

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Porthcawl Comprehensive School
52 Park Avenue
Porthcawl
CF36 3ES**

School Number: 6724080

Date of Inspection: 8 May 2007

by

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Porthcawl 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 Porthcawl Comprehensive School took place between 08/05/07 and 11/05/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Gareth Hawtin Buckland undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **short** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Porthcawl Comprehensive School is a co-educational 11-18 school with 1,436 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection, compared with 1450 pupils at the time of the previous inspection in October 2001; there are 271 students in the sixth form. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2002.
2. The school is located in the seaside town of Porthcawl and is the town's only unitary authority (UA) maintained secondary school. Its pupils are drawn from the town and a number of surrounding villages as well as from a number of developing housing estates. Pupils also travel from the neighbouring town of Bridgend.
3. The school's intake represents the full range of ability. Reading scores on entry are average overall and numeracy scores are slightly lower. There are two pupils for whom a statement of special educational need (SEN) has been made and a further 148 pupils on the register; 110 of these are on school action and 38 on school action plus.
4. The percentage of pupils registered on the school census form as being entitled to receive free school meals is 11.1%. This percentage represents 159 pupils and is below the Welsh national average of 16.6%.
5. English is the predominant language spoken at home by 99.9% of pupils with 0.1% speaking Welsh as their first language.
6. Just fewer than 98% of the pupils are classified as white British and the remainder are classified in a variety of ethnic groups.
7. Approximately 25% of pupils are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds with a further 25% from economically advantaged backgrounds. The remainder is neither disadvantaged nor advantaged according to current classification criteria.
8. The school has been successively awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Investors in People Award, the Wales Quality Award, the European Network of Health Promoting Schools' Award and the bronze stage of the Eco-Schools' Award.

The School's Priorities and Targets

9. The school's stated mission is to provide a caring, disciplined learning environment based on mutual respect in which all pupils, irrespective of gender, race or ability develop their talents to the full.
10. The aims of the school, in partnership with pupils, parents, governors and the local community, are to:
 - develop a warm, caring, secure and happy environment;
 - help pupils develop lively and enquiring minds, the ability to question, argue rationally and apply themselves to tasks and skills;
 - help pupils to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life, employment and leisure in a fast-changing world;
 - help pupils to use language and number effectively;
 - develop an appreciation of personal and moral values and standards that make for good relationships in community life, namely, self-respect, honesty, respect for

others and their property, courtesy, effort, self-discipline and responsible behaviour;

- ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity with access to all elements of the curriculum; and
- ensure that pupils appreciate and care for the local community and its environment.

11. The school's main priorities are outlined in the school development plan (SDP) for 2006-09 with the key areas identified including:-

- further development of the 14-19 curriculum;
- further development of basic skills and key skills;
- further development of learning, teaching and assessment;
- the raising of pupils' standards and achievements;
- care and support for pupils; and
- enhanced links with the community.

12. The targets for external examinations agreed with the local education authority (LEA) are as follows:

Key Stage 3:

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| English level 5 and above | 74% | 75% | 74% |
| Mathematics level 5 and above | 80% | 80% | 80% |
| Science level 5 and above | 81% | 81% | 81% |
| Core subject indicator | 67% | 68% | 67% |

Key Stage 4:

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Pass rate 5+A*-G | 92% | 92% | 92% |
| Pass rate 5+A*-C | 65% | 64% | 64% |
| Core subject indicator | 53% | 53% | 53% |
| Y11 with no qualifications | 1% | 2% | 2% |

Summary

13. Porthcawl Comprehensive School is a good school with many outstanding features. Within the school, there are particular areas of strength including the:

- high performance of the pupils and sixth-form students over a period of time;
- planning for, and standards in, key skills across all areas of the curriculum and all year groups;
- positive contribution to teaching and learning made by the learning group;
- breadth and quality of the extra-curriculum provision;
- highly effective partnership arrangements with a wide range of partners;
- quality of the leadership of the headteacher; and
- established culture of rigorous self-evaluation across all areas of the school.

Table of grades awarded

14. In the seven key questions, the following grades were awarded.

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

15. In the school's self-evaluation report, the school awarded itself a Grade 1 for all key questions.

16. The inspection team awarded the school a Grade 2 for key questions 2 and 4 while concurring with the school's judgements in the other evaluations.

17. The reasons for the differences in grades are:

- In key question 2, the team felt that, whilst acknowledging the improvements made in both teaching and assessment since the last inspection, variations in the quality of both areas remained. Furthermore, despite the team judging 74% of all lessons as either Grade 1 or Grade 2, the team decided that the overall quality of teaching was not sufficiently strong for a Grade 1 with 11% of all lessons being identified as containing outstanding features.
- In key question 4, whilst the quality of care and support was deemed to be outstanding, there were insufficient outstanding features identified within each of the areas of provision for additional learning needs and equal opportunities. Therefore, since equal weighting has to be given to each area within this key question, on balance, the grade awarded did not concur with that of the school.

Key Stages 3 and 4

Standards

Good and outstanding features

18. The outstanding features include the:

- high percentage of pupils attaining level 7+ in national curriculum (NC) tests in key stage 3 (KS)3;
- high standards of key skills across the curriculum within both key stages;

- attitudes displayed by pupils towards their learning; and
 - progress made by pupils in their personal development.
19. Results in NC tests at the end KS3 in 2006 were very good and, at 65%, the result for the core subject indicator (CSI) was 7% above the national figure. Both girls and boys perform higher than local and national averages.
 20. When comparing the school with similar schools, the results place the school in the top quartile for English and the second quartile for science and the CSI. Over the past three years, results in mathematics have been very good, placing the school in the upper quartile for two years and in the second quartile for the third year. However, in 2006, the result in mathematics placed the school in the fourth quartile. An outstanding aspect is that English has remained in the top quartile for the past three years and, in particular, girls' literacy skills are outstanding.
 21. The maintenance of high standards in KS4, given the variations in the annual intake at Y7, is an outstanding achievement. In 2006, GCSE results compared extremely well with local and national results with the number of pupils gaining 5+A*-C grades being 11% above the local education authority (LEA) figure and 10% above that for Wales.
 22. The results in GCSE examinations reflect the achievements in KS3 with an impressive number of pupils attaining the CSI, 53% compared with 39% locally and 38% nationally, placing the school in the top quartile when compared with similar schools.
 23. A further outstanding result is the high percentage of grades A* and A awarded.
 24. All pupils, from the most able to those with SEN make very good progress. Specific talents are identified and encouraged and good support is provided when required.
 25. Pupils' key skills develop very well and, in particular, communication skills and the use of wider key skills to develop learning. Standards in all key skills have improved since the last inspection and the enhanced role of information technology (IT) in lessons has made a significant impact on the standard of information and communication technology (ICT) among the pupils. Standards in bilingualism are generally good.
 26. Pupils' personal development is a high priority. Personal, social and learning skills develop as pupils progress through the school. Pupils are confident and display a maturity and understanding of the wider world. They behave well and are polite and personable to visitors, staff and each other. Pupils work well in all contexts and participate in a comprehensive and successful work-experience programme.
 27. The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good and is successfully delivered through the personal and social education (PSE) programme and other subject areas in the curriculum.

Shortcomings

28. Despite girls and boys performing better than LEA and Welsh averages, there remains a gap in performance that is an issue for the school. This is particularly evident in the number of girls and boys attaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE.
29. Even though the school recognises the importance of attendance and punctuality, at 91%, the attendance rate is 2% below the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) target of 93% by 2007.

The quality of education and training

Good and outstanding features

30. The outstanding features include the:

- quality of reporting to parents;
- breadth and high quality of extra-curricular provision;
- highly effective partnership arrangements;
- care, support and guidance given to all pupils; and
- impressive transition arrangements for pupils arriving from the partner primary schools.

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

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Total |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Number of lessons in KS3 | 4 | 26 | 9 | 1 | | 40 |
| Number of lessons in KS4 | 3 | 18 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 29 |
| Total number of lessons | 7 | 44 | 15 | 2 | 1 | 69 |
| % of lessons | 10% | 64% | 22% | 3% | 1% | 100% |

32. Overall, teaching has good features, some of them outstanding, in 74% of lessons observed and important shortcomings in only 4% of all lessons. The proportion of lessons judged to be Grades 1 and 2 is, at 74%, 5% higher than the national average for secondary schools published in the recent annual report by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of schools in Wales.
33. The quality of teaching has improved when compared with the percentage of teaching judged as being good or very good in the last inspection. The range and variety of teaching methods have increased and this is evident in lessons in all subject areas.
34. Teachers are very well qualified and have high expectations of their pupils. There are extremely good working relationships and lessons are well planned. The appropriate use of resources is identified including a range of well-produced materials for homework and revision purposes.
35. The very good role played by the learning group in developing teaching and learning is demonstrated in the increased confidence of teachers to innovate, share ideas and help each other.
36. Assessment is regular and accurate; self- and peer-assessment is undertaken in most subject areas. Monitoring and reviewing pupils' work is undertaken rigorously and regularly. Information arising from these processes is shared between pupils and teachers and parents receive reports of high quality that identify clear learning objectives within particular areas of each subject.
37. The curriculum meets pupils' aspirations and is accessible to all. It is flexible enough to be tailored to the range of abilities and interests in the school. Particularly good aspects of the curriculum are the opportunities for early-entry GCSE and the range of initiatives for the development of key skills.
38. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop socially and culturally. The curriculum is extended by an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities that caters for interests in sport, music, drama as well as a range of activities directly linked to

subject areas. A significant number of visits abroad take place and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is a very popular and successful activity.

