

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

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

**Tasker Milward V C School  
Off Portfield Avenue  
Haverfordwest  
Pembrokeshire  
SA61 1EQ**

**School Number: 6684511**

**Date of Inspection: 26 February 2007**

**by**

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Tasker Milward V.C. 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 Tasker Milward V C School took place between 26/02/07 and 01/03/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Brian William Medhurst undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 Tasker Milward V C School is an 11 – 18 mixed comprehensive school, situated in the Scarrowscant district of Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. There are 1116 pupils on roll, of whom 166 are in the sixth form. Overall, these figures are similar to those recorded at the time of the previous inspection, although there are now fewer students in the sixth form.
- 2 Pupils come from a full range of economic backgrounds. Thirteen percent of the pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals – a figure matching the local authority average and just below the national mean.
- 3 Pupils come from a large number of contributory primary schools in the town and surrounding rural areas, and a substantial number of them arrive by bus each day. Virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. About one percent of pupils can speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic heritages. Six pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language and there are six pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- 4 The school's intake represents the full range of ability, but assessments indicate an increasing proportion of pupils whose literacy skills on entry are below average. There are 17 pupils with statements of special educational needs, as compared with 49 at the time of the previous inspection. There are an additional 230 pupils (164 previously) on the school's special needs register who also receive additional learning support.
- 5 Welsh is taught and examined as a second language only. No subjects are taught through the medium of Welsh.
- 6 The school was inspected previously in 2001. Since then, there have been several changes in the school's leadership. The senior leadership group now consists of the headteacher, two deputy heads and three assistant heads. The headteacher and one deputy head were in post at the time of the previous inspection. The other deputy and the three assistants have been appointed in the intervening years.

### The school's priorities and targets

- 7 The school states that it is "a caring and supportive school which works closely with the community to maximise the potential of all its pupils".
- 8 It highlights three major aims, which are underwritten by detailed objectives. These aims are:
  - to use both the curriculum and the wider ethos of the school to enable all pupils to achieve their fullest potential, thus allowing them to become active and responsible participants in our changing society;

- to foster in the school a caring and orderly community exercising concern and respect for the welfare of others; and
- to develop a positive partnership between school, parents and the community which enhances and supports pupils' learning.

## Summary

- 9 Tasker Milward V C School is a good school that provides many opportunities for learners to achieve their full potential. There have been a number of beneficial improvements in the school since the previous inspection and the school has the capacity for further success.

### Table of grades awarded

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

- 10 The grades in the above table agree with those awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report for key questions 1, 2, 5 and 6. For key questions 3, 4 and 7, the team awarded grades one lower than those suggested by the school.

### Standards

#### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Key stage 3	Key stage 4	Sixth form
English	3	2	3
Welsh second language	2	1	2
Design technology	3	2	2
Geography	2	2	1
Music	2	2	1
Religious education (including religious studies)	2	2	2

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

77 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	12	53	26	9	0
Key stage 4	11	85	4	0	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
Sixth form	13	68	19	0	0
<b>Whole school</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

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

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 12 These figures for pupils' achievement are well above national targets for grades 1 and 2. They also represent a considerable improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
- 13 We compared pupils' performance in national tests, through teacher assessment and in external examinations with those of pupils throughout Wales and of pupils in similar schools<sup>1</sup>. In many respects, especially at key stage 4, pupils' performance is above the average performance of pupils in the comparison groups. There are many good features. Amongst these are:
- in key stage 3 in 2006:
    - in science and English, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or better was above the Welsh average; and
    - in comparison with similar schools, the school's results in science were above average.
  - and in key stage 4:
    - the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C was above both the national average and that achieved in similar schools;
    - the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to G was above both the national average and that achieved in similar schools; and
    - the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A\* to C in English, mathematics and science was above the national average and better than that achieved in half of similar schools.
- 14 In key stage 3 in 2006, however:
- in mathematics, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or better was below the national figure; and

<sup>1</sup> 'Similar schools' refers to other schools in Wales that have a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The Welsh Assembly Government places Tasker Milward School in the group having between 10% and 15% of pupils with entitlement to free school meals.

- in comparison with similar schools, the school's results were below average in English and mathematics.
- 15 Overall, the difference between girls' and boys' GCSE performances matches the national variation, but the greatest discrepancy occurs in English.
  - 16 Pupils who have special educational needs do especially well in the school and so too, do many higher attaining pupils.
  - 17 Most pupils communicate well in English and their bilingual competence in Welsh and English is developing well. However, there are limited opportunities, on a daily basis, for pupils to use Welsh across the curriculum. Most pupils have good number skills, which they use well in many other subjects, and they use computers competently in a wide range of subjects.
  - 18 Most pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. They persevere well to investigate a range of problem-solving situations and work sensibly and productively in pair and group activities. They often demonstrate respect, consideration and support for each other.
  - 19 On the whole, pupils understand how well they are working and what action is needed to improve their own learning and performance.
  - 20 Pupils make good progress in their personal, social and moral development. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good.
  - 21 Attendance figures are slightly below the averages achieved in the unitary authority, Wales as a whole, and similar schools. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and current figures show an improvement. Unless frustrated by transport difficulties, pupils generally arrive at school on time and are also punctual to lessons.

### **The sixth form**

- 22 Standards as seen in lessons are much better than those indicated in the latest A level examination results. Inspectors commented positively about many aspects of work in the sixth form.
- 23 In 2004, the proportion of students who achieved at least two A level results at grade C or better was 63%. This was below the unitary authority average of 69% and the all-Wales figure of 68%.
- 24 A level examination results suffered a marked and sudden decline in 2005, so that the proportion of students who achieved at least two A level results at grade C or better was 46%.
- 25 In 2006, results at A level were better than those achieved in 2005. The proportion of students who achieved at least two A level results at grade C or better rose to 54%.
- 26 Students listen respectfully to their teachers and peers and they put forward points of view with a growing confidence. Their reading skills are also good. Writing is often well organised and expressed.

- 27 Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. In a number of subjects across the curriculum, they use and apply these skills effectively and competently.
- 28 Students make good use of information and communication technology to support their studies. They have easy access to computing facilities and are autonomous in using a wide range of appropriate applications in their work.
- 29 Students collaborate effectively with each other and reach good standards in creative and problem solving activities.
- 30 Most take the necessary steps independently to improve their own progress.

### The quality of education and training

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

119 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	12	50	36	2	0
Key stage 4	9	76	15	0	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Sixth form	15	60	25	0	0
<b>Whole school</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

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

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 32 The proportion of lessons awarded grade 1 or grade 2 is greater than the national average for 2005/2006. It also marks an improvement on the figures achieved at the time of the previous inspection for these key stages.
- 33 Good teaching is a predominant feature of the school. Pupils commented positively about the high quality of teaching they receive in most subjects.
- 34 There are a few shortcomings, such as the use of closed questions that restrict the opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills and limited opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- 35 Procedures for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements are good overall. There is ongoing development of assessment systems and strategies in all departments, but inconsistencies of practice are to be found in a few areas.
- 36 The curriculum meets pupils' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996, and also offers opportunities for pupils to obtain appropriate qualifications. It provides equality of opportunity and access for all pupils.

- 37 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has good features that outweigh shortcomings.
- 38 There are effective partnerships with parents, community, education providers and other institutions that provide positive support for learning.
- 39 There are many good features in the care, guidance and support that learners receive and there are no important shortcomings.
- 40 The quality of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs has a number of remarkably good features including the Focus Room, that enables pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties to come to terms with their special educational needs and a multi-agency team that meets regularly to identify ways of supporting pupils and students with social and educational needs.
- 41 The school is good at ensuring that pupils with disabilities are full and equal members of the school, but there are areas of the school buildings that are inaccessible for pupils in wheelchairs.

### **The sixth form**

- 42 The quality of teaching is at least good in the majority of classes in the sixth form and its positive effect on learning can be seen in the standards that students are currently achieving.
- 43 Many teachers work hard to help students prepare for external examinations. They encourage them to become responsible for their own learning and prepare them well for learning beyond school.
- 44 The assessment, recording and reporting of students' work is good. In day-to-day work, teachers identify strengths and weaknesses and indicate to students how improvements may be made.
- 45 Students benefit from a good curriculum. It offers an extensive range of courses at AS and A levels to cater for all students' needs. The breadth of provision, which is enriched through the growing partnership with a local secondary school and a college, is a strength of the school.
- 46 The partnership with Careers Wales is effective and students are catered for well within a good careers education and guidance programme.

### **Leadership and management**

- 47 The school is led and managed effectively and efficiently, and there is a corporate ethos in the school, with a shared sense of purpose overall.
- 48 The senior leadership group is an effective team and it works closely with the governing body. Members of this group work well together, under the leadership of the headteacher. Between them, there is a wealth of expertise and experience, which they use well to the school's advantage.

- 49 The quality of leadership and management at middle management level is good overall with no important shortcomings, but there is some variation in the thoroughness with which activities are undertaken.
- 50 The school has made very good progress in establishing comprehensive and effective procedures for evaluating and improving its provision. There is a clear and effective policy that underpins a robust annual planning cycle. The school rightly believes that the processes of evaluating and planning are successfully linked and inform each other well.
- 51 The school does well in ensuring that all are well informed about the performance of the areas for which they are responsible, and most use the information very effectively. There are, nevertheless, a few departments where procedures need to be improved to match the best in the school.
- 52 Planning takes good account of Welsh Assembly Government priorities, but in respect of embedding Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and extending the use of Welsh across the curriculum, there is a need for further progress to be made.
- 53 The staffing of the school has good features and no important shortcomings. There are sufficient members of staff for the school to run efficiently.
- 54 The quality and quantity of learning resources are good overall.
- 55 As a whole, the accommodation is such that good features outweigh shortcomings. However, the Milward building in particular, has a shabby, drab, overused look. The staircases are narrow and parts of the flooring have missing tiles. Additionally, in design technology, there is only one small room for the teaching of resistant materials and this is insufficient for the numbers of pupils on roll and restricts the development of the 14 –19 curriculum.
- 56 The school's finances and resources are used competently. The school provides good value for money by achieving improved results, having a good quality of teaching, and maintaining good care and support for pupils and students.

