups. Thus statutory requirements are not met. A few racist incidents have occurred, but have not been adequately logged, investigated and reported to the appropriate authority. Legal requirements in this area are not met.

### **Leadership and management**

46. There is not, currently, a strong, corporate ethos of learning and achievement, with which everyone in the school identifies, and of which everyone is proud. Communication between the headteacher and staff is not effective in sharing vision about the future development of the school nor in fostering a sense of common purpose.
47. Policies have been written and systems set up, but these are not having sufficient impact on practice. The voice of staff, pupils and parents has not contributed to the self-evaluation arrangements effectively, and monitoring has not been sufficiently rigorous. As a result, the extent of shortcomings has not been recognised. The grades for the school's self-evaluation report were unrealistically high.
48. Some pupils interviewed, and, to a much greater extent, parents in the pre-inspection meeting and in the responses to the questionnaire, indicated that they have significant concerns about the school.
49. The school's transformation plan does not prioritise the elimination of shortcomings in important areas, nor give detailed planning about how this will be achieved. Nor does it link adequately to departmental plans.
50. The role of each member of the senior leadership team has been redefined in the new management structure. Whilst there are some imbalances, such as the management of all faculties allocated to one person, there is evidence of initial progress in a number of initiatives. However, the senior leadership team does not operate as a team in critical debate to determine priorities, and in driving forward on an agreed agenda of priorities for school improvement.
51. Governors are pro-active and supportive of school activities. They are involved in strategic planning and are beginning to link with faculties, in order to gain first-

hand evidence of the school's performance. However, they are not yet acting objectively enough as 'critical friends' of the school. Until recently, the chairing of their finance committee by the business manager contravened the WAG regulations for maintained schools.

52. The workload agreement was successfully implemented. The recent workforce re-modelling has introduced a new management structure, which is at an early stage of development. There has not yet been sufficient continuing professional development (CPD) in leadership, for all middle managers. The process of workforce re-modelling has adversely affected staff morale and pupils' learning.
53. The quality of middle management is variable. There are outstanding features in a few areas, predominantly good features in a larger minority and some shortcomings in a significant number. Self-evaluation grades are unrealistically high, monitoring of practice is not rigorous enough and does not lead to detailed planning for improvement. In general, there is not a sufficiently self-critical culture.
54. There has been good progress in implementing most of the WAG priorities. Partnerships have been established, personal, social and work-related education have been planned effectively, sustainable development is a high priority, and healthy living is promoted, particularly through the physical education partnerships. The school gained the healthy schools' award in 2004.
55. There is also established good practice in the provision for pupils with additional learning needs, in transition arrangements and in work-related education.
56. Apart from in Welsh second language, there are sufficient, qualified teachers to cover the curriculum, supported by a substantial number of learning support assistants. The deployment of staff results in a number of excessively large classes in a range of subjects. This adversely affects learning in those groups.
57. There is a good range of learning resources, of good quality, across the school, which is benefiting pupils' learning. Substantial investment in ICT has taken place and the computer to pupil ratio is good. The Learning Resource Centre (LRC) provides good access to computers, but not to a range of up-to-date fiction.
58. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. Facilities for physical education are very good. The SSRB provides a very attractive and inviting learning environment, in contrast to some other areas of the school. The totally inadequate toilet facility in the SSRB has been recognised and funding has been very recently provided to extend facilities.
59. Structures are in place to monitor and track the budget, and the day-to-day management is tight. With agreement from the Unitary Authority (UA), the school is running a deficit budget and has estimated that substantial savings will have to be made in the next two years, if serious financial difficulty is to be avoided.

60. In its use of resources, and in its outcomes in terms of standards and examination results, the school does not currently give value for money.

**Progress since the last inspection**

61. With regard to the key issues from the last report, the school has made progress in:
- raising standards of achievement in ICT;
  - improving results in the KS3 NC tests; and
  - reporting to parents.
62. However, pupils' attendance, GCSE results, and the grades for standards and teaching awarded in this inspection are all lower than in the previous inspection. Target-setting is still inconsistent and statutory requirements are not met for the daily act of collective worship.

## Recommendations

In order to bring about the necessary improvement, the school should focus on the following priorities, from the targets relating to the seven key questions, in its transformation plan.

R1. Develop a shared vision of the school with staff, pupils and parents, and work together, at all levels of management, to monitor the quality of practice and plan for improvement.

R2. Improve behaviour.

R3. Improve standards and examination results, eliminating the shortcomings identified in this report.

R4. Improve the overall quality of teaching and learning, by eliminating shortcomings and sharing best practice.

R5. Improve attendance.

R6. Meet all legal and statutory requirements.

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 4 : Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

63. The school awarded itself a grade 3 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees, because there are shortcomings in important areas. These are:
- GCSE results;
  - standards of achievement in lessons observed;
  - standards of behaviour; and
  - pupils' attendance.

#### Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

64. Results in the NC tests at the end of KS3 have improved since the last inspection, at the same rate as nationally. In 2006, 53% of pupils reached at least level five, in all three subjects combined, compared to 58% nationally. Results in the previous two years were very similar.
65. Results in each of the three core subjects have improved since the last inspection, though they all remain below the national averages. Performance in English in 2005 was good, and very close to the national average, though there has been a significant gender gap, as nationally. In mathematics and science, there are fluctuations in performance between girls and boys.
66. In comparison with schools of a similar intake, results have improved from the lowest quartile in all indicators in 2003, to below average and, in some indicators, above average in the last three years. Performance in English has been the strongest of the three core subjects.
67. However, this improvement has not been sustained into KS4 results. Whilst the attainment of the 10 pupils in the SSRB has a slight impact on comparisons with other schools, it does not adequately explain the school's underperformance at GCSE.
68. The important shortcomings are the percentage of pupils:
- entered for one and five GCSEs;
  - entered for the core subjects;
  - gaining at least one graded GCSE; and
  - leaving school without any GCSE, Entry-level or equivalent qualifications.
69. These figures are well below both local and national averages.
70. Seventy-five per cent of pupils are entered for five or more GCSEs, compared to 87% locally and nationally, and 87% are entered for one GCSE, compared to 94% and 95% respectively. In the last three years, on average, 75% of pupils

have been entered for GCSE in science, 80% in mathematics, and just over 80% in English, compared to about 90% locally and nationally.

71. Consequently, results are below or well below results locally and nationally. Twenty-one per cent of pupils in 2005, and 14% in 2006 did not achieve any GCSE qualifications, compared to 7% nationally. Of these, 13% of pupils, in 2005, and 8% in 2006, left school without any GCSE, Entry-level or other equivalent qualification, compared to 4% nationally. Significantly more boys leave without qualifications than girls.
72. Performance in the core subjects is also low. In the last three years, on average, 74% of pupils have obtained a grade at GCSE in science, 78% in mathematics and 82% in English, compared to about 88%, in each subject, locally and nationally.
73. The low entry also affects the performance of a wider ability group of pupils. Seventy-five per cent of pupils gained at least five grades A\*-G in 2006, compared to 86% locally and nationally. Underachievement is linked to both lower-ability pupils and those of average ability. Forty-one per cent gained at least five grades A\*-C, in 2006, compared to 46% locally and 53% nationally.
74. The most able, however, do well at GCSE. The percentage of grades A\* and A has been above the national average, in each of the last three years. Nevertheless, there is variation in success between subjects, with strongest performance in history, geography, physical education, information technology, and, for the very small numbers involved, in modern foreign languages and Welsh second language.
75. Performance at the higher grades is low in the core subjects. On average, in the last three years, 34% of pupils have gained a grade A\*-C in science, compared to 48% nationally, and 36% in mathematics, compared to 50% nationally. Girls have underperformed, comparatively, to a greater extent than boys. By contrast, girls' results in English are good but boys' results are significantly lower. Thirty-two per cent of boys gained a grade A\*-C in English in 2005, compared to 46% nationally. There was a marked improvement in 2006.
76. By comparison to schools with a similar intake, results at KS4 over the last four years have placed the school in the lowest quartile in virtually all indicators. Results were highest in 2002, but are now lower than at the time of the last inspection, though, nationally, they have improved. In particular, the percentage gaining a grade A\*-C and A\*-G in one or more and five or more subjects has dropped. Nevertheless, there was a slight improvement in results in 2006, over those in 2005 and 2004.
77. The school has not met its targets at GCSE, based on pupils' prior attainment.
78. There are no important shortcomings in English and design and technology at KS3, and in design and technology, history and modern foreign languages at KS4.

