

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

**St Illtyds Catholic High School  
Newport Road  
CF3 1XQ**

**School Number: 6814600**

**Date of Inspection: 27 November 2006**

**by  
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78306**

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

The inspection of St Illtyds Catholic High School took place between 27/11/06 and 01/12/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Gareth Hawtin Buckland undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Year groups and key stages**

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

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

### **Primary phase:**

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

### **Secondary phase:**

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

### **The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:**

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

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ACCAC	Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
ARR	Assessment Recording and Reporting
BSQM	Basic Skills Quality Mark
CC	Cwricwlwm Cymreig
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSI	Core Subject Indicator
DIP	Departmental Improvement Plan
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EMAS	Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
KS	Key Stage
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
NC	National Curriculum
PM	Performance Management
PPA	Planning Preparation and Assessment
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
Y (1-13)	Year (1-13)

## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. St. Illtyd's Catholic High School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school. It is an English medium school situated in the East of Cardiff in the area known as Rumney. It has 724 pupils on roll of whom 360 are girls and 364 are boys.
2. Most of the pupils who attend the school come from the area of Cardiff to the East of the River Taff and South of the A48(M). Those who attend the school chose to do so because of the Catholic nature and character of the school. The pupils come from a range of backgrounds and cultures. The proportion of pupils on free school meals is 31.2% which is well above the national average of 15.7%.
3. The school caters for the full ability range of pupils. In recent years, the schools intake of pupils of above average ability has shown an increase. There are 145 pupils on the school's SEN register; 91 are on School Action and 44 on School Action Plus of the Code of Practice for SEN; 10 pupils have statements of SEN.
4. The pupils in the school come from a variety of backgrounds with 14% coming from ethnic minority backgrounds. Five point three per cent of pupils come from homes that do not have English or Welsh as their first language.
5. The school occupies new buildings opened in December 2003 on the same site as the previous buildings. Some internal modifications have taken place to ensure that the school is able to provide an education for all its pupils.
6. The school has very strong links with its three main partner primary schools and with St David's Catholic Sixth Form College.
7. The headteacher was appointed in 2001, and the deputy headteacher, together with the assistant headteachers, in September 2005.
8. The school was last inspected in October 2000.

### The school's priorities and targets

9. The school's mission statement is "Together in Christ, we make a difference" which acts as a focus for all its work.
10. The main priorities of the school form the basis of the SIP. These are:
  - further development of our Catholic ethos;
  - raising standards by improving the quality of senior and middle leadership focusing on monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement;
  - improving the quality of transition from KS2 to KS3;
  - to develop a new reporting system;
  - to improve attendance; and
  - to develop the 14-19 provision further.
11. The targets set out for the school are discussed with and are provided to all staff.

## Summary

12. St. Illtyd's Catholic High School is an extremely caring and improving school with many good features and a number of outstanding features. In general, teachers and pupils work hard to achieve success for the school and to ensure that the school develops into an excellent place for learning and teaching.

### Table of grades awarded

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

13. The grades awarded by the inspection team differ from those awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. The variations are in key questions 2 and 7 where the team awarded higher grades and in key question 5 where the team awarded a lower grade; each variation is by one grade.

### Standards

14. The team inspected the standards that pupils achieved in six subject areas of the curriculum.

### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Mathematics	2	3
Design technology	2	3
Modern foreign languages	3	2
Geography	3	2
Art	1	1
Physical education	3	2

15. The following table shows the standards that pupils achieved in KS3 and KS4 in the six areas of the curriculum inspected.

<b>65 lessons</b>	<b>Grade 1 %</b>	<b>Grade 2 %</b>	<b>Grade 3 %</b>	<b>Grade 4 %</b>	<b>Grade 5 %</b>
<b>KS3</b>	3	54	41	3	0
<b>KS4</b>	14	39	39	7	0
<b>School</b>	8	48	40	5	0

### **KS3 and KS4**

16. The figures shown in the table fall just short of the national targets for 2007, namely 98% of lessons to be graded 1, 2, and 3 and below the target of 65% to be graded 1 and 2. Across the six subjects inspected, the school achieved 96% and 56% respectively. This is a significant improvement from the previous report.
17. There are very few barriers to learning in the school. All pupils have a range of opportunities to achieve well, regardless of background or ability.
18. In most subjects, pupils generally achieve standards that match or exceed expectations of success.
19. Pupils with SEN receive good support and often achieve good standards with the performances of looked-after children exceeding the national average.
20. Results in the national curriculum tests at the end of KS3 fall short of targets set by the school, the LEA and those set by WAG. The performance in mathematics has improved consistently since the last inspection. However, the performance in English, and the resulting performance in the CSI, has fluctuated.
21. Figures for performance by gender and ethnic minority are in line with LEA trends and school expectations.
22. The quality of GCSE results has varied since the previous inspection. However, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A\*-C grades has risen from 35% at the last inspection to 38% in 2006. The figure for 2006 places the school below the median when compared with schools of similar intakes.
23. For pupils attaining five or more A\*-G grades, the school performs in line with targets set by the school and the LEA; the school's performance places the school in the upper quartile of schools with similar intakes.
24. The downward trend in CSI rates of success was reversed this year and targets for the future indicate a significant improvement over the next few years.
25. Pupils' skills in communication contain many good features. Reading skills are generally good and speaking and writing are good within groups containing the more-able pupils. Standards of listening vary according to the quality of the learning experience.
26. Overall, the good features outweigh the shortcomings in numeracy and ICT. However, the lack of coordination in the planning for delivering ICT across the curriculum is hindering progress in the development of this particular key skill.

27. All pupils study Welsh second language in KS3 and KS4. Bilingualism, although evident in Welsh signs and other items in and around the school, is not actively promoted throughout the school. There is no evidence of incidental Welsh being spoken around the school.
28. Pupils' problem-solving skills and their capacity to work with others are well developed in the school. However, there is insufficient encouragement from teachers for pupils to work independently and to develop their decision-making skills through research and enquiry.
29. On the whole, pupils are enthusiastic in their approach to the challenges they encounter, wanting to perform well and succeed in their work. However, a minority of pupils find it difficult to focus and meet the demands made of them. When such a lack of focus occurs, levels of low-level disruption hamper the learning of the pupils in those classes.
30. Pupils within the SEN groups make good progress and use their key skills well. However, those pupils in the mainstream with learning difficulties fair less well, often not being fully engaged in their learning.
31. Attendance rates are not satisfactory and remain an issue for the school. Despite a significant improvement since the last inspection, the rate of attendance remains below 90% and this is interrupting and hindering progress for a number of pupils. Pupils' punctuality to school and to lessons is generally good.

### The quality of education and training

32. The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in all 93 lessons observed during the inspection.

	<b>Grade 1</b> %	<b>Grade 2</b> %	<b>Grade 3</b> %	<b>Grade 4</b> %	<b>Grade 5</b> %
<b>Y7</b>	2.2	8.6	9.7	2.2	
<b>Y8</b>		12.9	5.4	1.0	
<b>Y9</b>	2.2	10.8	3.2	1.0	
<b>Y10</b>	3.2	10.8	2.2	1.0	1.0
<b>Y11</b>	3.2	16.2	2.2	1.0	
<b>Whole school</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>1.0</b>

33. Teaching displays good features in approximately 93% of all lessons observed; nearly 11% of all lessons contained outstanding features with art being an area of outstanding practice within the school.
34. Despite these encouraging figures, teaching is generally restricted to a limited range of strategies and approaches that fail to meet the needs of all pupils.
35. Good relationships between teachers and pupils are a strong feature in the school with pupils showing respect for their teachers and the support and guidance they provide. Clear learning objectives are conveyed to the pupils and generally form part of a well-planned sequence of lessons.
36. However, shortcomings in teaching were identified in a number of subject areas with shortcomings in important areas being recognised in 7% of lessons. Whilst the school recognises the need to provide appropriate learning experiences for the more-able pupils, at present, their needs are not being met in a systematic

and planned way. A similar situation occurs for those within the mainstream who have a range of learning difficulties.