39. All statutory requirements for assessing pupils' achievements and reporting on NC subjects are met. Teaching fulfils the regulations of examining bodies. The strong emphasis placed on the development of key skills, from Y7 through to accreditation in the sixth form, and other aspects of the learning core reflects the national focus on the 14-19 learning agenda.
40. The school has developed long-standing and highly successful partnership arrangements with employers and the local community. Very good links exist with Careers Wales and mid Glamorgan Education Business Partnership (EBP). There is an exceptionally well-developed work-related programme (WRE).
41. The school has a very caring and inclusive ethos that effectively guides, supports and challenges all learners. The very good links with partner primary schools ensure that all pupils settle quickly into the routines of their new school.
42. The transition arrangements are a strength of the support provided for pupils with SEN whose progress through school is carefully tracked and supported by the SEN co-ordinator. The recent initiatives to extend the challenge to the more-able and talented pupils augur well for the future.
43. The PSE programme supports pupils' social development well. The provision for spiritual and moral development is successfully delivered through curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Shortcomings

44. Despite the improvements made in teaching, some ineffective teaching takes place in a small but significant minority of lessons. This is exemplified by a loss of pace and the inability to complete planned activities, resulting in pupils losing interest or being disadvantaged through not having the opportunity to consolidate their learning in a plenary session.
45. The quality of assessment practice is variable with inconsistencies remaining in the quality of teachers' comments in the routine marking of books.
46. Pupils are often unclear about their personal targets and, at times, how to move forward to attain them.
47. The level of direct support for the pupils with additional learning needs working in mainstream lessons is inadequate.
48. Opportunities to appreciate and celebrate aspects of diversity in all its guises are limited at present.

Leadership and management

Good and outstanding features

49. The outstanding features in leadership and management include the:
 - progressive leadership of the headteacher;
 - commitment to the professional development of staff including a strong focus on developing the skills of middle leaders through secondments onto the senior team;
 - extremely inclusive and comprehensive self-evaluation arrangements;

- extent to which the school seeks out and takes account of the views of all interested parties; and
 - management of the budget to drive forward the school's extensive programme of improvement.
50. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and seeks to sustain improvements. He is ably assisted by a strong senior management team, members of which have the same values. The senior team works closely with staff, pupils and students and is a strong presence around the school.
 51. The headteacher provides progressive leadership in strategic and financial planning, self-evaluation, developing staff and maintaining high standards of work and behaviour among pupils and students. At the heart of his work are an openness and approachability that achieve an effective balance of support and challenge.
 52. The governing body contains considerable expertise and experience. Governors fulfil their leadership role effectively, taking a strategic, leading role in planning, monitoring and evaluating; this is an outstanding feature of the leadership of the school.
 53. The quality of middle management is good and all middle managers have a clear understanding of their roles and a strong commitment to quality assurance within their designated areas. The culture of reflection is based on an exceptional self-evaluation culture, one that has been established for a number of years.
 54. There are sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced teachers to deliver the school's planned curriculum effectively. The technical staff provide good support in a number of areas of the curriculum. The school libraries are well managed by the librarian.
 55. Administrative and support staff undertake their roles effectively in the day-to-day running of the school. A site manager and assistant keep the campus and grounds in good order and undertake smaller maintenance work as required.
 56. The school holds the "Investors in People" award.
 57. The overall quality of the accommodation is good and, in some areas, very good. The school benefits from a range of sports facilities of high quality; good drama and dance facilities are provided for the performing arts. Through diligent financial planning, the rolling programme of improvement, driven by the school, has provided a range of new facilities. The school's on-going drive for improvement and development of facilities for pupils is an outstanding feature of the school.
 58. The school has recently installed a high-speed broadband system throughout the campus, providing good access to ICT facilities of high quality in all subject areas. With 37 teaching rooms having interactive whiteboards and a majority of other rooms having data projectors, the provision of IT facilities is an outstanding feature of the school.
 59. Across all subject areas, pupils have adequate access to a range of resources to support their learning. The way that the school manages all its resources is an outstanding feature of the management of the school; financial planning and control are significant strengths.
 60. The deputy headteacher and the senior administrative officer manage the day-to-day spending of the school budget very effectively. The finance committee of the

governing body rigorously oversees their work. The most recent audit report was very favourable.

61. Overall, when measured against its outcomes, the school provides very good value for money.

Shortcoming

62. There is a lack of clarity in terms of line management accountability and responsibility within the newly established faculty structure; not all faculty heads have a sufficiently well-defined quality assurance role within their faculties.
63. The gymnasium is in need of refurbishment and updating both internally and externally.

Sixth Form

64. The outstanding features identified in KS3 and KS4 are equally applicable to the sixth form. Further good and outstanding features, specifically relating to the sixth form are provided below:

Standards

Good and outstanding features

65. Over the past three years, examination results have consistently been at or above the national and local averages.
66. In 2006, 67% of students gained two or more passes at grades A-C at advanced level (A-level), 96% gained two or more passes at grades A-E and the average points score was 21. Sixth form students outperformed the LEA and national indicators within a significant number of categories.
67. Boys attain significantly higher than the local and national indicators in all categories with girls excelling in attaining 30+ points whilst performing at or above local and national figures in several other indicators.
68. Students have well-developed key skills and are now working towards accreditation in a number of areas. Communication and numeracy standards are very good and the use of IT is integral to many tasks presented to the students. Standards in the use of wider key skills are often outstanding.
69. Students make very good progress through their sixth-form studies and the vast majority of students stays in school for two years before progressing to further or higher education.
70. Sixth-form students are mature, well-motivated young adults with a wide variety of talents and interests who display confidence without arrogance and are personable and at ease with visitors to the school. Their behaviour is very good and outstanding relationships exist between students and teachers.
71. Students are confident in their ability to think and work independently and take a leading role in a wide range of activities in school and the local community. Their contributions are often outstanding and, through on-going work and involvement, continue beyond the students' life in the school.
72. Students display good personal and social skills and exhibit a very good awareness of issues relating to social and cultural diversity.

Shortcomings

73. There are no significant shortcomings.

The quality of education and training

Good and outstanding features

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Total |
|---|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Number of lessons observed in the Sixth Form | 2 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 15 |
| % | 13% | 60% | 20% | 7% | 0% | 100% |

74. The quality of teaching in the sixth form was based on a small sample of 15 lessons. The grades compare closely with those of KS3 and KS4, with 73% of all lessons being graded 1 or 2 and 93% of all lessons graded at least grade 3.
75. Teachers exhibit very good subject knowledge, enabling students to explore issues in depth. Teachers keep up-to-date with subject developments and ensure that examination requirements can be met.
76. Outstanding working relationships exist between teachers and their students. High expectations exist on both sides, making for a purposeful and productive learning environment.
77. There is an increased emphasis on students working independently and collaboratively in preparation for higher education. Students regularly undertake research activities.
78. Teachers regularly share with students the learning objectives, the criteria for success and the examination requirements. In this way, students are well prepared for external examinations.
79. Assessment practice is very good. Assessments are carefully marked with teachers' comments outlining strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement. Students are able to understand how improvements can be made and are actively involved in their own learning.
80. Formal monitoring of progress is effective and takes place regularly. Marking is rigorous, detailed and accurate and reflects examination board criteria. Students recognise and understand their targets and work towards them, assisted through good support from their teachers.
81. There is an appropriate range of courses available to students, with added breadth achieved through PSE lessons and a wide range of extra-curricular activities including a community action scheme where students voluntarily give of their time for the benefit of the local community.
82. Extremely strong partnerships exist with a range of businesses and the wider community. A comprehensive work-experience programme enhances the experiences of the students in the world of work.
83. Pastoral support and guidance, as well as very good links with Careers Wales, assist students in making informed choices about their future and support their personal development. Visiting speakers further raise awareness of various issues appropriate to students' interests and aspirations.

Shortcomings

84. Despite a conscious drive to develop independent research and learning, students' learning in the sixth form is often teacher-led and tightly controlled with a relatively narrow range of teaching methods being employed.

Leadership and management

Good and outstanding features

85. The sixth form is very well led and managed as a unit within the school as a whole. A good balance exists between providing a disciplined environment and allowing students a greater measure of independence.
86. There is a clear management structure that ensures effective liaison between sixth-form managers and other senior and middle managers. Students' progress is monitored and reviewed regularly.
87. Self-evaluation is very thorough and extremely effective; views of students are taken into account. Areas for development are identified and planned with appropriate levels of resources established and provided.
88. The sixth-form building provides good accommodation with a range of seating and work areas including a café section that students can access throughout the day. Students have good access to high quality ICT facilities and they make extensive use of the larger library.

Shortcomings

89. There are no significant shortcomings.

Progress since the last inspection

90. All three key issues for action identified in the last inspection have been fully met.
91. New procedures introduced to share good practice and to improve the link between self-evaluation and planning have made a significant contribution to the work of the school. The self-evaluation framework establishes strong links between self-evaluation and development planning at departmental and whole-school levels. This rigorous framework has led to a significant improvement in the quality of departmental development plans (DDP).
92. The learning group has been very influential in spreading aspects of good practice in teaching across the whole school.
93. The school now meets the statutory requirement to provide religious education for students in the sixth form.