79. Good features outweigh shortcomings overall in mathematics, history, modern foreign languages and art at KS3, and in English and art at KS4. However, there is inconsistency between classes, and in some classes - in mathematics, history, modern foreign languages and art at KS3 - there are shortcomings in important areas.
80. In mathematics at KS4, there are shortcomings in important areas.
81. In the 65 lessons observed in these subjects, the following grades were awarded:

Key Stage	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>KS3</b>	0%	36%	49%	15%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	0%	46%	46%	8%	0%
<b>KS3 &amp; KS4</b>	0%	40%	48%	12%	0%

82. These grades fall well short of the WAG targets for 2007, that 65% of lessons should be graded 1 or 2, and 98% should be graded 3 and above. They are also well below those in all inspections in Wales in 2004-5, when 60% of lessons were graded 1 or 2, and 94% were graded 3 and above.
83. Whilst the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures are lower. At that time, 99% of lessons were graded 3 and above, compared to 88% now and 50% were graded 1 or 2, compared to 40% now.
84. The long-term or recurring absences of a number of staff is a significant problem. Nine were absent during the inspection. Lack of continuity in temporary staffing arrangements has been another factor in the adverse effects on progress in some classes in English, science, music, drama and modern foreign languages.
85. In no lesson observed were there outstanding features. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough in a substantial proportion of lessons, and the need to control behaviour often stifles the amount of creative work which is accomplished.
86. The clear exceptions are the SSRB and physical education, which were not part of the sample of six subjects. In these areas, expectations are high and pupils' progress has outstanding features. In particular, pupils succeed regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background.
87. Pupils' communication skills have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Standards of listening vary substantially between classes, because of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are generally articulate, though a significant minority is passive and does not engage fully in class, nor use extended speech. Reading is generally good, and standards improve among those who have reading difficulties, through targeted support. Standards in writing vary. The most able write fluently, with a good level of technical accuracy. There are gaps in some

pupils' work and evidence of technical inaccuracies, but, overall, writing is better than speaking and listening.

88. Standards in numeracy also have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Pupils can apply numbers in a variety of formats, but their recall of previously acquired techniques is hesitant.
89. Standards in ICT are good and have improved since the last inspection. The timetabled provision at KS3 develops their skills and the majority is successful in gaining accreditation at level one in ICT. Standards are also good in cross-curricular usage, which is well planned and monitored. At KS4, a significant number gains qualifications in ICT.
90. Pupils generally co-operate well in pairs and groups, in creative and problem-solving opportunities.
91. Bilingual skills are generally good at KS3. Skills are developed through lessons in Welsh second language, and some pupils and staff make use of Welsh in conversation. At KS4, not all pupils receive their entitlement, so bilingual skills do not develop effectively. Twenty-two per cent of pupils achieved a grade A\*-G in Welsh second language at GCSE in 2006, compared to 62% nationally.
92. In 2002, the school gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

### **Their progress in learning**

93. The extent to which pupils make good progress varies between subjects and classes within subjects. In the six subjects inspected, where there are no important shortcomings, pupils of differing abilities generally do well. There is also good performance in a number of option groups, where pupils achieve well at GCSE.
94. The most able achieve well in public examinations, in specific classes when expectations are high and learning is not disrupted, and in extended written work. The gifted and talented scheme has identified their needs and provided some extension activities, but these are not in all subjects, nor is their effectiveness adequately monitored. Overall, the most able are not sufficiently challenged in a significant number of classes across the curriculum, particularly when behaviour disrupts learning. The excessive number of pupils in some top sets restricts the progress of individuals.
95. Pupils of average to lower ability, especially boys, underachieve overall, though, in specific classes when expectations are high, they do well. A significant number of pupils is not fully engaged in learning, attendance patterns are erratic, behaviour disrupts learning and progress is not adequately monitored, nor short-term successes celebrated.
96. Pupils with SEN in the SSRB make outstanding progress. In the main school, pupils with additional learning needs generally achieve well, particularly when there is learning support available, but less so in the discrete class in each year

at KS3. Pupils with support in English as an additional language make good progress.

97. Pupils, in general, do not receive sufficient, regular feedback on their progress to know how well they are doing and what to do to improve, though there are good examples of practice in English, history and geography. Individuals at KS4 receive regular mentoring from members of the business community, and a small group receives some mentoring from within the school.

### **The development of their personal, social and learning skills**

98. Pupils are friendly and engage well with visitors. However, standards of behaviour in class represent an important shortcoming. Improving behaviour is the key priority for the school. During September and October, 511 incidents of misbehaviour were logged, an excessive number and a further increase on the 372 logged at the same period of the previous year. A significant minority of pupils shows lack of respect for teachers and disrupts their own learning and that of others. Pupils are frustrated by the disruption caused, as are staff and a significant proportion of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaires and came to the meeting.
99. Many pupils are not disruptive, but among this group is a significant minority which is passive and not fully engaged in learning. They also underachieve. When they are fully challenged, pupils respond very well and standards improve significantly.
100. Behaviour around the school is orderly overall, though boisterous at times.
101. The overall attendance rate, over the three terms last year, was 86.9%. Up to May 31<sup>st</sup>, it was 88.5%, which compares unfavourably with the latest national comparator of 90.7%, but is not far below the local average of 88.7%. Both figures are well short of the WAG target for 2007, that absence should be less than 7%.
102. A significant minority of pupils is not punctual to school in the morning, and the distances between buildings on the site mean that lessons cannot begin promptly. However, the large majority of pupils arrives within reasonable time.
103. Pupils who take part in the extra-curricular activities in sport, in a range of clubs in subjects across the curriculum, and in visits, benefit in terms of their personal, social and wider development. Those in the SSRB make outstanding progress. In the main school, most pupils have good social skills but these are not promoted sufficiently and the frustration over disruption to learning is having an adverse effect on the school community.
104. It is also having an effect on pupils' personal, especially moral development. Assemblies and lessons in PSE (citizenship) and in some other subjects make a particularly good contribution to pupils' moral development. The lack of an act of collective worship in some tutor groups is a missed opportunity to promote pupils' spiritual development.

105. The absence of extra-curricular activities in drama, and in music and drama combined, limits pupils' cultural development in this field. Pupils learn of cultural diversity in a range of other subjects, and many show an appreciation of difference.
106. Careers guidance and work-related education are of good quality and prepare pupils well for opportunities post-16. However, too many pupils leave school without qualifications and without sufficiently positive attitudes to lifelong learning.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

107. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees because there are shortcomings in important areas in both teaching and in the use of assessment. These are:

- an over-reliance on teachers' presentation, with insufficient opportunities for pupils to explore ideas, share viewpoints or solve problems;
- ineffective management of pupils' behaviour;
- low expectations, and a slow pace in a significant minority of lessons, which do not challenge pupils and allow them to make appropriate progress; and
- inconsistent use of the school's assessment for learning policy.

108. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in the lessons observed during the inspection.

124 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>6 subjects</b>	3%	43%	43%	9%	2%
<b>Other subjects</b>	8%	29%	46%	14%	3%
<b>Total</b>	6%	36%	44%	12%	2%

109. Teaching has good and some outstanding features, with no important shortcomings, in 42% of lessons, compared to 81% nationally, in the last year for which national figures are available. Fourteen per cent of lessons have shortcomings in important areas, compared to 3% nationally. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment within and across most subjects.

110. The size and nature of the sample are different from that of the last inspection. However, these grades are lower. At that time, 58% of lessons were graded 1 or 2, compared to 42% now and 97% were graded 3 and above, compared to 86% in this inspection.