37. The school has a clear assessment policy for all departments to work towards. However, there are inconsistencies in approaches towards assessment across and within subject departments, particularly in day-to-day assessments where, despite some good and even outstanding practice, the use of formative assessment comments is an area that remains under-developed.
38. There are some subject areas where elements of outstanding and good practice are apparent, such as pupils involved in assessing their own work. However, this good practice is not evident in all areas of the curriculum.
39. Despite some shortcomings, the assessment procedures meet statutory requirements for the assessment and reporting of national curriculum achievements.
40. The curriculum overall meets the needs of most pupils and generally reflects the aims of the school. It is accessible for all pupils including those with SEN. However, a number of timetabling and curricular issues were identified as having a detrimental impact on the learning opportunities of some pupils. In particular, the banding system in KS3 is restricting the ability of pupils to move across bands in order to match any progress they make in their work. It is also having an impact on class sizes, particularly in distorting the class sizes based on gender in physical education.
41. There is a well-planned programme for delivering PSE which contains good activities for providing guidance on work-related education, careers guidance, sustainability and global citizenship. Despite the well-planned work in PSE, there are variations in the quality of its delivery.
42. The school meets the requirements of the law to provide religious education and a daily act of collective worship. The curriculum in KS3 and KS4 meets the requirements of the NC and religious education. The curriculum provides all pupils with a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities and contains many good features.
43. Nevertheless, there are shortcomings across both key stages that limit the quality and range of experiences. These shortcomings include a lack of curriculum time for design and technology and an imbalance of activities in physical education arising from the timetable structure used in the school.
44. In KS4, there are a number of shortcomings in the curriculum including a lack of vocational courses and the lack of ability effectively and efficiently to monitor the delivery and impact of key skills, especially ICT across the curriculum.
45. Out-of-hours' learning opportunities are a strength of the school with a wide range of different learning, sporting and cultural opportunities being available to all pupils. The programme of activities is co-ordinated by a member of staff assisted by a pupils' committee.
46. Pupils' learning is enriched through an excellent range of partnerships established with the diocese, parents, the wider community and partner primary schools.

47. A strong sense of community exists within the school. Pupils are generally courteous, co-operative and work well together.
48. *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig* (CC) is embedded into the schemes of work in a number of subjects but at present, the impact of CC on curriculum delivery is inconsistent across the school. The school has not undertaken a full audit to determine the extent to which CC pervades all subject areas.
49. The school is aware of the needs of employers through the membership of the governing body as well as other partnerships established to enhance the learning experiences of all pupils.
50. Entrepreneurial and similar skills are at an early stage of development and are currently developed through the enterprise days set up by the school.
51. There are appropriate procedures in place for child protection and the school works in close partnership with a range of agencies to ensure pupils' welfare.

### **Leadership and management**

52. The headteacher is a good leader who has been successful in encouraging staff to share a common vision for the way forward for the school. He is fair and compassionate as a leader, conducting business in an open and honest style. His knowledge of the school ensures he has an understanding of its strengths and areas for development.
53. Other members of the SLT support the headteacher using their own strengths to best effect. However, there is a lack of understanding of strategic leadership at a whole-school level that is restricting the impact the team could make on the progress of the school.
54. There is a clear sense of purpose, shared by many in the school, but this does not permeate through the whole leadership structure. Too many inconsistencies in the quality of the leadership are restricting significant progress in some areas. However, examples of best practice are evident in some departments and these clearly demonstrate the impact good leadership can have on standards.
55. The school has appropriate policies for promoting equal opportunities among staff and pupils. There are good systems in place for PM; all staff recognise the benefits of this system in their own personal development.
56. The SIP provides a clear framework for improving the school. It sets challenging targets and rightly focuses on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. In general, DIPs effectively link into the SIP. However, the quality of DIP varies significantly across departments and this, in turn, affects the quality of the SIP.
57. The school has established a culture of self evaluation, one that has led towards a good self-evaluation report. The school's work on self evaluation and improvement is continuing to develop well and is being driven through the new senior leadership structure.
58. Governors are extremely supportive of the school and are actively involved in the strategic planning undertaken by the school. They have a good understanding of their school and their roles in its management. However, a more pro-active stance is required to ensure the governors provide a truly critical edge towards their thinking and challenge to the school and its work.

59. Highly effective short and mid-term strategic management by the headteacher and the governors has ensured the school has steered itself through a difficult financial period. All budget planning is directly linked to the identified priorities within school and departmental plans. The budget is well managed and effectively controlled by the headteacher and school bursar.
60. Continuing professional development of all staff is a good feature providing all staff with a range of opportunities to extend their own learning and development. Continuing professional development is well planned and based on the identification of individual, departmental and whole school needs.
61. Courses are evaluated by staff who are expected to identify whether the training met anticipated outcomes and likely impact on departmental or whole school activities. However, there is at present no overall evaluation made of the impact of the CPD on individual, departmental and school performance.
62. An outstanding feature is the level of developmental opportunities provided to the non-teaching staff ranging from modern apprenticeships to higher degrees.
63. Arrangements for ensuring health and safety are unsatisfactory in some areas. Litter is a significant problem and a potential health hazard and petty vandalism has rendered parts of the building unsafe and potentially dangerous. All issues were identified to the school during the inspection week and the school took appropriate action.
64. Overall, the school provides good value for money by using its finances and resources effectively and efficiently.

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

65. The progress made by the school since the last inspection displays many good features but shortcomings remain.
  - Standards of achievement have improved significantly but attainment remains variable in both key stages.
  - The quality of teaching has dramatically improved and now displays some outstanding practice in a number of subject areas.
  - The development of key skills in a planned and systematic manner has helped the school acquire the BSQM. However, work in planning for the delivery of ICT across the curriculum and developing independent learning skills amongst all pupils remain under-developed.
  - Work has been undertaken to ensure a coherent policy for ARR is in place across all departments. The consistency of application of this policy remains an issue that requires further attention. Issues exist around target-setting and the use of data for establishing realistic targets for pupils and the school.
  - Self evaluation is now an aspect of the life of the school, established over the past few years. It has led to a good self-evaluation report that is seen as a management tool for improving standards and the quality of teaching across the school.
  - Attendance has improved well since the last inspection. Many strategies have been put in place and pupils recognise the impact that non-

attendance has on their progress. However, the attendance rate remains stubbornly below 90%.

## Recommendations

In order to continue the trend of improvement in the school, focusing on the following areas should be central to the school's future plans:

1. establish greater coherence in whole-school approaches to making improvements for raising standards of achievement and attainment through:
  - building on existing good practice; and
  - further improving the effectiveness of all levels of leadership;
2. develop further the range of teaching strategies to improve pupils' skills at working independently and further develop their skills of research and enquiry;
3. develop a more consistent approach to the application of the school's ARR policy in order to:
  - ensure improvements in the methods of formative assessment;
  - establish more robust methods of tracking and setting targets for pupils; and
  - raise teachers' and pupils' expectations;
4. provide a more co-ordinated approach to the delivery of key skills, paying particular attention to ICT across the curriculum and the promotion of bilingualism;
5. improve the current timetabling of lessons so that pupils are allocated to teaching groups more appropriately; and
6. raise the standards of attendance to at least a satisfactory level by continuing to improve the effectiveness of monitoring procedures.

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

## Standards

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

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

66. The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation summary.

## Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

### KS3 & KS4

67. The school sets ambitious targets for performance in NC tests by the end of KS3 and for GCSE by the end of KS4.
68. The following table shows the percentage of pupils who reached level 5 or above in NC tests in 2005 and 2006 compared with targets set by the school.

	Target 2005 %	Attainment 2005 %	Target 2006 %	Attainment 2006 %
English	81	44	81	44
Mathematics	74	65	72	68
Science	76	57	90	74
CSI	74	35	63	43

69. These figures fall short of the LEA targets of 70% for English and Mathematics respectively and 73% for science. They also fall short of the WAG target of 80% - 85% for 2004 – 2007.
70. Results in mathematics have improved over time whereas results in English, and the CSI have fluctuated. When compared to LEA and national averages results are below in all three subjects.
71. When compared with similar schools in the LEA and in Wales the school is in the lower quartile for English and the CSI and in the median for mathematics and science.
72. In the 2005 tests the girls outperformed the boys in English by 14% and by 4% in the CSI, and the boys outperformed the girls in mathematics by 8% and in science by 11%. These figures are in line with the LEA trend.
73. The minority ethnic pupils performed in line with the school averages in all three subjects. Pupils with SEN also performed in line with school expectations.
74. The following table provides a summary of the school's performance in the GCSE examinations of 2005 and 2006 and compares them with the targets set by the school.