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

- 57 Overall, the school has made good progress in dealing with the key issues of the previous inspection. In respect of the progress made in Welsh and information and communication technology, the school has done outstandingly well. The quality of leadership has improved considerably. Most tutors now make generally effective use of tutorial time following morning registrations, but there is still room for improvement here. The school now provides adequate information for parents and there is ample provision for religious education in the sixth form. Although the school has attempted to satisfy statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all learners, not all activities that occur in form bases when pupils are not attending a formal assembly satisfy requirements.

## Recommendations

- R1\* Satisfy statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and students and continue to improve the use made of tutorial time.
- R2 Continue to seek ways of raising standards in all subjects.
- R3 Continue efforts to combat absenteeism and thus to raise levels of attendance to match national targets.
- R4 Eliminate the few inconsistencies in middle management, so that all departments match the best quality already operating in the school in terms of:
- using assessment for learning effectively; and
  - encouraging pupils to become independent learners.
- R5 Improve the Welsh ethos of the school by ensuring that Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is more firmly embedded in the wider curriculum and that pupils are given more opportunities to hear and use Welsh in their daily lives in school.
- R6 Working together with the unitary authority, seek ways of improving the school's accommodation overall and especially for design technology. Also improve access for learners with physical disabilities.

\* The recommendations made in R1 were made at the time of the previous inspection. Although progress has been made, best practice is not fully widespread.

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

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

## Standards

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

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

58 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

### Key stages 3 and 4

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

61 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	12	53	26	9	0
Key stage 4	11	85	4	0	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>

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

60 National targets for standards in schools are that, by this year, lessons should be graded 3 or better in at least 98% of cases and grade 2 or better in at least 65%. Overall, in the six subjects we inspected, pupils' standards of achievement exceeded the target for grade 2 or better by a considerable margin. The three instances where grade 4 was recorded were attributable to unusually adverse circumstances in the classes.

61 The figures in the table also indicate a considerable improvement upon those achieved at the time of the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be good or better (equivalent to grades 1 and 2) in 52% of classes inspected.

### Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

62 We evaluated pupils' performance in public examinations at the end of key stage 4, and in tests and by teacher assessment at the end of key stage 3 by comparing their attainment with:

- the attainment of all pupils in Wales;
- the attainment of pupils in Pembrokeshire; and
- the attainment of pupils in similar schools throughout Wales.

63 It must be highlighted that in 2006 there were no national tests at the end of key stage 3. Pupils' attainments were measured by teacher assessments.

64 In selecting similar schools in Wales, we used the group of schools where between 10% and 15% of pupils are entitled to free school meals (called the FSM group).

- 65 We considered pupils' results in 2006 in particular, since this is the most recent year for which figures are available. We also considered pupils' attainment in previous years.
- 66 We found that in key stage 3 in 2006:
- in English, the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or better was just above the Welsh average and just below the Pembrokeshire figure;
  - in mathematics, the proportion was below both the national and the local figure;
  - in science, the proportion was above both other comparators;
  - the proportion of pupils achieving the core subject indicator<sup>2</sup> was below both national and local averages;
  - boys and girls performed equally well in English and mathematics, but boys outperformed girls in science; and
  - girls outperformed boys in terms of the core subject indicator.
- 67 When pupils' 2006 key stage 3 performances were compared with those achieved in other schools in the FSM group, we found that:
- in science, pupils in Tasker Milward School did better than pupils in half of the other schools in the FSM group;
  - in English, results were below average, with pupils doing less well than pupils in half of the other schools; and
  - in mathematics and the core subject indicator the school did less well than three-quarters of similar schools.
- 68 Success in terms of such comparisons within the FSM group was slightly better in 2005, when the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals was the same as in 2006. In 2004, when the FSM group was one where between 15% and 20% of pupils were entitled to free meals, the school fared very well in comparison with similar schools.
- 69 In key stage 4, in 2006, pupils did particularly well in the GCSE examinations. For example:
- the proportion of pupils entering for 5 or more examinations exceeded both local and national averages;
  - the proportions achieving 5 or more grades A\* to C, 5 or more grades A\* to G and the core subject indicator were better than national and local figures;
  - pupils' average GCSE points score matched the local figure and exceeded the national version;
  - success at achieving 1 or more grades A\* to C or 1 or more grades A\* to G was better than that achieved in Pembrokeshire or Wales as a whole; and
  - only one percent of pupils failed to achieve a graded GCSE or equivalent, as compared with 4% in Pembrokeshire and 7% in Wales.
- 70 The school is rightly proud of the success enjoyed by these pupils in the GCSE examinations.

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

- 71 Additionally, pupils in Tasker Milward School did better than pupils in at least half of the other schools in the FSM group in respect of:
- the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C;
  - the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to G;
  - the proportion of pupils achieving the core subject indicator; and
  - their average GCSE points score.
- 72 The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C has risen steadily from 53% in 2002 to 64% in 2006. Over the last 10 years, this measure has been above local and national averages.
- 73 Overall, the difference between girls' and boys' GCSE performances matches the national variation, but the greatest discrepancy occurs in English.
- 74 Actual 2006 GCSE figures and comparisons with Pembrokeshire and all-Wales data can be found in Appendix 3 at the end of this report.
- 75 Over recent years, GCSE performance targets, agreed with the local authority and approved by governors, have been met overall. Targets for performance in terms of 5 or more grades A\* to C were met in 2003, not so in 2004, but met or exceeded in 2005 and 2006. In all years girls have exceeded their targets, whilst boys have been rather erratic in achieving their goals.
- 76 Because of the very good provision made for them, pupils with special educational needs generally achieve very well across the curriculum.
- 77 The school is a fully inclusive establishment and it provides open access to all aspects of learning, regardless of learners' backgrounds, disabilities and/or prior attainment.
- 78 Pupils usually listen with respect and attention to teachers and to one another. There are a few instances of inattention in key stage 3. Pupils willingly respond to questions in class and contribute well to class discussions. Able pupils are often articulate and give extended responses. When given the opportunity, pupils collaborate well in pairs and small groups. There are examples of outstanding collaboration of the most able pupils. Pupils use Standard English when required, demonstrating that they can adapt tone and language to audience. There is good understanding of subject vocabulary. In key stage 3, pupils of lower ability are less communicative.
- 79 Pupils' reading skills are good. They read aloud with accuracy and fluency. Able pupils read unfamiliar material with expression. Pupils with reading difficulties are given good support and progress is made. Most read a wide range of challenging texts with good understanding, although in key stage 3, the reading range of the less able pupils and those with additional learning needs is more limited. All pupils read for pleasure. Pupils display competent skills of research, including the skimming and scanning of texts and screen for information.
- 80 In key stage 4, writing skills are good as are the skills of the able pupils in key stage 3. Most pupils can write in a range of forms and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Most extend their writing and organisation is good. In key stage 3, the writing range of pupils of lower abilities and those with additional learning needs is

more limited. These pupils have insufficient opportunities to regularly and frequently develop extended writing skills in a range of forms. In some subjects, they plan, draft and proof read their work to improve. Many use computers effectively to help the drafting process. Skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation are generally in line with abilities.

- 81 Overall, pupils' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. In both key stages there is evidence of some good and very good standards. A small minority of pupils have limited numerical skills and lack confidence when applying and using number in everyday situations.
- 82 The school has a numeracy policy for subjects across the curriculum. The co-ordinator actively supports the teaching of the numerical skills needed in subjects and promotes parental involvement and understanding.
- 83 Pupils' bilingual skills are developing well, as pupils have a very positive attitude to learning Welsh. An increasing number of pupils opt for the full GCSE course. Results in all the key stage 4 courses on offer have improved year on year. Almost all Y11 pupils complete their course and achieve accreditation.
- 84 Pupils gain good information and communication technology skills across the curriculum in key stage 3 and apply them in nearly all subjects. In the subjects inspected, applications of information and communication technology are good with no important shortcomings in English, Welsh, religious education, design technology and music in both key stages, and in geography in key stage 4. Good features outweigh shortcomings in geography in key stage 3.
- 85 There is good access to computers. Information and communication technology is used effectively to enhance the standards of work produced by pupils with special educational needs.
- 86 Whilst pupils make good progress overall in their wider key skills, shortcomings are present due to some lesson tasks being insufficiently open-ended, resulting in less opportunity for creative solutions and individual responses.
- 87 However, most pupils:
- persevere well to investigate a range of problem-solving situations. In art, English, design technology and information technology they devise well-considered solutions and show flair and imagination in their decisions and outcomes;
  - work sensibly and productively in pair and group activities. Here they demonstrate respect, consideration and support for each other. Outstanding examples are seen in some lessons in business, English, design technology and Welsh; and
  - understand how well they are working and what action is needed to improve their own learning and performance.

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

- 88 As mentioned in the context section at the beginning of the report, on entry to the school, there is an above average proportion of pupils who have low-level literacy skills. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' skills of communication, especially in key stage 3, and this has been successful in helping learners achieve

well in other areas of the curriculum. Most pupils make at least good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing throughout the key stage.

- 89 Because the school has very good links with the primary schools within its family of schools, continuity in learning across the phases is good and allows pupils to make progress from the time they enter the school.
- 90 Pupils with special educational needs generally make at least good progress overall. They benefit well from integration into mainstream classes with appropriate support, special classes and planned individual education programmes. Through these measures, the school ensures that as many pupils as possible gain success in external examinations and in the key skills.
- 91 Through exposure to a wide variety of teaching styles, and with varying degrees of success, pupils acquire new knowledge and skills and use these in new and increasingly challenging situations. In doing so they often extend their understanding and make progress towards realising their potential for success. In many subjects, pupils work productively, often enjoying their work and appreciating the progress they make.
- 92 Most high attaining pupils do well, but in a few instances they are not challenged sufficiently well to achieve their full potential.
- 93 Although there is some variation in the quality of feedback given to pupils, many teachers give pupils a good idea of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. On the whole, pupils respond well to teachers' comments and advice, and make appropriate progress.
- 94 Because of the school's good support and guidance programmes, the rigorous monitoring of performance and the overall good quality of teaching, by the end of each stage of learning, most pupils have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and level of maturity they need to do well in the next stage.