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

111. When teaching is considered to have shortcomings, it is:

- dominated by teachers' presentation and fails to give pupils opportunities to work independently;
- reliant on a limited range of approaches;
- lacking in pace and not well-structured, so that pupils do not experience a variety of tasks, or they work on one task for too long; and

- lacking in challenge, or failing to extend the more able in particular.

112. Where teaching has good features it is characterised by;

- lively and interesting tasks that engage and challenge pupils;
- well-structured opportunities for pupils to work in groups and learn by becoming actively involved in debating issues, problem-solving and developing their own viewpoints;
- good use of interactive whiteboard facilities and of other resources;
- lessons that are managed in a lively and well-paced way; and
- encouragement to pupils to identify what they need to do in order to make progress.

113. Teaching, in a significant proportion of lessons, establishes good relationships with pupils and has high expectations of their behaviour and achievement. Praise is used effectively and teachers intervene to support and encourage pupils. However, a significant minority of teaching does not:

- make expectations of learning and behaviour explicit;
- have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve; and
- intervene in an effective way to prevent low-level disruption and poor behaviour.

114. Teachers are well qualified and many are experienced. They understand the requirements of the NC and examination specifications. However, in some subjects, teachers do not always use their knowledge to present experiences or information in a stimulating and interesting way. Some teachers also fail to address misconceptions held by pupils.

115. The long-term absence of a significant number of teachers is disrupting pupils' learning in a number of subjects. Supply teachers are mostly, but not always, subject specialists and thus do not always have the appropriate range of subject-specific approaches to ensure that pupils make progress in the area for which they are responsible. They are not always supported with appropriate resources.

116. Planning is variable within and across subjects. When it is good, teachers:

- set clear learning objectives that pupils understand;
- make good use of a range of resources and approaches that take into account pupils' additional learning needs, preferred learning styles and abilities;
- share objectives with pupils and revisit them during the lesson;
- ensure that pupils participate fully by providing work to meet a range of needs and abilities, including those with SEN and the more able;
- use information on prior achievements to plan lessons and tasks that address pupils' needs; and
- plan and deliver plenary sessions that encourage pupils to reflect on their own learning and think about targets for the next lesson.

However, the planning of a significant number of lessons does not contain

these good features.

117. Despite the important shortcomings, there are outstanding features in a small minority of lessons - in physical education, English, PSE (citizenship), geography and in the SSRB. A small number of teachers is using the school improvement group to develop new approaches to learning and teaching that can be adopted by all subjects. This initiative is still in its early stages but the group has a clear vision of how it would like to see learning and teaching develop in the school.
118. Teachers are mindful of ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to speak Welsh and a few subjects have developed strategies to encourage pupils to look at the Welsh translation of key words and phrases. However, some pupils do not have a specialist Welsh teacher for Welsh second language lessons, and, as a result, they lack the opportunity to develop bilingual skills.
119. Teaching is particularly effective in the SSRB where it is stimulating, motivating and takes account of the individual needs of a range of pupils. The teaching of pupils with SEN in mainstream classes is generally well planned with clear learning outcomes, though inconsistent between faculties. Learning objectives are clearly explained to pupils. Lessons contain a range of activities that keep pupils focused and interested. Relationships between pupils with SEN and teachers are good. Pupils are well supported to work in groups and engage in peer and self-assessment. Sometimes the level of challenge is low and the narrow range of resources used by teachers limits effective differentiation.

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

120. The assessment for learning policy outlines the main principles of the way in which teachers should be assessing pupils' progress and achievement. This has been developed since the last inspection. The implementation of this policy is very variable. Some teachers and subjects use the approach to good effect but this is not reflected across the school. Consequently, the impact of assessment on learning is not as effective as it could be. The current practice has important shortcomings because:
  - pupils do not understand how they are being assessed;
  - targets for improvement are not understood by pupils, neither do they understand what they have to do to make progress;
  - some marking is infrequent and fails to identify mistakes;
  - comments on work do not tell pupils what they need to do to improve;
  - some marking is over-generous and does not present a realistic view of how pupils are progressing; and
  - data and information are not used effectively to monitor achievement.

121. However, some teachers use the school guidelines on assessment to good effect. In these cases, particularly in English, history and geography, assessment is rigorous and useful, for it:
- is understood by pupils;
  - informs pupils of what they have to do to make progress;
  - is regular, accurate and identifies misconceptions and mistakes;
  - identifies realistic targets that are focused on subject-specific skills; and
  - encourages pupils' self-assessment and peer assessment.
122. Teachers have access to a good range of information on the prior achievements of pupils. Some teachers and subjects use this to set realistic individual and class targets as well as to inform future planning.
123. However, the use of targets to improve achievement varies from subject to subject. The analysis and use of performance data are of varying quality and impact across the curriculum and, even when pupils have clear targets, they are not always rigorously monitored by teachers.
124. Although year heads and an assistant head regularly analyse information on pupils' progress, this is not adequately shared. Discussions, based on this information, with staff, have not led to significant improvement in all subjects. Some subjects use this information to reflect critically on their approaches and use it to help forward planning.
125. The school uses a computerised system to record and track pupils' progress but access to this is limited and, as a result, the impact of the system on improving standards is not as effective as it could be.
126. Annual reports to parents and guardians comply with statutory requirements. They provide information on personal development and academic progress. Some subject reports provide detailed information on the development of pupils' skills and communicate useful subject-specific targets. Others are more general and offer a minimum amount of guidance on how the pupil can improve. Some subjects such as drama, music and religious education were unable to offer comments on achievement in the latest reports because of teachers' absence.
127. Pupils have the opportunity to include a self-evaluation of their progress in their report. This is usually well done and is a good feature of the annual report to parents.

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

**Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

128. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees, because there are shortcomings in the:
- low percentage entered for GCSE qualifications;
  - planning, co-ordination and monitoring of key skills as a whole;
  - adverse effects on pupils' personal and social development from a significant amount of unsatisfactory behaviour in class and around the school; and
  - failure to meet statutory requirements with regard to a daily act of collective worship and the teaching of Welsh as a second language at KS4.
129. However, overall, good features outweigh shortcomings in the provision of learning experiences. The impact of some of the shortcomings, in practice, is reflected in the grading of key question 1.

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

130. The curriculum overall meets the needs of pupils and provides opportunity for accreditation. However large group sizes in some subjects, a low entry policy for external examinations overall and in some subjects in particular, and a lack of challenge in teaching in a significant minority of lessons limit the achievement of a significant number of pupils of all abilities. Homework is set inconsistently and does not adequately extend learning experiences.
131. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced in each key stage and provides effective continuity and progression. Pupils in KS4 have a fair choice of GCSE courses, enhanced by a growing range of vocational options in conjunction with other providers, for pupils of lower ability and with SEN in particular. The school does not provide a specialist teacher in Welsh as a second language to all groups in Y11, and does not give sufficient time to specialist Welsh language teaching in Y10.
132. Schemes of work and lesson plans identify where key skills can be taught through the programmes of study. However, key skills are rarely made explicit in planning or sufficiently emphasised in teaching across the curriculum. They are an integral part of the PSE (citizenship) lessons.
133. The use of ICT, however, is well planned across the curriculum and audited. Provision at KS3 and KS4 enables a significant percentage of pupils to gain accreditation.
134. The way in which the physical education department exploits the opportunities offered by very good facilities is a strength of the school. A wide range of sporting activities is available for both boys and girls.

135. In addition, pupils have access to a number of clubs and societies based in subject areas. The lack of activities, currently, in music/drama prevents many pupils developing their talents in those areas. The number of visits is also good and extends pupils' learning experiences effectively.
136. Assemblies and lessons in PSE (citizenship) and religious education combine to form a good basis for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This awareness is not always translated into their day-to-day behaviour, as evidenced by the significant incidence of disruption in classrooms and boisterous behaviour, at times, around the school.
137. Home-school agreements operate and parents and friends of the school are issued with a newsletter of good quality. There are good links with Careers Wales and local employers. Links with partner primary schools and local colleges are effective and transition arrangements operate smoothly. The school's involvement in sporting links with primary schools is a good feature of its provision.
138. Assemblies are clearly planned, to be broadly of a Christian nature, and the assemblies seen were of good quality. However, acts of worship, as 'thoughts for the day', in tutor groups, vary considerably in quality. The guidance given to form tutors for the act of collective worship is inadequate, their practice is inconsistent, the provision is not monitored, and the absence of an act of worship in some groups means that statutory requirements are not met.