Recommendations

In order to build on the current success the school should address the following recommendations.

- R1 Continue the developments in teaching and learning in order to improve the quality of teaching across all curriculum areas.
- R2 Improve the level of support for pupils with SEN within the mainstream lessons.
- R3 Continue to raise awareness of equal opportunities by addressing the shortcomings relating to diversity and gender.
- R4 Build on the strengths in leadership to establish greater clarity relating to responsibility and accountability within the new faculty structure.
- R5 Continue to improve the rate of attendance across the school.

All of these recommendations have been identified as being in need of development in the SDP for the period 2006-09.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

94. The grade awarded matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

95. There are several **outstanding features** including:

- the high percentage of pupils attaining level 7 or above in KS3 tests;
- aspects of the performance of pupils in KS3 and at GCSE;
- the maintenance of high levels of attainment at A-level;
- the high standards of key skills across the curriculum at all stages of learning;
- the attitudes displayed by pupils and students towards their learning; and
- the progress that pupils and, in particular, students make in their personal development.

Their success in attaining agreed learning goals

Key Stages 3 and 4

Good and outstanding features

96. In 2006, the KS3 CSI for the school was 65%; this is significantly above the national figure. Despite slightly more girls than boys reaching this level, the separate performances of boys and girls were also significantly above the national figures.
97. The percentage of pupils attaining level 5 and above in each of the separate subjects of English, mathematics and science is above 70%. An outstanding feature is the high percentage of pupils attaining level 7 and above within one or more subjects.
98. In all core subjects and the CSI, the KS3 performance in 2006 was better than the local and national averages. In addition, when comparing the school with schools of a similar intake, it is in the top two quartiles for all but one indicator. Results in English have remained in the top quartile over the past three years with the performance of the girls being outstanding.
99. In KS4, the school has maintained very good standards of attainment in GCSE. The maintenance of the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades, given the fluctuating performance profile of the intake in KS3, is a very good feature of the school's performance. In 2006, 63% of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades and 92% of pupils achieved five or more A*-G grades. These percentages are similar to the results from 2005.
100. GCSE results compare extremely well with the LEA and national results. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C is 11% above the LEA figure and 10% above that for all-Wales. An impressive feature of the GCSE results is the

percentage of pupils attaining the CSI in year 11. In 2006, 53% of pupils attained the CSI, compared with 39% locally and 38% nationally. This performance is enhanced further by the high percentage of GCSE A* and A grades; in 2006, the figure was 30%.

101. When compared with similar schools, the school's GCSE results in 2006 place the school in the top quartile for half of the indicators; elsewhere, they are in the second quartile. The average points score, at 49.3, places the school in the top quartile, indicating further the quality of the performance at GCSE across the full spectrum of abilities.
102. The school uses a wide range of data to set numerical targets for the end of each key stage. In both key stages, these targets are exceeded. In KS4, the performance of the pupils in 2006 demonstrated a good level of value added when compared with the pupils' attainment on entry and the targets set by the school.
103. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, generally perform very well. The most-able pupils are challenged to produce work of a high quality both in oral and written responses. Pupils with SEN are successful in their work and good use is made of individual education plans (IEPs) in ensuring good levels of participation and success in mainstream classes.
104. The development of key skills is an important feature in the life of the school. The standards in key skills are very good with some outstanding work in a number of areas.
105. Standards of communication through speaking and listening are very good across both key stages. Pupils of all abilities listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. The pupils speak with clarity and confidence in a wide range of contexts across the curriculum and within extra-curricular activities. Within whole-class and group discussions, pupils are capable of sustained discussion and debate.
106. Reading skills are very good; in general, access to the curriculum is not held back by an inability to read materials that are used in lessons. Independent research is undertaken in a number of subject areas and pupils carry this out with enthusiasm, producing outcomes of high quality.
107. Very good examples of sustained and extended writing are evident across a number of areas of the curriculum with some outstanding narrative in several subject areas. Throughout the school, the quality of presentation is of a very high standard and pupils take pride in the work they produce.
108. There is considerable evidence of numeracy being effectively used across the curriculum; the ability of pupils to use number in a range of contexts is very good.
109. Information and communication technology has developed extremely well recently, raising the standards in key skills, particularly for promoting independent research, drafting and redrafting and creating presentations.
110. Standards in bilingual skills are generally good. Signs are bilingual and are produced to a high standard. Incidental use of the Welsh language is heard in registration and assemblies. The culture of Wales is celebrated in the school and is evident in many of the displays of high quality within classrooms and corridors around the school.
111. Standards in the use of the wider key skills are often outstanding, particularly within the creative aspects of work. Pupils demonstrate a keenness to work together in pairs

and in small groups. Within these situations, the combination of high standards of discussion and debate with grouped and paired work is often outstanding practice in learning.

112. The development of independent learning skills is good. Pupils acquire new skills and knowledge and develop new concepts and understanding through a range of pieces of work in class and for homework.
113. Target-setting at a whole-school level is very accurate. The school has achieved or exceeded its targets annually for the past three years and has set realistic targets for the forthcoming three years. Apart from some fluctuation arising from the target-setting procedures in one area, the school has consistently maintained a high level of performance.

Shortcomings

114. While the percentage of pupils attaining either five or more A*-C or five or more A*-G grades is very good, the absolute performance in both of these indicators has remained within a narrow performance range for the past three years. This is despite national and local averages moving forward.
115. At GCSE, the gap in performance between girls and boys is wider than that for all-Wales within the five or more A*-C grades and the average points score categories. Despite this, the actual performances of girls and boys are both significantly above the figures for the LEA and Wales.

Sixth Form

Good and outstanding features

116. The school has maintained high standards in sixth-form examination results. The results have been consistently above the national and local averages over the past three years. Challenging but realistic targets have been met and, on occasion, exceeded.
117. In 2006, the average points score was 21, compared with 19 locally and 20 nationally. Sixth-form students outperformed the LEA and national indicators within the 20+ and 30+ categories.
118. An outstanding feature is the boys' performance that is significantly higher than the local and national indicators in all categories. In 2006, the girls excelled in attaining 30+ points whilst performing at or above local and national figures in several other indicators. Girls achieved well in BTEC and AVCE examinations.
119. While 67% of students attained two or more passes at grades A-C, 96% attained two or more passes at grades A-E. These results are at or above the local figures for these two indicators.
120. Students have extremely well-developed key skills and are now working towards accreditation in a number of areas. Standards in communication and numeracy are very good. Good use of IT is integral to many tasks presented to the students. Bilingual skills are generally good.
121. Standards in the use of wider key skills are often outstanding. Students demonstrate an ability to work well with others, both in school and in other situations, and to solve problems through a range of independent learning skills such as research, analysis and hypothesis testing.

Shortcomings

122. Despite girls attaining well in UCAS points gained, the percentage of girls attaining two or more A-C grades at A-level is, at 66%, lower than the local and national figures.

Their progress in learning

Key Stages 3 and 4

Good and outstanding features

123. Pupils of all abilities readily acquire new skills, knowledge, concepts and understanding and apply these successfully to new and challenging learning situations. The most-able pupils absorb new knowledge quickly and are able to apply key skills in a range of situations. They are prepared to think for themselves, undertake research and make deductions.

124. Pupils display considerable enthusiasm for the work they undertake and become actively engaged in the learning opportunities provided. Pupils recognise and understand the progress they are making. Pupils reflect on the work they are doing, either individually or in small groups.

125. Pupils' progress through each transition point in their learning is extremely efficient and effective, allowing them to move on successfully without any significant delay in their learning experiences. Transition arrangements to ensure standards are maintained and all pupils are able to fulfil their potential are outstanding.

126. Pupils are able to adapt their knowledge to unfamiliar situations and this is frequently displayed by pupils; this is a significant strength of their learning experience.

Shortcomings

127. There are no significant shortcomings.

Sixth Form

Good and outstanding features

128. Students readily acknowledge that they need to acquire a large body of knowledge in their A-level studies. They study issues in depth; research and independent thinking form integral aspects of their learning.

129. Students make outstanding progress through their sixth-form studies, by comparison with their GCSE performances. The vast majority of students entering the sixth form after GCSE stays in school for two years before progressing to further or higher education.

130. Students have a very good understanding of how well they are doing. They receive verbal and written feedback on work they have presented to subject teachers. Progress is informally reviewed regularly and formally at specific times of the year and targets are set for future performances.

Shortcomings

131. There are no significant shortcomings.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

Key Stages 3 and 4

Good and outstanding features

132. An important factor contributing towards the standards of attainment is the contribution that pupils make through the use of their very good personal, social and learning skills. These skills are used exceptionally well in a wide range of aspects of school life.
133. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is good. Pupils display maturity and understanding within a wide range of situations presented within PSE and many other areas of school life, such as in the school council.
134. Pupils of all ages and abilities display very good attitudes towards their work. Active engagement in the tasks presented in lessons, allied to clear enjoyment in their learning, is an outstanding feature of the culture of the school.
135. Despite the size of the site, pupils move between lessons in a sensible and orderly manner. The school is a happy and relaxed community and the caring use of the communal areas around the school demonstrates a sense of ownership and pride on the part of the pupils.
136. Pupils behave responsibly around the school and in lessons. They have a clear understanding of the importance of good behaviour in a learning environment. A strong emphasis is placed upon the importance of self-discipline; working with others and improving one's own performance are good features of the effective learning that takes place.
137. Punctuality to school, registration and lessons is good.
138. Pupils, parents and other partners comment very favourably on the ability of pupils to solve problems and improve their own learning. Consequently, at the end of KS4, pupils successfully establish themselves in either the sixth form or at college. For the small number of pupils who leave full-time education, entry into the world of work is successfully achieved.
139. Care, respect and concern for others are key aspects of themes within the school's PSE programme and assemblies. These features are openly visible within the daily work of the school. Such strengths, linked with an acute awareness of the local community, ensure that pupils are able to adapt to the wider community beyond the school.
140. The school provides pupils with very good work-experience opportunities through an extremely comprehensive and successful programme that is well established in the school. Employers' evaluations indicate the very good contribution made by the pupils they receive, often citing an outstanding contribution having been made by the pupils. This aspect of the curriculum is an outstanding feature of the school's provision.

