

**REPORT**

**on the**

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF  
THE SCHOOL INSPECTION ACT 1996**

**ST RICHARD GWYN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
ALBERT AVENUE  
FLINT  
FLINTSHIRE  
CH6 5JZ**

School Number: 664/4600

Date of Inspection: 31 March – 4 April 2003

**By**

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Registered Inspector W098/3292

Under Estyn contract number: T/23/02

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## **CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES**

A new nomenclature to describe pupils' progress through school was introduced in 1989. This system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to age 18 is intended to ease communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and LEAs and emphasise the importance of continuity.

The term "Reception" (R) is applied to the year group of pupils in a primary school (not a nursery class) who attain the age of 5 during the academic year "Year 1" (Y1) is applied to the year group of pupils who attain the age of 6 during the academic year and so on to Y13 the year group who attain the age of 18 during the academic year:

	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Years	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18

Key stage 1 of the national curriculum consists of Y1 and Y2; KS2 of Y3 to Y6; KS3 of Y7 to Y9; KS4 of Y10 and Y11 (which is the final year of compulsory education).

## **GRADE DESCRIPTIONS**

The five-point grading scale used to represent the main judgements in this report is as follows:

1. Very good: many good features, some of them outstanding.
2. Good: good features and no major shortcomings.
3. Satisfactory: good features outweigh shortcomings.
4. Unsatisfactory: some satisfactory work but shortcomings in important areas.
5. Poor: many shortcomings.

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## **1. CONTEXT**

### **The school and its priorities**

St Richard Gwyn High School is an 11-18 Voluntary Aided Catholic co-educational comprehensive school. It serves the whole of Flintshire and is within the diocese of Wrexham. Virtually all pupils come from homes where English is the predominant language. The proportion of pupils who come from ethnic minority groups is less than one per cent.

The 965 pupils, with equal numbers of boys and girls on roll, but with fluctuations from year to year, is stable and includes a sixth form of just over 100 students. A number of pupils travel from beyond the defined catchment, having expressed a preference for the school. Because of the school's extensive catchment, about three quarters of the pupils have relatively long journeys and are brought to school by contract school buses or by parents.

The school occupies compact buildings, dating from 1954, with subsequent enlargement and renovation, on an extensive site in Flint. The intake is fully comprehensive. Pupils come from the full range of economic and social backgrounds, including rural areas and small towns and from families which are advantaged and disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 11%, is half the Welsh average of 22%.

The school houses a special education unit on site for pupils on the school roll who have statements for learning difficulties and is a centre for dyslexia provision. Thirty five pupils have statements of special educational needs. A further 98 pupils across the school are on stages 1 or 2 of the school's special educational needs register.

The proportion of pupils choosing to remain in full-time education beyond the age of 16, over two thirds, compares favourably with similar schools.

Through its mission 'Learning together in Christ', the school commits itself to 15 related aims, which underpin the consistent philosophy of the school's range of policies and the priorities of the school development and improvement plans.

## **2. MAIN FINDINGS**

### **The main findings of the report**

- St Richard Gwyn Catholic High is a successful and flourishing school, which is advancing and improving further as it enters a new stage in its development. It serves its pupils and their parishes very well.
- The standards achieved by pupils are at least satisfactory in 93% of classes and good or better in 61%. Very good standards are achieved in 8% of classes and these occur in all key stages. These figures exceed the targets set by the National Assembly for the year 2002. (The standards of achievement in 95% of classes should be at least satisfactory and 50% good or better). In some 7% of classes, confined to KS3, standards were unsatisfactory. Standards are better in KS4, where 64% of lessons are good or very good, than in KS3, where the proportion is 48%. In the sixth form the figure is 81%. The

proportion of good or better standards has doubled since the last inspection. The proportion of unsatisfactory standards in lessons has halved.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Key Stage 3</b>	<b>Key Stage 4</b>	<b>Sixth Form</b>
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Very Good
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Welsh	Good	Satisfactory	-
Design & Technology (DT)	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good
Information Technology (IT)	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good
History	Good	Good	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Modern foreign languages	Good	Good	Good
Art	Good	Very good	Very good
Music	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	-
Physical education	Good	Good	Very good
Personal, social and health education (PSE)	Good	Good	Good
Drama/Theatre studies	Good	Good	Good
Electronics	-	Good	Very good
Humanities	-	Satisfactory	-
Business	-	Satisfactory	Good
Health and social care (AVCE)	-	-	Good
Home Economics	-	Satisfactory	-
Travel and tourism (AVCE)	-	-	Good
Law	-	-	Good *
Sociology	-	-	Good *
Psychology	-	-	Satisfactory *

\* distance learning

- In the end of KS3 tests taken in 2002, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English, was above local and national averages and was an improvement. In mathematics and science the proportions are mainly steady and in line with local and national figures. In each subject, the proportions are in line with the majority of similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining level 5 and above in all three subjects, the core subject indicator (CSI), was 55%, and this is 5% higher than the national average. These figures, overall, are an improvement since the last inspection.
- GCSE results have generally improved since the last inspection. In 2002, 93% of pupils were entered for 5 or more subjects, a very high entry rate compared with local and national figures. The proportion gaining 5 or more A\*-C grades, 54%, is above local and national figures. Five or more grades A\*-G were achieved by 93% of candidates, which is higher than local and national figures and includes a good proportion of A\*/A grades. The CSI, the percentage gaining grades A\*-C in all three subjects, English, mathematics and science, is in line with local and national averages. The average points score per pupil, 46, is above the local and national average of 39. Girls' performances, 59%, 5 or more A\*-C grades, in common with national trends were better than those of the boys, at 47%, and by an equal amount. Results demonstrate positive progress overall.

- Standards are good in the sixth form. In the 2002 A level examinations, the proportion of students achieving 2 or more grades A-C was below local and national averages. The proportion gaining 2 or more grades A-E matches these averages. The average points score, 18.5, is in line with the local and national averages. Students who followed GNVQ courses gained good results.
- Progress is even across the school. Pupils of all ability make mainly good progress in almost all subjects across each key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the curriculum.
- Scores on entry, predicted results and actual grades indicate that the school provides good added value to its intake as it progresses through the school.
- Pupils' communication skills are good in almost all subjects. The majority are articulate, confident and respond well to questions, often producing thoughtful contributions. Very productive group and pair work is a successful feature in many lessons. They build up their ideas well through talk. Listening skills are very good. Pupils listen well to teachers and considerately to each other.
- Reading skills are generally good. Pupils carry out research in a range of subjects, from a variety of sources, including CD Roms and the internet. They use the library well. Many read for pleasure. Not all subjects require pupils to read out loud.
- Writing is mainly good in KS3 and KS4 and often very good in the sixth form. Most successfully learn to produce relevant, well presented, well organised and often extended work in most subjects. Pupils understand the need to revise and redraft although some careless mistakes persist. Many make notes efficiently.
- Numeracy standards across the curriculum are satisfactory overall. Most subjects use mathematics within their programmes of study, for example using formulae in spreadsheets, predicting statistical data, measuring accurately and using a range of applications. However, not all subjects plan for the development of numeracy, which restricts pupils' range of experiences.
- A whole school audit of the use of numeracy is planned, so that pupils' experiences across departments can be monitored.
- Standards of achievement in ICT are satisfactory, although opportunities to develop and apply ICT skills are not fully exploited across the curriculum.
- Pupils' competence in the use of ICT for communicating information and research using the internet is considerably stronger than in handling and modelling information using spreadsheets and databases.
- The school rates the use of ICT highly in its development planning. Of particular note is the rapidly expanding 'Digitalbrain' initiative, on the school's website, which is producing information and learning resources.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- Pupils' spiritual development is very good. Religious education makes a very strong contribution, providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own experiences, to consider life's fundamental questions of the Christian attitudes and values the school identifies and upholds.
- Regular collective acts of worship are held throughout the week. These services include music and participation by pupils and are effective in reinforcing the Christian values in the life and work of the school.
- Pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils learn about prejudices, human rights and racism. They understand the need to respect others, whatever their background. Environmental issues are frequently discussed. A strong emphasis is placed on nurturing self-discipline, honesty, choice and responsibility. Through generous support of charities, pupils show care and willingness to help people less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils' social development is very good. The School Council, work experience, residential opportunities and a wide range of extra-curricular activities all contribute strongly. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to accept responsibility and collaborate effectively. They are articulate, friendly and helpful. Sixth formers are particularly active in the school and wider community. Pupils mix well socially and take pride in representing the school at local and national level.
- Pupils' cultural development is good. Across the age range they benefit from a wide range of relevant activities and visits, locally and further afield, which enhances their cultural development. There are good, established links with schools in Germany and France and numerous opportunities to visit countries outside Wales. Pupils develop an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of living in a multi-cultural society. Most subjects develop an understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales well. There is a successful eisteddfod at the end of the school's Welsh week. Participation in Urdd activities is common.
- The standards of behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good. There is a clear vision of the civilised ethos which the school seeks to establish and maintain. The school has responded sensitively to social inclusion strategies.
- Social behaviour throughout the school is overwhelmingly mature and considerate. Pupils are well behaved; they are motivated, work well and a pleasant learning environment prevails. A very small minority demonstrate an unsatisfactory attitude towards learning and their teachers. The school is a lively, orderly and civilised community.
- A satisfactory rate of attendance has been maintained since the last inspection. The school works hard to improve it further.

## **Quality of Education**

- The quality of teaching has improved overall since the last inspection and contributes significantly to pupils' achievements. It is at least satisfactory in 96% of classes and good or better in 62%. In 8% of classes there is teaching of very good quality and this is across all key stages. In KS3, 48% of teaching is good or better. In KS4 the proportion is 65%. In the sixth form 81% is good or better.
- A high proportion of the good or very good teaching occurs in almost every subject across the whole school. The increasing consistency of this teaching is a strength, containing many examples of good practice to be shared.

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is almost entirely good. Classroom organisation and lesson planning are good. Practical or activity work is usually well organised.
- The range of teaching strategies used is good. A good sequence of activities and resources is used to maintain interest and develop confidence and knowledge. Skilful questioning checks, reinforces and develops understanding.
- The best teaching realises the importance of recognising and planning for pupils' different learning styles.
- Social relationships are based on mutual respect. Regular feedback, often oral, during lessons, motivates and supports pupils. Praise is used well to encourage and acknowledge effort.
- The quality of assessment, recording and reporting is good. Pupils' work, including homework, is generally accurately marked, using the whole-school system. In the best cases, marking includes helpful comments as to how work may be improved, but there is variation in the quality and quantity of comments.
- Individual teachers and faculties keep complete and accurate records of pupils' work and progress. Good central records are kept. There are good procedures for identifying and monitoring gifted and talented pupils and for underachievement. Self-evaluation by pupils is developing well in some subjects.
- Assessment requirements for the National Curriculum, public examinations, vocational courses and the Code of Practice are all met, except for IT in KS3.
- Pupils with SEN have good individual education plans. Teachers are aware of pupils' special needs.
- Pupils' progress files contain appropriate and well written sections. Building a record of academic, social and personal progress takes place throughout the school. The high quality final documents are presented at a special Mass at the end of KS4. Profiling continues effectively into the sixth form.
- Reports to parents give constructive and positive statements on progress and attainments, together with information on attitudes, effort, social skills and contribution to school life. Parents have an opportunity to respond.
- Good use is made of a range of results and assessment data to identify pupils who need extra support and to monitor progress.
- School targets are appropriately linked to pupils' predicted performances. An annual review and analysis of examination results is generally well used.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education.
- Curriculum organisation makes a positive contribution to meeting the school's commitment to equip pupils with knowledge and skills together with spiritual, moral and cultural understanding.
- Provision is inclusive and offers pupils of all abilities equal access and opportunity. The SEN pupils experience appropriate disapplications. Provision for 'traveller' pupils is good.
- The KS3 curriculum goes beyond the minimum NC requirements. All Y7 pupils also receive regular skills lessons on literacy, for which the school recently won an award. ICT is taught across the subjects of the curriculum. Current arrangements are unsatisfactory, but appropriate plans are in place for next year. There are large teaching groups in a number of subjects.
- In KS4, all pupils study an extended common core and choose from four option choices, with an appropriate range of full and short GCSE courses, including subjects new to

pupils. Lower ability pupils are able to opt for three subjects with the remaining time being used for additional support.