	Target 2005 %	Attainment 2005 %	Target 2006 %	Attainment 2006 %
5+ A* - C	45	28	46	38
5+ A* - G	75	83	93	85
CSI	55	15	54	24

75. The school set and achieved a target of 100% pupils entered for at least one examination in 2005 and 2006. It set and achieved its target of 0% leaving with no recognised qualification in both 2005 and 2006.
76. When compared with local and national averages these results are less than those for five or more A\* - C but in line with those for five or more A\* - G for both 2005 and 2006.

77. When compared to similar schools for 2005 these results are below the median for five or more A\* - C and the CSI but in the upper quartile for five A\* - G.
78. The downward trend over the previous three years represented by the CSI of 15% for 2005 was reversed in 2006. This reflects an improvement in 2006 compared to 2005 in all three core subjects as illustrated in the table below.

	% A* - C 2005	% A* - C 2006
English	33	50
Mathematics	23	38
Science	24	34

79. In 2006, the gap between the school and local averages for the percentage of pupils gaining a grade C and above in English, mathematics and science narrowed. The percentage of pupils gaining a grade G or above in English, mathematics and science continues to be in line with local averages.
80. The following table shows the standards that pupils achieved in KS3 and KS4 in the six areas of the curriculum inspected.

65 lessons	Grade 1%	Grade 2%	Grade 3%	Grade 4%	Grade 5%
<b>KS3</b>	3	54	41	3	0
<b>KS4</b>	14	39	39	7	0
<b>School</b>	8	48	40	5	0

81. The percentages shown in the table fall just short of the national targets for 2007, namely 98% of lessons to be graded 1, 2, and 3 and below the target of 65% to be graded 1 and 2. Across the six subjects inspected, the school achieved 96% and 56% respectively. Even though these figures fall below national expectations, this is a significant improvement from the previous report.
82. One subject in particular, art, contributed greatly to those lessons graded 1 and 2 where pupils' creative and imaginative development has outstanding features at both key stages.
83. Art is good with outstanding features in both key stages. There are good features and no important shortcomings in design and technology in both key stages; in mathematics in KS3 and in MFL, physical education and geography in KS4. Good features outweigh shortcomings in mathematics in KS4 and in MFL, physical education and geography in KS3.
84. This compares favourably with the previous inspection in all six subjects particularly in art and design and technology at both key stages, and MFL, geography, and physical education at KS4.
85. Pupils' communication skills have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Reading is generally good, and standards improve among those who have reading difficulties, through targeted support. The most able speak and write fluently with a good level of technical vocabulary. While most pupils listen well standards vary, particularly when teaching lacks pace and learning experiences lack variety.
86. Standards of numeracy and ICT have good features which outweigh shortcomings. However, while there is good use made of word processing, ICT skills are not sufficiently used across the curriculum to enhance subject skills.

87. Bilingualism, though evident in the display of Welsh signs , is not actively promoted throughout the school.

### **Progress in learning**

88. The progress that pupils make has good features and no important shortcomings. There is good performance in option groups where pupils achieve well. Pupils of different ability groups generally do well. The most able pupils achieve well in public examinations.
89. Pupils with SEN make good progress. They are motivated to work hard and complete tasks. They are aware of the key skills and exercise them at a level appropriate to their ability.
90. However pupils in mainstream who have learning difficulties do not make such good progress. A number are not fully engaged in learning and their progress is hindered by low level disruption.
91. Monitoring of pupils' progress is starting to take place. Tracking sheets that assist pupils and staff focus on the improvements being made by pupils are starting to be used by staff in some subject areas. However, this is not consistently undertaken across the curriculum.
92. Many pupils receive good and regular feedback on their progress which enables them to know how well they are doing and what to do to improve. There is, however a variation in practice between, and sometimes within, subject areas.

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

93. Pupils throughout the school are friendly and engage well with visitors. The majority of pupils respond positively to the tasks set. They engage with the task in hand and are able to concentrate for the full length of the lesson. They respond well to challenge.
94. The school is aware that a minority of pupils finds it difficult to meet the demands made of them in lessons and to organise their work. Some teachers have devised strategies to motivate such pupils, which have helped them engage more constructively with their work. Where this good practice has been shared and consistently implemented pupils' responses have been positive.
95. Many teachers encourage pupils to develop confidence and become more independent learners. Tasks that require research and independent as well as collaborative working help pupils develop problem solving and decision making skills.
96. Whole school and house assemblies play a significant role in developing pupils' personal, social, moral and wider development. The Catholic ethos of the school, modelled by the headteacher and reflected by his staff, fosters in all pupils a strong sense of respect, care and concern for others and a sense of responsibility, fairness and honesty. Pupils are free to express their views openly and respect the opinions of others.
97. The PSE programme helps pupils to develop the skills of working independently and to maintain positive attitudes towards life long learning. Self evaluation and target setting by pupils in their progress files are used well.

98. Cultural development is a further feature of the school's work and includes good links with schools abroad as well as recognising the cultural aspects available to the school from within its own community of pupils and parents.
99. Poor attendance adversely affects the achievement of a significant number of pupils. Pupils' punctuality to school and to lessons is generally good.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

100. The school judged its teaching and assessment to be a grade 3. The team established that, despite there being some shortcomings, there are good features present and no important shortcomings in teaching.

### How well teaching meets learner's needs and the curricular or course requirements

#### Key Stages 3 and 4

101. In the 65 lessons in the six subjects inspected, the grades awarded for teaching at KS3 and KS4 were:

Grade 1%	Grade 2%	Grade 3%	Grade 4%	Grade 5%
12	60	20	6	2

102. Overall grades for the quality of teaching in the 93 lessons observed in KS3 and KS4 were:

Grade 1%	Grade 2%	Grade 3%	Grade 4%	Grade 5%
11	58	24	7	1

103. Teaching has good features which outweigh shortcomings in 93% of lessons observed. Good features with no important shortcomings were observed in 69% of lessons compared to 81% nationally in the last year for which figures are available.
104. This constitutes an improvement in teaching from the last inspection, particularly in the proportion of teaching judged to have no important shortcomings.
105. Where teaching has good features it is characterised by tasks that engage and challenge pupils. Lessons are managed so that pupils work in groups and become involved in problem solving and developing their own viewpoints. Lessons have pace and encourage pupils to identify what they need to do in order to make progress.
106. However where there are shortcomings it is because teachers use a limited range of approaches and fail to challenge pupils. In the small minority of lessons where there were important shortcomings it was because the planning was poor and the pace was too slow.
107. Most of the teaching establishes good relationships with pupils and has high expectations of their behaviour and achievement. Pupils respect their teachers and this has a positive effect upon their work.

108. Teachers are well qualified and experienced practitioners. They understand the requirements of the NC and examination board specifications and draw upon their knowledge and a range of contexts to make the subject knowledge comprehensible to pupils.
109. Clear objectives about what pupils have to learn are communicated to pupils. Lessons form part of a well structured sequence and are adapted to suit their needs. Learning support staff are managed so that they have a positive impact on the learning of pupils with SEN. Pupils whose first language is not English are well supported as are pupils from the Travelling community.
110. While the school recognises the need to cater for gifted and talented pupils their needs are not yet met in a systematic and planned way; neither are the needs of pupils in the mainstream who, at times, find academic work difficult and challenging.