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

- 95 Most pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. Able pupils in particular are well motivated and want to succeed. Most understand and respect the values and expectations promoted by the school. They abide by the Code of Conduct and appreciate the merit system to reward good work and behaviour. Many work diligently in lessons, but there is a small number of pupils in key stage 3 who are less well motivated. Some lessons in Y9 suffer from low levels of disruption and the pace of work is slow.
- 96 All engage in research and able pupils are confident and mature. In both key stages, however, many pupils lack the confidence to work independently and are over reliant on their teachers.
- 97 There is good progress in personal, social and moral development. For example, pupils engage in charitable work and adopt roles such as school councillors. The majority of pupils show a good understanding of issues of equal opportunities and are sensitive towards diversity within society. Pupils with disabilities are well integrated and their needs are generally understood.

- 98 Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good. In class, the vast majority are respectful and polite, working well with the teacher and one another in a friendly and supportive way. There is a very small number who show off and are disrespectful, but their annoying behaviour seldom disturbs learning. In the public areas of school, the behaviour of some pupils is sometimes over-exuberant.
- 99 Over the last three terms, attendance at school averaged 90.5%. This is slightly below the averages for the unitary authority, all Wales and for schools with similar free school meals statistics. Unauthorised absence is often well in excess of the Welsh Assembly Government target of 1%. Sickness is a major reason for absence but there is a substantial number of pupils who take the occasional day off for spurious reasons. Much of this absence is parentally condoned.
- 100 Unless frustrated by transport difficulties, pupils generally arrive at school on time and are also punctual to lessons.
- 101 The values and attitudes encouraged by the school, and the good opportunities for pupils to learn about the community and workplace, prepare learners effectively for life after school.

### **The sixth form**

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

16 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Sixth form	13	68	19	0	0

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

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

- 103 As the table indicates, in the six subjects inspected in depth, students achieve well in the sixth form.
- 104 Standards, as recorded in the table and in the subject reports later in this report, are much better than those indicated in the latest A level examination results. Recent changes in the organisation and management of the sixth form have already had a beneficial effect on the standards that students achieve in Y12 and Y13.
- 105 A level examination results suffered a marked and sudden decline in 2005.
- 106 In 2004, the proportion of students who achieved at least two A level results at grade C or better was 63%. This was below the unitary authority average of 69% and the all-Wales figure of 68%. Similarly, the school's figure for grade E or better at 89% was below the 95% achieved in the unitary authority and Wales as a whole. The average score per student, at 22, was, however, above the local and national averages of 21 and 20 respectively.
- 107 In 2005, the proportion of students who achieved at least two A level results at grade C or better was 46%. This compared badly with the unitary authority average of 67% and the all-Wales figure of 68%. Similarly, the school's figure for grade E or better at 92% was below the 95% achieved in the unitary authority and the 94% in

Wales as a whole. The average score per student, at 18, was also below the local and all-Wales average of 20.

- 108 In 2006, results at A level were better than those achieved in 2005. The proportion of students who achieved at least two A level results at grade C or better was 54%. This compared unfavourably with the local average of 69% and the all-Wales figure of 68%. The school's figure for grade E or better at 83% was below the 94% achieved locally and in Wales as a whole. The average score per student was below the local and all-Wales average of 20.
- 109 In 2004, boys outperformed girls in terms of the higher A level grades and the average points scored, whereas nationally the converse was the case. In 2005, boys and girls performed equally in achieving 2 or more grades C or better, but boys achieved a better average points score. Again, nationally, girls outperformed boys overall. In 2006, boys continued to outperform girls for grades A to C and for average points scored. Nationally, girls outperformed boys by a considerable margin.
- 110 Students listen respectfully to their teachers and peers. They put forward points of view with a growing confidence. Higher attaining students extend their responses and are articulate. There is good use and understanding of subject specific vocabulary. In many subjects there are good standards of discussion. When given the opportunity, collaboration is good.
- 111 Reading skills are also good. Students respond with understanding to a range of challenging texts. There is good progress in the development of critical analysis although students tend to rely on the teacher as expert.
- 112 Writing is often well organised and expressed. The development of ideas and arguments is in line with abilities. Students show that they competently use relevant quotations. All adapt language, style and format to fit the purpose of their writing. In some cases there is insufficient proof reading to eliminate errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 113 Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. In a number of subjects across the curriculum, they are able to use and apply these skills effectively and competently.
- 114 Students make good use of information and communication technology to support their studies. They have easy access to computing facilities and are autonomous in using a wide range of appropriate applications in their work. In the subjects inspected, outstanding information and communication technology applications are found in geography and music, and in the other subjects inspected standards are good with no important shortcomings.
- 115 Students collaborate effectively with each other and reach good standards in creative and problem solving activities.
- 116 Most take the necessary steps independently to improve their own progress.

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

- 117 The school's managers were very concerned about the lack of progress made by the students who produced the unsatisfactory 2005 A level results. Following this, the

sixth form has been reorganised and there is now a good work ethic within this sector of the school.

- 118 As indicated in comments made in the detailed subject reports that follow later in this report, many students are now achieving at least good standards. Evidence gathered suggests that students are becoming more committed to their work and making good progress.
- 119 Most teachers are working hard to help students become accomplished independent learners. Students are encouraged to carry out a wide range of challenging tasks, working independently on research projects, choosing appropriate sources of information for their work and being analytical in their thinking. They generally respond well to their teachers' comments and advice, and make good progress.
- 120 There are some good examples of students making progress and becoming more mature learners, amongst them:
- instances of students challenging teachers and asking in-depth questions to confirm their understanding of principles, ideas, concepts etc.;
  - students providing innovative interpretations of texts;
  - occasions when students make their own purposeful notes and do not constantly rely on teachers for guidance and handouts; and
  - students' confident contributions to debates – adding their own ideas and opinions.
- 121 Around 55% of Y11 pupils remain in the school for their sixth form careers and a few students join from other schools. Almost 85% of Y12 students continue into Y13 to complete their studies and around 85% of these proceed to higher or further education after leaving school.

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

- 122 Good progress is made in the development of students' personal, social and learning skills. In lessons, they show positive attitudes to learning and engage willingly in tasks. Students are courteous and respectful. They contribute well to the life of the school by engaging in charitable work, duties and the school's council. They are valued mentors of key stage 3 pupils and behave with a growing confidence and maturity.
- 123 In the sixth form, attendance is very slightly below 90%, which is well below what employers will expect and not high enough for students to achieve their full potential. Unless frustrated by transport difficulties, students who attend generally arrive at school on time and are also punctual to lessons.
- 124 The values and attitudes encouraged by the school in key stages 3 and 4 are now prominent in the sixth form. There are good opportunities for students to learn about the community and workplace, and to be prepared effectively for life after school.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

126 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

#### Key stages 3 and 4

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

99 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	12	50	36	2	0
Key stage 4	9	76	15	0	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

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

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

128 There has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The improvement for lessons at the equivalent of grade 2 or above is 13% and at grade 3 and above, 6%.

129 At the time of the previous inspection, 7% of lessons had good features, but also shortcomings in important areas; in this inspection only 1 lesson was judged to be grade 4.

130 The best teaching across all key stages at the school was in key stage 4.

131 The grades awarded for the quality of teaching compare well with the national picture that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector reported in her annual report for 2005-2006. Nationally, teaching and assessment was awarded a grade 2 or better in 69% of lessons, and grade 3 or better in 95% of lessons.

132 In 10% of lessons there were outstanding features in the quality of teaching which include:

- teachers' lively presentations, which add depth to pupils' understanding of their subject;
- high expectations of what the pupils can achieve through challenging tasks and experiences;
- detailed awareness and communication of examination board's requirements; and
- very effective plenary sessions to reinforce understanding and consolidate learning.

133 The good features of the teaching include:

- the detailed knowledge teachers have of their subject and current developments in their field;
- good working relationships between teachers and pupils in most lessons, which create a culture of mutual respect and a classroom ethos for learning;
- clear lesson objectives being shared and used meaningfully with the pupils;
- detailed planning, including a wide range of appropriate activities that are presented at appropriate pace and within specified time limits;
- the use of a wide range of resources including interactive whiteboards to enrich pupils' learning;
- the careful planning for the use of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in lessons;
- effective feedback and support to pupils to encourage their motivation;
- firm and constructive class control; and
- providing opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the diversity of life-styles, culture and beliefs.

134 Pupils commented positively about the good quality of teaching they receive in most subjects.

135 The shortcomings listed below were observed in a few lessons:

- the use of closed questions that restrict the opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills;
- tasks that do not stretch the pupils and are not at the appropriate level of challenge;
- restricted opportunities for pupils to work independently to develop subject concepts in depth and to nurture their independent learning skills;
- lack of variety in the teaching methods;
- insufficient time being spent on the plenary session; and
- insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their bilingual skills.

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

136 Procedures for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements are good overall with no important shortcomings.

137 The leadership team devised an appropriate whole school policy to inform departmental practice based on "Assessment for Learning". In addition, there is a policy for recording and reporting. Practice is good overall, and in Welsh and music in particular, there are examples of outstanding practice.

138 There is ongoing development of assessment systems and strategies in all departments, but inconsistencies of practice in day-to-day assessment of pupils' work in key stage 3 are evident in a few cases.