- The sixth form offers an extensive range of over 20 A/AS courses. Advanced vocational courses are taught plus GNVQ intermediate. Over half of Y12 have a vocational course as part of their programme. Students successfully broaden their personal development through a wide range of community activities, which unusually, includes a major active blood donor scheme.
- Year 10 work experience is well planned and managed. Sixth form students have appropriate industrial experiences as coursework in a number of subjects.
- Pupils also undergo a wide range of work-related experiences. The school fulfils the National Assembly recommendations for work-related education targets.
- Arrangements for PSE are very effective. The programme is well planned, with appropriate content and continuity. It fully meets the requirements of the PSE framework.
- Planning for the delivery of key skills is satisfactory overall. It is good for literacy. It is satisfactory in numeracy and ICT.
- Planning for development of Cwricwlwm Cymreig and multiculturalism is good.
- Most subjects include homework which gives opportunities to extend and consolidate work. All pupils have a planner, but its use varies widely between subjects. The use of the planner is not fully developed and there is no homework timetable.
- The programme of extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils enrich and extend their learning through a range of events including sporting, dramatic and cultural activities, clubs and societies and many links with the community. Pupils can also continue their studies at lunchtime and out of school hours. These activities do a good deal to broaden experiences and increase self-confidence.
- The quality of the support and guidance given to pupils is very good. The pastoral system is very well defined. The school takes its responsibilities very seriously.
- Tutors, who remain with their groups as they move through the school, have very good information on academic progress and pupils' strengths and weaknesses and concerns in and out of school.
- Teachers throughout the school, communicate a commitment to social inclusion.
- Careers education has improved since the last inspection. Through the very good PSE programme, all pupils now study good careers modules.
- Support for sixth form learning is very good.
- Efficient child protection guidelines and health and safety procedures, known to all, are securely in place.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school's response to the New Code of Practice is very good. Pupils with SEN are integrated naturally into the school's daily life.
- The SEN coordinator ensures teachers are well informed and distributes extensive information.
- Effective support from learning support assistants enhances the opportunities for all pupils in the groups they support. In a number of large KS3 mixed ability classes, there is no support and this affects the group's learning. In KS4 all SEN pupils have good access to external accredited courses.
- Y12 students, through the paired reading scheme, provide good support for Y7 pupils.
- Good cross-curricular support is provided in KS4 for pupils who require help in organising their work and specific study skills.

- The SEN pupils identified as having specific learning difficulty have very good support. Provision ensures, with support, access to curriculum entitlement and individual progress in literacy skills.
- The statements of the 35 pupils with SEN are reviewed very effectively. Arrangements for the 103 pupils on the SEN register are very good and are reviewed regularly and effectively for each pupil. Each pupil on the SEN register has a good IEP, with appropriate targets for future progress.
- SEN work is very well organised, with high expectations. A good, whole-school approach has successfully been created.
- Partnerships with parents, the community, schools and other institutions are very good, with a pro-active and planned approach. The wide range of links and partnerships make a substantial contribution to school life, its ethos and values and pupils' development.
- The quality and range of information is very good. The establishment of the rapidly expanding 'Digitalbrain' website project, which produces information and learning services for pupils and parents is an exciting new development.
- Very effective contact is maintained by booklets, circulars and the weekly 'Gwyn News'. Good advice is available when crucial future decisions have to be made.
- The very good partnership with the main primary schools includes a commitment to the interchange of ideas and numerous mutually beneficial curriculum initiatives and joint projects have been established.
- Partnerships with industry, commerce and the business world are very good. They have been strengthened and extended since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' awareness and understanding, course provision and curricular experiences are greatly enhanced by a comprehensive and well planned programme of activity. The school prepares well for the world beyond school.
- Industry is used effectively as a resource. Good constructive links with the careers company, employers, colleges and support agencies, all of whom are supportive of the school's work related programme, greatly benefit pupils and students.

## **Management**

- Although the practice of self-evaluation and planning for improvement has only recently been adopted by the school, its quality in the short term is good and developing further, with the appointment of the new headteacher.
- The SMT has clear responsibilities for monitoring and reviewing a range of aspects and subjects.
- The improvement plan is presented under the school's 15 published aims, which are individually displayed throughout the school.
- Governors have received good training to develop their strategic role further. The governing body is knowledgeable, greatly involved and discharges its responsibilities well.
- The headteacher has carried out a whole school review in order to establish a clear focus on developing 'a learning school', with raising standards and continuous improvement. Leadership has a very good vision and understanding of the school's development.
- Whole school performance indicators are set, using available information.
- Use is made of national benchmarks and external consultants to review aspects of the school's performance.
- Review of the significant recent developments is properly built in.
- The mission statement 'Learning in Christ' is underpinned by aims to which the school commits itself and which it fulfils well.

- The school is effectively managed overall. In his short tenure to date, the headteacher has provided energy, vision and new insights. He is very well supported, in particular by his senior team of deputy and three assistant headteachers. A substantial number of improvements, short and longer term, have been set in train, the better to respond to current demands faced by schools.
- Almost all staff appreciate the opportunities they can now have for involvement and consultation. Teaching and non-teaching staff at all levels in the school work very well together.
- The clarity of departmental responsibilities, including consistent monitoring and review, has improved.
- Communication and the school's routine organisation are very good.
- Financial management of the school is good. Budget proposals clearly reflect the school development plan's priorities. Hard financial decisions have removed former deficits and the school now has a growth budget. Day-to-day management and monitoring are carried out well.
- Teachers are well qualified. There is an appropriate balance of experienced teachers and those who have joined the profession more recently. Professional development is appropriately matched to personal, whole school and departmental needs.
- With the exception of the four 'temporary' mobile classrooms, which are of poor quality and condition, the accommodation is generally good. The internal fabric of the building is good. There are displays of good quality in classrooms and corridors.
- Since the last inspection, several improvements have been made to the buildings and to the environment, and in particular in the last year. Caretaking and cleaning staff ensure a good level of cleanliness.
- The expenditure per pupil on resources has been well below the national average, but this year has been tripled. The quality and use made by departments of available resources are good.
- The school has made a considerable investment in ICT, so that the pupil:computer ratio of 3:1 is very good.
- The library is a valuable, popular whole school resource, which is well managed by the librarian. The quality of book stock is good, although in total it falls well below the 13 book per pupil recommendation. Borrowings, however, are high, at over 4500 a year.

### **Progress since the last inspection**

The previous report identified eight key issues. Progress has been made in each issue. Progress have been very good in 2 issues, good in 3 issues and in 3 issues, which still remain, there has been partial progress.

## **3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

### **3.1 Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning**

The standards achieved by pupils are at least satisfactory in 93% of classes and good or better in 61%. Very good standards are achieved in 8% of classes and these occur in all key stages. These figures exceed the targets set by the National Assembly for the year 2002. (The standards of achievement in 95% of classes should be at least satisfactory and 50% good or better). In some 7% of classes, confined to KS3 standards were unsatisfactory. Standards are better in KS4, where 64% of lessons are good or very good, than in KS3, where the

proportion is 48%. In the sixth form the figure is 81%. The proportion of good or better standards has doubled since the last inspection. The proportion of unsatisfactory standards in lessons has halved.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Key Stage 3</b>	<b>Key Stage 4</b>	<b>Sixth Form</b>
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Very Good
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Welsh	Good	Satisfactory	-
Design & Technology (DT)	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good
Information Technology (IT)	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good
History	Good	Good	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Modern foreign languages	Good	Good	Good
Art	Good	Very good	Very good
Music	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	-
Physical education	Good	Good	Very good
Personal, social and health education (PSE)	Good	Good	Good
Drama/Theatre studies	Good	Good	Good
Electronics	-	Good	Very good
Humanities	-	Satisfactory	-
Business	-	Satisfactory	Good
Health and social care (AVCE)	-	-	Good
Home Economics	-	Satisfactory	-
Travel and tourism (AVCE)	-	-	Good
Law	-	-	Good *
Sociology	-	-	Good *
Psychology	-	-	Satisfactory *

\* distance learning

In the end of KS3 tests taken in 2002, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in English, was above local and national averages and was an improvement. In mathematics and science the proportions are mainly steady and in line with local and national figures. In each subject, the proportions are in line with the majority of similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining level 5 and above in all three subjects, the core subject indicator (CSI), was 55%, and this is 5% higher than the national average. These figures, overall, are an improvement since the last inspection.

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Standards are good in the sixth form. In the 2002 A level examinations, the proportion of students achieving 2 or more grades A-C was below local and national averages. The proportion gaining 2 or more grades A-E matches these averages. The average points score, 18.5, is in line with the local and national averages. Students who followed GNVQ courses gained good results.

Progress is even across the school. Pupils of all abilities make mainly good progress in almost all subjects across each key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the curriculum.

Scores on entry, predicted results and actual grades indicate that the school provides good added value to its intake as it progresses through the school.

## **3.2 Standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum**

### ***Literacy***

When given the opportunity, pupils' communication skills are good in almost all subjects. In speaking, the majority are articulate and confident and respond well to teachers' questions, often producing thoughtful, extended contributions. On occasion, however, closed questioning restricts speaking to perfunctory responses or to pupils being 'spoken for' by teachers. Specialist terminology is usually used correctly. Very productive pair and group work and presentation by pupils is a successful feature of many lessons. This is an area of good practice to be shared and exploited further. Pupils pose pertinent questions and build up their ideas through talk, although expressing opinions more effectively than developing their case, and with increasing maturity as they move up the school.

Listening skills are very good. Pupils are attentive. They listen well to teachers, to audio-visual resources in modern foreign languages and considerately to each other. Their subsequent verbal or written responses, show that they have understood. Only rarely do teachers need to repeat instructions or information.

Reading skills are generally good. Effective support is provided in KS3 for those with reading problems and the great majority are subsequently able to read efficiently for information and pleasure. Pupils carry out research in a range of subjects from a variety of sources, such as magazines, books, CD Roms and the internet. Not all subjects require pupils to read out loud. They use the library resources well. Over 4500 books were borrowed last year.

Standards of achievement in writing are mainly good in KS3 and 4 and often very good in the sixth form. Most are successfully taught to produce relevant, well presented, well organised and extended work in most subjects. They consciously adapt the style and tone of their writing appropriately for its purpose and readership. They understand the need to revise and redraft, although careless mistakes in spelling and punctuation often persist. Many become accomplished note takers, using a range of learning styles. They use dictionaries willingly.

### ***Numeracy***

Standards in numeracy across the curriculum are satisfactory overall. Many subjects use mathematics within their programmes of study, for example when using formulae in

spreadsheets in ICT, presenting statistical data in geography, measuring accurately in DT, and using a wide range of mathematical applications in science. However, a number of subjects do not plan for the development of numeracy in their schemes of work, and consequently the cross-curricular range of pupils' mathematical experiences is limited. The school has identified this deficiency, and is planning a whole school audit of the use of numeracy in the near future. It will then be in a better position to monitor the use of mathematics across the curriculum, with a view to ensuring consistency in all lessons, and across all departments.

## ***ICT***

Standards of achievement in ICT are satisfactory.

Opportunities to develop and apply ICT skills are not fully exploited across the curriculum. Standards of achievement are good in modern foreign languages in KS3 and KS4, and in geography and business studies in KS4. In most other subjects they are satisfactory in both KS3 and KS4 other than in DT, music and PE, where applications are unsatisfactory. Pupils with SEN make good use of appropriate ICT packages to improve their literacy skills.

In the sixth form, standards are very good in AVCE travel and tourism and good in AVCE business, AVCE health and social care, modern foreign languages and geography. In the remainder, applications are satisfactory.

Pupils' competence in the use of ICT for communicating information and research using the internet is considerably stronger than that in handling and modelling information using spreadsheets and databases. There is inadequate teaching of these skills, particularly in KS3. Forward planning for the use of ICT is good, and the school rates the use of ICT highly in its development planning. There has been recent heavy investment in ICT equipment but technical difficulties resulted in a substantial number of machines not being operational at this time.

## **4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good; pupils' cultural development is good.

Religious education makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development, providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own experience, to consider life's fundamental questions and the Christian values and attitudes the school identifies and upholds. Across the subjects of the curriculum learning opportunities have been identified to develop pupils' awareness of the relationships between belief and action and provide personal responses to questions about the purpose of life. Liturgy activities, day and residential retreats and the school's focus and retreat weeks all make a very valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Regular collective acts of worship are held throughout the week for forms, year and school. These services are Christian in character, include music and participation by pupils and are effective in reinforcing the Christian values in the life and work of the school. The practice of marking the attendance registers during the service

undermines the solemnity of the occasion and in some services pupils appear passive listeners.