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

139. Careers education and guidance, work-related education and PSE (citizenship) are closely integrated. Pupils receive appropriate guidance on option choices at the end of KS3, as well as work experience and mock interviews in KS4. Careers Wales and local businesses support the school's careers convention. Overall, work-related education is of good quality.
140. The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* features in schemes of work and is an important part of pupils' learning experiences in several subject areas. Some examples of incidental Welsh, spoken by both staff and pupils, were heard during the inspection. The large size of some classes in Welsh as a second language, and the limited provision at KS4, limit the development of bilingualism.
141. The SSRB enables pupils with SEN to access the curriculum and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation (ASDAN) courses provide good support for pupils who find GCSE courses difficult. However there is insufficient mentoring of pupils in the main school, whose behaviour is challenging. Whilst there are vocationally-based courses for pupils of lower ability and with SEN, there are insufficient vocationally-based courses to meet the needs of differing abilities, aptitudes and interests, particularly boys of average to lower ability. This limits their access to courses in which they will experience success.

142. Pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship are successfully promoted in several subjects, including geography, science and technology. Issues are further developed in preparatory work towards gaining Eco-school status.
143. Participation in the 'Dynamo' project and visits to school from outside speakers broaden pupils' understanding of the workplace and the needs of employers.
144. However, the limited variety of teaching strategies, in a sizeable proportion of lessons, restricts the opportunities to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills.
145. Whilst the school successfully informs pupils of the knowledge, understanding and skills required for lifelong learning, it does not ensure that they are challenged and motivated to take responsibility for lifelong learning.

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

##### **Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas**

146. The school awarded itself a grade 1 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees because there are shortcomings in important areas in both the quality of care and guidance to learners as well as in the quality of provision for equal opportunities. These are:
  - insufficient pastoral care and support offered to individual pupils through the pastoral care system;
  - insufficient, constructive monitoring and mentoring of individual pupils' academic achievement across the school, and insufficient support for further improvement;
  - lack of impact, in practice, of the detailed monitoring and analysis of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, together with inconsistent application of behaviour management strategies; and
  - legal requirements not met with regard to reported incidents of racial harassment.
147. Despite these important shortcomings, there is one outstanding feature. This is the SSRB, which provides a safe and secure environment for a number of pupils with complex and severe needs. Attendance levels of 96% highlight the motivation of these pupils. The high quality of teaching and sensitive support provided for pupils allow for positive engagement and planned opportunities to improve their educational attainment. Good standards of behaviour have a positive impact on achievement as well as on personal and social development. The KS4 curriculum in the SSRB has been well planned to provide maximum benefit for Y11 pupils, and they all take part in a successful work-experience placement. Self-help and life-skills are an important aspect in their education. All pupils benefit from a wide range of planned extra-curricular activities that enhance their wider-community experiences. Pupils make very

good progress. The SSRB is very well managed and the head of the SSRB provides very good guidance and effective leadership.

**The quality of care, support and guidance to learners.**

148. Regular pastoral team meetings are held to ensure effective communication between year team leaders and form tutors. Although pastoral teams remain with their groups from Y7 to Y11, time in registration periods is not being used consistently well, to foster and improve positive relationships and pupils' achievement. In some groups, there is not enough focus on meeting individuals' needs in pastoral care.
149. Similarly, relationships between subject teachers and pupils, in a small minority of classes, are distant. There has also been lack of continuity in teaching and support for pupils, through the significant number of staff with recurring or longer-term absence.
150. There is not enough consistency in the monitoring of pupils' progress and in the setting of targets for improvement. Data are not used effectively in all subjects, to measure progress. Targets are set in some subjects, but not in others. Pupils do not always know what they have to do to improve their performance.
151. Pupils at KS4 receive mentoring from representatives of businesses in the community, and a small group is mentored by the school at KS4, but there is not enough support for a wider group of pupils, to improve their performance.
152. There are very good systems in place to monitor behaviour, punctuality and attendance. Every incident of misbehaviour is logged. However, these very good systems for informing senior managers are not resulting in improvement in practice.
153. A behaviour management policy and systems are in place, to deal with incidents of misbehaviour in the classroom. However, these are not being implemented consistently by staff. Expectations of pupils and classroom routines are not firmly established on a whole-school basis.
154. Past strategies for dealing with serious incidents have been withdrawn this year, such as the time-out room and the duty rota, of senior staff on call. The current strategy of removing pupils from one classroom and putting them in another classroom is not effective. Teachers and pupils are frustrated by the spread of troublesome behaviour.
155. Attendance and punctuality are monitored. However, this has not resulted in significant improvement, and the level of attendance is an important shortcoming. Several parents reported problems in the system of first-day absence calls.
156. There are, however, two initiatives, led by the UA, to assist pupils' learning. The student assist programme (SAP) works with small groups of pupils to

enhance their self-esteem, and five members of staff have been trained to take this initiative forward. The pupils' attitude to self and school (PASS) scheme began last year and will be an annual on-line survey.

157. Also, some Y11 pupils have been trained as peer mentors and they provide a useful service to other pupils during the lunch-hour.
158. Effective links with outside support agencies have been established and good use is made of outside speakers to supplement the PSE (citizenship) programme. Parental links are fostered through the regular, informative newsletter and homework diary. Open evenings are usually well supported but the PTA is not well supported.
159. Relationships with partner primary schools are good. The transition of pupils from KS2 to KS3 is smooth and effective. Year 5 and Y6 pupils visit the school on a number of occasions during the year and the reciprocal visits which Y7 pupils make to the primary schools are a good feature. Several cluster initiatives, set up by the primary schools, have not had significant impact on Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School.
160. Advice and guidance on choosing appropriate courses in Y10 are good. The comprehensive option booklet, "Learning Pathways", is clear and well presented. Collaboration with Careers Wales supports the advice given by the school. Open evenings are well supported by both parents and pupils.
161. Links with providers of education post-16 are also good and pupils receive appropriate information on their options for education and training.
162. A team of teachers delivers a PSE (citizenship) programme through discrete lessons in citizenship. It takes account of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales' (ACCAC) framework for PSE and careers education and guidance. Although the programme is comprehensive and allows pupils to consider their role in the community, the quality of the delivery is inconsistent.
163. The school council is well established and guided by a member of the senior leadership team (SLT). Regular meetings are held with both year and form representatives. The school is part of the Caerphilly Youth Forum and the PC3 initiative with partner primary schools.
164. A member of the SLT acts as a designated person for child protection. The workload is shared with the child protection team. There are three pupils looked after by the local authority. Their required care plans have not been kept up-to-date.
165. The school is aware of health and safety issues and actively promotes the safety of pupils. It is well served by first-aiders and pupils with medical conditions are well supported.

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

166. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is generally good. The SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) provides effective leadership. Established links with partner primary schools and close liaison with the educational psychologist ensure early effective identification of pupils with additional learning needs.
167. Some pupils at KS3 are taught in discrete classes. A significant number of these pupils has associated behavioural difficulties, which are magnified within a small group situation. Most pupils make progress, in line with ability. However, expectations are low and there is some low-level disruption. There are issues of lack of inclusion in this arrangement.
168. Both the school and the SSRB are well supported by external agencies. Supportive and monitoring visits are made by specialist teachers, mobility officers, therapists and the educational psychologist. Pupils have access to teaching in English as an additional language. A very good feature is the support provided for pupils with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) by a specialist teacher employed by the school for three days a week. Pupils make good progress in these sessions.
169. A team of LSAs provides appropriate and effective support. Briefing meetings are held every morning. Support staff have a good knowledge of their pupils. However, curricular planning by faculties is not always sufficiently detailed for support to be fully effective. The SEN committee, of link teachers and the SENCO, provides a useful forum for the dissemination and discussion of SEN issues.
170. The school offers a range of appropriate vocational and academic courses at KS4, for pupils with additional learning needs. The SENCO arranges meetings with parents to discuss possible choices. There is a focus on ASDAN and a small number of targeted pupils in Y11 follows a planned youth-access programme involving links with a further-education college.
171. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are sufficiently detailed and relate well to both pupils' weaknesses and strengths. Targets are negotiated and shared with both pupils and parents. IEPs are not consistently utilised by faculties in curricular planning.