139 In both key stages 3 and 4, not all teachers:

- explain the assessment criteria to pupils and give them models of successful day-to-day work;

- write comments on day-to-day work which identify how far pupils have met the criteria and how they might improve; and
  - involve pupils in self and peer assessment so that they fully understand the criteria, their own strengths and areas where they might need to improve.
- 140 The school's self-evaluation processes enable members of the leadership team to be aware of the good practice in departments. They also know where improvements need to be made to bring all departments up to the level of the best.
- 141 The school's database is comprehensive and well used. Standardised tests and teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2, provide scores to identify pupils with additional learning needs and to aid the grouping of pupils. Predictions of pupils' end of key stage achievements in all subjects are included on the database. These are accessible to all teachers and used effectively to track progress.
- 142 All subject teachers are required to summarise the achievements of pupils each term. Subject staff monitor progress, identify underperformance and take action. Results of the assessments are used to update the school's database. Heads of year also access the data and compare pupils' current achievements in all subjects against those predicted. There is effective early identification of underachievement.
- 143 A range of appropriate strategies is used to support pupils who are underperforming. For example, heads of year counsel individuals and liaise with subject teachers. They ensure that parents are appropriately informed of progress by letters, by the use of pupils' planners and in parents' evenings. The role of heads of year in assessment represents good practice. Form tutors are also used to mentor and support pupils. They discuss individual progress with all pupils twice a year. All pupils complete a personal performance profile, add their own comments and set targets for improvement. In addition, each half term, the school's pastoral support team meets with school based support staff such as the special needs coordinator, the school nurse, the educational social worker, the behavioural support teacher and the teacher in charge of the focus room. They represent a multi-agency approach to the identification and support of individual pupils who are underperforming.
- 144 Members of the leadership team monitor practice to ensure that assessments are accurate and fair. They observe lessons, monitor marking in books and ensure that there is departmental moderation, standardisation and monitoring.
- 145 Organisation of assessment events is good. Members of the leadership team calendar internal and external examinations and arrange an annual meeting of parents of each pupil in each year group. They also organise the annual preparation of an interim and a full report for parents of each pupil so that there is contact with parents each term. Interim reports include grades for a range of personal, social and learning skills. Full reports are equally informative and include targets for improvement in all subjects.
- 146 Heads of department analyse results of external examinations with members of the leadership team. Usually, challenging yet realistic targets for improvement are agreed. In addition, heads of department ensure that the requirements of examination boards, the National Curriculum and Code of Practice are met.

## The sixth form

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

20 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Post 16	15	60	25	0	0

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

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

148 The figures in the table compare well with the 2005-2006 national whole-school averages at grades 2 and 3, and above. The percentage of lessons awarded grade 1 was slightly below (national average 17%), and also below the percentage awarded in the previous inspection.

149 Most of the good and outstanding features are similar to those observed by inspectors in lessons in key stages 3 and 4.

150 There were some shortcomings in grade 2 lessons and particularly in grade 3 lessons. These include:

- insufficient questioning and missing opportunities to develop students' understanding;
- overlong teacher presentations at the start of lessons and students receiving knowledge passively for a considerable amount of the lesson; and
- few opportunities for students to discuss their work in depth and to learn independently and take responsibility for their own learning.

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

151 In the sixth form, the assessment, recording and reporting of students' work is now good. In Welsh and music there are outstanding features of assessment practices. In day-to-day work, teachers identify strengths and weaknesses and indicate to students how improvements may be made. Students are aware of the criteria for success and the requirements of examination boards.

152 Students are also aware of the minimum target grades that they are expected to achieve. These grades are recorded on the school's database and in students' journals. Each half term the subject teachers award current working grades for each student, which are compared with target grades. Form tutors review progress with students each half term and targets are negotiated for improvement. In addition, the head of the sixth form examines the data frequently and regularly. There is ongoing monitoring, contact with parents and mentoring of individual students.

153 Parents receive interim and full reports on progress. The full reports contain detailed information on standards achieved.

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

<b>Grade 3:</b> Good features outweigh shortcomings
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154 In its self-evaluation, the school proposed a grade 2 for this key question. We would have agreed with this grade had it not been for the fact that the school does not provide an act of collective worship in all tutor groups. A daily act of collective worship is a statutory requirement and its omission is therefore an important shortcoming.

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

155 The curriculum:

- meets pupils' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996;
- offers opportunities to obtain appropriate qualifications;
- promotes an appropriate balance and breadth of study;
- provides personal, social and health education, work-related education and careers education and guidance in accordance with Welsh Assembly Government guidelines; and
- gives equality of opportunity and access to all pupils.

156 Good features in the curricular provision include:

- all pupils in key stage 3 having opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills through a cross-curricular programme;
- almost all pupils in key 4 being able to choose from a comprehensive list of GCSE subjects including vocational options;
- the alternative curriculum in key stage 4, which helps pupils at risk of exclusion to adapt to mainstream education, and encourages them to remain on a learning pathway; and
- the breadth of provision in the sixth form, which is enriched through the growing partnership with a local secondary school and a college.

157 The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Through the direction of co-ordinators and a recently appointed key skills co-ordinator, the key skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology are embedded in almost all schemes of work. At present, some of the wider key skills are not as well developed in some subjects. In the sixth form, it is planned to enter students for accreditation in communication and two of the wider key skills this year.

158 There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that broadens pupils' experiences and promotes their personal and social development. A particular strength is the wide range of sporting activities available, with many pupils and students representing the school and gaining county and national honours. There are also opportunities to:

- take part in musical activities, have peripatetic music lessons, join choirs and orchestras, and take part in school productions;

- visit local and national theatres, museums, exhibitions, careers conventions and field visits;
- take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme; and
- experience a range of visits abroad for curricular and social activities.

159 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has good features that outweigh shortcomings.

160 The good features include:

- spiritual development is promoted in some subjects;
- a vast majority of pupils take responsibility and work well together;
- pupils show concern for others by raising considerable sums of money for good causes and charities;
- a good awareness of other cultures and a respect for diversity;
- pupils generally respect teachers and fellow pupils so that overall good relationships are established; and
- assemblies give pupils and students opportunities to develop an understanding of beliefs and values.

161 However, there are some shortcomings:

- not all subjects plan for the delivery of the spiritual aspects;
- a small minority of pupils show little respect to their peers or their teachers at times;
- Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is not embedded in all subjects; and
- all pupils do not have the opportunity to participate in a daily act of collective worship, and consequently the school fails to conform to statutory requirements.

162 There are effective partnerships with parents, community, education providers and other institutions that provide positive support for learning. There have been beneficial improvements since the last inspection and all the appropriate links are now well established. There are several good features, which include:

- the transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3, which now includes a very good range of both pastoral and curricular bridging activities;
- the extensive use made of visits to, and visitors from, the local community to enhance pupils' personal development and learning;
- the benefits to the wider community through activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and Enterprise Fair that offer support to both individuals and a wide range of charities; and
- links with several initial teacher training institutes that provide students to many departments, thus introducing new perspectives and personalities to teaching.

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

163 Overall, work-related education is good, but it is less well developed in key stage 3 than in key stage 4 and the sixth form.

- 164 There is a well-organised and beneficial work placement for pupils in Y11, and in Y12 where career options require it. In the upper school opportunities to meet employers through a programme of visits, Industry week, Careers conventions, Enterprise schemes and mock-interviews, greatly enhance learners' understanding of the workplace.
- 165 In key stage 3, pupils study the needs of the workplace and benefit from advice from a Careers adviser to help with option choices. However, they have limited opportunities to meet employers or take part in team building, enterprise and other such challenges.
- 166 Time allocated to Welsh at key stages 3 and 4 is generous and provides a sound base for pupils to develop their bilingual skills. Extra-curricular activities are arranged by the Welsh department to help pupils develop their bilingual skills further, such as the eisteddfod, visits and residential courses. However, the promotion of bilingualism is underdeveloped. There are no planned opportunities for pupils to use their considerable bilingual skills in other areas of the curriculum as appropriate. The use of incidental Welsh around the school is rare.
- 167 A recent audit identified that Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is effectively embedded in schemes of work of some subjects across the curriculum.
- 168 There are a number of good features in the promotion of pupils' and students' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include:
- good coverage in schemes of work in a number of subjects;
  - involvement with significant funding in a 'Community Classrooms' project with three schools in both South Africa and Ethiopia;
  - an exchange link with a school in Japan with an emphasis on looking at global citizenship and cultural links; and
  - pupils' involvement in recycling projects and the Healthy Schools Initiative.
- 169 The account taken of employers' needs is an outstanding feature of the school. Governors have an extensive knowledge of the local community. There is a very effective partnership with Careers Wales. An audit of local job opportunities and demographic trends has been carried out as part of a pilot scheme to develop careers education and guidance targeted at these changing local opportunities for employment.
- 170 Entrepreneurial skills are generally well developed in school. Problem solving is a regular feature of lessons in the sixth form, but not as frequent in key stages 3 and 4. Pupils in key stage 4 and sixth form students have good opportunities to meet entrepreneurs and to participate in enterprise and challenge activities where they develop decision-making and risk-assessment skills. Although sometimes offered, these opportunities are underused in key stage 3.
- 171 Overall, the school has planned a curriculum that reflects most of the national priorities. Although the impact of bilingualism and opportunities for independence of learning are not widely embedded, pupils and students' other experiences generally lay a sound foundation for lifelong learning.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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172 In its self-evaluation report the school awarded itself a grade 1. The inspection team judged that there are many good features in the care, guidance and support that learners receive and that there are no important shortcomings. Nevertheless, there are shortcomings present and insufficient outstanding features to warrant a grade 1.

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

173 Good features in the quality of care, support and guidance include:

- establishing a strong pastoral structure with clear lines of communication between all involved;
- a clear commitment to the pupils' education and personal and social development;
- effective use of Y12 and Y13 students to support younger pupils;
- a good induction programme for new pupils and the strong relationships with partner primary schools;
- detailed monitoring of pupils' attendance by electronic tracking;
- the school's pastoral work which is enhanced and supported by the personal, social and health education programme;
- support for the six pupils in the care of the unitary authority who have relevant education and social plans that reflect the close working partnership between carers, social services and the school;
- clearly documented procedures for assuring pupils' well-being and health and safety;
- effective procedures to deal with child protection issues;
- a wide-ranging careers education programme and close co-operation with the Careers Wales adviser;
- a daily club for pupils who feel vulnerable and isolated;
- procedures whereby parents are positively welcomed to school to discuss any concerns;
- school and year councils who actively contribute in a positive manner to the life of the school; and
- good and meaningful educational and social links with a local special school.

174 Shortcomings include:

- form tutors not making best use of tutorial time available to them; and
- a few health and safety issues that were reported to the school during the inspection.