Moral issues are raised regularly in collective worship and during lessons in religious education, PSE and many other subjects of the National Curriculum. In these lessons pupils learn about prejudice, racism and human rights. Pupils understand the need to respect others whatever their background or race. Environmental issues are frequently discussed in geography and science lessons. The school places a strong emphasis on nurturing self-discipline and pupils learn about honesty, choice and responsibility. Through their generous support for a number of local and national charities pupils show their care and willingness to help children and people less fortunate than themselves. Pupils often nominate the charities they want to support through the School Council and take an active part in raising the money.

Pupils develop their social skills very well by responding positively to the opportunity for accepting responsibility and collaborating effectively in lessons through pair and group work. There are very good opportunities in religious education and PSE lessons to learn about relationships. The School Council, work experience, residential opportunities and a wide range of extra-curricular activities all contribute to pupils' social development. Pupils are friendly, articulate and helpful. Year 12 students help younger pupils with their reading. Sixth form students are particularly active in the community. They are developing as mature adults and have a very positive effect on the life of the whole school. Pupils who take part in extra-curricular activities, such as sport and drama, mix well socially and take pride in representing the school at local and national level. Pupils are courteous, polite and respect staff, visitors and each other.

Across the age range pupils benefit from a good number of relevant activities, such as visits to theatres, art galleries, museums and concerts, both locally and further afield, which enhances their cultural development. Aspects of the curriculum foster European and international awareness in the pupils. There are very good, long-established links with schools in Germany and France, and numerous opportunities to visit different countries outside Wales. Pupils are developing an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of living in a multi-cultural society, although the school has no formal policy on this aspect. An understanding of the culture and heritage of Wales is developed well in most subjects of the curriculum. There is a successful school eisteddfod at the end of the school's Welsh Week. Participation in Urdd activities, and greetings in Welsh are common in and around the school.

## **4.2 Behaviour and attitudes**

The standards of behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good.

The school is a very caring community and there is a clear vision of the civilised ethos which the school seeks to establish and maintain; this is based on a range of pastoral care policies which are designed as a platform for learning, personal development and quality of life in school. Expectations are made clear to both pupils and parents in the school prospectus and other documents and they are well understood. The leadership team, teachers and support staff are conscientious in maintaining good standards of behaviour throughout the school and most pupils respond well.

Strategies and procedures for behaviour management are firmly established and monitoring procedures are very effective. The pastoral system involves external agencies and makes every effort to resolve problems and support, assist and re-integrate pupils facing difficulties.

The school has responded sensitively and pro-actively to social inclusion strategies. Anti-bullying procedures are implemented effectively and the rewards scheme is well established.

Social behaviour throughout the school especially on arrival and departure at the beginning and end of the school day is overwhelmingly mature and considerate; it is often very good throughout the campus during breaks and lunchtime and in corridors during lesson changes.

The vast majority of pupils are well behaved and work well in lessons; pupils are motivated and concentrate well and as a result, a pleasant learning environment prevails in most classes. However, a small minority of pupils behave unsatisfactorily and demonstrate an unacceptable attitude towards learning and their teachers, in some classes, by being inattentive and disruptive.

Relationships between pupils and teachers and pupils are good and the school is a lively, orderly and civilised community.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Attendance for the three terms prior to the inspection was 90.6% and a satisfactory rate has been maintained since the last inspection.

The school works hard to maintain existing attendance and to attempt to raise it further. Policies, strategies and procedures are clear and form part of the whole school approach to raising standards of personal achievement. Registers are maintained efficiently and in accordance with statutory requirements. Procedures in respect of all related matters including punctuality, are pursued conscientiously by form teachers, heads of year and administrative staff. Communication is good. Pupils with below 80% attendance are monitored rigorously. The education welfare officer is very supportive of the pastoral system in relation to attendance and other matters. Her weekly meetings with heads of year concerning individual pupils' attendance are effective.

The overall rate of unauthorised absence is low. The two main reasons accounting for absence are unsatisfactory attendance in Year 10 in all terms, (a feature of attendance patterns identified during the previous inspection) and a high number of holidays and occasional days taken during term time; this practice by parents is strongly discouraged in the school prospectus.

The school day operates smoothly and efficiently although the late arrival of a few local pupils who do not travel by school buses, affects punctuality at the beginning of the day. The overwhelming majority of pupils arrive in time and the school makes refreshment arrangements for those pupils who have left home early in the morning.

## **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

The quality of teaching has improved overall since the previous inspection and contributes significantly to pupils' achievements. It is at least satisfactory in 96% of classes and good or better in 62%. These figures exceed the targets set by the National Assembly for the year

2002, for there to be satisfactory or better teaching in 95% of classes and good or better in 50%. The small number of unsatisfactory lessons occurred in KS3 and were almost entirely confined to classes being taken by temporary supply teachers. In 8% of classes, there is teaching of very good quality and this occurs in all key stages. In KS3, 48% of teaching is good or better. In KS4 the proportion is 65%. In the sixth form 81% is good or better.

A high proportion of the good or very good teaching occurs in almost every subject across the whole school. The increasing consistency of the good and very good teaching is a strength and contains many elements of good practice which can be shared.

Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is almost entirely good. Planning at departmental level is good. The range of opportunities to develop pupils' language and numeracy skills are good, but opportunities for delivery are not always identified. Strategies are not always implemented consistently and this is particularly the case in ICT in KS3, where pupils' entitlement is not mapped.

Classroom organisation is good. All lessons are well planned. Teachers use the information from day-to-day assessment well to plan. Objectives are visible and are made clear at the start and end of the lesson so that pupils are fully involved and take some responsibility for their own learning. Practical or activity work is usually well organised. Classes are well managed. Teachers give generously of their time in providing support.

The range of teaching strategies used in lessons is good. Usually a good sequence of activities and resources is used effectively to maintain interest and develop confidence and knowledge. Skilful questioning checks and reinforces understanding and often drives learning. Some teaching relies too greatly on closed questions, which restricts opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. On occasion they are not sufficiently encouraged to overcome difficulties for themselves, together, or to use their initiative. There is often a final recapitulation of key ideas which reinforce what has been learnt, although opportunities for pupils to lead this are sometimes missed. In the best cases, pupils develop their understanding through discussion as they explore and clarify their ideas, by analysis and evaluation. The best teaching realises the importance of recognising and planning for pupils' different and preferred learning styles.

Teachers know their pupils well and sound relationships are built on mutual respect. The match of realistically challenging activities to pupils' previous achievement is generally good. Regular feedback, often oral and informally during lessons, motivates and supports pupils. There are, however, classes in a minority of subjects, whose work is insufficiently matched to pupils' understanding.

The best teaching is enthusiastic about the work being covered. Praise is used well to encourage and acknowledge achievement.

## **5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting**

The policy for assessment, recording and reporting appropriately aims to highlight achievements and to further pupils' progress. There are clear whole school guidelines for integrating assessment into schemes of work. Implementation of the assessment policy is, in most cases, successfully delegated to departments.

Pupils' work, including homework, is generally accurately marked using the whole school system. There is a variation in the quantity and quality of written comments on pupils' work. In the best cases constructive and accurate marking includes helpful comments, indicating pupils' specific strengths and weaknesses, together with indications as to how to make further progress. In a few departments, good use is made of pupils' self assessment based on clear criteria. In many lessons, good use is made of oral feedback, including positive use of praise and encouragement. Portfolios of assessed work are well used in several departments to ensure accurate NC levelling. The assessment of pupils' KS3 work is unsatisfactory in a small number of departments. Regular formal assessments are well related to NC levels in several subjects in KS3 and to external examination criteria in KS4.

Individual teachers and faculties keep complete and accurate records of pupils' work and progress. Good central records are kept. Mentoring interviews with all pupils by SMT members identify individual strengths and weakness in subject areas. The resulting action plans, containing appropriate targets for improvement in subjects with identified weakness, make a good contribution to promoting higher standards. Assessment requirements for the National Curriculum, public examinations and vocational courses are all met, except for IT in KS3.

Pupils with SEN have individual educational plans in line with the Code of Practice and teachers are well aware of pupils' special needs. Statements are reviewed annually with parental involvement.

Pupils' Progress Files contain appropriate and well written sections on pupils' work experience, career action plans, academic and personal achievements. The process of building a record of pupils' academic, social and personal progress takes place throughout the school and is well linked with the tutorial, pastoral and assessment systems. The high quality final documents are presented at a special Mass at the end of KS4. The student profiling system is effectively continued in the sixth form.

Parents receive one full report each year. Reports give constructive and positive statements on pupils' progress and attainments together with information on attitudes, effort, social skills and contributions to the life of the school. Subject comments generally include subject specific strengths together with indications as to how pupils can make further progress. Sixth form reports also contain well considered student self-evaluations. Parents have an opportunity to respond to the reports and there is an appropriate programme of consultative meetings. NC and external examination achievements are appropriately reported.

Good use is made of NC assessments, external examination results and other assessment data to identify those pupils needing extra support and to monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school. School examination targets for subjects are appropriately linked to individual pupils' predicted performances. An annual review and analysis of examination results is generally well used to evaluate attainment in departments and to monitor the equal opportunities policy.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education throughout the school. Curriculum organisation makes a positive contribution to meeting the school's commitment to equip pupils with knowledge and skills together with moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. Provision is inclusive and

offers pupils of all abilities equal access and opportunity. Pupils with SEN have access to the full curriculum and examination courses, and enjoy good support for integration into the full life of the school. Ten SEN pupils experience appropriate disapplications from modern foreign languages and follow suitable alternative activities. Provision for 'traveller' pupils is good. The curriculum meets the recommended 25-hour teaching week.

In KS3, pupils follow all NC subjects, RE, drama and PSE. Subjects are mainly allocated an appropriate number of lessons. In Y7 pupils are taught in mixed ability groupings. All pupils in Y7 also receive regular skills lessons in literacy, and the school recently won a curriculum award for this programme. In Y8 and Y9, appropriate setting occurs in English, mathematics and science. In modern foreign languages, pupils are placed in either French or German in Y7 for the whole of the key stage. There is no opportunity to follow a second modern foreign language for able linguists although this will change in September and, as at the time of the last inspection, the timetable arrangements do not enable setting in Y8. There is setting only for some groups in Y9. ICT is taught across the curriculum in KS3. Current arrangements are unsatisfactory but appropriate plans for teaching ICT are in place for the next academic year. There are large teaching groups in a number of subjects at KS3, which has a detrimental effect on standards. Curriculum links in the core subjects with Catholic feeder schools are effective, but the school also receives pupils from a large number of other primary schools.

In KS4, the organisation of the common core curriculum ensures that pupils have access to English, mathematics, double award science, Welsh, physical education, PSE and RE. Pupils also choose from four option columns which contain an appropriate range of full and short course GCSE courses. Electronics, home economics and applied ICT are introduced at KS4. Humanities GCSE is also available alongside geography and history. Lower ability pupils have appropriate access to courses and opt for three subjects rather than four, with the remaining time being used for additional support. This is good provision. Generally, there is a good take-up of subjects and most pupils have a balanced curriculum. At the end of KS4 the great majority go on to further study in school or college.

The school offers an extensive range of over 20 A/AS courses in Y12 and Y13. Students make their choices from four option groups, which allows for diverse combinations of subjects. There is continuity of courses from KS4, and psychology, sociology and law are introduced as distance learning subjects, which are accessed on the school premises. All students follow RE and PSE courses but there is no provision for PE and games other than as examination courses. Careers education is embedded in the PSE programme. Most students study four subjects in Y12, reducing to three in Y13. Numbers in Y12 are much higher than those in the current Y13. Group sizes in most subjects in Y13 are lower than average and students say they appreciate the close attention. Some subjects have fewer hours than others as a result of staffing constraints. Students working alone or staff generously giving up non-contact time for further lessons, compensate for the shortfall. Advanced vocational courses in travel and tourism, health and social care, and business are taught in Y12, plus a business GNVQ intermediate course. Over half of Y12 have a vocational course as part of their programme, which is higher than average. Students successfully broaden their experience in preparation for citizenship and adult life through a wide range of community activities that include regular, eagerly anticipated SVP suppers and performances for the elderly on a very large scale, an active blood donor scheme and a prefect system which is pro-active both in school and on the school buses.