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

172. The equal opportunities policy is clear and issues are covered in the PSE (citizenship) programme. Both boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum and school activities. The school monitors the achievements of boys and girls, but there is still a wide gender gap, in some subjects in particular.
173. The school has suitable policies to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including bullying and racism. An explanatory pamphlet is provided for parents. However, the few racist incidents which have been reported have not been properly logged and passed on to the appropriate authority. Nor have they

been thoroughly investigated, and effective pastoral support provided by senior managers.

174. Although the school has produced an accessibility plan to cater for pupils and visitors with a disability, some of the timeframes for implementation are unrealistic. The site does not allow access to all areas, for those in wheelchairs.
175. Awareness of other cultures and diversity is promoted in the PSE (citizenship) programme and religious education. Diversity is also celebrated in collective acts of worship in assemblies.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

176. The school awarded itself a grade 3 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees because there are shortcomings in important areas. These are:

- ineffective communication between the headteacher and staff in fostering a sense of common purpose;
- lack of recognition of the importance of the shortcomings and ineffective planning to eliminate these shortcomings;
- lack of teamwork within the senior leadership team; and
- inconsistency and shortcomings at middle management level.

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

177. There is not, currently, a strong culture of learning and achievement, at the heart of the school's ethos, with which everyone identifies and of which everyone is proud. Communication between the headteacher and staff is not effective in sharing vision about the future development of the school nor in fostering a sense of common purpose.

178. Clear expectations of everyone, staff and pupils, are not prevalent. Pupils are frustrated by other pupils' behaviour. Parents, in the pre-inspection meeting, and in their responses to the questionnaire, expressed significant concerns about the school. In seven out of 11 questions, over 30% of the 46 parents who responded to the questionnaire, replied negatively.

179. The voice of pupils, parents and staff has not contributed to the self-evaluation arrangements effectively, and monitoring of practice has not been rigorous enough. Thus the extent of the shortcomings has not been adequately recognised.

180. However, policies have been written and systems have been set up to bring about consistency. These are not being implemented successfully, and are currently having a limited effect on practice.

181. The school's transformation plan does not prioritise the elimination of major shortcomings such as misbehaviour, and underperformance at GCSE. The transformation plan is not detailed enough, in planning for improvement, and does not link to faculty and subject plans in a meaningful way.

182. However, there are areas of established good practice in provision for pupils with additional learning needs, transition arrangements, work-related

education, ICT, and staff involvement in working groups, to identify and take initiatives forward. There has also been progress on some of the key issues from the last inspection.

183. The role of each member of the senior leadership team has recently been revised. Whilst there are early signs of specific initiatives being carried forward, there are some imbalances. In particular, the allocation of responsibility for all faculties, to one person, is unwieldy.
184. The senior leadership team does not currently operate as a team, in critical debate to determine priorities and then to drive forward on a shared agenda for school improvement.
185. The workload agreement was implemented successfully. The recent workforce re-modelling has introduced a new management structure and re-defined the role of some middle managers. The process has adversely affected staff morale and pupils' learning.
186. The new structure is not yet embedded and there remain one or two areas to be resolved. Some departments, which have been brought together as a faculty, are not close geographically on site. This does not facilitate, easily, effective management of resources and pupils' behaviour, nor the sharing of best practice.
187. The quality of middle management is variable. Continuing professional development has not yet been provided for all those in new leadership roles, and there are inconsistencies in practice. Management of the SSRB and of the Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) initiatives is established and outstanding. A good start has been made in some other faculties, but, in general, there is not a sufficiently self-critical culture. The grades awarded in subject self-evaluation reports are unrealistically high, monitoring is not rigorous enough and does not feed into detailed planning for improvement.
188. Welsh Assembly Government priorities have been implemented with a large measure of success. Partnerships have been established, for transition from primary schools and post-16. Personal, social and work-related education have been planned effectively. Sustainable development is a high priority and is influencing practice. Healthy living is promoted, with particularly good practice through the physical education partnerships, and the receipt of the Healthy Schools' award. Awareness of racial equality issues and global citizenship are not as embedded.
189. Whilst the SSRB is a very good example of inclusion, and the provision for pupils with additional learning needs is generally good, there remain issues of access, for those pupils with SEN in discrete classes, in the main school. Also, low entry to GCSE and accredited courses is not preparing pupils of all abilities effectively for opportunities post-16, and for lifelong learning.
190. Targets for public examinations are set, based on pupils' prior attainment, but these have not been met at KS4. Target-setting for individual pupils is

inconsistent and targets are not challenging enough to motivate pupils to greater success.

### **How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities**

191. Governors are pro-active and supportive of the school. They are involved in strategic planning and know of the school's longer-term priorities.
192. They also know of the school's shortcomings, if not their extent, and are developing their role in gathering first-hand evidence. Some have already formed a link with faculties and observed practice.
193. They are not, however, acting objectively enough as 'critical friends' of the school, in addressing its shortcomings in important areas.
194. Statutory requirements are not met for the daily act of collective worship, and for Welsh second language provision for all pupils at KS4.
195. Legal requirements are not met for the logging, investigation and reporting of racist incidents to the appropriate authority.

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

<b>Grade 4 : Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas</b>
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196. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees because there are shortcomings in important areas. These are:
  - lack of realistic awareness of performance;
  - lack of emphasis on regular, first-hand evidence in the self-evaluation process;
  - insufficient account taken of the views of parents, pupils and other contributors to the school community;
  - insufficient sharing of the school's priorities and vision among all sections of the school community;
  - lack of prioritisation and detailed planning in the school's transformation plan; and
  - little direct impact of the monitoring and planning for improvement on the standards of teaching and learning across the school.

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

197. The school's self-evaluation procedures are thorough and systematic and are in their second year of implementation. Senior managers are aware of the school's shortcomings, though not of the extent of the shortcomings, in all aspects.

198. The school's self-evaluation report is a detailed document, outlining strengths and areas for development, but its grades differed from those of inspectors in all key questions, by one, two or three grades.
199. Whole-school and faculty self-evaluation reports follow the Common Inspection Framework's seven key questions. Self-evaluation, in a number of faculties, is not yet fully informed from rigorous lesson observations, scrutiny of work and interviews with pupils. Thus, self-evaluation is often based on assertions, rather than on hard evidence. Generally, a self-critical culture is not well established across the school as a whole.
200. The senior leadership team has begun a three-year cycle of faculty reviews. These are comprehensive and are based directly on the observation of teaching and learning.
201. Although the views of pupils are gained through a well-established school council and a recent survey of pupils from Y7 to Y10, these do not yet inform the self-evaluation process in a formal way. Similarly, the views of parents and other contributors to the school are not formally channelled into the self-evaluation process.
202. There is a lack of common understanding and ownership, in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, and a lack of rigour. The faculty structure itself is new and procedures have yet to become embedded in this new structure.

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

203. The school transformation plan does not set out a clear, prioritised agenda for school improvement, based on the results of self-evaluation. Costings, responsibilities, success criteria and deadlines are not detailed enough to bring about the necessary improvements at an appropriate pace.
204. Similarly, the information gained in the faculty self-evaluation plans does not adequately inform development planning. The latter is hampered by overcomplicated documentation, which leads to a lack of clarity in identifying a few important priorities.
205. The setting of targets for pupils is inconsistent between subjects and faculties and targets are too general to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
206. Financial resources are appropriately targeted for the continuing professional development of staff. This is planned, tracked and monitored well. There are further resource implications, instigated by the new faculty structure which have yet to be addressed, to assist the monitoring and effectiveness of planning between heads of faculty and subject staff.
207. Self-evaluation procedures and development planning have yet to impact significantly on teaching and learning within the school.