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

111. The school has established procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress and the planning and improvement of their future learning which meet the statutory requirements.
112. Where these procedures are good they are based on clear criteria for learning objectives. They are efficiently collated and analysed so that they inform the future planning of lessons and consistently applied by teachers. This enables pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work and make progress.
113. There are however several shortcomings in the way in which assessment procedures are applied in both KS3 and KS4.
114. The day-to-day assessment which is good or outstanding in some classes is not working effectively in all. There is inconsistency of approach both within and between departments. While pupils benefit from good practice in some areas this is not sufficiently shared between teachers. This results in a variable quality of feedback to pupils and the way in which assessment is used to promote improvements in learning.
115. Too many teachers' comments on pupils' work do not get to the heart of what the weakness is, and how the pupil could put it right. Teachers in some departments and classes miss the opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work.
116. Reporting to parents is generally good and parents feel that they are able to discuss issues with the teachers in an open and frank manner. Pupils are aware of their reports and believe they convey well their progress to their parents and guardians.
117. In general, the school meets statutory requirements for assessment and reporting.

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

**Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

118. The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.

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

119. The curriculum generally is successful in meeting pupils' learning needs and satisfies the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996. The school meets the requirements of the law to provide religious education and a daily act of collective worship.

120. Overall, the curriculum allows pupils of all abilities equality of access. Pupils are encouraged to achieve success in each key stage.

121. Pupils have opportunities to gain qualifications at GCSE and Entry Level.

122. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced in each key stage. There are a number of good features including IT, PSE and drama being taught as discrete subjects. Furthermore, work-related education and PSE are taught as discrete subjects in KS4 and all pupils are able to study for the double award science.

123. There are shortcomings in both key stages. These include French and Spanish only being available in alternate years in both key stages. There is an imbalance of activities in physical education, especially limited opportunities for gymnastics in KS3 and a lack of curriculum time for design technology. The time in design technology is below the time recommended by ACCAC and limits pupils' experiences in graphics at KS3. A further shortcoming is the limited choice of vocational courses currently available in KS4.

124. In addition, one or two timetabling and curricular issues were identified during the inspection. The banding system, in KS3 particularly, restricts pupil movement to different bands across a range of subjects. This has a detrimental effect on class sizes and occasionally impacts negatively on learning opportunities.

125. There are some good features in the development of basic and key skills. The school has been successful in gaining the BSQM; a key skills co-ordinator has recently been appointed. Opportunities to reinforce key skills are identified in most departmental schemes of work and pupils have started to chart their own progress in some key skills in their diaries and progress files

126. However, there are some shortcomings. The monitoring and assessment of key skills across the school are not yet fully developed and no audit has been carried out to monitor and chart the use of IT in different subjects across the school.

127. Out-of-hours learning opportunities are a strength of the school. There is a wide range of different activities on offer to pupils mainly after school. These activities are co-ordinated efficiently by a member of staff who is assisted by a pupil committee. The activities range from different sports, musical activities including an annual school production and a clay club run by the art department where

parents and grandparents of Y7 pupils attend. The mathematics enrichment club has had a positive effect on mathematics' GCSE results.

128. The school is a Catholic community that is happy and caring where the needs of each individual pupil are important. Learners' spiritual development is good and opportunities for spiritual awareness and reflection are embedded into most departmental schemes of work.
129. Acts of daily collective worship for each house are held weekly and daily form worship provides a good range of opportunities for reflection and meditation to help learners develop an understanding of belief and values. These are supplemented by additional services of worship for individual classes in the chapel, retreats and special one day events. There is a prayer room for pupils to use and the school has recently appointed a chaplain. The school meets all statutory requirements in this aspect.
130. Learners' moral, social and cultural development has good features that include pupils being able to work effectively together and pupils being willing to express their views and show respect for those of others. Pupils also show care towards others by fund-raising for charities and good causes and enrich their learning experiences through visits and school trips.
131. Pupils' learning is enriched further by positive partnerships with parents, the local community, primary schools and other educational providers. There are a number of good features including early links being established with partner primary schools thus ensuring a smooth transition from KS2 to KS3. Departmental links with individual primary schools are good, especially within the MFL department and in particular, the development of Spanish.
132. The range of information provided for parents in the form of newsletters, option information and reports is good. Furthermore, there are well-established links with the local business community and firmly established good liaison, both academically and pastorally, with the local sixth form college and the local initial teacher training college.
133. The programme for PSE is well planned and work related and careers education and guidance meet national guidelines.

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

134. In both key stages the school provides good work –related education and responds to most of the needs of employers and the wider community. The good features include a strong partnership with Careers Wales that leads to the provision of individual guidance that ensures that pupils can make informed option choices at KS4.
135. Effective links have been established over a number of years with local employers and this has led to a well-organised work experience programme in Y10. Valuable de-briefing sessions and well-focused feedback from employers and pupils take place after work experience. A discrete work related lesson has been built into the timetable in KS4.
136. Despite these good features displaying the strength of the curriculum provision, there are a few shortcomings. A lack of coordination of all the aspects of the provision within work-related education, allied to the variable quality of the

documentation, is restricting the overall impact of the good programme available to all pupils in KS4.

137. The school has bilingual signs and the CC is addressed well in the inspected subjects of art, geography and religious education. However, the school has yet to audit this provision across all departments. All pupils follow the Welsh second language course in KS4.
138. There are some good features in promoting the awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include good curriculum provision and coverage in PSE, geography, religious education and MFL. Pupils are actively involved in healthy eating initiatives and using Fairtrade products.
139. The school has awareness of the needs of employers through its governors and other partnerships. The development of entrepreneurial skills is in its early stages and addressed through Enterprise Days.
140. The school is generally successful in ensuring that pupils acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to progress.
141. There are shortcomings in the lack of vocational courses in the curriculum, the monitoring of key skills, especially ICT across the curriculum, developing pupils' skills as independent learners and promoting bilingualism.

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

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

142. The inspection team agrees with the school's own judgement of the quality of care and guidance it offers its pupils.

##### **Outstanding features:**

143. Within this key question, two elements of the school's provision are outstanding. These are:

- The organisation of pupils' transfer from partner primary schools; and
- Provision for the protection of vulnerable children in the school as a result of the dedication, sensitivity and thoroughness with which all cases are dealt, and subsequently monitored.

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

144. The school places Catholic beliefs and values firmly at the centre of all that it does. These permeate all care and guidance activities and produces relationships across the school that are genuinely inclusive. This is a school in which all pupils and staff are supported in every aspect of their involvement in the school.
145. Recent conversion to a house system of pastoral organisation has had a very positive impact on pupil behaviour and on school ethos in general. Each house is divided into a number of mixed-age form groups, in which older pupils help younger ones and in which groups compete to achieve the best overall levels of attendance. All the disadvantages of year groupings have been eradicated and form teachers are effective as a result.

146. Form teachers take an active interest in the progress being made by their pupils. The priority attached to pupil mentoring is reflected in the fact that form teachers are taken off timetable for two hours each half term in order to mentor the pupils in their groups and keep them focused on their personal targets.
147. Good links have been established with local employers through a well-established work experience programme and parents are very positive about the levels of care that their children enjoy in the school – in particular those with learning or behavioural difficulties.
148. All pupils – including those with SEN - are extensively supported and advised on subject and career options. Special Y9 assemblies are arranged and addressed by all heads of departments and a good quality options booklet backs up this information.
149. The organisation of pupils' transfer from partner primary schools is an outstanding feature of school provision. Many of the more familiar aspects of good practice – 'taster' days, teacher presentations and 'bridging' projects that link teaching and learning in Y6 and Y7 are also evident here. However, the school has taken a significant step further by organising a day in which teachers from both St. Illtyd's and its partner primary schools meet to mark work done by pupils in Y6 and Y7, discuss each other's grades and arrive at agreement about standards representing different NC levels of attainment. Whilst participating teachers gained understanding of assessment, the real beneficiaries were the pupils, whose achievement and progress are uninterrupted despite moving from one school to another.
150. Pupils benefit from a very well organised programme of PSE. Delivery of PSE as a timetabled subject by staff, who, for the most part, have indicated an interest in the subject matter enhances its status and effectiveness. Supporting documentation, including scheme of work, teaching guide and resources, and self-evaluation material for both teachers and pupils, is immaculate. However, there is variation in the quality of the teaching of PSE across the year groups.
151. At 87.8%, the overall level of attendance is unsatisfactory, although it has improved steadily over the last three years and compares favourably with similar schools. The school continuously makes good efforts to improve this situation, with efficient procedures for identifying, reporting and following up pupil absence. However, there are no methods currently in place for tracking pupil attendance at individual lessons.
152. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic performance are thorough but cumbersome. Data dealing with pupil performance are based on subject teaching groups. Pupils then transfer these data into their homework diaries, and it is only then that form teachers can begin the mentoring process and play a more central role in monitoring pupils' academic progress.
153. The school provides effective careers advice as part of work-related education, which is taught as a separate, timetabled subject. Industry days, organised by Careers Wales, allow pupils to experience a number of problem solving and group initiative activities, and so act as an effective vehicle for the development of key skills.
154. Provision for the protection of vulnerable children in the school is outstanding. All legal requirements are met and day-to-day procedures are well known by

staff. Provision is outstanding because of the dedication, sensitivity and thoroughness with which all cases are dealt, and subsequently monitored. Child-protection procedures sit comfortably within the pervasive Catholic ethos of the school.