Work experience is well managed and timetabled for a week in Y10. There is no formal work experience programme in the sixth form but students have appropriate industrial experiences

in a number of subjects where it is a course requirement. Pupils and students also undergo a wide range of work-related experiences, including technological challenges, enterprise activities, mentoring schemes, and talks and visits often related to curriculum activities. The school fulfils the recommendations of the National Assembly work-related education targets.

Arrangements for PSE are very effective. The timetable rotates on a regular basis throughout the school. The programme is very well planned with appropriate content and continuity, including careers education and guidance and all aspects of health education. It fully meets the PSE framework requirements. Pupils and students value the provision.

Planning for the development of key skills across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is good for literacy, and satisfactory in numeracy and ICT. Planning for the development of Cwricwlwm Cymreig and multiculturalism is good. In most subjects, schemes of work are suitably detailed. They cover NC requirements and provide good guidance for teaching and learning, and continuity and progression between key stages. Most subjects include homework that usually provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to extend and consolidate their work. All pupils and students have a planner but its use varies widely across subjects and some pupils do not always have them available. Currently the use of the planner as a regular means of communication between school and parents is not yet fully developed and there is no homework timetable.

The programme of extra-curricular activities organised by the school is good. Pupils enrich and extend their learning through a range of events that include dramatic, sporting and cultural activities, clubs and societies and many links with the community. There are also opportunities for pupils to continue their studies at lunch-time and out of school hours. The homework club organised by the LEA in the town library is supported by the school. The activities do a great deal to broaden experience and increase self-confidence.

#### **5.4 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare is a great strength of the school.

The school takes its responsibilities for the support and guidance of pupils very seriously. Teachers know their pupils well and very good relationships encourage pupils to engage in open discussion with teachers on a variety of topics. The pastoral system is very well defined; the role of the form tutors is well developed, and they carry out their duties effectively. They have responsibilities for their own groups, but are also part of year teams ably led by the heads of year. Pupils receive very good support from heads of year and form tutors. Tutors stay with groups as they move through the school, enabling them to build effective relationships with pupils. They have very good information on academic progress, pupils' strengths and weaknesses and concerns both within the school and outside. The school plans and provides a range of opportunities to expand personal interests and experience through a good number of extra-curricular opportunities, and the well structured PSE programme. Throughout the school, teachers communicate their commitment to social inclusion.

When issues occur, parental involvement is considered key to the development of effective support strategies. Form tutors and heads of year work closely with parents. When necessary, the EWO, the LEA behaviour support teacher, and social services work effectively in partnership with the school and parents to address wider social, behavioural and attendance concerns. All partners monitor progress carefully. The support given by the school to pupils who are unable to attend because of illness is very good. A member of staff visits these

pupils regularly, acting as a link between school and home. The school also has the services of the LEA's Travelling Support Teacher, who oversees the welfare of pupils who attend seasonally.

The school's system for informing parents and pupils of the work covered and the expectations of the school and individual departments is through the medium of pupils' planners. Pupils record their assessment grades, and also their homework tasks. Planners are checked by form tutors, ensuring that parents have seen them. This method of communication between the school and parents is effective, but its use varies and is an aspect for further development. A further good feature of the support given to the pupils is the school's merit system; pupils receive praise for good work, and can collect merit points which ultimately lead to receiving a prize. This system is proving to be very effective, particularly in the lower school.

Since the previous inspection, the school has addressed the issue relating to the improvement of the careers education to age 16. As part of a very good PSE programme, pupils now study modules on career guidance from Y7 to Y11, and are also given very good careers advice in the sixth form. Good guidance is given to pupils making subject choices at the end of Y9, and also to pupils at the end of Y11. The work experience organised for Y10 pupils is of very good quality. This is also true of the work placements arranged for Y12 students.

The head of sixth form and form tutors provide very good student support. Registration groups in the sixth form are deliberately kept relatively small so that students are able to receive adequate support from their tutor.

Effective child protection and equal opportunities policies are in place. Health and safety guidelines are followed effectively, and accommodation is regularly inspected for potential hazards. Several members of staff are trained in first aid, and a rota of two staff is available daily for help with accidents and illness at school.

## **5.5 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)**

The provision for pupils with SEN is good and the school's response to the New Code of Practice is very good. Pupils with SEN are integrated naturally into the daily life of the school.

Subject teachers are responsible for providing suitable work for pupils with SEN within their curriculum area. There are good links between the SEN teachers and the subject teachers. The SEN co-ordinator ensures teachers are well informed and distributes extensive information, including pupils' individual educational plans (IEPs) to teachers who deliver the programme. Effective support from learning support assistants (LSAs) enhances the learning opportunities for all the pupils in the groups they support. However, in a number of large mixed ability classes in KS3, there is no support and this affects the learning of the group. In KS4 all SEN pupils have good access to outside accreditation courses and the vast majority are successful.

The 42 pupils withdrawn from mainstream lessons to receive additional assistance in literacy skills are making good progress. They follow relevant educational programmes that include a mix of commercial and teacher-prepared materials supplemented by appropriate ICT programmes. Pupils enjoy reading stories together and are developing awareness of the requirements of reading to an audience and read with meaning.

The 10 pupils from the Resource Centre who are extracted from modern foreign languages to receive literacy and study skills support, achieve well. They follow relevant programmes of work and are developing a secure grasp of basic syntax, together with reading and spelling skills. Good cross-curricular support is provided in KS4 not only for the pupils who are receiving help but to other pupils who require support in organising their work and specific study skills. By participating in the Careers Wales Transition Team project, pupils gain good communication and life skills.

Five Y7 pupils benefit from regular reading practice during registration on four mornings a week. Year 12 students, through the paired reading scheme, provide good reading support for 12 Y7 pupils. They read enthusiastically and most are reading with fluency and expression at their ability levels.

The pupils who have been identified on the school register of SEN with specific learning difficulty have very good support. The provision ensures access with relevant support to curriculum entitlement and progress in individual literacy skills. A variety of suitable programmes is well used to support their literacy and organisational and study skills. The pupils are appreciative of the support and are achieving well in subjects across the curriculum.

Four LSAs provide very good support for pupils with SEN. The work is well targeted to ensure effective support and there are good examples of close collaboration with subject teachers. They offer good cross-curricular support for KS4 pupils; they listen to pupils read and offer support and guidance for pupils in their written work. A record is kept of their work and this information is shared with SENCO. This is good practice.

Thirty-five pupils have statements of SEN which are reviewed effectively, and parents, external agencies and the LEA are consulted according to need. Thirty seven pupils are included on School Action and 66 on School Action Plus of the SEN register. Arrangements for identifying these pupils are very good, and the SEN register is reviewed regularly and effectively. Every pupil on the SEN register has a good IEP. The plans relate well to the needs of the individual and appropriate targets are set for future progress. The IEPs are shared with the parents; this is good practice.

The co-ordinator provides very good guidance and is effectively supported by the manager of the learning resource and the assistant headteacher. The work is very well organised with expectations high. There are very good links with primary schools and the LEA provides the school with good specific support for individual and small groups of pupils. The headteacher and the designated governor offer good support and ensure good provision for pupils with SEN. The school is successful in creating a good whole-school approach to the education of pupils with SEN.

## **5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions**

Partnerships with parents, the community, schools and other institutions are very good with a pro-active and planned approach. The wide range of links and partnerships make a substantial contribution to the life of the school, its ethos and values and pupils' personal, social and academic development.

The quality and range of information provided for parents is very good. The prospectus, issued to parents of all new pupils, is user-friendly, of very good quality in style and information, and together with the governors' annual report and home-school agreement, meets National Assembly requirements. There is in addition, a range of informative booklets and an interesting innovation has been the establishment of the special website project which introduces information and learning resources for both parents and pupils.

There is effective contact by means of circulars, sometimes personal letters and a newsletter 'Gwyn News' is produced weekly. The school operates an open-door system whereby parents are able to make contact or make an appointment with the school to discuss matters of concern. There is good information and advice for pupils and parents for important decisions in Y9, Y11 and in the sixth form and a series of evenings and review days are arranged annually for the benefit of parents, with much planning and thought given to their organisation. Parents respond well to events and activities organised by the school. The PTA is very active and supportive in fund raising and other activities.

Extensive links with the community are used to enhance pupils' experiences and a strong outward-looking community ethos has been developed.

The very good partnership with the main contributory primary schools is a particular strength of provision. There is a commitment to making the transition from primary schools as smooth as possible and to dispel possible concerns and fears of Y6 pupils and parents. Arrangements commence early in Y6, are thorough and extensive and continue throughout the academic year. There is also a strong commitment to the interchange of ideas with primary schools and numerous mutually beneficial curriculum initiatives and joint projects have been established.

Links with FE and HE Colleges are effective and there is a well-established partnership with a teacher training institution. Placements are provided annually for trainee teachers who receive good support.

## **5.7 Partnership with industry**

Partnerships with industry, commerce and the world of business have been strengthened and have become well established since the previous inspection and are now very good. Pupils' industrial understanding, awareness of the world of work, course provision and curricular experiences are greatly enhanced by a comprehensive and well-planned programme of activities. The school prepares well for the world beyond school.

Strategies are evident in practice and the annual programmes of activities, experiences and opportunities are carefully planned, monitored and evaluated. The ACCAC framework for work-related 14-19 education in Wales is implemented.

The programme to raise awareness commences in Y7 with a module within the PSE programme on careers which continues through the school. In addition, there is special transition provision for some Y8 pupils and a stronger focus in Y9 with industry day, engineering club and special projects. Momentum increases in Y10 and continues to Y13. Industrialists are directly involved with KS4 and post-16 programmes. Y10 pupils undertake a week's work experience in the summer term and follow a detailed programme of preparation. Pupils are well monitored and on their return, pupils and teachers are fully involved in feedback and evaluation; the work experience programme is very well managed

by the co-ordinator. Y11 pupils follow a programme of career interviews. Y12 and Y13 receive a comprehensive programme which includes vocational courses, Young Enterprise, participation in competitions, mock interviews and techniques, involvement of external companies, transition and preparation courses for transfer to higher education. All programmes are very well organised by members of staff and a stimulating range of experiences and opportunities is undertaken by students.

Industry is used effectively as a resource to enhance understanding in about half of curriculum subjects and there are good links with the careers company, employers, colleges and support agencies, all of whom are very supportive of the school and its work related education programme. The school is proactive in its approach to income generation and receives valuable support from a number of organisations.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement**

Although the practice of self-evaluation and planning for improvement has only relatively recently been adopted by the school, its quality in the short term is good and developing further, with the appointment of the new headteacher. The ensuing strategic development plan has been endorsed by the governing body and staff.

Prior to this, in 2000 and 2002, in-depth questionnaires were devised, circulated and analysed by external consultants, to monitor parents' education perceptions on a wide range of criteria. The school has made careful use of the results in devising its improvement plans and review cycle.

The SMT has clear responsibilities, known to all for monitoring and reviewing a range of aspects and subjects. The improvement plan is presented under the school's 15 published aims, which are individually displayed throughout the school. Time scale, success criteria, resources and evaluation strategies are transparent. To date, the use of results to effect improvement is positive. The document 'Putting it all together', provides a helpful overview and rationale. The school development plan extends this beyond the current year. The school has kept track of the progress of the key issues from the last inspection. Governors have received good training to develop their strategic role further. A useful, comprehensive self-evaluation document has been produced for each subject to complete to aid consistency. SMT planning is of a high order. The headteacher has carried out a whole school review in order to establish a clear focus on developing 'a learning school', with raising standards and continuous improvement. This philosophy is well on the way to becoming embedded in the various levels and groupings within the school, including the extensive web site.

Procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's progress and activity are becoming increasingly firmly in place. Leadership has a very good vision and understanding of the school's development. Lesson observations judge the quality of teaching on agreed criteria, provide feedback and, where necessary, set targets.

Whole school performance indicators are set, using available information. The school is data rich and staff understand and are experienced in the use of tests to forecast and predict, to judge pupils' progress from entry to the school and the residual values provided by subjects. All Y11 pupils are mentored.

The school reviews aspects of its performance against national benchmarks such as Investor in People, SportsMarc, the Welsh Secondary School Award and during inspection week, the award of Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Successful analysis and decisions have eliminated a budget deficit, to the extent that this year's budget allows for growth. Review of the significant number of important recent developments is properly built in, together with plans to evolve further.