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

175 The quality of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs has a number of good features, which include:

- extensive and effective deployment of learning support assistants;

- a comprehensive process that identifies pupils who need extra assistance;
- a range of strategies and activities to improve pupils' literary and social skills;
- the recording of statemented pupils' progress in lessons by learning support assistants;
- opportunities for all pupils to gain accreditation;
- a small team of teachers and nursery assistants who know pupils well and lend effective support in class and in social and life skills courses;
- a positive response to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice;
- comprehensive documentation, including the special needs policy;
- good use of various agencies to provide specialist expertise;
- good involvement of parents, with all parents of statemented pupils attending their children's annual reviews;
- provision of good information for teachers about pupils' educational needs, so that they can plan work that is suitable for these pupils; and
- success in enabling pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties to come to better terms with their special needs and ensure that their behaviour does not impact upon other pupils' progress.
- measures, including the Focus Room, that enable pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties to come to terms with their special educational needs; and
- a multi-agency team that meets regularly to identify ways of supporting pupils and students with social and educational needs.

176 Of these features, the last two are examples of outstanding practice.

177 The school has invested in a very good interactive software package, which helps many pupils who need additional support to improve their basic skills. However, the school's fortnightly timetable does not provide pupils with sufficient and regular access to this facility.

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

178 The good features in the quality of provision for equal opportunities include:

- availability of all the curricular provision for all the pupils;
- a clear commitment to creating a community that shows respect and tolerance to all and to eradicate any difference on the basis of disability, sex, race, language or religion;
- raising large sums of money towards good causes to help those who are less fortunate;
- ensuring the quality of the provision for equal opportunities to promote equality and eradicate negative bias in aspects of school life;
- promoting social inclusion so that awareness permeates through all the activities and the life of the school;
- the vast majority of pupils do not have any serious concerns about bullying and are confident that teachers will deal with any incidents quickly and effectively;
- the school does all it can to help disabled learners to play a full part in the life of the school;
- creating a policy and implementing effective measures to eliminate aggressive behaviour; and

- the small number of pupils from ethnic minority groups attending the school are happy and well-integrated.

179 However, there are some shortcomings, including:

- areas of the school buildings that are inaccessible for pupils in wheelchairs; and
- a few key stage 3 pupils, who indicated that some pupils were bullied during lunchtimes.

## Leadership and management

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

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

180 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

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

181 At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership of the school was criticised for its lack of effectiveness. Since then, there have been substantial and important improvements. So much so, that the school is now led and managed effectively and efficiently, and there is a more corporate ethos in the school, with a shared sense of purpose overall.

182 The senior leadership group of six (headteacher, 2 deputy heads and 3 assistant heads) is an effective team and it works closely with the governing body. Members of this group work well together, under the leadership of the headteacher. Between them there is a wealth of expertise and experience, which they use well to the school's advantage.

183 The governing body believes that the most important resource that the school has is its staff. Consequently the school uses very rigorous selection procedures when appointing new staff and for internal promotions.

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

- regular reviews of the school's aims and objectives, especially at focus meetings, with all staff present, where values are shared and discussed;
- strategic plans with a three to five year focus, that are formulated by the leadership group, approved by governors, and reviewed and updated annually;
- the manner in which pastoral leaders and most heads of department promote a clear direction through regular team meetings and meetings with members of the leadership group;
- clear policies for equality of opportunity, the effectiveness of which can be seen in the inclusive ethos of the school and the very good provision for pupils with a very wide range of special educational needs;
- the rigorous performance management system operated in the school together with professional development activities that are linked closely to performance management objectives;
- the clear vision of most heads of department for the direction of developments within their area of responsibility;
- target-setting processes at whole-school, departmental and individual levels that are based upon a wealth of data and indicate generally challenging targets;
- the governing body's effective role as a 'critical friend'; and

- the good relationships between all in the school that help make the school a pleasant environment in which to work and learn.
- 185 The effective development of key skills, and especially information and communication technology, has been a predominant feature of the school's activity and all aspects are overseen well by co-ordinators.
- 186 All members of staff have agreed job descriptions and appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. The leadership group recently used the workforce remodelling process as an opportunity to change the school from a faculty to a departmental structure. At the same time, a number of new staff were appointed with management responsibilities. Such reorganisation appears to have been successful, especially in terms of raising standards at GCSE.
- 187 Leaders and managers have taken good account of most national priorities. An assistant headteacher has release time on a regular basis to lead the school's developments in 14 – 19 Learning Pathways. The headteacher is chair of the Pembrokeshire 14 –19 network. There are detailed plans to extend choices pre and post 16 and to implement the Learning Core. Post 16, the school has become a member of the Haverfordwest Federation and there will be extended shared A level provision to enable more efficient use of sixth form resources.
- 188 The school enjoys exceptionally good links with local primary schools. These links are effectively and efficiently coordinated. The work carried out by the family of schools is recognised by the unitary authority as an example of good practice.
- 189 Good partnerships exist between the school and a range of providers of work experience. The alternative curriculum in key stage 4 has led to more partnerships with the local further education college and work-based providers being established that supplement well the school-based provision.
- 190 Notwithstanding the good level of pupil's bilingualism in Welsh and English, the school's efforts to promote pupils' bilingualism across all subjects across the curriculum are limited.
- 191 Leadership and management in the sixth form are also effective and have already had a positive impact on improving standards in Y12 and Y13.
- 192 The leadership group has established a rigorous process for setting challenging and realistic targets for future success. The school uses a wealth of contextual and attainment data to set these targets and to analyse past performances. Members of the leadership group, in their line management roles, negotiate targets with heads of department and the governors then approve the targets.
- 193 Teachers set individual targets for their pupils in the various subjects of the curriculum and these are monitored within departments. In the best departments, learners know and understand their targets, and how to achieve them. There is, however, some variation in practice across the school. The leadership group is aiming to have all practice matching the best already in the school.

- 194 The quality of leadership and management at middle management level is good overall with no important shortcomings, but there is some variation in the thoroughness with which activities are undertaken, and there are a few shortcomings in one or two areas. These include:
- lack of rigour in evaluating, managing and improving the performance of staff and pupils;
  - failing to encourage the use of Welsh incidentally and in lessons; and
  - not ensuring that 'assessment for learning' is used to best effect by all staff.
- 195 Senior managers, governors and most staff have created an environment in which pupils:
- are encouraged to achieve well in all aspects of their work, which many do; and
  - acquire many of the skills they need, to play a full part in society locally and beyond.
- 196 The organisation of the curriculum and the timetable overall ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities and support to achieve to the best of their ability and commitment. No pupil is disadvantaged because of linguistic or cultural background and/or disability.
- 197 Senior managers meet regularly at half-termly intervals with middle managers. These meetings have a specific agenda that includes the monitoring of teams by middle managers. This has the beneficial effect of focusing middle managers' and leadership group members' efforts on school improvement priorities.
- 198 All heads of department operate systems of lesson observations that are proving to be instrumental in improving the standards of teaching and learning. Individual teachers also reflect upon and evaluate their own performances to good effect.
- 199 A noteworthy aspect of developments in the school is the effectiveness of the School Improvement Group. Meetings of this group and those of the middle management committee effectively share and disseminate examples of good teaching strategies. Such activity is encouraging a collective commitment to raising standards of achievement.
- 200 The school development plan focuses appropriately on priorities for improvement in standards of achievement, teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum, further development of 14 – 19 education, care and support, and resources overall. Amongst these, areas for development are highlighted that match the recommendations we make in this report. The development plan indicates success criteria and timescales along with costs involved. The school's spending is apportioned appropriately according to developmental priorities.

### **How well governors meet their responsibilities**

- 201 The governors have a thorough knowledge of their school and their roles in its management. With the exception of ensuring that all learners are involved in a daily act of collective worship, they fulfil their statutory duties well. They have a good awareness and understanding of the community that the school serves and a

particularly good knowledge of the needs of employers. They are thus able to contribute very positively to strategic planning.

- 202 Detailed reports from senior management, together with observations by link governors ensure that meetings are very well informed on school procedures and performance. Governors constructively integrate this information into their good understanding of regional and national trends in education, employment and the needs of their community. Decisions are soundly based on a wealth of data. They are appropriate and effective.
- 203 The governing body provides a strong sense of identity and direction for the school and these are clearly set out in the prospectus and the annual report to parents.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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- 204 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade proposed by the school in its self-evaluation report.

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

- 205 Since the previous inspection, the school has made very good progress in establishing comprehensive and effective procedures for evaluating and improving its provision. There is a clear and effective policy that underpins a robust annual planning cycle. The school rightly believes that the processes of evaluating and planning are successfully linked and inform each other well.
- 206 The school does well in ensuring that all are well informed about the performance of the areas for which they are responsible.
- 207 Heads of department and the leadership group rigorously monitor standards of attainment, in terms of externally reported results, at each key stage and post 16. Such data form the main part of the agenda for scheduled meetings between heads of departments and their respective line managers.
- 208 Results are discussed in depth at departmental meetings, management meetings and with governors. The school also takes due regard of a wide range of other assessment information, including that provided by the unitary authority, when making judgements and in setting targets for future success.
- 209 A wealth of data at pupil level is stored on the school's very useful computer database and most teachers are now confident when accessing and using the information. This has led to improved target setting and monitoring of pupils' performance.

- 210 The school has devoted a considerable amount of professional developmental time to improving evaluation procedures and this has been successful in improving practice in this aspect of school activities.
- 211 The school has moved from a mainly 'top-down' system, where most of the evaluation was undertaken by members of the leadership group, to a more efficient system involving all personnel as appropriate. All departments are charged with devising programmes, to be approved by line managers, which include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, and analysis of results. These procedures highlight good features and shortcomings, from which actions are planned to improve areas in need of development. In the best departments, practice is extremely effective, but there remain a few departments where procedures need to be improved to match the best in the school.
- 212 The leadership group also undertakes additional thematic monitoring, focusing on such areas as key skills, pastoral provision or reviews of policies. Such activities are effective in promoting a shared view of the school's activities and how it can move forward.
- 213 The school has developed good systems for listening to the views of learners and other interested parties. The pupils' year councils are particularly effective vehicles in this respect. Additionally, groups of pupils have been consulted on a range of issues and the feedback from these consultations has been instrumental in informing teachers about curricular and teaching developments.
- 214 Individual teachers also use questionnaires to seek the views of learners about their lessons. These are proving to be useful tools for teachers to evaluate their own practice.
- 215 All members of staff are consulted routinely on most issues in the school, through a programme of regular meetings. All teachers are required to attend departmental and tutor meetings, where they are able to express their opinions. A very effective internal e-mail system has improved communication in the school considerably. All information is readily available via this system and allows for a two-way flow of opinions and ideas as well.
- 216 Parents and carers are consulted regularly by questionnaires issued at parents' evenings and during the annual pastoral evenings. The school also consults effectively with employers and other members of the community.