208. Progress in the key issues of the last inspection has been good in:

- raising standards in ICT across the curriculum;
- improving results in the NC tests at KS3; and
- reporting to parents.

209. There are important shortcomings in the progress made in the following areas:

- improving pupils' attendance;
- raising standards of achievement, especially at KS4;
- extending target-setting consistently across the school; and
- meeting statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship.

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

<b>Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas.</b>
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210. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees, because there are shortcomings in important areas. These are the:

- insufficient number of Welsh second language teachers;
- budget situation and the need to run a deficit budget;
- number of staff away on long-term sick leave; and
- excessively large size of some classes, in a range of subjects, at both key stages.

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

211. There are sufficient, qualified specialist teachers with the expertise to teach the curriculum, in all areas except Welsh. In some short-course KS4 Welsh groups, pupils do not receive any language teaching. In others, they receive an insufficient amount of language teaching, with the timetabled time used for the study of cultural aspects of Wales. In a few instances, higher level support assistants are timetabled to teach a class, such as in art and humanities.

212. Teachers and pupils are supported in their work by a substantial number of LSAs, administrative staff and cover supervisors. However, there is no technician to support the teaching in design and technology and the science faculty requires additional technician hours if it is to service, adequately, curricular needs.

213. Learning support assistants are managed by the SENCO, in association with faculty leaders. Many LSAs play an important role in planning, teaching and recording pupils' progress. Training, to date, for both teaching and support

staff, has not been entirely adequate to meet the needs of pupils with SEN, across the curriculum.

214. The SSRB is adequately staffed by teachers and LSAs and its very good management ensures that pupils' needs are met.
215. There is a good range of learning resources, of good quality, in the school, which is benefiting pupils' learning. Substantial investment in ICT has taken place and all classrooms are equipped with an interactive whiteboard. The computer to pupil ratio is 4.6:1, which is good.
216. The LRC provides good computer facilities, which are well used by a wide range of pupils and departments. An attractive range of fiction from the county's school library service is also in evidence, but much of the school's own stock is unattractive, out-of-date and little used. There is no library/resource centre policy. There are no meetings between the learning resource manager and the line manager to monitor use and plan for development.
217. There is adequate accommodation for the number of pupils on roll and for the curriculum provided. The facilities for physical education are very good.
218. The buildings and grounds are well maintained and there is a rolling programme of refurbishment and improvement. However, some areas remain unattractive and would benefit from a fresh coat of paint and displays of good quality. Display brightens many classrooms. Caretakers do a good job in keeping the site free of litter.
219. The single toilet/changing facility for the fifty pupils, of both genders, in the SSRB is totally inadequate and unsuitable for the demands placed upon it. The UA has very recently announced that funds will be made available in this financial year to undertake the work.

**How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.**

220. The school has increased its resource base, through the use of the Leisure Centre and the Caerphilly Music Service, both based on site.
221. The school has successfully implemented the workload agreement, including planning, preparation and assessment time, leadership time, cover arrangements and external examination invigilation.
222. Continuing professional development and the performance management of staff are effectively managed, tracked and evaluated by the deputy headteacher. The scheme extends to all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. The needs of newly-qualified staff (NQTs) and Initial Teacher Training (ITT) students are similarly met by the provision of relevant programmes. Long-term sickness of key personnel has affected the support which individual NQTs have received.

223. All staff are criminal record bureau (CRB) checked.
224. Structures are in place to monitor and track the budget and the day-to-day management of the budget is tight. Staffing, curriculum and resources are annually assessed. The governors' finance committee meets every two months. However, until recently, it was chaired by the business manager, in contravention of WAG regulations for maintained schools (Welsh Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 2914).
225. The school, with agreement from the UA, is running a deficit budget and has estimated that substantial savings will have to be made over the next two financial years, if serious financial difficulty is to be avoided. This is as a result of the:
- cost of an experienced staff;
  - cost of the restructuring of the teaching staff and the necessary appointment of substantial numbers of support staff;
  - high spend on the year 11 curriculum;
  - cost of long-term sickness cover;
  - efficiency savings of 1%, put in place by the UA;
  - implementation of the school's priorities contained in the development plan; and
  - funding generated by the formula in relation to pupil numbers.
226. Teaching group size, in several classes, is overlarge and it is not unusual to find groups of high thirties and, in a recent case, a group of 44. This adversely impacts upon the learning of these pupils. Middle managers are responsible for taking decisions on group size. The senior leadership team does not carry out checks.
227. Staffing is spread unevenly between year groups, Y9 having an average group size of 27.2, compared with an average for year 11 of 20.2.
228. Workforce re-modelling was carried out in 2006. There was industrial action during the summer term and six days lost to strike action in the autumn term. This has affected pupils' learning and damaged staff morale. The school did not set up a joint governors/staff/ headteacher consultative working party, though the headteacher met each member of staff individually.
229. There is a significant minority of staff away with long-term illness and this continues to have an impact on both teaching and the budget. The school and UA have an absence sickness policy, but this has not resulted in outstanding issues being resolved.
230. Governors are extremely supportive of the school and are pro-active in their approach. However, they do not always act as the 'critical friend' of the headteacher. This is evidenced by the:
- current budget situation;

- workload re-modelling difficulties; and
- insufficient evaluation of the impact of new structures and systems.

231. The school's examination results, at KS4, show that its performance is below that of similar schools.

232. Currently the school does not give value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

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

**Key Stage 4: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings**

#### Key Stage 3

##### Good Features

233. Overall, pupils respond well to a range of tasks connected to the three attainment targets of the NC. KS3 results have shown considerable improvement recently.
234. At KS3, the standards of pupils' speaking skills are often good and the great majority of pupils is keen to speak in lessons. They are able to offer valid contributions, usually in standard English, to a suitably broad range of topics being considered.
235. More able pupils demonstrate that they are able to use a good range of vocabulary and the great majority of pupils listens attentively. They are able to use such terms as 'superlative' and 'imperative' accurately.
236. Pupils work productively in pairs and small groups, on focused activities that meet the demands of the English curriculum.
237. In general, attitudes to reading are good and pupils are able to read suitable texts with fluency and with reasonable expression.
238. Pupils read appropriately challenging texts that include S.T. Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' with enthusiasm. Some demonstrate higher-order reading skills such as the ability to skim and scan for information.
239. A large minority of pupils makes effective use of ICT particularly when they complete homework assignments.
240. Most writing is done with interest and enthusiasm. Fluency broadly matches the indicated ability level of pupils.
241. Many pupils show that they are able to appreciate the stylistics and persuasive devices of a range of texts that includes poetry and Greek myths. More able pupils show that they fully understand the function of figurative language and use quotations appropriately in their writing.
242. Pupils with additional learning needs make sound progress in all years of KS3.

## **Shortcomings**

- 243. Some written work is unfinished and displays a range of technical error.
- 244. A small minority of pupils engages in some off-task behaviour.

## **Key Stage 4**

### **Good Features**

- 245. The majority of pupils is generally keen to speak in class and to express their views, usually in standard English, in exchanges with each other and in response to teachers' questions about tasks and texts.
- 246. Most pupils show that they can collaborate well in group work in timed tasks and the more able respond well to texts of increasing complexity.
- 247. Standards of reading are generally sound and more able pupils are able to, for example, demonstrate good knowledge of plot, characters and how literary effects are created in such texts as Robert Swindells' 'Stone Cold' and Willy Russell's 'Blood Brothers'. They are able to read in class with reasonable expression and understanding.
- 248. Most pupils show that they are able to make the most of the opportunities provided for a range of writing (including extended writing) that prepares them well for the demands of GCSE Language and Literature as well as Entry level.
- 249. A sizeable minority of pupils produces good standards in coursework with well-crafted essays, often in response to literary texts.
- 250. The great majority of pupils writes in a variety of ways that include creative writing, the analysis of literature, and transactional writing, that includes letters and reports.
- 251. Pupils with SEN make good progress in smaller groups and engage well with appropriate aspects of the KS4 curriculum.