155. In contrast, arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils are unsatisfactory. Despite significant improvements to the security of the site, litter is a major problem and health hazard, whilst petty vandalism has rendered parts of the building unsafe and potentially dangerous.

### **Quality of Provision for Additional Learning Needs**

156. The quality of provision for those pupils with SEN is good. The SENCO, who is also the Inclusion Officer, plans and manages care arrangements effectively.
157. Early identification in Y6 and testing in the first term of Y7 ensure that pupils with greatest need receive support.
158. Pupils work in small groups with a high level of differentiated work; other pupils are withdrawn for extra reading, spelling and numeracy depending on need.
159. A good feature is that mainstream teachers are kept informed of pupils' progress. This, in turn, is carefully monitored and supported by the SENCO.
160. Parents and carers are kept well informed of progress. The statutory requirements of the Code of Practice are effectively implemented.
161. Individual Education Plans have focused targets and these are known to pupils. However, some teachers do not make these targets sufficiently subject specific so that the requirements of the work across curriculum can be met.
162. Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into school life and have access to the full range of NC subjects.
163. At KS4 pupils are guided in their subject choices and have the opportunity to take part in work experience one day a week. This good feature of provision sustains the interest of pupils who may otherwise become non-attenders.
164. Key stage 4 pupils are entered for GCSE and Entry Level. Results are good and those of Looked after Children exceed the national average.
165. Outside agencies are used effectively. The school has an impressive track record for its efforts in dealing with the growing number of pupils entering the school with little or no command of English. The success the school achieves with these pupils is to be commended. The EMAS is working closely with the school and provides effective support and guidance for the school.
166. Progress has been made since the last inspection in the area of IT provision. Seven computers are located in the department and effective, commercially produced programmes are helping to raise levels of achievement.
167. The Buddy Reading Scheme overseen by LSAs and prefects is also effective.
168. An increase in the number of LSAs since the last inspection has meant that more pupils have a higher level of adult support in class. The LSAs provide a high level of expertise and their support in class is extremely effective. However, there is still insufficient support at KS4. The use of LSAs to supervise the internal exclusion room is not the best use of these resources.

169. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is still undeveloped. The SENCo has identified pupils but as yet the school has not addressed how best to meet their needs.
170. The school is fully adapted to meet the needs of disabled learners.

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

171. The school exudes a strong ethos of inclusion and no pupils are excluded from opportunities available on the grounds of ability, gender or race. This is evidenced by the care and support offered to pupils with SEN, the curriculum access offered to Traveller pupils and the EMAS support for pupils, for whom English is an additional language.
172. All departments have an Equal Opportunities policy. Several are trying to deliver awareness of Equal Opportunities through teaching organisation and topic choices, but progress is uneven across the curriculum.
173. The general quality of pupil behaviour, both in class and around the school, is very good. The new house-based pastoral system has had a marked impact on pupil behaviour and general pastoral arrangements for monitoring pupil behaviour are effective.
174. Where more serious infringements occur, consistent and well-understood procedures are in place for dealing with them, in the form of the school's DfL policy. This system of graduated sanctions – from simple reprimands to exclusion - acts as an effective deterrent against oppressive behaviour, partly because pupils do not like the punishments and partly because parents are informed and involved at every stage.
175. The school provides particularly good facilities for disabled learners in the form of lifts and disabled toilets, both specially designed to allow wheelchair access.

## **Leadership and management**

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

#### **Grade3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

176. This is a grade lower than the school's self-evaluation grade. Although there are examples of good leadership at senior and middle levels, the overall quality of leadership is variable.

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

177. The school has established a clear set of aims and values and these are shared among all those associated with the school. There is a common purpose among the staff in moving the school forward and this is clearly displayed in the ethos established within the school community.
178. The self-evaluation report is a well-constructed and honest document that clearly indicates the work still to be done as well as what has been successfully achieved since the last inspection.

179. The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership in all aspects of the life of the school. Through his extremely compassionate and sympathetic approach towards leadership, he has introduced a number of initiatives that have raised standards and improved the quality of the educational provision.
180. Staff and pupils acknowledge the quality of his leadership and recognise the impact his leadership has had on the school since the last inspection. Standards of achievement, the quality of teaching and the behaviour of the pupils have all benefited from his direct leadership.
181. Teachers and support staff, at all levels, work well together to make the school a place where staff enjoy working and pupils enjoy learning within a caring and supportive climate.
182. Members of the SLT are clear in their individual responsibilities for line management within pastoral and faculty teams. However, the team is relatively new and, at times, lacks sufficient understanding of the strategic leadership responsibilities attached to individual roles and of the potential of their collective impact. This leads to a less effective corporate approach.
183. The effectiveness of middle leadership and management varies. Most staff with middle management responsibilities have a sound understanding of their management roles in promoting high standards within their respective faculty areas. However, lines of accountability are vaguely drawn and the monitoring and evaluation of departments are generally lacking in rigour. Moreover, there are inconsistencies in the ability of middle leaders to extend the range of teaching and learning styles in order to improve pupils' performance and thus raise standards.
184. Such inconsistencies lead to a reduction in the capacity of the school to reflect critically on the collective work being done and how it can be improved. Nevertheless, there are areas of good practice that provide the school with examples for dissemination.
185. The school takes account of national priorities and this is clearly evident in both the whole-school documentation and the curriculum. The school's focus on issues such as inclusion, sustainable development and transition arrangements is evident in both documentation and observed practice within and around the school.
186. Good systems are in place to ensure that PM is a sensitive, constructive and productive activity; these systems are understood by all staff. All staff are provided with appropriate training arising from this process; a number of further opportunities for continuing professional development enhances the opportunities arising from the PM process.

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

187. Governors are extremely supportive of the headteacher and the school and take a full role in the strategic planning for the school. They have a good understanding of their school and their roles in the school's management.
188. The committee arrangements ensure that governors are aware of all aspects of planning, monitoring and evaluation of school performance. The education and finance committees provide strong support to the school. Budgetary issues are

carefully considered and the governing body oversees the finances of the school effectively.

189. As a result of the headteacher providing regular and comprehensive reports, the governing body is well informed about all aspects of school life. Some governors actively undertake departmental link roles, taking a keen interest in developments in the curriculum areas in which they are involved.
190. Minutes of meetings are thorough and demonstrate a good level of discussion and debate around matters that are important to the school.
191. The governing body accepts its role in helping the school in raising standards and provides a good sense of direction for the school. However, a more proactive stance needs to be taken to strengthen the role of the governing body as a critical friend of the school and to be able collectively to ask pertinent questions and challenge the progress the school is making.
192. The governing body successfully meets all statutory and legal requirements.

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

<b>Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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193. The grade awarded agrees with the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.