Shortcomings

141. The rate of whole-school attendance over the past three terms is 2% below the WAG target of 93% by 2007. During this time, procedures to monitor attendance have moved from half-day checks to lesson checks being made via an electronic attendance monitoring system. Attendance figures in previous years placed the school in the top quartile when compared with similar schools. However, using the

new system, the combined attendance rate of KS3 and KS4 produced an unsatisfactory figure of just below 90%; this figure falls short of the WAG target.

Sixth Form

Good and outstanding features

142. The sixth-form students are well-motivated young adults with a wide variety of talents and interests which are developed well within the sixth form. They display confidence without arrogance and are personable and at ease with visitors to the school.
143. Behaviour is very good, based on self-discipline and outstanding relationships exist between students and teachers. Students realise the importance of good attendance for academic success and there is a business-like approach towards punctuality to lessons.
144. Students are confident in their ability to think and work independently and take a leading role in numerous activities within school and the local community, where they often excel themselves. They receive recognition for their work in a range of sporting, cultural and social activities; such recognition is both local and national. These contributions are often outstanding and, through volunteering and active involvement by the students, continue beyond the students' life in the school.
145. Students display an awareness of the importance of good personal and social skills. They also demonstrate a very good awareness of issues relating to social and cultural diversity and are very effectively prepared to take their place in the community, higher education and the workplace.

Shortcomings

146. Despite variations in attendance rates across Y12 and Y13, from 96% to 87%, over the last three terms, the mean attendance rate in the sixth form was just over 91%.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

147. This grade disagrees with the Grade 1 that the school awarded itself in its self evaluation report.
148. Whilst acknowledging the considerable improvement that has occurred since the last inspection in the quality of both teaching and assessment, inspectors judged that neither process was yet complete, resulting in insufficient teaching containing outstanding features being observed.
149. The team also took the view that the school was too generous in its interpretation of 'outstanding practice' in this section of the self-evaluation report.

150. The **outstanding features** identified include the:

- relationships formed between sixth-form students and their teachers; and
- quality of the reports issued to parents.

151. In the 84 lessons observed, the following grades were awarded:

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Total |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Number of lessons in KS3 | 4 | 26 | 9 | 1 | | 40 |
| Number of lessons in KS4 | 3 | 18 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 29 |
| Number of lessons in Sixth Form | 2 | 9 | 3 | 1 | | 15 |
| Total number of lessons | 9 | 53 | 18 | 3 | 1 | 84 |
| % of lessons | 11% | 63% | 21% | 4% | 1% | 100% |

152. Comparison with grades awarded in the last inspection is difficult, because of the introduction of a category for 'outstanding' teaching and the sample being different in size and nature. However, it is clear from these figures that the quality of teaching has improved considerably, with 74% lessons judged to be Grade 1 or 2, compared with less than 62% deemed good or better in the full inspection of 2001.

153. Only 21% lessons were given Grade 3 and a further 5% of lessons graded 4 or 5. The proportion of lessons judged to be Grades 1 and 2 is 5% above the national average of 69% for 2005-6 and significantly better than the national target for 2007. Despite this very positive picture, only about 11% of lessons were judged to contain outstanding features.

How well teaching meets pupils' needs and curricular or course requirements

Key Stages 3 and 4

Good and outstanding features

154. Good teaching can be observed in both key stages and in all curricular areas. Its development and dissemination owes much to the very good work of the learning group, which has given teachers the confidence to innovate, share ideas and help each other.

155. The role of the group has been to research new ideas, provide staff in-service training (INSET), encourage initiatives and disseminate good practice in all subject areas. The success of these methods has created a clear momentum for further change and renewal. For example, 35% of staff – from senior managers to newly-qualified teachers - have led INSET sessions.

156. The work of the learning group is supported by a very well managed programme of continuing professional development.

157. Good teaching is characterised by detailed planning, clear objectives, appropriate pace and challenge, good subject knowledge and good awareness of recent development in subject teaching. It is also based upon a willingness to take risks and, in the best practice, on a determination to push pupils a little further than they thought they could go.

158. In many subject areas, medium-term planning is detailed and comprehensive in its syllabus coverage, key skills, assessment opportunities and a variety of learning styles.

159. An unusually good feature of the best practice in shorter-term lesson planning is the level of care taken in planning for continuity and progression in pupils' learning. There is a requirement in the planning to show how assessment of pupils' prior work has informed planning of the current lesson.

160. This process is assisted by the simultaneous development of pupils' understanding of key skills. These are targeted in all planning documentation and are integral to most lessons in both key stages.
161. The range and variety of teaching methods have increased since the last inspection and are evident in some lessons in all subject areas, but mainly in English, history, art, design technology and mathematics. Particularly effective use of ICT and video was observed in a number of lessons, as well as problem-solving activities that handed the learning initiative over to the pupils.
162. Relationships between teachers and pupils, and amongst pupils, in most lessons are extremely good. Expectations are high on both sides and this allows challenging work to be set and completed.
163. In general, the school has started to move effectively to reduce the gender gap in the academic performance of boys and girls. Based on guidance from the learning group, each department has produced an action plan for addressing the problem. Even though an issue relating to gender continues to exist, the effectiveness of the work of the group is starting to be seen in the improved performance of boys relative to that of girls.
164. Teaching is well organised to meet the needs of the least- and most-able pupils; arrangements for the learning of all pupils can be seen in both planning and classroom practice. Pupils' progress is well monitored by both academic and pastoral staff and effective arrangements exist for identifying and mentoring pupils who under-achieve.

Shortcomings

165. Despite considerable improvements since the last inspection, teaching is ineffective in a small but significant minority of lessons as a result of too much talking by the teacher or loss of pace. When these issues arise, pupils lose interest, disengage from the tasks that are set and, in a very small number of lessons, cause low-level disruption. Poor behaviour occurs most frequently in lower-ability teaching sets.
166. Inconsistencies in the quality of planning exist both across and within departments. Where the planning is not well prepared, shortcomings in practice and classroom management exist. In particular, shortcomings in time management mean that in a minority of cases, teachers are unable to complete all planned activities and pupils are deprived of the opportunity to consolidate their learning in plenary discussion.

Sixth Form

Good and outstanding features

167. The quality of teaching in the sixth form mirrors that within KS3 and KS4 with 73% of all lessons being graded 1 or 2. 93% of all lessons were graded at least Grade 3. The short inspection of the school afforded opportunities to observe a small sample of lessons only.
168. Teachers in the sixth form have outstanding working relationships with their students. Teachers exhibit very good subject knowledge, which they deploy with confidence. They keep up-to-date so that examination requirements can be met.
169. Expectations are high on both sides and this makes for a purposeful and productive learning environment. In most lessons, well-structured exposition and probing questioning extends the limits of students' understanding.

170. Students are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively and are required to participate in class discussions, presentations and demonstrations.
171. Teachers regularly share with students the learning objectives, the criteria for success and the examination requirements. In this way, students are well prepared for external examinations.

Shortcomings

172. A significant amount of the learning seen in the sixth form was teacher-led and tightly controlled. This can be explained in part by the need for teachers to give last-minute advice on revision during the week before the start of study leave. However, it means that a relatively narrow range of teaching methods was seen during the inspection.

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

Key Stages 3 and 4

Good and outstanding features

173. Teachers monitor and review pupils' progress regularly and there is good support for pupils.
174. The school has an extremely effective system for collecting, collating, analysing and sharing a wide range of performance data. The information is kept up-to-date throughout each year so that a full profile of pupils' performance is available throughout their school career.
175. Monitoring is broadly effective with information being shared appropriately. Individuals are tracked and under-performance identified and addressed. Mentoring and support are provided by heads of year. Parents are informed of progress and any under-performance that has been identified.
176. Most departments have effective methods of periodic assessment, in the form of end-of-module tests or focused assessment tasks. These assessments are carefully marked with teachers' comments outlining strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement.
177. Pupils' work is marked regularly and, in the best practice, comments provide considerable assistance for pupils to be able to move forward with their learning.
178. There is also evidence of planning for pupils to be involved in self- and peer-assessment and in proposing their own targets for improvement; some good practice can be seen in art, design and technology, and history.
179. Whole-school target setting is accurate. Assessment by teachers is broadly accurate and fair with marking undertaken regularly. This use of prior attainment leads to targets being established for each individual pupil which, in turn, creates subject targets. These are then used to establish the school's targets. This is a good process.
180. The quality of arrangements for reporting to parents is very good with an outstanding feature included within these arrangements. This feature is the quality of the statement banks, generated as a result of extensive collaboration between subject leaders and the assessment manager. These go well beyond general statements based on attainment target levels, to reflect precise learning objectives within facets or strands of each subject. Consequently, it is difficult to know where the free text ends and the 'bank' statements begin. This makes for ease of use, as does the fact that teachers can write their reports from home, by means of a secure internet connection.