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

- 217 Within the constraints of available funds, the school does well to make sure that priorities are supported through adequate allocation of resources – human, material and financial.
- 218 The school's planning cycle generates most of the information that is required to plan for improvements. The leadership group sets the priorities for improvement and these are debated at length through the various meetings described above, including those with the governing body. In this way, clear and appropriate priorities for improvement are established.

- 219 In order to make sure that these priorities are developed through adequate allocation of resources, the school has changed the planning cycle to begin in the Spring term. This change allows financial resources to be allocated when the budget is released. All plans are costed realistically. Small improvements are funded within capitation allowances and larger items are funded by bids submitted to the leadership group and the governing body.
- 220 Following the allocation of funds to the development plans, professional development activities, including those highlighted by performance management activities, are supported through adequate financial resources.
- 221 The school's self-evaluation document is detailed and comprehensive. It looks in depth at each of the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework.
- 222 The findings of the school's self-evaluation report and those of the inspection team match each other closely. The document usefully and accurately sets out what the school does well and in which respects it needs to develop. Our grading was the same as that of the school in four of the seven key questions. In key question 3, non-compliance with the requirement for a daily act of collective worship reduced the grade by 1. In key questions 4 and 7, the team recognised good and very good features, but highlighted shortcomings that precluded a grade 1 being awarded.
- 223 Overall, the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues for action highlighted in the previous inspection report.
- 224 In respect of the progress made in Welsh and information and communication technology, the school has done outstandingly well. The Welsh department is now an example of best practice in the school, as indicated in the subject report that follows. Standards in information and communication technology are now good, facilities are very good and in most subjects pupils use computers effectively across the curriculum.
- 225 The modern foreign languages department was not inspected in depth, so progress there cannot be commented upon.
- 226 The quality of leadership has improved considerably and the school now functions more effectively as a cohesive unit.
- 227 Most tutors now make generally effective use of tutorial time following morning registrations, but there is still room for improvement in this aspect of provision.
- 228 The school now provides adequate information for parents in the school's prospectus and the governors' annual report, and there is adequate provision for religious education in the sixth form.
- 229 Although the school has attempted to satisfy statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all learners, not all activities that occur in form bases when pupils are not attending a formal assembly satisfy requirements. Consequently, this remains as a shortcoming in the school's provision.

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

<b>Grade 2:</b> Good features and no important shortcomings
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230 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one less than the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report. Although there are some exceptionally good features, there are shortcomings that adversely affect standards and curricular provision.

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

231 The number of staff is sufficient for the school to run efficiently. Just over a third of the teaching staff have ten years or less teaching experience, including two newly qualified teachers.

232 The good features can be summarised as:

- most teaching staff are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects and subjects to meet the needs of the curriculum;
- the bursar, administrative officer and administrative staff ensure that the office, reception and reprographics areas run efficiently on both sites;
- technician support in science and information technology is good;
- nineteen learning support assistants provide good support to the number of pupils with physical, learning and behavioural difficulties; they work very effectively with teachers;
- four pupil support staff make a highly effective contribution in serving the emotional and pastoral problems of the most needy pupils;
- two cover assistants look after classes for absent staff, otherwise they are deployed to support the curriculum or support pupils in lessons;
- a librarian supervises the use of the library; and
- the caretakers contribute to daily routines of the school.

233 The high number of non-specialist staff teaching English limits the experiences of the pupils, and has an effect on standards in this subject. At present, there is not a permanent food technology teacher and the post is shared between an art teacher and an English supply teacher. This results in limited experiences for the pupils. Support in design technology is restricted to one part time technician for two days a week. This is totally insufficient to cater for the needs of resistant materials, food technology and textiles. These are shortcomings.

234 The quality and quantity of learning resources for key stage 3 and key stage 4 in the six subjects inspected have good features and no important shortcomings.

235 Overall, the capitation is more than adequate and the good features include:

- a range of text books and equipment across the subject areas;
- a good range of subject booklets produced in-house ;

- the high number of digital projectors and the increasing number of appropriately located interactive white boards that are used effectively to enhance classroom teaching;
- the good use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum; these include visits abroad and to museums, art galleries and theatres, and field trips;
- a wide range of visiting speakers who enhance pupils' learning experiences; and
- the good provision of information and communication technology equipment in design technology for computer aided design and manufacture, and a modern laser cutter.

236 The very good provision of information and communication technology equipment caters well for the teaching of discrete information and communication technology lessons. Many computers to enhance pupils' learning are also available in the mathematics, humanities, music, vocational studies, design technology and learning support departments. Sets of fifteen laptops in each building are available for class use by subjects across the curriculum.

237 An obvious shortcoming in resources for key stages 3 and 4 occurs in design technology, where the rooms are not equipped for the large classes that are taught in them.

238 For the sixth form, in the six subjects inspected, there is a good range and supply of textbooks and equipment. During lessons, when there are no classes, students use the library and their study room with computers for independent learning and research.

239 The library is small for the number of pupils on roll. The library encourages pupils' reading and independent research. It is used well at lunch and break times. It has a teaching area with 20 computers that is used by classes. At other times pupils and students make good use of the computers.

240 The humanities block and sports dome are located between the two main sites of the school. Overall, the accommodation is just sufficient for the numbers of pupils and students on roll. It caters for the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum.

241 As a whole, the accommodation is such that good features outweigh shortcomings. The good features include:

- most rooms catering well for all class sizes;
- subject classrooms being grouped together wherever possible;
- in some corridors and classrooms, displays of pupils' work and subject information providing an effective and occasionally stimulating learning environment;
- the sports dome that has very good facilities;
- the newly refurbished food technology room;
- the modern dining areas that are used well; and
- the school grounds and buildings that are mostly litter free.

242 The Milward building, in particular, has a shabby, drab, overused look. The staircases are narrow and parts of the flooring have missing tiles.

243 Other shortcomings in accommodation include:

- the displays in a few parts of the school that are old and ripped, and fail to subscribe to providing a stimulating learning environment;
- the unsatisfactory condition of some rooms which have old furniture and are in need of refurbishment;
- in design technology where there is only one small room for the teaching of resistant materials; this is insufficient for the numbers of pupils on roll and restricts the development of the 14 –19 curriculum; and
- the inadequate standards of cleaning.

244 Accommodation for the sixth form is sufficient for both the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum. Students benefit from a large common room and two study rooms. One study room has 12 computers, but is timetabled for a small number of lessons. Students use these rooms well for independent learning, research on the Internet and to improve the presentation of their work.

245 Overall, the deployment, management and development of staff have good and outstanding features. The outstanding features are:

- the very well coordinated training for teachers, linked to the professional development of staff in line with performance management, the school development plan and the needs of departments and individuals;
- the programmes and support for newly qualified teachers and for initial teacher training students that are exemplary; they are detailed and comprehensive; and
- the induction and training programmes for cover and learning support assistants.

246 The good features include:

- the deployment of most staff, resulting in effective and efficient use of their expertise, experience and time; and
- the fact that courses attended by staff are carefully evaluated and used to the benefit of the school.

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

248 The headteacher and leadership group have consulted all interested parties and, with the governing body's approval, have finalised their structure for the new teaching and learning responsibilities. It has not yet been fully implemented.

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

249 The financial management of the school is good. The headteacher, deputy head teacher, the bursar and the governing body's sub-committee for finance manage the available budget effectively.

250 The following good features are evident:

- the finance sub-committee meets regularly and it receives detailed up-to-date reports from the headteacher;

- financial decisions are well focused on the curricular needs and educational priorities identified in the school development plan;
- the distribution of capitation to subject areas is formula based and there are opportunities for subject areas to bid for extra funds to introduce initiatives;
- the bursar is responsible for the day-to-day running of the finances and monitors spending effectively;
- the headteacher and heads of department have immediate breakdowns and current balances from the finance officer; and
- the recommendations of the latest auditors' report have been addressed.

251 Overall, the finances and resources are used competently. The school provides good value for money by achieving improved results, having a good quality of teaching, and maintaining good care and support for pupils and students.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

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

#### Good features

##### Key stage 3

- 252 Many pupils listen attentively. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding by responding to questions in class discussion.
- 253 They recall previous learning, describe, explain and put forward ideas. Able pupils pose questions, justify opinions and refer to evidence to support their views and ideas.
- 254 Most read a range of challenging fiction, media texts, poetry and drama, including texts that reflect the culture of Wales. Most read aloud with accuracy and fluency. All read for pleasure. Able pupils read with expression.
- 255 Pupils with additional learning needs are well supported in the development of reading and progress is made. Most pupils skim and scan for information and there is good recall of what is read. Able pupils in particular interpret well and understand inference and the effects of devices used by authors.
- 256 Able pupils and those of middle abilities understand the conventions of different genre. They write in a range of forms and for a variety of purposes. Most adapt tone and language to audience.
- 257 Portfolios of best written work demonstrate that pupils can improve writing by knowledge of the criteria for success and by planning and drafting. Presentation skills are variable.
- 258 Usually, the writing of girls is better than that of the boys. Able pupils structure their work well and often produce writing of a good standard.

##### Key stage 4

- 259 Pupils usually listen respectfully to the opinion of others. Most are able to explain their work clearly and they engage readily in class discussions.
- 260 The most able achieve very good standards of oracy. They collaborate well in small groups, engage in research, use Standard English and are aware of audience and purpose. They use computers effectively to present group work to the class. This shows thorough knowledge of criteria and demonstrates effective collaborative approaches to learning.
- 261 All read a range of texts. They have a clear understanding of plots, characters and themes. Responses in class discussion demonstrate a growing confidence in understanding linguistic devices and statistics.