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

194. The school produced a self evaluation report that provides a comprehensive and honest appraisal of the school's performance; it identifies a number of strengths and weaknesses. All staff were actively involved in the construction of the report.
195. In general, the team's grades match those of the school, although the findings of the inspection team vary with the grades awarded by the school in three questions, two grades higher and another lower.
196. Since the last inspection, the school has established an effective culture of subject self-evaluation with formal reviews being undertaken within subject areas. In these reviews, teachers gather first-hand evidence with which they make valid judgements about the quality of teaching and standards. However, within the new faculty structure, introduced this academic year, arrangements for establishing improvement plans, that include opportunities for heads of faculty to observe members of the faculty teaching, are in their infancy.
197. The use of data to raise standards is a key area within the SIP. The school uses a broad range of evidence, including classroom observations, analysis of performance information and reviews of pupils' work, to identify areas for improvement. Information is collected on the performance of individual pupils and it is used to track pupils' progress. However, accurate use of this information to establish appropriate targets for all pupils is hampered by inconsistencies in approaches towards target setting by teachers.
198. At present, the school recognises that insufficient work is being done to consider the views of pupils and parents at a senior level and has planned to address this deficiency. Nevertheless, the views of other partners are sought and comments

from these partners demonstrate that the school has made strides forward in ensuring the views of the wider school community are considered.

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

199. Improvement plans provided by departments and the school are comprehensive and identify all aspects of a formal review. However, the quality of these plans varies significantly across departments.
200. Some departments provide plans that are thoroughly researched and indicate clear targets for progress. In other departments, too much descriptive, rather than analytical, text limits the potential impact of the document. At all levels, there are inconsistencies in the levels of accountability of staff for the work they undertake. However, within the school improvement plan, there is recognition of the need to develop further this aspect of leadership.
201. The SIP is a good document, setting out clear priorities for the school and building on the plans provided by departments. Thorough monitoring and reviewing strategies are identified and all actions are attributable and costed.
202. The school's plans link well to professional development activities taking place. However, evaluation of the impact of the implementation of the plan has not been thoroughly built into the process. This limits the ability of the school to be able to measure the impact of a number of the actions taken.
203. Overall, the school's work on evaluation and improvement planning is developing alongside the new leadership structure. Over the past five years, the school has addressed a number of the key issues identified within the previous inspection report. Considerable improvements are evinced in the quality of teaching, the standards of achievement and the standards of basic skills. However, the school has only partially addressed other issues such as the development in ICT and the requirement for more coherence in ARR; little improvement is evident in some of these areas.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good with no important shortcomings</b>
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204. The inspection team's grade did not agree with that awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. The school's self-evaluation grade was grade 3.

#### **Outstanding features**

205. There are a number of outstanding features that include:

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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• through effective planning and identification of clear priorities the headteacher and governors have successfully overcome difficult budgetary and staffing situations to ensure good progress in learning and teaching;</li><li>• the professional development of non-teaching staff; and</li><li>• the adequacy, suitability and use made of staffing, learning resources and accommodation.</li></ul> |
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206. There are sufficient teachers to ensure the curriculum is delivered effectively; they are well qualified, and highly committed. In general, lessons are taught by subject specialists. This is not always the case. In some subjects including mathematics, and especially physical education, the use of non-specialists is an

- issue. There is a good balance between longer serving, experienced teachers and those relatively new to the profession. Together they form an effective team.
207. There is a good range of capable and experienced support and administrative staff. All work very effectively alongside teachers to enable the school to function efficiently. One area of weakness is the lack of technician support in design technology.
208. The school has implemented effectively its strategy for the workload agreement and for teachers' PPA.
209. Subject departments operate within a formula based allocation of funds for the majority of their essential resource needs. The process is well understood by all departments.
210. In addition there is a more open bidding process for a further sum of money identified for learning resources. Bids have to relate directly to identified departmental plan or school improvement priorities.
211. Despite the lack of interactive whiteboards overall learning resources are of good quality, particularly in art, mathematics, geography and MFL. In design technology and physical education resources are insufficient and less good.
212. Overall the accommodation provides a good setting for teaching and learning. Staff and pupils benefit from subject areas being in suites of rooms with most classrooms being of sufficient size. Where, in Y7 and Y8, classes are large then some classrooms are congested. Specialist accommodation in general is of good quality but there are some aspects of the accommodation that require attention, particularly within the physical education area. Nevertheless, in general sport facilities are good.
213. There is a large and well appointed reception area, with a separate hall and dining areas. There are good staff facilities and work areas. However, across the school there is a lack of storage areas for learning resources and disposable items.
214. One aspects of the school's environment that caused concern was the amount of litter scattered across a wide area at the rear of the school. Although this was addressed during the inspection there was a continuous tendency for the litter to reappear due to the negligence and general attitude of the pupils towards litter dropping.
215. Displays around the school are good and reflect well the work of the pupils', the school's activities and ethos. Displays in English, Welsh, mathematics, geography and MFL were very good.

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

216. The effectiveness of short and mid-term strategic management by the headteacher and the governors has enabled the school to steer itself through a difficult financial period. All budget planning is directly linked to the priorities identified in the SIP and departmental plans. The budget is well managed and effectively controlled by the headteacher and school bursar.

217. Decisions as to the reason for purchasing learning resources are identified but insufficient attention is paid to measuring the subsequent impact on performance. Expenditure on resources is monitored closely and effectively. However, a lack of interactive whiteboards across the school, and particularly in graphics, inhibits innovative teaching.
218. Overall, teachers are well deployed and good use is made of their expertise. A negative effect on standards was identified in physical education and mathematics by the use of non-specialist teachers. In general the use of teaching assistants and cover supervisors is effective. However, there is insufficient teaching assistant support within SEN at KS4.
219. The training and CPD of all staff has good features and provides all staff with a range of opportunities to extend their own learning and development. Continuing professional development is well planned and based on the identification of individual, departmental and whole school need which emanates from the performance management arrangements.
220. Individual courses are evaluated by staff and they are asked to identify whether the training met anticipated outcomes and likely impact on departmental or whole school activities. However, there is at present no overall evaluation made by heads of department or the deputy head responsible for staff development of the impact of the whole training programme on individual, departmental and school performance.
221. An outstanding feature is the level of developmental opportunities provided to the non-teaching staff ranging from modern apprenticeships to higher degrees. The school is an 'Investors in People' organisation and in consequence people are deployed, managed and developed effectively.
222. The headteacher and governors, regularly plan, monitor and review the use of school resources. A good feature is the careful planning of all the indicators relating to the age profile, sickness records and time devoted to staff development. Overall, the school provides good value for money by using its finances and resources effectively and efficiently.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Mathematics

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

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

#### Key Stage 3

##### Good features

223. Pupils in all years of KS3 have made good progress this term. In particular, pupils across the ability range achieve good standards in various aspects of number.
224. The basic mental number skills of pupils are good at levels appropriate to their general mathematical ability. Some able Y7 pupils can quickly and accurately work with complicated fractions. Many able Y9 pupils are inventive in finding

and using different mental methods when working with integers. Many pupils with SEN can work out the cost of simple shopping lists and mentally compute the change required. In general, most pupils can confidently use the four rules of number and find simple fractions of quantities; abler pupils know the equivalences of many fractions and decimals. Pupils also make good progress in their written computational skills. For example, many middle-ability pupils in Y9 can accurately multiply and divide integers and decimals.

225. In studying shape and space, many Y7 pupils achieve good standards when calculating angles in configurations involving triangles. Most Y8 pupils can find the areas of both basic and compound shapes and able Y9 pupils can calculate the circumference and area of circles with confidence.
226. Many Y8 pupils achieve good standards when they represent a table of data as a pie chart. They can successfully calculate the angles required and construct the diagram accurately.
227. In KS3, the standards that pupils achieve are enhanced by the appropriate use of homework.

### **Shortcomings**

228. When developing their number skills, pupils do not sufficiently use their skills in a wide enough range of contexts. For example, Y8 pupils successfully learn how to calculate using directed numbers but do not then use what they have learned.
229. The timetabling of lessons does not provide for some pupils to be placed in the classes most appropriate for their mathematical ability; this has an adverse effect of the standards that they achieve. For example, SEN classes have pupils with a wide range of abilities. Many of these pupils achieve good standards but the needs of some of the weakest pupils are not always well met.
230. Pupils' investigative skills in the use and application of mathematics are not sufficiently evident in Y7 and Y8. Pupils do not use their literacy skills well and standards of investigative work in Y9 are not sufficiently high.