181. The school meets all statutory requirements for the assessing and reporting of pupils' achievements.

Shortcomings

182. The quality of assessment practice is variable. Despite very good practice in end-of-module formative assessment, inconsistencies remain in the quality of teachers' comments in the routine marking of pupils' exercise books.

183. While target setting is a feature of assessment across the school, a minority of pupils are often unclear about their personal targets and do not readily recognise the importance of their targets or, at times, how to move forward to attain them. There is inconsistent practice in the use of target setting across the subjects in the curriculum.

Sixth Form

Good and outstanding features

184. Assessment practice is very good. The assessments are carefully marked with teachers' comments outlining strengths, weaknesses and targets for improvement. This leads to students understanding how improvements may be made and actively involves them in their own learning and planning their own progress.

185. In the best practice, both self- and peer-assessment are used to enable students to see what is expected of them and where they stand in relation to this expectation. They, therefore, act as effective revision techniques.

186. Subject teachers have a good knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses. They support students with helpful diagnostic comments on their work and orally in lessons.

187. Formal monitoring of progress is effective and takes place regularly. Marking is rigorous, detailed and accurate and reflects examination board criteria. Students recognise and understand their targets and work towards them assisted through good support from their teachers.

Shortcomings

188. There are no significant shortcomings.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

189. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

190. The **outstanding features** identified include the:

- planned provision for key skills development across the school;
- breadth and high quality of the extra-curricular programme;
- promotion of pupils' personal development;
- highly effective partnership arrangements with a wide range of partners;
- quality of work-related education;
- accurate and acute awareness of employers' needs; and
- active development of entrepreneurial skills.

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

Good and outstanding features

191. The school's curriculum broadly meets the needs of its pupils and is accessible to all including those with SEN.
192. There is impressive continuity of the curriculum from KS2, developed through strong curricular links with all partner primary schools. The school offers a wide curriculum with the opportunities to study two languages and drama at KS3. There is good curricular continuity from KS3 to KS4.
193. The majority of pupils return to the sixth form which has an extensive choice of academic courses. These are complemented with a few vocationally-orientated and twilight courses offered at Bridgend College. The school is an active member of the Bridgend 14-19 Learning Pathways Consortium.
194. Transition arrangements both from primary to secondary and into the sixth form are very strong. The outstanding primary/secondary liaison is very well co-ordinated with an impressive range of activities available. These include:
- teachers from the secondary school teaching bridging units;
 - a transition day in the summer term for pupils;
 - a transition concert;
 - very good sharing of data across the key stages;
 - a common INSET day for all staff in all partner schools;
 - poetry evenings;
 - a cross phase "**Thinking to Learn**" project funded by the LEA; and
 - the media group at the school producing a bilingual transition DVD.
195. There is an open option system in KS4, providing access and opportunity for all pupils. Courses in KS4 are tailored to ability and aptitude. The vast majority of pupils follows a course of ten subjects at GCSE. There are opportunities for the more-able and talented pupils to be entered for some GCSEs in Y9.
196. In KS4, some courses have been introduced to provide a wider choice including some vocational courses. However, as yet, the school is at an early stage in addressing the priorities that the WAG has established for 14-19 education and training.
197. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality mark for the second time and there are a number of outstanding features in the school's provision of key skills which include:
- an audit undertaken across all subjects across the school to map out the key skills;
 - all schemes of work identifying appropriate use of key skills;
 - the development of a staff guide to key skills;
 - the school seeking accreditation for key skills in the sixth form; and
 - the involvement of the more-able and gifted pupils in Y7 in the *ilearn* project on the topic of water.

198. The quality of key skills' development and the application of these skills across the curriculum, in the sixth form are outstanding. This is particularly in the development of appropriate opportunities for using the wider key skills that prepare students for life and learning beyond the sixth form.
199. There is an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities, held mainly during lunchtimes and after school. The participation rates are very high and extensive opportunities are provided for participation in sport, music, drama, homework clubs, visits related to curricular subjects, foreign visits, theatre trips, concerts, annual musicals and competitions. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is very well supported with many pupils achieving silver and bronze awards.
200. The school promotes pupils' and students' personal development very effectively. All pupils have access to a very good PSE programme that is delivered in a tutor period across the school and involves outside agencies. In the sixth form, there is a well-supported range of extra-curricular activities which includes a community action scheme where year 12 and 13 students volunteer to give of their time to work in the community.
201. The school provides very well for pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their spiritual and moral development is successfully nurtured through opportunities provided in assemblies, tutor periods and in other curricular areas. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is further enriched by additional days to promote self-awareness and study skills and the careers' convention.
202. The overall promotion of pupils' and students' personal development is an outstanding feature of the school.
203. The vast majority of pupils enjoy the school and behave responsibly showing respect for one another. They display a caring, courteous attitude and concern for others which is reflected in the way they organise and raise money for charity and how older pupils help younger pupils in the school.
204. There are many enrichment opportunities for pupils and students to develop both culturally and socially. This very good provision assists in pupils and students mixing easily and relationships are good throughout the school.
205. There are outstanding partnerships with representatives from the business world and the wider community who value their relationship with the school. There is a well-supported youth club and adult community centre on-site.
206. There are effective links with parents which ensures maximum support for pupils. There are well-established links with Bridgend College and higher education institutions.
207. The school meets statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship while the broad and balanced curriculum complies with all statutory requirements.

Shortcomings

208. Despite the good work undertaken by the school, the development of individual learning pathways to provide a wider choice of level 1 and 2 courses in KS4 remains limited.
209. There is some imbalance of gender in the lower sets and some large groups of pupils in the higher sets in KS3.

210. The provision of one hour per fortnight for the delivery of statutory religious education in KS4 limits continuity and progression.

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

Good and outstanding features

211. There has been a considerable amount of work undertaken by the school on sustainable development. This includes a mixed-age, pupil-led Porthcawl Eco People (PEP) group which has already gained a bronze Eco School's Award. The PEP group is also responsible for arranging the disposal of waste for recycling and for the school obtaining the Healthy Eating Award.

212. Two curricular audits on sustainable development have been carried out and the school has been audited independently; this has led to the installation of new windows, the use of low energy bulbs, dry waste recycling and other initiatives to save energy.

213. Global citizenship is promoted through the PSE programme, supplemented with input from the humanities faculty. Students from the sixth form have been involved in United Nations' debates on citizenship.

214. The breadth of, and the equality of opportunity within, the curriculum ensure that it is accessible to all pupils. There are flexible arrangements for the less-able pupils in KS4 including some college-based vocational courses and work-based provision.

215. Bilingualism is a developing feature of the school's work. There is a Welsh language and culture policy and a questionnaire to pupils has been undertaken. There are good numbers of pupils opting for Welsh second language in KS4. An audit of the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* has been undertaken and displays relating to the *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* are visible throughout the school.

216. The outstanding extra-curricular opportunities and the strength of the work-based learning ensure that pupils' educational experiences reflect national priorities and provide a platform for lifelong learning.

217. There is a highly effective WRE programme which is planned and delivered through the school's PSE provision. It starts in Y7 and is gradually developed throughout the rest of KS3 where WRE is partly delivered by humanities staff.

218. There are outstanding links with Careers Wales, supported by very good links with Mid Glamorgan EBP, Youth Gateway, Wise for Life and project Dynamo. A careers' convention is held annually at the school for pupils from Y9 upwards.

219. All Y11 pupils and Y12 students undertake an extremely comprehensive work-experience programme. This provides pupils and students with important insights into the world of work. All year groups are working towards Compact Certificates.

220. The school is extremely pro-active in canvassing the needs of employers through the extensive careers programme, individual interviews for pupils with the careers officer, visits and interviews with the business community, as well as through the work-experience programme.

221. All these features combined ensure the school provides outstanding opportunities and support for all its pupils and students in their WRE.

222. More vocationally-based courses continue to be introduced in KS4 and in the sixth form. In the sixth form, there is a higher education access tutor and the school is actively involved in the local Community Consortium for Education and Training (CCET).

223. An outstanding aspect of school life is the development of entrepreneurial skills. These are developed from Y7 with the Business Challenge Day organised by EBP through to pupils in KS4 being involved in local Dynamo projects. Pupils have been successful with the Celticar competition over the past two years. Furthermore, the school has taken part in the Sony Small Business Challenge. In addition, the Bosch science events and Young Business Enterprise are both well supported by the students in the sixth form.

Shortcomings

224. The *Cwricwlwm Cymreig* is not yet fully embedded into the working practices of every department.

225. Despite the recent developments in this area, the number of vocationally based courses in KS4 and the sixth form are limited.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

226. In its self-evaluation report, the school graded this key question as Grade 1.

227. The inspection team judged this key question to be Grade 2. As a result of equal weighting, whilst there are some outstanding and many good features, particularly in the quality of care, support and guidance, there are insufficient outstanding features in the quality of provision for additional learning needs and in the provision for equal opportunities, to award the key question a Grade 1.