## **6.2 Leadership and efficiency**

The mission statement 'Learning together in Christ' is underpinned by 15 aims, to which the school commits itself and which it fulfils well. These are endorsed by pupils and parents. A good understanding of whole school issues is now being further developed. The governing body is knowledgeable and greatly involved. It considers its responsibilities conscientiously and discharges them well. The comprehensive range of policies reflect the school's philosophy consistently. Governors have received training in visiting classes and have been developing procedures for reviewing and evaluating the school's progress, to bring about further improvements. They bring a wide range of expertise.

The school is effectively managed overall. In his short tenure to date, the headteacher has provided energy, vision and new insights, following reviews, analysis and consultation. He has produced a strategic development plan and has effected or set in place a substantial number of improvements, short and longer term, the better to respond to current demands faced by schools, to raise standards and pupils' experiences. In this he is very well supported, in particular by his senior team of deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers. Each member, in addition to important specific whole school responsibilities, has corporate responsibilities and links and monitoring responsibilities for a cluster of subject departments and improving accountability. Almost all staff appreciate the opportunities they can now have for involvement and consultation in the school's progress and of the potential of a consistent sense of common purpose in raising standards. Teaching and non-teaching staff at all levels in the school work well together, as is evidenced by the Investor in People submission. The quality of management of those with whole school responsibilities is good. Most departments are well led. Long term absence is hindering progress in music and design and technology. The clarity of departmental responsibilities, including careful monitoring and review, has improved.

Communication overall and the routine organisation of the school are very good.

Financial management of the school is good. Available funds and grants are managed to good effect. The budget is planned in close liaison with the finance committee of the governing body. Day-to-day financial management and monitoring are carried out well. Hard financial decisions have now successfully removed former budget deficits and the school now has a growth budget. The priorities identified in the school development plan are clearly reflected in budget proposals. The few matters identified in the most recent audit report were carefully considered and implemented. Careful departmental housekeeping has ensured available scarce resources are used well. Evaluations by governors on the effect of their decisions on the quality of provision are emerging.

## **6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

### ***Staffing***

There are 51 full time and 3 part time teachers. The pupil:teacher ratio of 18:1 is less generous than that of similar sized schools in Wales. Teachers are well qualified and there is an appropriate balance of experienced teachers and those who have joined the profession in recent years. Nearly half have been at the school for 10 years or more. They are generally effectively deployed to cover their academic, managerial and pastoral responsibilities. Non-specialist teaching and long-term absences combine at present to affect standards adversely in a small number of subjects.

All non-teaching staff, including technicians, learning support assistants, caretaker, restaurant staff, cleaners, librarian and administrative staff, provide very effective support and make a valuable contribution to the everyday life of the school. The lack of a technician is adversely affecting standards in DT.

The school has a clear well-documented professional development programme for all staff. INSET needs are appropriately matched to personal, whole school and departmental priorities. Participants effectively evaluate courses. The co-ordinator keeps good records and makes an annual evaluation and review of provision, which is reported to the governing body. The school provides satisfactory support for newly qualified and trainee teachers.

### ***Accommodation***

With the exception of four ‘temporary’ mobile classrooms at the back of the school, which are of poor quality and condition, the accommodation for the number of pupils on roll and the curriculum provided is generally good. Since the last inspection, several improvements have been made to the buildings and to the environment of the school. This has enabled the school to generate extra teaching spaces, to create new ICT suites, considerably improve the library, refurbish some classrooms, create more departmental suites, and establish new offices.

As well as a school development plan, the school now has an annual school improvement plan. The current plan lists nine areas for improvement. To its credit, the school has already attained seven of those targets. These include a pleasant and impressive restaurant style dining facility, new boilers and heating system, new reception area and offices, the refurbishment of the sixth form common room as a study area, palisade fencing extended to cover all areas, a security system installed and security doors fitted to all external doors. The two remaining targets in the improvement plan, updating some poor quality PE facilities and, in particular, replacing the mobile classrooms, are the subject of protracted discussion.

Areas where attention is required include the art rooms, DT workshops, and the suiting of the geography department.

The internal fabric of the building is good. Good quality displays in classrooms and corridors, celebrate pupils’ efforts and achievements in curricular and extra-curricular activities. A rolling programme of internal and external decoration has recently been introduced.

The caretaker and the cleaning staff work successfully to ensure a good level of cleanliness is maintained throughout the school. Very little litter is seen, there being a conscientious effort by staff and pupils to keep the site clean and tidy.

## ***Resources***

The expenditure per pupil on resources has been well below the national average, but in the majority of cases, the quality of resources within departments is satisfactory. In design and technology, insufficient CAD/CAM equipment of quality affects standards. This year the proportion of the total budget allocated to resources has been tripled to 6.3%. The use made by departments of available resources, including the environment locally and further afield, is good. Resources are mainly distributed on an agreed formula. Departments can also bid for further resources to support developments identified in their annual plans.

The school has made a considerable investment in ICT, so that the ratio of pupils to computers at 3:1 is very good. A room is well equipped for sixth form use.

The library has a full-time librarian who provides very good support. It is a valuable and popular whole-school resource. Its resources are also available out of school hours. The quality of the book stock is good. It falls well below the 13:1 recommendation for the whole school, although several subjects have small reference libraries in departmental areas.

## **7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING**

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **English**

Standards are good in KS3 and 4 and in the sixth form. In the end of KS3 NC tests in 2002, achievement improved further to 67%, level 5 and above. Figures for boys and girls were 60% and 74% respectively. Virtually all pupils are entered for GCSE English and literature, a higher proportion than average. 61% gained grades A\*-C in English, 100% grades A\*-G with a high proportion of the top A\*/A grades. The differences between the relative performances of girls and boys matches those nationally. In literature, 50% of candidates were awarded grade A\*-C, with 97% awarded grades A\*-G. At A/S level, 80% of students achieved grades A-E, including 30% A-C. At A level, all but one candidate passed grades A-E, half at the higher grades A-C.

#### **Good features**

##### ***KS3 and KS4***

- KS3 and 4 pupils' presentation is good. They take care in their work.
- Coursework is well done.
- They learn and understand the need to revise and redraft their work to effect improvement, on occasions using word processing.
- They consciously adapt the style and tone of their writing appropriately for its purpose and readership.
- Work is well organised and relevant. Much good extended writing work is produced. Much grammar, punctuation and spelling is accurate.
- Dictionaries are used well. Research skills are well developed.
- Pupils are given good introduction to a wide variety of literacy experiences, which acknowledge their developing preferences.
- They respond well to realistic challenges, encouragement and praise.

- Attention is paid to teachers' suggestions for improvement.
- Most are confident, articulate speakers.
- They pose and answer questions willingly. When given the opportunity, they collect their ideas thoughtfully and express their opinions well.
- They read out loud well. Many are keen readers for pleasure. They develop an ear for vocabulary and the use of language skills. The library is popular.
- They work well in pairs and small groups, sharing ideas, listening to each other courteously, even in disagreement and giving whole class presentations.
- They learn to summarise and respond well to a range of note-making skills.
- High attaining pupils and pupils with SEN attain well, in response to the planned provision.
- They show good recall and understanding in response to questioning.
- KS4 pupils benefit from the dual entry English and literature policy.
- They come to appreciate the influence of character and plot-development. They begin to empathise with characters.
- They respond well to poetry.

### ***Sixth form***

- Students express their preferences and opinions well, often with flair, calling well on appropriate evidence, background and textual references.
- They collaborate well together in small groups, to discuss each others' ideas and to build up a response. Resulting presentations to the whole class are accomplished.
- Written work is often of a high quality. It shows sensitivity, developing knowledge and understanding of the text and context.
- Critical skills, deduction and interpretation in Year 13 are finely developed.
- They assess strengths and weaknesses of exemplar materials realistically.
- They appreciate authors' technical devices and techniques.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3 and KS4***

- A minority of written work is very brief. It lacks development and organisation.
- A minority of pupils do not read enthusiastically for pleasure.
- SEN support is limited.
- Although standards are good, some simple mistakes persist.
- Occasionally pupils appear passive and uninvolved.

Steady progress has been maintained throughout, since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4, and very good in the sixth form.

In the national tests at the end of KS3 in 2002, 64.8% of pupils achieved level 5 or better, which was above the Welsh average. The percentage of pupils attaining GCSE grades A\*-C was 48%, close to the Welsh average.

A level results last year were very good. All candidates were awarded grades A-E, 11 of the 14 at grade A-C, giving an average individual 7.2 score.

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- Pupils consolidate their ability to do basic arithmetical operations, although there is still room for improvement.
- The principles of algebra are developing well. This is particularly true for the more able pupils, but it is also evident amongst middle and lower ability pupils.
- All pupils learn to draw and investigate the properties of geometric shapes at an appropriate level.
- Pupils learn how to collect and represent statistical data effectively.

### ***KS4***

- Number work is quite well developed in this key stage, but pupils still need to gain greater confidence in this area.
- As in KS3, the principles of algebra are developing well across the ability range.
- The properties of geometric shapes continue to develop well from KS3. The work on geometric shapes is good across the ability range.
- The work on trigonometry is very well developed for the higher ability pupils, and is also developing well for the middle ability pupils.
- Pupils of all abilities learn to collect and represent statistical data, and the abler pupils are able to interpret the data well.

### ***Sixth form***

- The standard of work in the sixth form is very good. Students work very hard and maturely. They organise their work carefully, using accurate and precise mathematical notation and processes in all parts of the work.
- Students take an active part in the lessons, and discuss issues in a mature and knowledgeable manner.

## **Shortcomings**

### ***KS3 and 4***

- Although IT is included in schemes of work, it is used insufficiently.
- There is some inappropriate use of calculators by pupils. Department policy is unclear in this respect.
- Their number work lacks sharpness, with insufficient experience of mental mathematics.

Since the last inspection, the department has made considerable progress. Test and examination results have improved steadily.

## **Science**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and KS4. In the sixth form standards are good.

In 2002, results in the KS3 SATs were in line with the national average. GCSE science examination results were above the national average at grades A\*-G but below average at the

higher A\*-C grades. At A level, all students obtained an A–E grade and in physics almost all achieved the higher A-C grades.

Pupils with SEN have full access to the national curriculum and to accredited courses in KS4.

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- Pupils generally have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of current NC topics.
- A majority of pupils have a satisfactory recall of previous work, they can describe and explain key facts and ideas. They are able to apply their knowledge and understanding to problem solving. They make satisfactory and in some cases good progress through the key stage.
- Scientific vocabulary is generally carefully introduced by teachers and is appropriately used by a majority of pupils in written and oral work. A minority of pupils makes good oral contributions in class.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their abilities.
- Experimental and investigative skills are acquired throughout the KS. Pupils can follow instructions and carry out experiments. They make accurate observations and measurements generally using appropriate units. Pupils can describe and record their results and the majority makes good use of graphical methods in analysis. They carry out practical work safely.
- The quality and presentation of written work, including extended writing, is often good.
- The majority of pupils make good use of mathematical skills in scientific contexts.
- Pupils make good use of ICT to record and process data using spreadsheets.

### ***KS4***

- Many pupils build upon their KS3 achievements and have a good recall and understanding of topics covering life processes and living things. They have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and of physical processes.
- The most able can use their knowledge and understanding to solve scientific problems and generally make good progress.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in the CoEA course.
- During the KS, pupils' experimental and investigative skills are further developed. The majority of pupils can use detailed scientific knowledge and understanding to plan their investigations. They successfully carry out an investigation making appropriate observations and taking accurate readings. They are aware of the need to repeat readings and to make fair comparisons.
- Graphs are generally well used in detailed analyses and in making conclusions. The more able pupils are well able to link their conclusions to scientific theory and their predictions. The most able make reasoned suggestions for improving their methods in good in-depth evaluations.
- Able and middle ability pupils reach good standards in externally assessed practical work. Lower ability pupils make satisfactory progress.
- Throughout KS3 and KS4 pupils knowledge and awareness of the contributions science makes to everyday life improve. They acquire an understanding of the social, economic, ethical and environmental aspects of the subject.