262 Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the criteria required for different kinds of writing. They are all aware of audience and purpose. They develop good skills of critical analysis in relation to ability.

263 Higher attaining pupils write with fluency and confidence. Their persuasive writing is often well structured and narrative writing conveys mood effectively. Their course work is well structured, detailed and includes insightful comments, appropriate references, accurate use of terminology and clear expression.

### **Post 16**

264 Students put forward opinions in class discussions. They analyse and respond to an appropriate range of challenging tasks orally and in extended critical essays. They demonstrate a clear understanding of characters, plots and themes as well as the social, cultural and historic backgrounds of set texts.

265 The highest attaining students demonstrate detailed and incisive analysis of complex literature. They compare the work of different authors demonstrating a confident use of technical vocabulary and a good understanding of techniques used by writers for effect.

266 Most make good progress in response to diagnostic comments written by teachers. By the end of the course, most students produce critical writing that includes appropriate quotations and cross-references. The writing of the most able is clear, detailed and well structured.

267 All students know and understand assessment criteria and the requirements of the examination board.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stage 3**

268 Pupils lack skills of independent learning. They have insufficient opportunities for pair and group work.

269 Extended writing is insufficiently developed in pupils of lower abilities and those with additional learning needs.

270 In some cases, the reading range of pupils of lower abilities and those with additional learning needs is insufficiently broad and challenging.

271 Boys achieve less well than girls.

#### **Key stage 4**

272 Pupils of lower and middle abilities are reliant on their teachers and do not have sufficient opportunities to develop independent approaches to learning.

### **Post 16**

273 The ability of some students to interpret texts for themselves is sometime limited because of over-reliance on the teachers. This is characterised by a passivity in lessons particularly in Y13.

## Welsh second language

Key Stage 3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings  
Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features  
Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

### Outstanding features

#### Key stage 4

- 274 Pupils of wide ranging ability achieve outstanding standards on the GCSE full course examination. In 2006, results were 23% above national average for success at grades A\* to C.
- 275 Standards in speaking are outstanding. As a starter activity in lessons pupils take turns to face classmates' questions without prior preparation. Their responses are lively and accurate. They express opinions effectively, and confidently conduct dialogues in front of their classmates on any one of a range of topics studied. They vary their sentence structures and tenses to good effect. Dialogue with classmates and their teacher is fluent.
- 276 Pupils write freely without reference to a worksheet. They show a sound grasp of grammar and syntax and use idioms and simile to enhance their writing. Before they begin a task they refer to targets set for improvement on previous work.
- 277 Listening skills are outstanding. During group dialogue each group assesses the other using examination criteria. Pupils offer honest yet sensitive feedback on performance and agree targets for improvement that are recorded.

### Good features

#### Key stage 3

- 278 Pupils make significant progress in all the language skills over the key stage. Their attitude to learning the language is very positive.
- 279 Standards in speaking are good. In group and pair work, pupils converse purposefully. They support each other well. By Y9, pupils build on the language already learned to express an opinion on new topics. The highest achievers perform group conversations confidently in front of their classmates.
- 280 Listening skills of the majority of pupils are good. They listen carefully to each other in class discussions to respond accurately.
- 281 Pupils read to a good standard. They extract information from a range of sources to use in their work. They use dictionaries effectively to introduce new words into their work.
- 282 Writing skills are good. From Y7 onwards, pupils write extended documents. By Y9, the highest achievers make good use of a wide vocabulary and show a sound grasp of tenses.
- 283 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress over the key stage.

284 Pupils use information and communication technology competently to produce presentations and to display work. They make good use of Welsh Internet websites for research work.

#### **Key stage 4**

285 Pupils on the GCSE short course and the entry-level course achieve good standards.

286 Pupils respond accurately to questions and speak clearly. The highest achievers on the short course use idioms and unfamiliar adjectives to create interesting, extended conversations in pairs and groups.

287 Pupils read a range of materials to research different topics.

288 Standards in writing are commensurate with ability. The highest achievers structure their written work well to produce increasingly accurate extended documents.

#### **Post 16**

289 Standards are good in all the language skills.

290 The highest achievers conduct a natural conversation on any subject with peers, teachers and visitors.

291 In class discussion, students make perceptive comments on social and moral issues. When discussing poetry they understand the poet's intentions and the effect of using literary techniques.

292 Students write purposeful notes on set books showing their understanding of content and style.

293 Students' extended documents are structured well. The highest achievers make effective use of their considerable language resources to produce impressive work.

#### **Shortcomings**

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

294 In some classes pupils do not concentrate sufficiently on their work for the whole lesson to reach their full potential.

295 The written work of a small number of pupils is incomplete and contains careless errors.

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

296 A small number of pupils on the short course are somewhat hesitant during class discussion. Their written work is sometimes brief and their spelling is occasionally insecure.

##### **Sixth form**

297 Although they respond accurately to questions, a small number of students are reluctant to express an opinion to move a discussion forward.

298 Written work of a few students contains basic errors of grammar and spelling.

## Design technology

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

### Good features

#### Key stage 3

- 299 Pupils plan well for making, and have a good understanding of making techniques in a wide range of materials. Overall, their making skills are good.
- 300 Nearly all pupils have a sound understanding of the materials they use and how they are applied in the projects they make. They also have a good understanding of the circuits they build.
- 301 Pupils make good use of information and communication technology for some aspects of designing, for computer aided design and manufacture, for the control of microprocessors and in the development and testing of electronic circuits.
- 302 Around four-fifths of pupils present their work well.
- 303 Lower-achieving pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress.

#### Key stage 4

- 304 Pupils understand the function of a design process and nearly all apply it well in their project work. Presentation skills are good.
- 305 In their design work, pupils develop appropriate design specifications, and nearly all understand the relationship between their design specification and the evaluation of the products they make.
- 306 Pupils often research well, especially when they use the Internet. Where appropriate, they model their ideas well.
- 307 Pupils use information and communication technology autonomously for a wide range of applications.
- 308 Pupils' making skills in a wide range of materials and components are consistently good and sometimes outstanding. They have a good understanding of the applications of the materials and components that they use.

#### Post 16

- 309 Students' design work is good overall. Research and presentation are good. Students analyse design contexts well and produce appropriate design specifications to guide their designing.
- 310 Students use information and communication technology autonomously for a wide range of applications.
- 311 Students' analyses and evaluations of commercial products are thorough and detailed and well used to support their designing.

- 312 Students' making skills are good and sometimes outstanding. Finished projects often display innovative characteristics.
- 313 Theoretical understanding is good.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stage 3**

- 314 Pupils do not fully understand the design process and therefore do not consistently apply it in their work. There are particular weaknesses in pupils' development of design specification and in their understanding of its significance when evaluating their products.
- 315 Pupils' skills in making quick developmental design drawings are underdeveloped.
- 316 Middle ability and more able pupils have too few opportunities to extend their ideas and produce individual and innovative solutions to design problems. This is the consequence of over prescriptive projects in a number of modules.

#### **Key stage 4**

- 317 Pupils' skill in making quick developmental design drawings is weaker than that in other areas of their designing.
- 318 Pupils seldom distinguish between primary and secondary criteria in their development of design specifications.

#### **Post 16**

- 319 Quick developmental drawing skills and the use of sketchbooks to record ideas and observations are weaker than other elements of designing.

<b>Geography</b>
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Key Stage 3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings  
Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings  
Post 16: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

### **Outstanding features**

#### **Post 16**

- 320 Students' research and enquiry skills developed through fieldwork are outstanding. They demonstrate a sound grasp of the processes and patterns in physical and human geography. Most coursework assignments completed on the sand dunes at Broomshill Burrows and on urban models based on Haverfordwest are outstanding.
- 321 Many students demonstrate an outstanding depth of knowledge, understanding and skill in the subject. They are proficient in the use of maps, statistical data, printed information sources and information and communication technology. They possess a sound understanding of the process of planning a report and the techniques at their disposal to maximise impact.
- 322 The majority of students have an outstanding grasp of geographical terminology. They use vocabulary appropriately and accurately in a variety of contexts.

## **Good features**

### **Key Stage 3**

- 323 The majority of pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the impact of physical geography on the environment. They possess a sound grasp of the severe problems encountered by the peoples inhabiting challenging environments such as in the Caatinga region of Brazil with its frequent drought conditions.
- 324 Most pupils define an ecosystem with confidence. They name the different parts of the ecosystem and understand the constituent segments. They understand the various parts of the food chain and web and can describe the contribution made by animals, plants and bacteria.
- 325 Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the physical features of Wales. They use the atlas effectively to locate and seek information on the relief and major weather characteristics in different locations in Wales.
- 326 Many pupils acquire a good range of geographical vocabulary with the ability to apply key words accurately to their study of ecosystems, sustainable tourism and globalisation.
- 327 Pupils display a good understanding and knowledge of the location of places. They locate Gambia and Peru on a world map with confidence. They display a sound grasp of the definition of sustainable development and apply this knowledge to describe and explain accurately the benefits of sustainable tourism to the Ese'eja peoples in Peru.
- 328 Pupils with special educational needs complete work of a good standard in relation to their ability. They demonstrate a good level of competency in the application of geographical skills.

### **Key Stage 4**

- 329 Many pupils demonstrate a sound grasp of the types of migration. They understand the significance of the 'push and pull' factors as applied to the movement of people from Mexico to California. They accurately describe the role of factors such as health, life expectancy, infant mortality, education and jobs in influencing the decision of people to move.
- 330 Most pupils' understanding of geographical terminology is good. They are secure in the application of increasingly sophisticated vocabulary to a range of geographical situations and contexts.
- 331 Pupils, with very few exceptions, display a sound grasp of how waterfalls are formed. They appreciate the critical function of rock type and structure in the development of a waterfall. They understand the process of waterfall recession leading to the formation of a gorge.
- 332 Pupils with special educational needs demonstrate good geographical skills and understanding. They apply these with success in the completion of their examination courses.
- 333 Skills of enquiry and observation are strengthened by fieldwork activities undertaken in the local area. They complete detailed individual studies based on practical work

carried out on the River Gwaun and its tributaries. Their understanding of the processes and patterns in physical geography is good.