228. **Outstanding features** were identified within:

- the transition arrangements provided for all pupils and students;
- extremely effective partnerships with parents, carers and a wide range of outside agencies; and
- the school's work in identifying and addressing the needs of its more-able and talented pupils.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

Good and outstanding features

229. The overall provision for care, support and guidance is good with some outstanding features. The school has a committed team of teachers who co-operate closely with outside agencies to provide an inclusive and supportive community. Pupils and students see their teachers as caring and approachable.

230. Very good and highly effective procedures are used to monitor learners' academic progress, attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Pupils and students are fully aware of these procedures which gather detailed knowledge of pastoral and academic development, allowing prompt and appropriate action to be taken when necessary. The procedures are used well in supporting pupils and students and are commented

upon favourably by parents who are reminded frequently of the need for pupils' regular attendance.

231. The school has developed outstanding relationships with employers and a wide range of outside agencies. It has good working relationships with parents and carers whose views are sought, on a range of issues, through questionnaires, meetings and via the school's web-site. They are all encouraged to be actively involved in the education of their children resulting in enhanced care, support and guidance of pupils.
232. As pupils progress through the school, within and across the key stages, they are provided with good advice and guidance. This allows them to make informed choices about which subjects and courses to follow.
233. The arrangements for the transition of pupils from Y6 into Y7 are an outstanding feature of the school's provision. They facilitate continuity and progression in pupils' learning within a safe and secure environment. The arrangements include:
- a joint transition plan with partner schools;
 - cross phase staff working on a '**Thinking to Learn**' programme; and
 - an exciting and well-managed induction programme.
234. Transition at other stages of learning is very good and forms a seamless progression for all pupils and students.
235. Pupils are very positive about the school's PSE programme. The PSE programme takes good account of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) Framework for PSE. It includes appropriate health education, careers guidance and makes very good use of external agencies and specialist services.
236. There is an increasingly effective school council with all year groups entitled to equal representation. Its development is guided through the school's planning and the involvement of a senior member of staff. Despite the profile of the council, a number of pupils comment upon a limited awareness of the council's activities.
237. The strength of the democratic role of pupils and students is enhanced in the sixth form through a highly effective sixth-form *senedd* which is recognised as a feature in the development of sixth-form students' independence and autonomy.
238. Overall, the provision for careers education and guidance within the school is outstanding. The school works well in partnership with many outside agencies including Mid-Glamorgan EBP and Careers Wales who provide a dedicated careers officer based in the school. The integrated provision within the PSE programme is extended through these partnerships and, as a result, learners become fully aware of their progression into the world of work and are able to make informed choices.
239. The school's collective endeavours to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all members of its community are very good. This is the result of the extensive range of measures the school has in place. They include:
- the employment of a full-time first-aider supported by trained staff first-aiders strategically located around the site;
 - pupils and students being made very aware of health and safety issues through the PSE programme;

- a detailed action plan that is reviewed every term; and
- the achievement of the Healthy Schools' Award.

240. The school has well-documented child-protection procedures. All staff undertake regular training and are fully conversant in the procedures. Clear, written information is also provided for temporary staff. There are strong links with outside agencies.

Shortcomings

241. There are no significant shortcomings.

The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs

Good and outstanding features

242. The school uses a range of appropriate strategies to diagnose pupils with SEN. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) liaises very effectively with colleagues in partner primary schools. Pupils' needs are also diagnosed through a range of diagnostic tests

243. All pupils who require them have IEPs. All teachers and support staff who work with pupils with IAPs have copies of these plans and use them effectively.

244. Records are very well maintained and the school meets all statutory requirements in regard of the extremely small number of statements of SEN and the review process.

245. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and the SENCO meets twice a year with the pupils and their parents to discuss progress and set new targets.

246. There is good liaison between the individual studies' department and subject departments.

247. The few pupils who are withdrawn for individual literacy support, mostly in Y7, respond well and make good progress. In KS3, there is also additional staffing in some English and mathematics lessons for one class in each year, to support pupils with their basic skills.

248. In KS3, the school provides for small withdrawal groups to address issues relating to behaviour management; the response of pupils is very positive.

249. The SENCO makes very effective use of professional support services and is proactive in ensuring that pupils access specialist support.

250. An outstanding feature is the school's provision for more-able and talented pupils. All such pupils are clearly identified and subject departments are expected in their planning to respond to their needs through extension and enrichment activities. In addition, the school has selected from within this group, a small core of about eight pupils in each year for whom it is developing an innovative and stimulating programme of mixed-age activities and projects.

Shortcomings

251. The level of learning assistant support for pupils with additional learning and behavioural needs in mainstream lessons is inadequate. The very small amount of support currently available is allocated to named pupils. There is no additional in-class support for the majority of pupils on the school's SEN register.

252. Individual action plans do not always indicate the strategies that teachers need to use to enable pupils to meet their targets.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

Good and outstanding features

253. The school has effective policies and procedures for recognising and taking account of pupils' backgrounds. Each pupil is valued as an individual. Pupils' and students' achievements are monitored and analysed with respect to ethnic diversity. This analysis indicates that pupils and students of all backgrounds succeed well at the school.
254. The school recognises the importance of gender equality in its developmental planning and the learning group is prominent in the promotion of it. All departments produce gender action plans and gender stereotyping is actively discouraged within subject areas and in the PSE programme. All pupils and students are given equal access to the curriculum and additional school activities.
255. Pupils and students benefit from the successful application of behaviour, race and equal opportunities policies throughout the school. There are few incidents of discrimination or harassment.
256. The school has a very rigorous approach to bullying including a "*Bullying Box*" and e-mail facility to access sixth-form counsellors trained by **Childline**, an anti-bullying week and a charter displayed in various prominent places including information leaflets for pupils and homework diaries. In the event of bullying taking place, there are good follow-up procedures in place.
257. The implementation of the behaviour policy, allied to the well-structured pastoral support programme, results in a low number of pupils with fixed-term exclusions; four pupils were permanently excluded in the last academic year, all in KS4.
258. The school works actively to ensure that disabled pupils are treated equally and do not suffer from less-favourable provision. There is a fully implemented accessibility plan and a very recently confirmed disability equality scheme. All pupils have equal access to the full curriculum.

Shortcomings

259. Even though a very positive picture of the school's provision is presented, there are some shortcomings. These are that:
- there is limited evidence of pupils having the opportunity to appreciate and celebrate aspects of multiculturalism and diversity;
 - the gender gap in performance remains; and
 - with some pupils, both boys and girls, there remains a tendency to make stereotypical choices when deciding upon option choices in KS4.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

260. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade

261. There are several **outstanding features** and these include the:

- leadership of the headteacher;
- commitment to the professional development of staff;
- focus on succession planning for senior managers in the staff development programme;
- induction procedures for all newly-appointed teaching staff; and
- pro-active approach of the governors in helping the school to set its strategic direction.

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

Good and outstanding features

262. There are several outstanding features in leadership and management, in terms of effectiveness in giving clear direction and promoting high standards at all levels of management.
263. The school's mission statement "*All at Porthcawl Comprehensive School are committed to providing a caring and disciplined learning environment based on mutual respect in which all, irrespective of gender, race or ability, develop their talents to the full*" is broadly fulfilled.
264. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and constantly seeks to sustain improvements. He is open and approachable in his management style and his progressive leadership achieves a highly effective balance of support and challenge.
265. The headteacher is ably supported by the senior management team which has the same values. Each member is effective in his or her own area of responsibility and they work well as a team, with the headteacher. They are a strong presence around the school, well known by staff, pupils and students.
266. The school's commitment to the professional development of all staff is outstanding. This is evident in the:
- breadth of training opportunities available to all staff;
 - high quality of school-based training, much of which is planned and delivered by members of the school's learning group, following careful analysis of both whole-school and individual development needs;
 - management and evaluation of the training undertaken; and
 - lengths taken by the leadership team to ensure financial constraints on training are overcome.
267. The school pays careful attention to succession planning and constantly makes provision for professional development through the shadowing of staff. A particularly

impressive feature is the opportunity provided each year for a middle leader to be seconded on to the senior leadership team. This practice is an outstanding feature of the school's leadership.

268. There are shared values in the school about learning, behaviour and relationships. School policies are extremely comprehensive and reflect these values.
269. The policies and development plans of the school take full account of WAG priorities. The school is working closely with the UA to begin to develop individual learning pathways in KS4 and beyond.
270. The school works very effectively with a wide range of local partners to enhance both the curriculum and extra-curricular activities for its pupils. The school is a strong focus in the community and held in regard by its community partners.
271. The school has very good processes for setting targets and goals for departments, teams and individuals. They form part of a well-established, comprehensive and effective system of self-evaluation and planning.
272. Senior leaders are well informed about the progress of the departments and teams for which they have responsibility. They attend meetings, monitor pupils' work and observe the teaching of all members of the department as part of the performance management process.
273. Heads of department have a clear understanding of their roles. They have a strong commitment to quality assurance as an essential means of promoting pupils' achievement, observing lessons and monitoring pupils' work on a regular basis.
274. The sixth form is very well led and managed as a unit within the school as a whole. The clear management structure ensures effective liaison between sixth-form managers and other senior and middle managers.
275. The systems for the appraisal of staff are very thorough, extremely effective and are closely linked with development planning at all levels. They highlight and meet the individual needs of all staff while equally addressing whole-school priorities. All training needs arising from appraisal are met; the ability to satisfy all staff training needs so successfully is an outstanding aspect of this process.
276. The programme for the induction of newly-qualified teachers is very well managed. Newly-qualified teachers and those in the early stages of professional development receive very good support from the senior mentor and also within their department. An outstanding aspect of the mentoring programme is that all new staff to the school are well supported and invited to take part in aspects of the induction programme which are relevant to their needs.