### **Key Stage 4**

#### **Good features**

231. Pupils in Y11 are making good progress towards GCSE in many aspects of mathematics. For example, in trigonometry, able pupils are confident in using the sine rule and are able to manipulate algebraic formulas accurately; whereas, middle-ability pupils have made good progress with elementary trigonometry. SEN pupils in Y11 have achieved good standards in their work this term in a wide range of appropriate topics.
232. Good standards are evident in Y10 when able pupils solve a cubic equation using a trial-and-improvement method and when lower-ability pupils demonstrate their knowledge of the equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages in a quick-fire session at the start of their lesson.
233. Good standards in basic number work are achieved by many pupils across the key stage. For example, many middle-ability pupils are confident with basic mental computations and with algorithms for multiplication and division.

234. Pupils' coursework for GCSE is at its best with the ablest pupils, with some individual pieces of coursework of a high standard.

### **Shortcomings**

235. Overall progress made in Y10 by many pupils is too slow. Too long has been spent on revisiting basic number work resulting in other aspects of mathematics being weaker than required at this level. Much of the number work has not been used enough to enhance standards across the mathematics curriculum.

236. Some middle-ability pupils are not as confident or as accurate as they should be when using their mental and written computational skills.

237. The least-able pupils in Y10 can accurately recall some of their recent learning but, in general, they do not achieve as much as they might.

## **Design technology**

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

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

### **Good features**

#### **Key Stage 3**

238. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the design process and can apply the principles well in their project work. They research their projects well and produce a solution that is appropriate to the design specification. Pupils understand the link between design specification and evaluation.

239. Pupils plan well for the making stages of their work and have a good understanding of making processes in a wide range of materials. Pupils show good practical skills in all areas.

240. In food technology pupils have a good understanding of hygiene issues and are clear about safe working practices. They can select and use utensils and tools competently and produce good quality outcomes as was evident in their fruit muffin project.

241. Most pupils have a good understanding of the precautions needed to keep food safe. They also carry out effective sensory evaluation of produce and describe their views using good technical descriptors.

242. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of equipment, materials, fastening, processes and techniques are well developed in textiles.

243. Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve to their capabilities.

### **Shortcomings**

244. Pupils' developmental drawing skills are weaker than other elements of designing.

245. Pupils' use of IT in their work is under-developed.

#### **Key Stage 4**

246. The most-able pupils understand and make effective use of a design process to guide their project work.

247. In the work of the most-able pupils in Y10 Graphics, presentation and graphical communication skills are good. Most pupils use ICT design packages effectively to enhance their research, and to develop and present their work.
248. In Y10 resistant materials the most able of the pupils' show a good knowledge and understanding of materials, processes, and procedures.
249. In textiles most pupils produce good product outcomes. They can readily explain the difference between functional and decorative fastenings. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the different types of fastenings used and can explain why certain fastenings are more suitable for various purposes.
250. In the best GCSE project work in all material areas there are good levels of creativity, innovation, flair and imagination.

### **Shortcomings**

In Y11 resistant materials:

251. Pupils' knowledge and understanding and implementation of the principles and processes of designing are very weak.
252. Pupils' do not always present their design ideas effectively in a structured, clearly defined and logical manner. They have weak graphical communication skills. Their quick developmental sketching of design ideas is very much underdeveloped.
253. Pupils' use of the computer to investigate and research projects and to present their ideas is not of a satisfactory standard.

In Y11 Graphics:

254. Course work folios are not of a satisfactory standard with too much incomplete work for too many pupils for the whole of Y10. Absenteeism has affected continuity, progression and the completion of tasks.
255. Graphical skills, for example rendering techniques, to produce two-dimensional effects is very weak.

### **Modern foreign languages**

256. Note: Pupils study one language only from Y7. The language studied each year alternates between Spanish and French.

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

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

#### **Key Stage 3**

#### **Good features**

257. Pupils usually listen well. As a result they readily identify required information, whether from what is spoken by their teachers or from recordings. A Y8 Spanish class coped particularly well when asked to follow a challenging authentic recorded conversation.
258. Most pupils can keep up simple spoken exchanges by substituting elements and adapting patterns they have learned. The ablest pupils are developing good accents and intonation. This is especially evident from Y8.
259. Most pupils read printed words well for gist and relevant detail.

260. In Y9 most pupils write competently to given guidelines. Some of the ablest pupils in Y8 work to a similar standard, which demonstrates particularly good achievement for their age.
261. A few pupils in Y8, and a minority in Y9, are confident when talking and writing about things outside the present tense.

### **Shortcomings**

262. Many pupils are not confident when speaking. Older pupils do not like to start a conversation in the foreign language, and find it hard to deal with more open exchanges which offer greater freedom of choice.
263. Similarly, many pupils do not write well at length without the support of a framework. They do not often read independently.
264. In speech and writing, many pupils in Y9 are not confident outside the present tense.

### **Key Stage 4**

#### **Good features**

265. The skill of listening continues to be well-developed.
266. Pupils have a good vocabulary. In Y11 they write well, and use a range of tenses appropriately. The ablest have a good sense of register and several have some idea of style. They correspond regularly over the Internet with their "e-pals" at their exchange school in France, so they read and then reuse up-to-date expressions well.
267. Pupils generally speak well in structured conversations. In Y10 in particular, the many boys who are taking Spanish speak with confidence.

#### **Shortcomings**

268. A minority of pupils lack confidence in speaking, so they rarely take the initiative and tend to lapse into English in unpredictable exchanges.
269. In Y11, pupils accents and intonation are not often as good as the quality of language they acquire via their keyboard correspondence.

<b>Geography</b>
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### **Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

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

### **Key Stage 3**

#### **Good Features**

270. Pupils' use of specific geographical skills are good. They use textbooks, information sheets, photographs, maps and graphs with confidence.
271. The majority of pupils demonstrate a good understanding and knowledge of renewable and non-renewable energy. They provide good examples of both. They select accurately the advantages and disadvantages of wind power. They use map and written information logically to decide on the most suitable site for a wind farm. They understand that people will hold different views and that there is seldom a 'right answer'.

272. Pupils display a sound understanding of the relationship between mankind and the environment. Their work on volcanoes using Mt Etna as a case study enhances their knowledge of the effects of an eruption on the landscape and human activities.
273. Most pupils demonstrate a sound grasp of the characteristics and features of place. They apply this understanding with confidence to their study of locations such as Wales, Kenya and some of the world's volcanic regions.
274. The majority of pupils possess a good knowledge and understanding of aspects of the geography of Wales. Their knowledge of the climate, economic activities and population of Wales is good. They can relate to the culture of Wales, in particular to the situation with reference to the Welsh language.

### **Shortcomings**

275. The quality of the work in exercise books of a significant number of pupils is unsatisfactory, often showing missing and incomplete work. This, along with poorly presented work has a negative impact on standards achieved.
276. A minority of pupils does not possess a sound grasp of some key geographical vocabulary especially with reference to the volcanoes unit.
277. Pupils' standard of work is adversely affected by the lack of investigative and enquiry work.

### **Key Stage 4**

#### **Good Features**

278. Pupils develop a good understanding of the relevance of geography to environmental, social and economic issues. They demonstrate a sound understanding of the causes of international migration. Most pupils apply the 'pull and push' factors accurately in their study of migration from Mexico to the USA.
279. The majority of pupils have a good grasp of geographical terminology. They apply vocabulary with confidence in the completion of set tasks and assignments on the weather and migration.
280. Most pupils can identify accurately the elements of the weather. They recognise the instruments required to measure the most common elements along with the units of measurement. All pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the distribution of the sun's heat over the earth's surface. They provide detailed reasons for the distribution pattern.
281. Mapping and geographical skills are good. They analyse and interpret geographical data with confidence and achieve good outcomes.
282. Coursework contributes to the pupils' understanding of the processes and patterns in both human and physical geography. Assignments on a wide range of topics from shopping hierarchies to the effects of weathering on gravestones demonstrate the pupils' ability to employ a variety of enquiry and fieldwork techniques successfully to their studies.

### **Shortcomings**

283. A minority of pupils have limited understanding of geographical terminology and this hampers their development across a range of topics.