### **Shortcomings**

- 252. Some pupils are more reticent in oral contributions and a few are less skilled in taking turns in class discussion.
- 253. A minority of pupils produces written work that is sometimes unfinished and less accurate in terms of technical skills, predominantly with regard to punctuation and weaknesses in spelling.
- 254. A small minority of pupils engages in off-task activities that impact negatively on their own learning and that of others.

## Mathematics

**Key Stage 3: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key Stage 4: Grade 4 – Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas**

### Key Stage 3

#### Good Features

255. Most pupils are able to calculate mentally with accuracy and speed. They have a secure knowledge of number facts and can apply this proficiently in a range of contexts.
256. More able pupils show good standards in simple problem-solving situations. In Y7, for example, they display confidence in tackling some investigational activities and can spot patterns from them. Many are able to make a generalisation based on their results and can express this algebraically.
257. In Y9, more able pupils have a sound knowledge of numbers in standard form. Most can use this well in more complex calculations, involving multiplication and division. They are also able to provide sensible estimates in more complex calculations, to appropriate degrees of accuracy.
258. Pupils of average and lower ability have a proficient knowledge of the properties of number and can use this to list factors and multiples of numbers of varying sizes. Most are able to convert between metric units competently and many pupils in Y8 know the equivalents of some metric and imperial units of weight and capacity.

#### Shortcomings

259. Recall of previous work is insecure for a significant minority of pupils of all abilities. This is particularly apparent among pupils of lower ability.
260. Although pupils are able to provide estimates in number and in angle, they do not always make effective use of this, in considering the reasonableness of their answers.
261. A significant minority of pupils tends to rely on a taught technique with limited understanding. This often results in some fundamental misconceptions, particularly in number.

### Key Stage 4

#### Good Features

262. More able pupils show good standards in algebra. They can solve complex linear equations that involve the removal of brackets, competently. Many show

an appropriate knowledge of current work and can explain their reasoning with a sufficient degree of confidence.

- 263. Pupils of average ability can apply Pythagoras' Theorem to find missing lengths, in simple problems. They use calculators proficiently and most are able to give answers to suitable degrees of accuracy.
- 264. Many lower ability pupils are competent in spotting patterns in a sequence of numbers. Most have a sound knowledge of whole-number facts and can use this competently to calculate mentally at levels commensurate with their ability.

### **Shortcomings**

- 265. Although able to make reasonable progress in current work, many pupils of all abilities lack understanding of what they are doing. They are often hesitant in recalling previous work with confidence and accuracy.
- 266. A significant proportion of pupils of average and lower ability displays fundamental misconceptions in number and algebra. In particular, their knowledge and understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages are often insecure and they are unable to solve a simple equation in algebra.
- 267. In some classes there is a significant amount of incomplete work due to sporadic attendance from a minority of pupils. This impacts adversely on their progress in learning.

<b>Design and Technology</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**

### **Key Stage 3**

#### **Good Features**

- 268. Pupils develop a sound understanding of the design process in all modules. In most material areas they construct appropriate design specifications to guide their product development.
- 269. Practical project work is good overall. In each of the subject areas, pupils use tools and equipment competently and safely and create products of good quality.
- 270. Knowledge and understanding of technical vocabulary and the working characteristics of materials are good.
- 271. Electronic and control principles are successfully incorporated into aspects of pupils' designing and making activities.

- 272. Good standards in a variety of ICT skills, including computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM), are utilised effectively to support design work and the manufacture of individual products.
- 273. Most pupils evaluate their work objectively and are able to suggest possible improvements.
- 274. Pupils with SEN work well and realise their potential.

### **Shortcomings**

- 275. A minority of pupils has limited design ideas and their developmental drawing skills are weaker than other elements of their designing.
- 276. There are examples of untidy presentation of work and incomplete work.

### **Key Stage 4**

#### **Good Features**

- 277. Pupils' knowledge of design principles is good overall. In all areas they make effective use of a design process in the development of their chosen projects.
- 278. Design specifications are well constructed and more able pupils link these well in the evaluation and modification of their coursework products.
- 279. Practical project work is interesting and individual. Pupils work accurately and have a good understanding of techniques and processes. Knowledge and application of the material and components they use are sound.
- 280. ICT is used well to enhance standards of design, research, manufacture and presentation. This is particularly evident in the graphics course.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 281. In some instances, design ideas and specifications lack focus and detail and are not always linked to final product outcomes and evaluations.
- 282. Erratic attendance, by a minority of pupils, mainly boys, impedes the progress and completion of work in resistant materials.

<b>Modern foreign languages</b>
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**Key Stage 3: Grade 3 - Good features outweigh shortcomings**

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

**Key Stage 3**

**Good Features**

- 283. Pupils generally make progress in line with their abilities. They listen attentively and understand the target language spoken by the teacher and on tape. The most able pupils can understand more detail.
- 284. Pupils are very confident in responding to classroom instructions in Spanish or French and many use the target language competently in familiar classroom situations.
- 285. Pupils generally have good recall of previously learnt vocabulary and phrases.
- 286. Almost all pupils can repeat with accuracy and many speak with a good accent. They generally respond confidently in the target language. They are able to form simple phrases and sentences accurately from memory. The more able apply language rules accurately when speaking.
- 287. Many pupils are able to read aloud confidently and accurately, standards generally being higher in Spanish than in French. Pupils are confident in reading for general meaning. The more able pupils can pick out finer detail.
- 288. Pupils generally copy accurately and many can write sentences using examples for support. Some pupils can write simple paragraphs from memory and the most able write accurately and at greater length.

**Shortcomings**

- 289. A few pupils do not repeat accurately and do not speak with a good accent.
- 290. Some pupils are not able to read aloud with accuracy.
- 291. Some pupils do not have sufficiently good recall of previously learnt vocabulary and phrases and so are not able to speak accurately from memory.
- 292. Some pupils make little progress because of their lack of concentration and self-control. This also impacts adversely on the progress of the class in general.

## **Key Stage 4**

### **Good Features**

293. Pupils generally have good listening skills and show confidence in understanding the target language spoken by the teacher and on tape.
294. Pupils generally speak clearly with a good accent and read aloud with confidence. In conversations they can both ask and answer questions. They are able to offer opinions and give simple reasons for them. The most able can extend their responses further and refer to structures from previously learnt topics.
295. Pupils generally have good recall of vocabulary and phrases. They have a good understanding of the grammar of Spanish and French and can apply the rules in familiar situations. More able pupils can apply their knowledge in new situations.
296. Pupils can pick out essential details in simple written texts. They can read for general understanding in longer, more complex texts. More able pupils can understand finer detail. Pupils can also carry out independent research on the Internet for background study.
297. Pupils make good progress in writing. They are generally accurate when writing short passages of familiar language. In Y11, there are examples of good coursework in which pupils write at length, paying attention to the content, accuracy and the quality of the language used.

### **Shortcomings**

298. A few pupils are still hesitant in speaking.
299. A few pupils do not recall grammar sufficiently well to be able to speak and write accurately.
300. Pupils do not carry out sufficient independent reading to extend their knowledge of the language.

## History

**Key Stage 3: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key Stage 4: Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings**

### Key Stage 3

#### Good Features

301. In KS3, pupils present their learning in a range of styles and formats such as letters, newspaper articles, posters and 'PowerPoint' presentations. They select relevant material and organise their arguments logically.
302. From Y7, pupils demonstrate a developing awareness of chronology, produce simple time lines and are able to place major events in the appropriate historical period.
303. In their work on the battle of Hastings, pupils are aware that events can have several causes and understand how these are connected.
304. In their work in Y8, on the Tudors, pupils understand that the Act of Union had a major impact on the development of Wales. They can categorise the consequences of the Act as either positive or negative and justify the reasons for the judgements they make.
305. As pupils progress through the key stage, they demonstrate a growing awareness of historical interpretations. They understand that people in the past viewed events and historical figures in different ways.
306. In their study of the First World War and the leadership of General Haig, they show an understanding that interpretations change over time and that historians can view events in different ways.
307. Pupils are able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. They demonstrate the ability to use a range of sources and are able to assess these for reliability, bias and usefulness. More able pupils are also able to identify gaps and omissions in evidence.
308. Pupils of average and high ability develop their research skills and use the Internet effectively to obtain information. In their work on industrial conditions in 19th century Merthyr, Y9 pupils interrogate a database and draw valid conclusions from a range of statistical information.