334 Most pupils analyse and interpret geographical data with accuracy. Mapping and graphical skills are good. They use maps, diagrams, textbooks and information booklets with confidence.

335 Pupils exhibit a good understanding of weathering processes. They fully understand that different climatic conditions determine the dominant type of weathering operating in a specific area.

### **Post 16**

336 Most students display a good understanding of natural hazards and are confident in ranking them according to their predictability and the human capacity to reduce their impact. They provide appropriate explanations to justify their decisions.

337 Students demonstrate a good grasp of the causes of change and the resulting outcomes on rural environments. They explain accurately how economic processes have impacted upon rural communities using specific case studies from Yorkshire and the Lake District. They possess a positive understanding of the issues associated with rural planning.

338 The mature approach adopted by students to their studies ensures the achievement of high standards in all aspects of their work. Completed work is well presented containing detailed notes and assignments on the various sections of their course.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key Stage 3**

339 A few pupils demonstrate limited map and graphical skills.

#### **Key Stage 4**

340 The work of a few pupils lacks the required detail in the completion of set assignments.

### **Post 16**

341 A few members of the group are reluctant to contribute orally in class.

<b>Music</b>
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Key Stage 3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

Post 16: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

### **Outstanding features**

#### **Post 16**

342 Standards of performance are outstanding. The majority of students demonstrate advanced vocal and instrumental skills in their solo and ensemble work.

343 Appraising skills are well developed and essays demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding based on extensive reading and listening experiences. The level of critical analysis is outstanding.

### **Good features**

#### **Key stage 3**

344 The standard of singing in Y7 is good. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and maintain a part in three and four part ensembles with clear diction and good tone.

345 Throughout the key stage, pupils perform confidently with a good degree of accuracy on keyboards and classroom instruments.

346 Pupils compose to a wide range of stimuli with some success. Y9 improvisations on the 12 Bar Blues structure, to a recorded backing track, demonstrate a good understanding of the style and rhythm of jazz.

347 In appraising tasks, pupils are mostly confident in using technical language directly linked to the musical elements.

348 Most pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards particularly in performing 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot' and in jazz improvisations.

#### **Key stage 4**

349 Pupils of all ability perform to a good standard. Many individual and ensemble performances are impressive; they are fluent, expressive and show an excellent understanding of the composer's style.

350 Most compositions show a good awareness of structure and form. There is interesting and imaginative treatment of musical ideas and effective use of instruments and voices. All compositions are enhanced by the use of information and communication technology.

351 All pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of music of different styles and cultures and this is exemplified in their oral and written responses.

#### **Post 16**

352 Compositions show a good understanding of Baroque technique. Work in progress shows evidence of clear structure, good development of musical ideas and an interesting selection and deployment of voices and instruments. Standards are enhanced by well-developed skills using computer programmes.

### **Shortcomings**

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

353 Some pupils, particularly in Y7, find it difficult to keep in time to a common pulse in classroom ensembles.

#### **Key stage 4**

354 Some compositions are not sufficiently refined, and there is limited development of musical ideas.

### **Post 16**

- 355 Occasionally, the harmonic language in some compositions lacks variety, and development of musical ideas is restricted.

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

### **Good features**

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

- 356 Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the religions they study, and this reflects the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus.
- 357 They know what is distinctive to each and can explain in some depth what it means to be Christian, Muslim, Jewish or Hindu.
- 358 They understand what religions have in common, how and why they differ, and the diversity of belief and practice within individual religions.
- 359 Through visits to religious buildings, pupils develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the importance of artefacts and symbolism in religion.
- 360 In both key stages, pupils with additional educational needs make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the religions they study and make good contributions to the oral part of lessons.
- 361 In key stage 4, pupils make mature responses to the moral and social issues they are studying.
- 362 They understand that people have different beliefs and show good knowledge of different religions when expressing their own views on contemporary moral and social issues.
- 363 The majority of pupils respond correctly, orally and in writing, and on the basis of their knowledge they can generalise and form opinions.
- 364 They increasingly understand issues such as human rights, raised by their experience of the natural world and human relationships, and of the way religious leaders address these issues.

### **Post 16**

- 365 Students compare, contrast and evaluate perceptively the views of different scholars on the theory of utilitarianism and its philosophy for everyday life.
- 366 Students express coherent personal views on these matters and make good references to the way different religions respond to these issues.
- 367 They have secure knowledge of Buddhism and are able to relate new knowledge to existing understanding, cross-referencing and comparing as they learn.

## Shortcomings

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 368 The standard of some of the most able pupils' written work does not reflect that of their oral contributions observed in lessons.
- 369 In a minority of classes the class discussions are impeded by shyness and the organisation of the classroom.
- 370 A minority of pupils' poor attendance and their failure to complete pieces of work seriously hinders their progress.

### Post 16

- 371 A small number of students lack confidence and are hesitant in putting forward a point of view in class discussion.
- 372 There is a lack of detail in some written work and a tendency for some students to use a narrative style.

## School's response to the inspection

The governors, headteacher, staff and pupils are pleased that the inspection report recognises Tasker Milward V C School as “ a good school that provides many opportunities for learners to achieve their potential”. The senior leadership group is described as an effective team that works closely with the governing body.

Since the last inspection we have made very good progress in establishing thorough and effective procedures for evaluating and improving provision. Our self-evaluation report is described as “detailed and comprehensive” and its findings and those of the inspection team match each other closely. It also accurately sets out what the school does well and which aspects it needs to develop.

The current high standards achieved by so many of our pupils reflect the very good quality of teaching and learning in the school. Good teaching is cited as a predominant feature, the proportion of lessons being graded 1 and 2 are above the national average and national targets. This represents a considerable improvement in standards since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is at least good in the majority of sixth form classes and is having positive effects on students learning. Many aspects of the work of the sixth form also received positive comments. The inspection findings are testament to the professional and positive way the teaching and support staff discharge their duties. In addition, the development of numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum is playing a significant part in the raising of standards. In particular, the report confirms our judgement that the school has done ‘outstandingly well’ in the progress of information and communication technology and Welsh since the last inspection. We recognise the need to continue this development and to embed ‘Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig’ more firmly in all subjects. To improve learning further, our development plans have already highlighted a need to spread the excellent ‘Assessment for Learning’ practices that exist in some departments and develop more independent

learning strategies. Our aim is to develop confident learners able to set themselves realistic targets, and, together with their teachers, develop strategies to reach them.

We are pleased that the school is recognised as a fully inclusive establishment and, because there is very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs, they do very well across the curriculum. The curriculum is both broad and balanced and is planned to reflect most of the national priorities. We will continue to develop courses appropriate to both learners' needs and aspirations and in line with the 14-19 Learning Pathways.

The quality of the pastoral care, support and guidance is a strength of the school and is given the highest praise. This reflects the school's commitment to its aim of creating a caring community, exercising concern and respect for the welfare of others. We are very proud of the many good and outstanding features described and believe that the support given helps pupils to achieve success and develop their personal and social skills. The quality of careers education is very good and the account taken of employers needs is judged to be outstanding. The report describes effective partnerships with parents, community, education providers and other institutions that provide positive support for learning.

It is reassuring that the inspection team recognised the improvements made since the last inspection and the approval given means we can confidently build on the many good features highlighted, to achieve even further improvement and success.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Tasker-Milward V C School
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11 - 18
Address of school	Off Portfield Avenue, Haverfordwest Pembrokeshire
Postcode	SA61 1EQ
Telephone number	01437 764147

Headteacher	Mr Christopher Jones
Date of appointment	1992
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Caroline Wheeler
Reporting inspector	Mr Brian Medhurst
Dates of inspection	26 <sup>th</sup> February to 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2007

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	168	196	190	204	192	98	68	1116

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	60	7	65.3

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.1:1
Average teaching group size	23.9
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	74.3

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	91.0	90.0	87.0	88.0	92.0	86.2	94.5	89.8
Term 2	91.1	94.4	89.8	89.5	87.5	86.6	86.1	89.4
Term 3	93.4	92.3	90.3	90.1	91.5	92.0	89.2	91.5

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	13
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	71

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006														
Total number of pupils in Y9: 197														
Percentage of pupils at each level														
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	25	37	26	6	0
		National	0.2	0.7	1.2	0.4	0.3	1.5	7.5	20.9	35.2	23.6	8.30	0.1
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	34	30	27	4	0
		National	0.2	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.7	6.2	17.9	24.5	32.5	15.4	0.4
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	14	29	30	16	5
		National	0.2	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.5	6.2	19.2	33.0	27.1	11.5	0.1

- 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	55	In the school	n/a
In Wales	58	In Wales	n/a

**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	183
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	44

<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:</b>	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	92	89	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	64	58	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	90	87	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	46	40	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	99	99	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	85	80	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	99	96	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	1	4	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	3	3

<b>For students aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of students aged 17 in January 2006	101
Number of students entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2006	76
Number of students entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2006	21

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of students entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	54	69	68
Percentage of students entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	83	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	17	20	20

UA Unitary Authority

## Appendix 4

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

Fifteen inspectors (including the school's nominee) spent the equivalent of 45 days at the school.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thirty-eight parents of pupils attended the pre-inspection meeting. One hundred and sixty-two replies to the questionnaire were received and analysed. A few parents also wrote to the registered inspector.

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
Mr Brian W Medhurst Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 5, 6
Dr Michael H L Snow Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 5
Mr Glyn Davies	Key Question 3; Key Question 2; Sixth form co-ordination
Mrs Lynne Bithell	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 3; English
Mr Huw Llewelyn	Contribution to Key Question 3; Geography
Mr Heddwyn Evans	Key Question 4; Contribution to Key Question 3; Religious education (including Religious studies)
Mr Selwyn Gale	Contribution to Key Question 1; Design technology
Mrs Margaret Herbert	Contribution to Key Question 1; Design technology
Mrs Mary Crandon	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3; Welsh
Mrs Susan Williams	Music
Mr Alan Edwards	Key Question 7; Contribution to Key Question 1
Mr David Jones	Support role
Mrs Anne Newman	Support role
Mr Martyn Williams	Support role
Mrs Catherine Millett	School's nominee

**Contractor:** Atlantes Educational Services  
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### Acknowledgement

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