### ***Sixth form***

- Students make very good progress in physics. The majority of students make good progress in biology and chemistry.
- Students generally have a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics and key ideas in biology, chemistry and physics.
- The majority can successfully apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to problem solving.
- Communication and mathematical skills are generally well used. Students research and organise information effectively, building up clear, comprehensive, well-kept files.
- Practical skills are good. Experiments are well planned, students work safely and systematically, they make appropriate observations and collect accurate data. Results are well analysed and interpreted using appropriate scientific theory.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3 and KS4***

- A significant minority of pupils have an insecure knowledge and understanding in key areas. They make slower progress, which is hindered in some cases by absence, in others by lack of study skills, incomplete work or inattention in lessons. The slow pace and lack of challenge of a significant number of lessons also hinders progress.
- A minority of pupils have difficulty using scientific vocabulary.
- Pupils do not have sufficient “hands on” experience of using ICT skills to capture, store and process information.
- In assessed practical work, a minority of pupils’ planning lacks scientific detail and preliminary work. Their analyses and evaluations lack sufficient depth or are incomplete.

#### ***Sixth form***

- A significant minority of students have less secure knowledge and understanding of key facts, concepts and ideas.

Since the last inspection standards of achievement have been maintained in the sixth form but not in key areas of KS3 and KS4.

### **Welsh second language**

Standards of achievement in listening, speaking, reading and writing are good in KS3 and satisfactory in KS4. In KS4, about 20% of the pupils enter the full course GCSE examination, the remainder being entered for the Short Course.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils respond well orally, they understand short spoken and recorded items. They can select relevant information to answer basic questions orally and in writing. Good progress is made in listening.
- Pupils contribute well in Welsh prayers at the beginning of every lesson, they have a positive attitude to the language, which is reinforced by good relationships between pupils and teachers.

- They are keen to volunteer answers and co-operate well in pair and group work. The majority are confident when talking about familiar topics, such as family, pets and their neighbourhood. They pose and answer questions on a variety of topics and explain preferences. They confidently use basic patterns like ‘achos ..’ to give explanations. More able pupils justify their opinions.
- More able pupils speak accurately and reasonably fluently. Middle and lower ability pupils make sound progress, using basic constructions and vocabulary well.
- Pupils read aloud well, understand short passages on familiar topics and respond well.
- They respond well in writing to a variety of stimuli, producing extended pieces of word processed writing which are displayed in class. They mainly use familiar patterns correctly. Accuracy and punctuation of the more able are good.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils work well in groups, following set tasks, and discuss topics effectively. They express opinions, occasionally using evidence. Only abler pupils talk freely on a variety of topics.
- Able pupils read well and show good understanding of a range of material. They are beginning to respond to books and magazines, discussing characters and plot.
- More able pupils write accurately and interestingly, using a wide range of constructions, verb forms and vocabulary to produce a variety of interesting tasks for folio and project work.

#### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- Some middle and lower ability pupils make basic grammatical and punctuation errors, when the focus is not on grammar. A number of these errors persist.
- In group work the more able pupils do not expand on their reasons when expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, using Welsh for real communication purposes.

#### **KS4**

- Middle and lower ability pupils are restricted in the number of topics that they can discuss confidently and their standards of written accuracy are relatively low.
- Redrafting to improve standards of accuracy and the provision of a programme of reading for pleasure are under-developed.

Satisfactory progress has been maintained.

### **Design and technology**

Standards in KS3 are unsatisfactory. In KS4 they are good in graphic products and satisfactory in resistant materials. At A Level in product design they are good.

GCSE examination results in 2002 for graphic products were below national averages for A\*-C but were generally in line with pupils’ performance in their other subjects. All pupils entered gained grade A\*-G. Examination results in resistant materials were poor. Overall, a lower than average number of pupils entered GCSE examinations in design and technology subjects.

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- Pupils use a design process to guide their work.
- Making skills are satisfactory in resistant materials and food.
- Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of structures and structural terminology.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials, components and the processes that they use in resistant materials and food is satisfactory.
- Pupils understand and conduct computer control procedures to a satisfactory standard.

### ***KS4***

- Design work is good overall with effective use of a design process to guide pupils' work. Design work is stronger in graphic products than in resistant materials.
- Design specifications are well constructed and appropriately linked to design evaluations. This is particularly so in graphic products.
- Presentation skills are good overall and sometimes very good.
- Making skills are good. Pupils generally work accurately and finish their work well. This is particularly so in graphic products.
- Project work is often innovative, particularly in graphic products.
- The understanding of materials, their properties and working characteristics is good in graphic products and satisfactory in resistant materials.
- Innovative work is more evident in graphic products than in resistant materials.
- The use of ICT for presentation is satisfactory.

### ***Sixth form***

- Design work is good overall. Students research, analyse and produce effective design specifications to guide their product development.
- Students' evaluation of the products they design and make is good.
- Project folios display good standards of presentation, particularly in the lower sixth.
- Project work is innovative and consistently well made.
- Students' theoretical understanding is good in Y12 and satisfactory Y13.
- Case studies, which are firmly linked with commercial and industrial contexts, are well structured.
- The use of ICT for research and presentation is satisfactory.

## **Shortcomings**

### ***KS3***

- Pupils do not have a secure understanding of the function of a design process and how it helps them to design better products.
- Few pupils understand the function of a design specification and the link between specification and evaluation.
- Creative design drawing and presentation skills are underdeveloped.
- Research work is insufficiently focused in some modules.
- Mechanical and electronic control principles are underdeveloped and insufficiently embedded in the products that pupils make.
- There is insufficient use of ICT for research, presentation and CAD/CAM.

- There are inadequate links between modules to ensure coherence and progression in pupils' work.

#### ***KS4***

- Creative design drawing skills are underdeveloped.
- Presentation skills in resistant materials are unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient use of ICT for research, CAD and presentation, particularly in resistant materials.
- The absence of some pupils on the resistant materials course lowers standards.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Quick creative design drawing skills are weaker than other elements of students' designing.
- Some industrial case studies lack sufficient analytical and evaluatory comment.

Standards in KS3 are lower than at the time of the last inspection. In KS4 and the sixth form they are broadly similar.

### **Information technology**

Standards of achievement in KS3 are unsatisfactory. Standards in ICT in KS4 and the sixth form are good.

GCSE examination results A\*-G in 2002 were above national averages for the subject and pupils' performance was similar to that in their other subjects. Nearly all gained grade A\*-G. A level, A-C grades in 2002 were well above national averages. Results demonstrated positive progress. All students gained a pass at A-D.

#### **Good features**

##### ***KS3***

- Pupils manage computers effectively. They confidently conduct fundamental computer operations such as logging on, calling up and saving their work, and accessing appropriate applications and the Internet.
- Standards of communicating information are satisfactory. Pupils use word processing and desktop publishing successfully in a number of subjects.

##### ***KS4***

- Pupils develop a comprehensive range of IT skills in the prescribed tasks of the GCSE courses.
- They confidently communicate information for a variety of purposes and audiences, including effective Powerpoint presentations.
- Project work displays confidence in handling and modelling information using spreadsheets.
- Pupils handle data well. They can construct databases and carry out appropriate searches.
- Research, analysis and problem solving skills are often well developed in project work based on real life contexts.
- Pupils present their work well and can explain clearly why they have chosen specific applications.

- They understand theory well.

### ***Sixth form***

- Project work is well structured and displays evidence of effective analysis, investigation and research.
- Students confidently use advanced database techniques to solve the real life problems they have identified.
- Problem solving skills and the implementation and testing of solutions are good.
- Students have a good understanding of theory.
- Students in Y12 are making very good progress.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils have insufficient cross-curricular ICT experiences of handling and modelling information, to achieve satisfactory standards.
- Pupils insufficiently consider social, economic, ethical and moral issues related to the use of ICT in society.

#### ***KS4***

- Standards of achievement of middle and lower ability pupils' work varies between similar ability groups.

### ***Sixth form***

- The evaluation and testing of Y13 projects lack depth.

At the last inspection standards were unsatisfactory overall. This remains the case at KS3 but there has been substantial improvement at KS4 and in the sixth form.

## **History**

Standards of achievement in KS3, KS4 and the sixth form are good.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils progressively develop knowledge and understanding of historical concepts, people and place and use this effectively to evaluate a range of evidence from source material to make informed judgements.
- They are able to recall historical facts and develop skills in presentation which reflect an understanding of historical context and chronology.
- They show a willingness to investigate issues, to recall information orally and to link events and issues from the past appropriately.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils develop their historical vocabulary and understanding of context and content and are progressively able to analyse source material.

- They are increasingly able to make judgements about historical events with an understanding of the values, attitudes, ideas and perspectives of people at the time in question.
- They reinforce examination techniques and develop their skills and knowledge to reflect expectations and requirements.

### ***Sixth form***

- In 2002 all students achieved an A - E grade at either AS level or A level.
- Students can place events in their historical context, use historical terms accurately and understand the nature of primary and secondary evidence.
- They work co-operatively to analyse evidence and to evaluate historical sources and interpretations, showing an awareness of values and attitudes, circumstances and a perspective of the period in question, together with an appreciation that there may be more than one valid interpretation of an issue.
- They demonstrate an extending range and depth of historical understanding which, at its best, is reflected in good oral and written communication.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

- A minority of pupils fail to get fully involved in their work, show limited skills in applying their knowledge and understanding, concentrating on narrative in their written work.

#### ***KS4***

- 2002 GCSE results were below the national average.
- A minority of pupils are less secure in their understanding of major personalities and events and lack confidence in interpreting information and presenting their written responses.

### ***Sixth form***

- Not all students have the confidence and ability to interpret more sophisticated concepts, restricting their written and oral responses.

Standards in KS3, KS4 and the sixth form are now good. Use of source material is now more effective and there is a clear focus on historical interpretation.

## **Geography**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4 and the sixth form. Results in recent years, although below national figures at the highest grades at GCSE and A level, represent positive progress for the significant proportion of the cohort, entered for external examinations.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils possess an increasing vocabulary of geographical terms and acquire a good range of skills and techniques, particularly those associated with the use of maps and atlases.

- They have a secure understanding of the fragile nature of the earth's crust and can explain the distribution of volcanoes and earthquakes; they are aware of the dangers to local residents.
- They increase their knowledge of how energy was produced in the past using non renewable sources such as coal; they understand that renewable sources such as wind farms are becoming important but that their introduction can cause conflict between interested parties.
- They also appreciate that a growth in tourism can bring both positive and negative effects to an area or country and that certain climatic regions are more favoured than others.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils have good recall and understanding of previously acquired facts which they apply well to their units of study both in class and in their coursework assignments.
- The files of Y10 pupils (no classes were seen) show they have a good understanding of current geographical issues such as global warming and the greenhouse effect and of factors which influence the migration of people both in Wales and in Brazil.
- Pupils apply their knowledge of urban problems to named case studies in the UK and further afield; they make good use of annotated field sketches to illustrate their findings.
- They carry out investigations and enquiries competently; they work productively as a group; their extended writing often shows balance and style.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Students speak and write with increasing accuracy and can collect, represent and interpret data in maps and graphs; they manage a wide range of geographical information in different forms and from a wide range of sources including ICT.
- They apply their knowledge accurately to case studies; they have a secure understanding of the relationship between people and the natural environment when studying natural hazards such as a tsunami or seismic waves
- Contrasting case studies also exemplify their theoretical knowledge of aspects of change in the rural environment such as National Parks.
- Students competently discuss more complex issues such as sustainable development and the concept that populations change in size and character over space and time.

#### **Shortcomings**

- In KS3, during lessons the progress of a small number of lower achievers is restricted by chatter, inattention and a lack of understanding of key words; the uncooperative behaviour of a handful of individuals hinders not only their progress but also that of their classmates and their standard of achievement is unsatisfactory.
- In both KS3 and KS4, some pupils are reluctant to contribute to class discussions; others are more confident orally than in writing.

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Issues identified, such as the application of theory to practice and of independent problem solving, have been addressed.