Shortcomings

277. The school has recently established a new faculty structure. At present, this structure lacks some clarity in terms of line management accountability and responsibility. The faculty heads do not have a sufficiently well defined quality assurance role within their faculties.
278. Senior leaders attend a range of department and team meetings and regularly work with their identified departments. However, the coaching role of senior leaders with individual heads of department and pastoral leaders needs to be enhanced.

The extent to which governors meet their responsibilities

Good and outstanding features

279. The governing body has a wide range of expertise and experience and fulfils its leadership role very effectively. The governors are highly pro-active and knowledgeable in helping the school to set its strategic direction. The quality of strategic management and evaluation by the governing body is an outstanding feature of the school.
280. The individual expertise of a number of governors is very well utilised, not only in the work of the governing body but also in enhancing curricular provision in the school.
281. Governors undertake their role as critical friend in a highly effective way. They monitor the quality of provision in the school effectively, scrutinising the full range of reviews and reports. They undertook an active role in the development of the pre-inspection self-evaluation report.
282. The governing body has a good understanding of the self-evaluation process and is fully involved in whole-school review and planning for improvement. Performance data are discussed thoroughly and the sub-committees review and update policies regularly.
283. Governors meet all regulatory and legal requirements.

Shortcomings

284. There are no significant shortcomings.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

285. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches that awarded by the school in its own self-evaluation.

286. There are several **outstanding features** and these include the:

- extremely inclusive and comprehensive self-evaluation and improvement planning arrangements;
- extent to which the school seeks out and takes account of the views of all interested parties; and
- highly focussed and accurate allocation of resources to all school priorities.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

Good and outstanding features

287. Since the last inspection the headteacher has introduced a new self-evaluation system. This makes very strong links with whole-school development planning and there are greatly improved DDPs.
288. The school has established the learning group to examine teaching and assessment and this group is successfully spreading good practice throughout the school.

289. Leaders and managers are well informed about the areas for which they have responsibility. The school has developed very effective procedures to evaluate standards and provision. Learners' progress is monitored and reviewed regularly.
290. The in-depth annual review is a very strong feature of the school's evaluation arrangements. School managers use a wide range of information to help determine the effectiveness of the school's performance and to plan for improvement. They undertake this through an extremely inclusive approach that involves:
- monitoring the quality of teaching and the standards that pupils achieve;
 - actively seeking out the views of pupils, students and their parents or carers;
 - consulting staff at all levels during management meetings; and
 - using local advisory services to provide an external and independent view of its performance.
291. The inclusive processes involved in the programme of self-evaluation in the school, allied to the comprehensive approach taken and the detailed analysis of findings from any self-evaluation exercise, make for outstanding practice in self-evaluation. The self-evaluation process is firmly embedded in the culture of the school, and an outstanding aspect of the life of this school.
292. The school's self-evaluation report is very comprehensive, evaluative and identifies strengths and areas of development. It provides a clear perspective on aspects of each key question that the school deems to be outstanding practice and provides an accurate view of the performance of the school.
293. However, the judgements made by the school about key questions 2 and 4 are one grade higher than those made by the inspection team; the inspection team decided that, while there were outstanding features in each of these questions, the frequency and impact of the outstanding features across each key question did not merit awarding an overall Grade 1 to either of these questions.
294. The systems introduced to monitor and evaluate the school's achievements and progress are very effective. As a result, senior managers and curriculum leaders have a well-founded and accurate opinion about the performance of their areas of responsibility and the school.

Shortcomings

295. There are no significant shortcomings.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

Good and outstanding features

296. There is a clear and well-established cycle of self-evaluation that feeds into the school's plans for improvement, providing a strong foundation for development planning at all levels. Senior managers and curriculum leaders use the results of self-evaluation to set appropriate priorities for development.
297. The resulting plans – at whole-school and departmental levels - identify success criteria, realistic timescales, staff responsibilities and allocate sufficient, appropriately costed resources. The high level of detail in these plans ensures that they have every opportunity to be delivered successfully.

298. The school takes exceptional strides to ensure that all interested parties are informed and involved in the developments planned for the school. It informs the community that it serves about its priorities for development by producing a short summary of the SDP. This is made available to parents, the general public in libraries, doctors' and dentists' surgeries as well as in other appropriate public places. This process of ensuring the school takes account of the views of all interested parties is outstanding practice.
299. Both the SDP and the linked DDPs are of high quality. Performance management arrangements and appropriate staff development are firmly integrated into the planning. Senior managers produce interim self-evaluation reports that monitor progress with the SDP and DDPs.
300. The high quality of departmental planning is ensured by the use of a standardised school checklist, direct monitoring by the headteacher and advice from external advisory agencies.
301. Overall, the school's work on evaluation and improvement planning is outstanding. There are several very good examples where departments through the self-evaluation process, have identified shortcomings in provision that affect pupils' attainment. These have been addressed and measurable improvements in pupils' performance have been observed as a consequence of actions taken.

Shortcomings

302. Some of the targets contained in the SDP and DDPs are not sufficiently specific and do not have a direct impact upon the standards that pupils achieve.

Progress since the last inspection

303. All three key issues for action identified in the last inspection have been fully met.
304. The procedures introduced to disseminate good practice and improve the link between self-evaluation and planning have made a significant contribution to the work of the school. The new self-evaluation framework establishes strong links between self-evaluation and development planning. This rigorous framework has also greatly improved the quality of DDPs.
305. The learning group has been very influential in spreading aspects of good practice in teaching across the whole school.
306. The statutory requirement to provide religious education for students in the sixth form has been met.

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

| |
|--|
| Grade 1: Good with outstanding features |
|--|

307. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches that awarded by the school in its own self-evaluation.

| |
|--|
| <p>308. The outstanding features include the:</p> |
|--|

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pro-active role of the school in developing its facilities;• development of IT facilities of high quality across the school; and• manner in which the school manages the budget to drive forward its programme of improvement. |
|--|

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

Good and outstanding features

309. Teachers are well qualified and committed. There are sufficient, suitably qualified and experienced staff to deliver the school's planned curriculum effectively. Teachers in the sixth form are highly qualified, experienced and are deployed well to ensure all students are provided with every opportunity to succeed.
310. The technical staff provide good support in design and technology, science and ICT. The school libraries are well supported by the librarian. Administrative and other support staff efficiently undertake their roles in the day-to-day running of the school. A site manager and assistant keep the campus and grounds in good order and undertake smaller maintenance work as required.
311. The overall quality of the accommodation is good and in some areas, very good. Since the last inspection the school has divided the campus into four main areas, namely, Morgannwg, Powys, Dyfed and Gwynedd. Subjects are suited together in each of these areas. This has proved very effective for the management of a large campus and made it much easier for new pupils to navigate from lesson to lesson on arrival at the school.
312. The school benefits from a new indoor community sports hall, a floodlit astroturf area, tennis and netball courts, large playing fields and a well-maintained swimming pool. Good drama and dance facilities are provided for the performing arts.
313. The rolling programme of improvement that the school maintains has more recently provided art facilities of high quality, a new, fully-equipped training room for pupils and a 150-seat theatre to provide a venue for the performing arts. The school's on-going drive for improvement and development of facilities for pupils is an outstanding feature of the school.
314. The sixth form benefits from good accommodation within a dedicated, sixth-form block. This accommodation has a range of seating and work areas including a café section that students can access throughout the day. Students have good access to ICT facilities and they make extensive use of the larger library.
315. The large numbers in the sixth form allow the school to offer a good range of AS and A level subjects delivered by suitably qualified teaching staff.
316. The school makes effective use of some specialist, off-site early evening courses and facilities at the local college to broaden the available subject range further for students.
317. The school provides good access for pupils with physical disabilities.
318. There are pleasant recreational areas with seating for pupils throughout the campus, and the grounds and buildings are well maintained. There is little evidence of litter or graffiti. The school has created two quiet, supervised areas exclusively for the use of Y7 and Y8 pupils during break time. Classrooms and corridors benefit from good wall displays and, overall, the accommodation provides a good environment for learning and teaching to take place.
319. The school has recently installed a high-speed broadband system throughout the campus. This provides good access to information and communication technology facilities of high quality in all subject areas. Thirty-seven teaching rooms have

interactive whiteboards and a majority of other rooms have data projectors; these facilities greatly enrich the teaching and learning environment.

320. The school has approximately one computer for every three pupils, as well as facilities for data-logging and computer-aided design and manufacture. Wireless laptop computers are also available in some areas. The music department has recently acquired new computerised musical facilities.
321. Overall, the provision of IT facilities is an outstanding feature of the school.
322. Across all subject areas, pupils have adequate access to a range of resources to support their learning. Strategically-placed display cupboards are used to display pupils' work. The quality of the displays around the school is good and often, very good.
323. The school has two libraries, both of which are sufficiently stocked with books and other resource materials. Pupils and students use these locations well.