<b>Art</b>
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**Key Stage 3: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 3**

**Outstanding features:**

284. Pupils benefit from a really effective art department. Most pupils arrive with average ability and experiences, and, by the end of KS3, the majority are achieving standards well above national expectation.
285. Pupils make outstandingly good progress in acquiring the essential practical skills in both two- and three-dimensional craft activities because they work with diligence and interest.

**Good features:**

286. The majority of pupils demonstrate that they know how to look and record with accuracy when drawing. They use line, tone, colour, shape, and texture confidently. They understand how to exploit colour and pattern with verve. Their sculptural figures show great liveliness. They know how to use computers to research and to create art. They are acquiring a growing art vocabulary and can write with accuracy about the artists they study. Through the imaginative use of group video presentations they demonstrate that they understand newly acquired techniques of printmaking. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of the visual culture of Wales and an appreciation of the art of other cultures.

**Key Stage 4**

**Outstanding features:**

287. A significantly above average number of pupils opt for art. In examinations, they consistently achieve results that are significantly well above the national average at the higher grades.
288. Pupils are successfully building on their previous practical craft skills in a body of work that is notable for its completeness. They are developing outstandingly well as independent creative artists. They succeed outstandingly well in newly learnt crafts such as batik and ceramics.

**Good features:**

289. They have a growing appreciation of contemporary art, informed by regularly working with visiting Welsh artists. Ethnic minority pupils, pupils with SEN and those with EAL achieve comparable high standards.
290. They show great imagination in the use of their sketchbooks when researching and developing their ideas. The Welsh language is used from time to time in designs. When writing about art they describe clearly what they see and express their own emotional and spiritual responses.
291. At both stages, pupils understand how to improve their work and meet their targets for improvement by regularly participating in an assessment process which identifies what they have to do in order to improve.

### **Shortcomings**

292. Because they rarely visit art galleries, pupils at KS3 do not have sufficient grasp of the historical context that underpins different art movements.
293. Pupils are not as familiar with the names of craftworkers or designers as they are with artists.

<b>Physical education</b>
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### **Key Stage 3 : Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

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

#### **Key Stage 3**

#### **Good Features**

294. The focus on key skills and, in particular, communication skills benefits performance. Pupils work together effectively, providing support and constructive criticism of one another's work when required.
295. Games techniques are generally well developed in football. Most pupils demonstrate good ball control with numerous examples of complex skills and understanding of the need to support one another and use space in attack and defence.
296. Most pupils understand the benefits of exercise and the need for regular activity. They can lead warm up sessions of cardio-vascular and stretching exercises effectively.
297. Girls show body tension in gymnastics and demonstrate an appropriate range of movements which they can link into basic sequences.
298. Pupils of different abilities make satisfactory progress throughout the curriculum. They co-operate well with each other during practical work and communicate effectively in group situations.

#### **Shortcomings**

299. The progress of girls is affected by some very large groups. This is a particular issue in gymnastics lessons where limited space and equipment restrict the progress they make.
300. In a Y9 netball lesson, many girls lacked basic control and knowledge of the rules of the game showing little evidence of skills practiced being transferred into game situations.
301. In some groups, a significant lack of participation limits the progress all pupils make.

#### **Key Stage 4**

#### **Good Features**

302. There are some very able pupils who demonstrate versatility and control in game play and good understanding of positional play and rules in a range of activities within the core programme.

303. Pupils taking part in fitness activities use their knowledge to devise appropriate training programmes which they undertake independently of the teacher. They sustain concentration and effort throughout the sessions.
304. Pupils taking the examination course are well motivated, behave responsibly, participate regularly and make good progress. The work is challenging and well focused to their abilities and interests and brings out the best in thee pupils.

### **Shortcomings**

305. Written work at GCSE is less secure than the practical work. There is an over-reliance on printed notes which results in lower quality extended answers and a lack of development of the subject vocabulary.
306. There is a core of pupils whose attendance and participation in lessons affects the dynamics within the groups resulting in a lowering of standards.

## School Response

The governing body and staff of the school are pleased that the school has been recognised as extremely caring and that significant improvements have been made since the last inspection in 2000. Furthermore, the report acknowledges the hard work put in by pupils and staff alike to ensure that the school is developing into an excellent place for learning and teaching.

The report confirms that there are **very** few barriers to learning and that, generally, pupils achieve at or above expectation. It is pleasing to see that the pupils with SEN have their high levels of performance recognised. Also pleasing is the recognition of the quality of teaching with nearly 93% of lessons observed having good features and nearly 11% of lessons containing outstanding features.

As a Catholic school, it is important that our ethos is recognised and the report pays tribute to this, commenting on the good relationships between pupils and staff and the mutual respect shown for each other. Our strong sense of community is also recognised as is the fact that the pupils are generally courteous, co-operative and work well together.

The report acknowledges that the school is fully inclusive and that all involved in the school are supported in every aspect of their involvement in school life. It is gratifying that the team recognises and commends how the school has embraced strategies to address the problems encountered by the growing number of pupils whose first language is not English. The positive impact of the new house system is recognised and the care shown to those who are vulnerable in our school is described as outstanding.

The manner in which the school has developed a culture of self-evaluation and improvement through its school and departmental improvement plans is identified positively as is the clear sense of purpose within the school. The planning for improvement is linked well to the budget planning and has enabled the school to place itself on a secure financial footing. It is pleasing to note that the school provides good value for money.

The governing body has always been extremely supportive of the school and its pupils and the report recognises this. The governing body and school staff will further develop the SIP and circulate to parents the ways in which development of the recommendations will come about to ensure that all pupils receive an education of a high quality.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	St Illtyds Catholic High School
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11-16 mixed comprehensive
Address of school	Newport Road Cardiff
Postcode	CF3 1XQ
Telephone number	02920 778174

Headteacher	M A Worthington
Date of appointment	May 2001
Chair of governors	Mr D Wall
Reporting inspector	Mr G H Buckland
Dates of inspection	27 – 30 November 2006

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	154	157	127	156	130	n/a	n/a	724

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	37	11	41

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16.4:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average teaching group size	22.7
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	72.2

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection						
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Whole School
Term 1	86	87	82.7	84.8	92.7	86.6
Term 2	92.3	87.2	89.2	84.8	85.6	88.1
Term 3	88.6	84.8	85.7	81.3	81.6	84.7

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	32%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	4

## Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006																
Total number of pupils in Y9: 156																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP	
English	Teacher assessment	School	1	0	0	0	1	0	6	47	36	8	0	0		
		National	1	0	0	0	2	8	21	35	24	8	0	0		
	Test	School	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	48	37	8	0	0	0	
		National	1	0	0	0	0	2	8	21	35	24	8	0	0	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	2	0	0	0	0	0	8	22	35	22	11	0	0	
		National	1	0	0	0	1	6	18	24	32	15	0	0		
	Test	School	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	22	35	23	11	1	0	
		National	1	0	0	0	0	1	6	18	24	32	15	1	0	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	19	51	19	5	0	0	
		National	1	0	0	0	0	6	19	33	27	12	0	0		
	Test	School	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	19	51	20	5	0	0	
		National	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	19	33	27	12	0	0	

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	42.9	In the school	44.2
In Wales	58	In Wales	58

**Public Examination Results:**

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ</b>	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	105
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	34

<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:</b>	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	90	87	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	38	52	53
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	85	84	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	28	38	39
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	99	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	81	75	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	100	93	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	0	7	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	1	3	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1			
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2			

## Appendix 4

### Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 38 days in the school and were joined by the school's Assistant Headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 65 lessons in the six subjects inspected and 93 lessons in other subjects;
- registrations and assemblies;
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

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

The team also considered:

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

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Gareth Buckland (Rgl)	KQ5&6
Gwynoro Jones (Lay)	KQ7
Peter Harris	KQ1&2
D Gwyer Roberts	KQ3
Alan Kelly	KQ4
Ann Norbury	SEN
Michael Heylings	Maths
Keith Hopkins	DT
Huw Llewelyn	Geography
Martyn Williams	MFL
Eric Foster	Art
Debra Makin	PE
Mrs W Doble	Nominee

### *Acknowledgement*

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

**Contractor:**

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