## **Modern foreign languages**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

In 2002, over 50% of the year group entered for GCSE examinations in either French or German, well above the national average. All gained an A\*-G grade and over 70% gained an A\*-C grade. At A level, all students entered gained grade A-E. In French, there was one grade C and one grade D. Of the 4 students entered for German, 3 were graded A-C and one grade D.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3 and KS4***

- Pupils listen well to authentic recordings, to the teacher and to each other.
- Listening comprehension is good. Pupils understand the teachers' extensive use of the foreign language and can extract information from cassette recordings.
- Pupils are confident in familiar oral work and work well together in pairs.
- They carry out structured role play tasks successfully, gradually extending their use of past, present and future tenses.
- They volunteer answers readily and have a good recall of vocabulary.
- Pupils read aloud confidently and reading comprehension skills are good.
- Pupils across the whole ability range produce extended writing, sometimes using ICT to improve their work.
- In KS3, pupils make good progress in structured writing tasks.
- In KS4, the standard of written coursework is good. The supportive framework enables the less able to perform well in test conditions; the more able produce interesting, well argued pieces.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Students understand the teachers' fluent use of the language and they respond appropriately.
- They understand the gist of authentic recordings and can extract relevant details.
- Students give confident oral presentations on topics of their choice.
- When they have the opportunity to prepare their ideas in advance, they can argue a case fluently, using a good range of language accurately.
- Students read confidently from an extensive range of sources; they use the internet well for research.
- There is a good range of written work. Students make good progress in their ability to express complex ideas on a range of topics.
- Students have a good awareness of the cultural context of the foreign language.

### **Shortcomings**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils occasionally develop a more personal response in their written work, and write from memory, but they do not do so often enough to develop greater independence.

#### ***KS4***

- Most pupils do not use their initiative sufficiently in oral work, for example to develop their ideas beyond an initial response to a question.

### ***Sixth form***

- A minority of students are hesitant in unprepared oral work. They give short answers and do not use their initiative.

Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in the sixth form and have improved in KS3 and KS4.

## **Art**

Standards of achievement are good at KS3 and very good at KS4 and in the sixth form.

The majority of pupils achieve to the expected level at the end of KS3. In the 2002 GCSE examination all pupils gained grade A\*-G. Numbers gaining A\*-C grades were significantly better than the national average for both boys and girls. Both students who entered the AS examination in 2002 achieved B grades. The two A level entries achieved A and B grades.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS3***

- Pupils make good progress in developing their drawing skills.
- Colour, shape and pattern are understood and applied well in study of the work of Klimt.
- Pupils show an understanding and appreciation of the art of Wales.
- Pupils appreciate and use the art of other cultures to enrich their own work.
- From study of Bauhaus designers, pupils understand how to relate shape and letterforms to create graphic design.
- Pupils know how to use computers to research the work of different artists.
- The regular practice of self-assessment from Y7 onwards leads to pupils knowing what they have to do in order to improve their work.
- Pupils with learning difficulties receive close attention and make good progress.
- Most pupils are acquiring and using an appropriate art vocabulary.
- Pupils work very well together in their practical activities in very little space.

#### ***KS4***

- Pupils understand how to use different artists' techniques to improve their own work.
- They can produce large lively paintings that show growing skill.
- Study visits and public exhibitions of their work are resulting in confident learners.
- Pupils regularly explore different colour variations to judge the most effective.
- Colour is beginning to be used with some finesse.
- Previous knowledge of Celtic art forms is applied imaginatively.
- Pupils know how to use digital cameras and computers to create art.
- They produce a better than average quantity of examination coursework.

### ***Sixth form***

- Students are developing well as independent artists.
- Painting skills are very well developed in graphic portraits.
- Students produce a body of paintings that are to a professional standard.
- An appreciation of the natural environment is demonstrated in delightful landscapes.
- Students show an inquisitive approach to new forms of art.
- Very good progress is made despite the shortage of teaching time.

- Well-established craft skills are extended in new textile and printmaking techniques.
- Students know how to use computers to design Powerpoint presentations on art.
- A greater breadth of expertise is developed by working with trainee art teachers.
- Students are able to use their art to express spiritual and moral issues.

### **Shortcomings**

- KS3 pupils do not experience a three-dimensional activity or use computers creatively.
- In all years, pupils do not express personal opinions and judgements in their writing.
- Standards and breadth of experience are limited by inadequate work space.

Exceptional progress has been made since the previous report. Standards have significantly improved.

## **Music**

Standards of achievement are unsatisfactory at KS3 and satisfactory at KS4. Because of long term staff absence and lack of continuity, pupils have been unable to build on the knowledge, skills and understanding acquired previously. This has affected standards of achievement across the school. In 2002, all GCSE pupils gained A\*-G, with 61% A\*-C. These figures represent good progress. There has been a significant increase in the numbers opting for music in Year 10: 40 pupils, over a fifth of the cohort, will enter GCSE in June 2004.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Many pupils can perform accurately and confidently on a number of instruments.
- A significant minority of pupils can maintain an individual instrumental part in an ensemble.
- Pupils can select and/or combine sounds from a range of instrumental and electronic sources.
- They can store work in progress using recording equipment.
- They can appraise their own and others' music with varying degree of perception and depth.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils are able to build on previous experiences, further developing their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- They show further control in performance and achieve good standards.
- Pupils are able to compose pieces of music to a given stimuli with some success.
- Pupils can use ICT to store work in progress and finished compositions, so as to improve standards.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **KS3**

- A significant number of pupils sing out of tune, with poor tone quality and inadequate control of dynamics.

- A significant minority of individual performances are technically inaccurate and unconvincing. Elements of the repertoire are inappropriate to the development of the pupils at the upper end of the key stage.
- In group work, a few pupils are unable to empathise with each other and fail to play in time, to a common pulse.
- When appraising music, a significant number of pupils, across the whole key stage, cannot recognise and describe the distinctive characteristics of the music.
- The response of many pupils to composition tasks lacks imagination and maturity in relation to their development.
- Pupils are unable to recognise their level of attainment and do not understand how to improve standards.

#### **KS4**

- A few individual performances lack variety and fluency and pay insufficient attention to dynamics, articulation, expression, etc.
- Some compositions are very simplistic, demonstrating a rudimentary understanding of the musical elements.
- The choice of musical ideas is restricted and there is limited harmonic understanding.
- Evaluations made by pupils in appraising their own music are brief, superficial and do not influence subsequent work.

Extra-curricular activities have complemented the work of the department, and good quality instrumental tuition is provided at no charge for 8% of the school roll. The annual show offers excellent musical opportunities and experiences for a large number of pupils to demonstrate talent and professionalism and to provide the community with high quality entertainment.

In recent months in particular, standards of achievement have fallen since the last inspection.

## **Physical education**

Standards of achievement in KS3 and KS4 are good. Standards in the sixth form are very good.

In both key stages, pupils dress smartly for practical activities and respond positively. Participation rates in activities are high. Pupils enjoy physical education and benefit from participation in single and mixed gender groups. All KS4 pupils are entered for either a full or short course GCSE.

### **Good features**

#### **KS3**

- Pupils understand how to prepare for exercise and lead others in appropriate warm up activities
- Pupils practise and refine their skills, adapting them to new situations
- Y8 and Y9 pupils apply tactics to outwit opponents and skills are enhanced by well structured practical lessons
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. They practise and refine movements, using teacher observation and feedback to improve their performance

#### **KS4**

- In swimming, pupils repeat and refine actions with greater control and accuracy to achieve technical competence. They learn to evaluate techniques and use this information successfully to improve performance
- A significant majority display a good attitude to GCSE work. They demonstrate a sound knowledge of the rules of competition before taking the role of officials
- Understanding of aspects of course work is good
- Pupils have a sound understanding of contemporary issues in modern sport and thoughtfully prepared lessons enhance pupils understanding and achievement

#### **Sixth form**

- Students who follow AS and A2 courses display a mature attitude towards their work and make good progress
- They show knowledge and understanding of issues in sport and society and can discuss and analyse aspects of the work successfully
- Students demonstrate increasing ability to formulate arguments and challenge assertions, enhancing the depth of their learning on the examination course
- They can connect theoretical concepts to examples from sport through well structured lessons

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3**

- Pupils skills' in evaluating their own performance and that of others are less well developed than other aspects of their work.

##### **KS4**

- Pupils are insufficiently challenged to sustain skills over longer distances in swimming.

#### **Sixth form**

- There is no non-examination sixth form PE provision.

A wide range of well organised extra-curricular activities and inter-school fixtures enhance and enrich the curriculum. Many individual and team successes bring credit to the school through county and national recognition.

Progress made by the physical education department since the last inspection has been good.

### **Personal and social development**

Standards of achievement across KS3 and KS4, and in the sixth form are good. The course very successfully places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' attitudes and values, and on raising personal and social skills.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils benefit from the very good quality of planning for the programme.

- They apply very good information about the development of study skills, citizenship, relationships, careers and work-related education, health and a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils respond very well to the good contribution from visitors, outside agencies and specialist speakers.
- The inclusion in the programme preparation for HE, the world of work and financial management, provides valuable discussion.
- Pupils improve their understanding of citizenship and the world of work and their responsibilities.
- Work experience and work placements are highly valued by participants.
- Most pupils research topics well, frame their own questions and develop their ideas.
- They collaborate and negotiate productively in pairs and small groups, sharing tasks equitably.
- Sixth formers have carefully planned programmes which reinforce some of the aspects included in earlier years.

### **Shortcomings**

- A small minority of pupils in KS3 and 4 fail to value the programme, show little interest or are inattentive.
- A small minority make only a token response to questioning or contribution to group work.

Since the last inspection, the school's PSE programme has continued to develop well. In KS3 in particular, careers guidance has been strengthened.

### **GCSE Business Studies, GNVQ Intermediate Business, AVCE Business and Finance**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory at KS4, and good overall in the sixth form. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, the percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C and A\*-G grades was close to LEA and national averages.

### **Good features**

#### ***KS4***

- A minority of pupils has a good understanding of business terminology relative to their abilities, and can apply business principles to a range of tasks.
- In Y10, a minority has good understanding of organisational structures, and how they differ in different establishments.
- In Y11, a minority has good understanding of different methods of production and the factors which can influence the quality of products.
- A minority of pupils make good progress with their coursework assignment. They can use a range of research techniques to establish the best location for their planned business outlet.

#### ***Sixth form***

- In the GNVQ Intermediate Business course, the majority of students are making good progress in all units of the course. The students who have completed the course to

distinction level have achieved very good standards. Completed assignments in consumer protection and consumer service are of a very good standard.

- In the AVCE course, students consolidate their understanding and the majority can apply more complex principles to a range of business applications
- The majority have made good progress in the completed assignments on business at work and marketing.
- A majority in Y12 and Y13 are making good progress in current assignments, demonstrating evidence of detailed research and good use of secondary sources.

In both stages, ICT is used effectively at all levels to improve the standard of presentation, carry out independent research and display data.

## **Shortcomings**

### ***KS4***

- A significant number have a less secure recall of previous work and difficulty applying business principles to a range of tasks.
- The progress of a significant number of pupils, especially in Y10 is hindered by the amount of incomplete work and irregular attendance.
- The majority of pupils in Y11 are making only satisfactory progress in completing their coursework assignment.

### ***Sixth form***

- In AVCE classes, a minority have a less secure knowledge and understanding of business terms and principles, and sometimes lack confidence in applying them to set tasks.
- A minority of Y13 make only satisfactory progress in planning one of their final assignments.

The department has continued to make satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

## **Drama**

Standards of achievement in drama are good at KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form. Results at GCSE, AS and A level reflect the good progress which students make in relation to their abilities.

## **Good features**

### ***KS3***

- The large majority of pupils listen attentively and respond readily to instructions with control and purpose.
- They collaborate well in groups, putting forward ideas and negotiating plans for presentation. There are good standards of problem solving.
- The majority display a good understanding of stimulus materials such as poetry and researched information. They interpret and deduce well.
- Groups evaluate their own presentations well in order to improve.
- The large majority have a good awareness of audience.
- Standards of presentation are good. Images portrayed in freeze-framed scenes show variety, a good use of levels, fluidity in body stance and appropriate facial expressions.

#### ***KS4***

- The majority collaborate very well in groups, putting forward suggestions for presentations. They listen to each other with respect and negotiate decisions for presentation.
- The majority of pupils use initiative and take responsibility for their own presentation, evaluating their own performance to improve.
- Able pupils display technical competence when they plan to use music for dramatic effect.
- Pupils understand and use technical terminology and understand the conventions of script.
- In the majority of cases, standards of devised and scripted presentations are good. Pupils communicate images and ideas effectively and are clearly aware of audience.