Shortcomings:

324. The gymnasium is in need of refurbishment and updating both internally and externally.

How efficiently resources are managed to provide value for money

Good and outstanding features

325. The way that the school manages its resources is an outstanding feature of the management of the school; financial planning and control are significant strengths.
326. The school does not easily qualify for additional funds and bids but continues to seek additional funding where possible. Through diligent house-keeping and prudent planning, the senior managers and governing body provide adequate funds for a continual drive for improvement of school facilities. To enrich the learning experience of all pupils is seen as a priority by the school. The impact of this financial management on the available learning resources and accommodation is an outstanding example of a school being able to drive its own agenda through budgetary acumen.
327. Departmental capitation is determined by an agreed formula. There is a clear link between DDPs and the whole-school development plan; accurate costing of activities is a clear aspect of planning at both levels.
328. Departments are encouraged to strive to improve and well-reasoned innovations can be resourced through a bidding system that exists to supplement the current capitation arrangements. Agreed larger changes are piloted first to evaluate true cost against an expected improvement in standards. Teachers are also encouraged to apply for development funding from the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW).
329. The deputy headteacher and the senior administrative officer manage the day-to-day spending of the school budget very effectively. The finance committee of the governing body rigorously oversees their work. The most recent audit report was very favourable.
330. The school does not have a service level agreement with the UA but prefers to contract out work to local craftsmen for building and larger-scale maintenance work. All spending over £1,000 is put out to tender.

331. Teachers' performance management objectives are firmly linked to whole-school priorities. All employees have access to appropriate training and the school has held the "Investors in People" Award for the last ten years. Not only does the school fully spend all of its allocation of Better Schools' funding on continuing professional development (CPD) but enhances the training opportunities for all staff through a range of other funding streams. This ensures all identified training requirements linked to personal and school improvement are met and is an outstanding aspect of the school's budgetary management.
332. The school has established the workload agreement arrangements and teachers have sufficient time for planning, preparation and assessment; this time is effectively used by teachers.
333. The governing body has revised the management structure of the school in line with teaching and learning responsibilities (TLR) guidelines. These changes have been introduced extremely sensitively to maintain staff morale and commitment.
334. Criminal record bureaux checks are carried out on all employees by the UA on behalf of the school.
335. Despite a number of small groups within the sixth form, the school successfully balances the costs incurred in the sixth form against its effectiveness. This ensures that the provision in other areas of the school is not adversely affected.
336. Overall, when measured against its outcomes, the school provides very good value for money.

Shortcomings

337. A number of the roles and responsibilities of the new teaching and learning post-holders are yet to be firmly embedded into practice.

School's response to the inspection

The headteacher, staff, governors and pupils of Porthcawl Comprehensive School welcome this very positive inspection report. The awarding of the highest grade in five of the seven key questions and the second highest in the remaining two key questions confirms the professional dedication with which the teaching staff, support staff and governors exercise their responsibilities while recognising the many outstanding features of the school.

We are pleased to note that inspectors have judged the key issues identified for action in the last inspection as having been fully met and are heartened by the numerous statements within the report identifying improvements since the last inspection.

We are very encouraged by the findings of the inspection team in relation to the high performance of our pupils and sixth form students, the high standards of key skills across all areas of the curriculum, the outstanding attitudes displayed by pupils towards their learning and the excellent progress made by pupils in their personal development.

It is particularly pleasing to acknowledge the quality of teaching observed by inspectors when 74% of lessons in key stages 3 and 4 and 73% of lessons in the sixth form were judged to be Grades 1 or 2. The school places great effort on our young people's performance in external examinations and it is very pleasing to note that inspectors recognise this as an outstanding feature and that, since the previous inspection, our results are among the highest in Wales.

It is also extremely encouraging that the inspectors judged the breadth and quality of extra-curricular provision to be outstanding. We are also very heartened by the highly effective partnership arrangements recorded in the report as being outstanding.

Of equal importance to us at the school is the high level of care, support and guidance experienced by our young people. We were very pleased to note that the provision for care, support and guidance is judged to be good with some outstanding features and that the school's very rigorous approach to bullying was recognised by the inspectors.

Essential to the success of an effective school is the quality of leadership and management at all levels of the institution. It is particularly gratifying that the inspection team credited all three key questions linked to leadership and management with the highest grade whilst identifying many outstanding features.

We agree with the recommendation of the inspection team and note that they are linked with the key priorities that the school is already pursuing through the school progress and development plan.

Overall, we have found the inspection process to be beneficial whilst offering an excellent opportunity to compare our own judgements through self-evaluation with those of the judgements of those whose experience extends beyond the school.

The very positive nature of the inspection report is a tribute to the efforts of governors, teaching and support staff, pupils, parents and the school's partners. This endorsement of our school ensures that we can move forward confidently and continue to build on the many outstanding features that are highlighted in the report.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Name of school | Porthcawl Comprehensive School |
| School type | Secondary |
| Age range of pupils | 11-18 |
| Address of school | 52 Park Avenue Porthcawl |
| Postcode | CF36 3ES |
| Telephone number | 01656 774 100 |
| Headteacher | Mr K Dykes |
| Date of appointment | September 2002 |
| Chair of governors | Mrs A Davies |
| Reporting inspector | Gareth H Buckland |
| Dates of inspection | 8-11 May 2007 |

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

| Year group | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Y13 | Total |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Number of pupils | 220 | 248 | 232 | 224 | 241 | 151 | 120 | 1436 |

| Total number of teachers | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| | Full-time | Part-time | Full-time equivalent (fte) |
| Number of teachers | 77 | 12 | 83.8 |

| Staffing information | |
|--|------|
| Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes) | 17.1 |
| Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes | - |
| Average teaching group size | 21.7 |
| Overall contact ratio (percentage) | 78.9 |

| Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------|
| | Y7 | Y8 | Y9 | Y10 | Y11 | Y12 | Y13 | Whole school |
| Term 1 | 92.6 | 92.1 | 90.2 | 87.5 | 71.1 | 86.6 | 95.5 | 88.1 |
| Term 2 | 94.5 | 93.7 | 92.9 | 91.2 | 83.7 | 92.6 | 91.0 | 91.2 |
| Term 3 | 92.6 | 93.1 | 92.1 | 90.6 | 90.8 | 90.9 | 90.4 | 91.6 |

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals | 11.1 |
| Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection | 58 Temporary 4 Permanent |

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

| National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2006 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|----------|-----|---|---|-----|---|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|
| Total number of pupils in Y9:223 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Percentage of pupils at each level | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | D | A | F | W | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| English | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | | | 0 | | 0.4 | 4.0 | 15.7 | 33.2 | 28.7 | 17.9 | 0 |
| | | National | 0.2 | | | 0.3 | | 1.5 | 7.4 | 21.6 | 35.8 | 23.9 | 8.0 | 0.2 |
| Mathematics | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | | | 0 | | 0.4 | 7.6 | 21.1 | 31.8 | 16.1 | 19.7 | 3.1 |
| | | National | 0.2 | | | 0.3 | | 1.1 | 7.4 | 18.4 | 25.0 | 30.4 | 15.7 | 0.6 |
| Science | Teacher assessment | School | 0 | | | 0 | | 0 | 4.0 | 13.0 | 27.8 | 26.0 | 29.1 | 0 |
| | | National | 0.2 | | | 0.1 | | 0.5 | 6.0 | 18.8 | 34.1 | 27.6 | 11.5 | 0.1 |

D Pupils excepted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum

A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence

F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence

W Pupils who are working towards level 1

EP Exceptional Performance, where pupils at key stage 3 perform above level 8

| Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment | | |
|--|----|----------|
| In the school | 65 | In Wales |
| | | 58 |

Public Examination Results:

| For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ | |
|--|-----|
| Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006 | 230 |
| Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil | 49 |

| The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006: | School | UA | Wales |
|---|--------|----|-------|
| entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent | 93 | 86 | 88 |
| attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both | 63 | 52 | 53 |
| attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both | 92 | 85 | 86 |
| attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator) | 53 | 39 | 39 |
| entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE | 99 | 98 | 98 |
| attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent | 85 | 74 | 77 |
| attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent | 95 | 93 | 93 |
| attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| attained one or more Entry level qualification only | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1 | 4 | | |
| attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2 | | | |

| For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs | |
|---|-----|
| Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2006 | 278 |
| Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006 | 121 |
| Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006 | 18 |

| | School | UA | Wales |
|---|---------------|-----------|--------------|
| Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C | 67 | 67 | 68 |
| Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E | 96 | 93 | 94 |
| Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects | 21 | 19 | 20 |
| Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2 | | | |
| Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3 | | | |

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 36 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:

- 84 lessons across key stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form;
- a range of registrations and assemblies; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

- staff, parents and governors before and during the inspection;
- senior managers, middle managers, teachers, support assistants and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group including the sixth form;
- a wide range of partners of the school; and
- representatives of the school council.

The team also considered:

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

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

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

| Team member | Responsibilities |
|---------------------|---|
| Gareth Buckland | Registered Inspector and Key Question 1 |
| Gwynoro Jones | Lay Inspector |
| Anthony Sparks | Key Question 4 |
| Alan Kelly | Key Question 2 |
| Irene Mackie | Key Question 5 and SEN |
| David Hughes | Key Question 6 |
| Dylan Gwyer-Roberts | Key Question 3 |
| Jane Down | Key Question 7 |
| Debra Makin | Team Inspector |
| Huw Llewelyn | Team Inspector |
| Gordon Williams | Nominee |
| Angela Atkinson | Peer Assessor |

Acknowledgement

The inspectors wish to thank the governors, the headteacher, staff, pupils and parents of the school for their willing co-operation during the inspection.

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