#### Shortcomings

309. A significant minority of pupils fails to complete written work undertaken in class and tasks set for homework. As a consequence, they do not have a complete record and understanding of key learning points and fail to make satisfactory progress.

310. The oral contributions made by some pupils in KS3 are too brief and infrequent to enable them to display or develop their knowledge and understanding.
311. Some pupils are unable to evaluate the significance of evidence and a minority believes that primary or first-hand evidence is more reliable than a secondary source.

### **Key Stage 4**

#### **Good Features**

312. Pupils in KS4 build successfully upon the range of skills acquired in KS3 and make good progress. They investigate historical questions effectively, select evidence with skill, examine issues thoroughly and produce balanced arguments. More able students produce coursework of high quality.
313. In their study of the USA in the twentieth century, pupils are able to identify areas of continuity, can explain the factors which bring about change and assess the impact of changes on society and the lives of individual men and women.
314. In their work on Wales in the 19th century and on Edwardian Britain, pupils employ strategies which enable them to make informed judgements on the reliability and usefulness of conflicting primary and secondary sources of information.
315. Pupils show confidence in using assessment criteria to mark their own work; they highlight strengths, weaknesses and omissions and so develop the ability to analyse and improve their own learning.

#### **Shortcomings**

316. There are no important shortcomings.

<b>Art</b>
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**KS3: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**KS4: Grade 3 – Good features outweigh shortcomings**

### **Key Stage 3**

#### **Good Features**

317. Most pupils show understanding of line, tone, pattern and colour that they use effectively in their work.
318. All pupils use ideas from direct observation and from imagination to create images, mainly in two dimensions.

- 319. They can experiment, successfully, with a range of media including pastel and collage.
- 320. Pupils use ideas from art movements such as Surrealism, and the work of artists such as Georgia O’Keeffe, to create imaginative images of their own.
- 321. Pupils in the SSRB and pupils with SEN in mainstream make very good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

- 322. For many pupils, work in sketchbooks remains unfinished and does not show sufficient progress.
- 323. A number of pupils in Y9 do not make the progress that they should, because of disruptive behaviour.

### **Key Stage 4**

#### **Good Features**

- 324. Most pupils make progress in their learning.
- 325. All pupils use ideas from direct observations of organic forms to create imaginative artworks such as monoprints, clay sculptures and batik.
- 326. Pupils are beginning to use the work of other artists and art movements to develop an understanding of their own work and the work of others.
- 327. Pupils in the SSRB make very good progress, and many receive accreditation.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 328. Pupils do not have sufficient critical understanding of the work of other artists and craftspeople. They have insufficient contact with museums, galleries and local artists.

### **Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4**

#### **Shortcomings**

- 329. More able pupils and boys of average ability do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- 330. Pupils do not use ICT for image manipulation and for research.

## School's response to the inspection

331. Firstly, we continue to celebrate the good and outstanding features and share best practice.
332. Post-inspection action planning in response to the recommendation for Special Measures began immediately on two levels- short-term strategies where an immediate change could be observed and a continuation of longer-term sustainable strategies which are already part of the school's improvement planning agenda. In the few weeks that have elapsed since the inspection, we have been able to progress work which had been previously identified in our own self-evaluation report in a number of areas.
333. Learning and Standards: The school's behaviour management system has been discussed again at length in a series of staff meetings. Working in conjunction with the school's LEA behaviour support teacher two modifications have been made: primarily, the reintroduction of a permanent internal exclusion facility (prior to the inspection this had operated on an ad hoc basis) and a different mechanism for referring classroom incidents to detention. Two assemblies were held for each year group to present the changes and parents/carers were informed. The changes have had an positive impact on behaviour in the school and the systems are now being sustained by staff at all levels. All other aspects of our behaviour management structure remain as these derived from extensive consultation with staff in the Spring of 2006 through the school's Change Team. This term all pupils in Year 11 for all subjects and in Year 10 for Science (New orders) have been entered for all examinations – GCSE, Entry level, DIDA, COPE (ASDAN) and Key Skills exams. This is in line with the policy that the school has adopted in the last two years.
334. Quality of Education: All teaching staff and some teaching assistants are now engaged in IQEA and the process of lesson study. Two training days have taken place since the inspection focusing on this, together with the quality of planning for delivering Grade 1 & 2 lessons and the development of portfolios of work for key stage 3 assessment. Further staff meetings are looking at a whole-school approach to the climate of the classroom (also being discussed by the School/Year Councils). Year Leaders are analysing effort and attainment data for all cohorts and challenging targets are being set for pupils.
335. Leadership and Management: The school's Senior Leadership Team and Faculty and Year Leaders have and are discussing and agreeing strategies for monitoring at different levels within the school. All discussions are focusing on a team/corporate response.
336. The main teacher and non-teacher associations have been involved in some of these discussions and have had tours of the school at work with the

Headteacher. In response to parental requests, a parents' forum to discuss teaching and learning issues has also been established.

337. The formal post-inspection action plan will start to be written this week in conjunction with the LEA.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Coed Cae Ddu Road Pontllanfraith
Post-code	NP12 2YB
Telephone number	01495-224929
Headteacher	Miss A. Stevens
Date of appointment	1/9/2004
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr M. Lewis
Reporting inspector	Miss G. Owen
Dates of inspection	13/11/06 – 16/11/06

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Y 14	Total
Number of pupils	156	181	174	166	168				845

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	44	3.1	47.1

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.9:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average teaching group size	24.4:1
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	73.5%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	92.5	89.9	90.8	86.6	91.1			90.1
Term 2	89.1	86.0	87.4	84.1	84.7			86.2
Term 3	87.8	83.3	82.9	77.9	95.4			84.5

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	17%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	41 temp. 5 perm.

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results

#### End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006																
Total number of pupils in Y9: 179																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	-	0	14.5	0	0	3.9	21.8	29.1	25.1	5	0		
		National	0	1	1	0	0	2	8	21	35	24	8	0		
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	-	0	6.7	0	0	7.8	15.6	19.0	31.3	15.6	3.9		
		National	0	5	1	0	0	1	6	18	24	32	15	0		
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	-	0	8.9	0	0	7.8	14.5	37.4	22.3	8.9	0		
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	19	33	27	12	0		

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	53.1	In the school	
In Wales	58	In Wales	

#### Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006:	168
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	32

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	76	87	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	41	46	53
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	75	86	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first	32	33	39

Report by Miss Glynis Owen  
Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School, 13/11/06

language (the core subject indicator)			
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	96	96	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	60	72	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	86	93	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	14	7	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	6	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-		
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-		

## Appendix 4

### Evidence base of the inspection

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

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 124 lessons, 65 in the six subjects inspected and 59 lessons in other subjects;
- registrations and assemblies; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

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

The team also considered:

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

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Miss Glynis Owen	Rgl: Context, Summary, Recommendations, KQ1, KQ5, Appendix
Ms Jayne Edwards	Core: KQ2
Mr Peter Harris	Core: KQ3
Mr Gwyn Griffiths	Core:KQ4
Mr Dylan Gwyer Roberts	Core: KQ6
Mr Angus Dunphy	Core: KQ7
Mr Edward Tipper	Lay Inspector: contributions to all key questions
Mr Charles Harris	English
Mr David Williams	Mathematics
Mrs Margaret Herbert	Design and Technology
Mr Gareth Barker	History
Mrs Irene Mackie	Modern Foreign Languages
Mrs Jennifer Williams	Art
Mrs Karen Holland	Peer Assessor: contributions to all key questions
Mr John Kendall	Nominee

### Acknowledgement

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

### The inspection contractor

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