#### ***Sixth form***

- Students collaborate very well in pairs to produce mime. There is trust and a quick response to working co-operatively with any partner to produce presentations of a good standard.
- They have good understanding of technical terminology e.g. circles of attention.
- Movement in mime is well-paced and effective, communicating mood and purpose, with good use of space and levels
- Written self-evaluation are detailed, often well structured and show good standards of critical analysis. Students with SEN make good progress in writing in relation to prior attainment.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### ***KS3***

- A small minority do not fully understand imagery in poetry which slows the pace of planning presentations.

##### ***KS4***

- A small minority lack focus and contribute minimally to group planning.

#### ***Sixth form***

- In a small minority of cases, writing lacks detail and depth.

Good progress has been maintained throughout.

### **Electronics**

Standards of achievement are good at KS4 and very good in the sixth form. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, the mean grade was the same as the UA, but below the national figures. At A-level in the 2002 examinations, a significant majority gained A-C grades, with all students gaining A-E grades.

#### **Good features**

##### ***KS4***

- The majority of pupils in Y10 are developing a good understanding of the function of different sub-systems, and their application in a number of block diagrams.

- In Y11, the majority have a good knowledge and understanding of key concepts and the function of a range of components in designing their applications.
- The majority of projects are of a good standard, showing detailed planning and pre-testing, precision in constructing, analysis of results and in-depth evaluation of the whole system.

### ***Sixth form***

- The majority of students in Y12 have a good understanding of a wide range of topics in the first two modules covered.
- Students in Y13 have a very good understanding of more complex electronic principles and their application in complex systems.
- The majority of students are making very good progress in the completion of their final projects.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of KS4 pupils have a less secure knowledge and understanding of key concepts when applied to past questions and practical applications

Electronics was not reported as a separate subject in the last inspection.

## **Home Economics**

Standards of achievement in KS4 are satisfactory. In 2002 almost all pupils entered achieved grades A\*-G and 42% A\*-C. Plans exist to replace this course with food technology.

### **Good features**

- Pupils display good research and analytical skills.
- Work is well presented.
- Pupils enjoy the subject, and can work independently.
- They communicate well orally and are willing to participate in class discussions.
- Pupils can explain their work and its development.
- Pupils act on feedback from the teacher to improve their work.

### **Shortcomings**

- The use of ICT is underdeveloped because of limited resources.
- The use of technical vocabulary is limited.
- Standards are affected by staffing difficulties, inadequate resources and accommodation that does not meet current requirements.
- Poor attendance hinders the progress of a few pupils.

This subject was not reported separately in the previous inspection.

## **Humanities**

Standards of achievement in KS4 are satisfactory.

### **Good features**

- In historical aspects, pupils are encouraged to make use of source material and to make effective judgements. They achieve an appropriate level of factual knowledge of topics covered and offer narrative responses which reflect an understanding of chronology, time and place.
- In geographical aspects, assignments are generally well presented and illustrated. At its best, written work shows balance and style with good use of source material and ICT and a clear link between topic and resulting activity.

### **Shortcomings**

- In 2002 GCSE results were below the national average.
- A significant minority are uncertain about the principles of selecting and weighing evidence and have difficulty in using their knowledge and understanding to compare, contrast and make judgements both orally and in writing.

The subject was not reported on at the last inspection.

## **Health and social care**

Standards are good. The first cohort completed this new course in 2002 with a 100% pass rate.

### **Good features**

- Students make good progress in building their knowledge and understanding of issues relating to health and social issues.
- The use of work experience and visiting speakers is a particular strength. Assignments for a unit, Communication in Health and Social Care, were completed through work experience placements in local hospitals and nurseries. Students can describe the theoretical aspects of communication and apply this knowledge to observations made whilst placed in a care setting. Visiting speakers such as the school nurse and speech therapists also enhance students' learning experience.
- The majority have a positive approach. They can describe the function of major organs and recognise the factors necessary for good health.
- They are aware of the environmental issues that impact on health and demonstrate some independent research when investigating the agencies that exist to control negative impact on health.
- They have a good understanding of equal opportunities and can apply this knowledge to a health and social care context when producing draft policies for a day care centre.
- They contribute confidently to class discussions and seek out guidance appropriately. They collaborate effectively.

## Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## Travel and tourism

This newly introduced subject is offered as a two-year course at AVCE level in Y12/13. Standards of achievement are good.

## Good features

- Students are knowledgeable of the structure of the industry and are confident in accessing relevant information from a wide range of sources including ICT.
- They make good use of the local community and of centres further afield as a source of primary evidence with planned visits to facilities such as Greenfield Valley and Chester Zoo; they make good progress in planning and investigation skills prior to their visits.
- Portfolios and files are well presented; students accept responsibility for their own learning and are developing self-confidence and maturity; they communicate their findings in concise and logical ways.
- Role-play simulations give them further insight into the importance of customer needs; they appreciate that organisations need to ensure staff are provided with appropriate training.
- They understand that tourism has changed over the years, that the industry now encompasses a widening range of destinations, and that tourists can have both a beneficial and detrimental effect on the host region.

## Shortcomings

- The work of a small minority of students lacks sufficient detail to attain the higher grades; others are reluctant to contribute to group discussions or are more confident orally than in writing.

## 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress since the last inspection

1. *Continue to improve the standards of achievement and the quality of teaching and learning, giving particular attention to the under-achievement of boys.*

Standards of achievement have been raised, results have improved. A greater proportion of teaching is now good or better. The school carefully analyses results by gender. When planning lessons, teachers are increasingly focusing on pupils' styles of learning.

2. *Improve the leadership and coordination of teaching and learning of information technology across the school and increase the provision of computers and the skills of non-specialist teachers.*

The pupil:computer ratio of 3:1 is very good. Investment in ICT has been substantial. Non-specialist teachers have improved skills. Provision in KS3 has been unsatisfactory. Coordination has only recently been re-established.

3. *Ensure that the programme of work across the faculty of design technology meets NC requirements fully.*

This has been partially addressed.

4. *Improve the school development plan by establishing priorities and targets, criteria for evaluating the measure of success achieved and costs.*

The school development and improvement plan extends beyond one year with clear cost implications. Progress towards targets is reviewed annually against success criteria, and priorities for the forthcoming year are established.

5. *Require faculties and departments to prepare their own development plans in response to the priorities of the school development plan with the detail and precision needed to secure improvements in practice.*

Departmental development plans reflect the priorities identified in the school development plan. Responsibilities of line managers include monitoring and reflect the increasing emphasis on self-evaluation by agreed criteria.

6. *Review the balance between expenditure on staffing and learning resources, so as to improve provision of the latter.*

This year the school has been able to triple the proportion of the total budget allocated to resources.

7. *Improve the arrangements for the coordination of the setting of homework.*

Guidance is given on the frequency, length and type of homework to be set, although no formal timetable is published.

8. *Take action in respect of the two health and safety issues to which attention was drawn during the inspection.*

These issues were promptly addressed.

## **8.2 Key issues for action**

The headteacher, staff and governors should build on the improvements already achieved or set in train. In order to raise standards, quality and provision of education further they should:

- maintain the school's positive features and recent developments,
- raise standards of achievement in those subjects identified as unsatisfactory in the report,
- further develop and use existing self-evaluation and review procedures consistently to assess and maximise the progress and effectiveness of whole school implementation,

- implement the plans for developing ICT across the curriculum,
- provide more structured homework arrangements,
- continue to make strong representations to secure a satisfactory outcome to the deficiencies of the 'temporary' mobile classrooms, to create an effective working environment,
- as circumstances allow, consider the level of support in the larger KS3 classes, and
- address the health and safety matter passed to the headteacher.

#### *Acknowledgement*

*The registered inspector and team wish to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy before and during the inspection.*

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic information about the school

Name of School	St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School
School type	Comprehensive
Age -range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Albert Avenue Flint Flintshire
Post-Code	CH6 5JZ
Telephone Number	01352 736900

Headteacher	Mr T P Quinn
Date of appointment	September 2002
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Mr B Lee
Registered Inspector	Mr J E James
Dates of inspection	31 <sup>st</sup> March – 4 <sup>th</sup> April

### B. School data and indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>								
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	180	157	174	189	162	70	33	965

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	51	3	53

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	18 :1
Average teaching group size	23.3
Overall contact ratio	77.8 %

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	91.77	92.55	91.79	88.76	88.83	89.96	92.81	90.92
Term 2	86.14	89.08	87.62	86.87	94.02	93.28	95.67	90.38
Term 3	92.3	88.19	90.78	89.38	89.29	92.62	90.68	90.46

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	11%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	11

## C. Results of National Curriculum assessments and public examinations

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2002															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 192															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
EN	Teacher assessment	School							22	43	60	59	5		
		National		1					2	9	22	34	21	8	
	Test	School	2	8						12	39	68	50	11	
		National		2	0.3	1	0.5	6	11	29	31	14	5		
MA	Teacher assessment	School							19	40	53	53	12		
		National		1					1	10	20	25	26	13	
	Test	School	2	11						15	39	47	59	17	
		National		1	0.3	0.6	0.1	1	14	26	25	23	9		
SC	Teacher assessment	School							29	52	75	29	5		
		National		1	1				1	10	24	31	23	9	
	Test	School	2	9						9	43	84	39	4	
		National		3	0.1	0.5			0.6	12	28	29	21	6	

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school:	46	In the school:	55
In Wales:	52	In Wales:	50

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.

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, CoE, GNVQ and NVQ</b>			
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2002: 150			
<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2002:</b>			
	School	UA	Wales
were entered for 5 or more GCSEs	93	88	86
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C	53	51	50
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-G	93	87	85
achieved GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language)	36	37	37
entered at least one CoE, GCSE short course or GCSE	96	94	97
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-C	78	74	74
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-G	96	91	92
achieved no graded GCSE	4	9	8
achieved one or more CoE only	0	2	3
achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	2		
achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	1		
achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	53		
achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	93		

<b>For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>			
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2002: 93			
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2002: 42			
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2001: 12			
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	52		66
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	90		94
Average points score per candidate	18.5		20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	8		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0		

## **D. The evidence base of the inspection**

The school was inspected by a team of 17 inspectors, who spent 55 inspection days in school collecting evidence and inspecting all subjects. Inspectors observed 211 lessons in full or in part. All teachers present were seen teaching, most on a number of occasions. Religious education was inspected in the same week by diocesan inspectors, with whom joint meetings were held. Planned discussions were held with the majority of teachers, including members of the senior management team and year and subject heads, with non-teaching staff, support workers and the chairman and members of the governing body. In addition, there were informal discussions with both teaching and non-teaching staff. In a meeting with the registered inspector, members of the governing body discussed their role in action which had been taken since the previous inspection.

All the work of a representative sample of pupils from each year group was examined, and planned discussions were held subsequently with these pupils. Pupils' records, past work, work during lessons and displays around the school were scrutinised. Inspectors spoke informally with many more pupils, and examined their work during class visits. The inspectors visited many tutorial and registration periods and all assemblies, together with a range of out-of-school activities. Pupils were observed at lunchtimes, travelling to and from lessons, and coming to and from the school.

The school helpfully provided an extensive range of informative documents which was analysed before and during the inspection. The inspection team carefully considered 549 responses made by parents to questionnaires distributed before the inspection and the comments by the 28 parents at the pre-inspection meeting conducted by the registered inspector.

## E. Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
JE James Registered Inspector	English Sociology	Context; main findings; standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning; standards achieved in key skills across the curriculum; quality of teaching; quality of self-evaluation and planning for improvement; leadership and efficiency; resources; progress since the last inspection; key issues for action
JH James Lay Inspector		Behaviour and attitudes; attendance; partnership with parents and community. schools and other institutions; partnership with industry
Dr E Price-Jones Core team	Mathematics PSE coordinator	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; accommodation
AT Woods Core team	Science coordinator (Chemistry)	Assessment, recording and reporting; staffing; sixth form coordinator
S Gale Core team	Design and technology Information technology coordinator GNVQ coordinator	Curriculum
DL Bithell	Drama Theatre studies	
E Bowyer	Geography Humanities Travel and tourism	
SG Davies	Science (Physics) Electronics	
I Ellis-Williams	Physical education	
H Evans		Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education; special educational needs
E Forster	Art	
DM Jones	Science (Biology)	
T Lewis	Welsh	
SV Pritt-Roberts	Information technology support Health and social care	
P Swinnerton	Home Economics Design & technology support	
TJ Wales	History Humanities Law Psychology	
SL Williams	Music	
A Woods	Modern foreign languages	