

INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 10 OF THE  
SCHOOL INSPECTIONS ACT 1996

WEST MONMOUTH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL  
BLAENDARE ROAD  
PONTYPOOL  
SOUTH WALES  
NP4 5YG

SCHOOL NUMBER: 678/4072

DATE OF INSPECTION: 19<sup>TH</sup> – 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2004

BY

REGISTERED INSPECTOR: MISS G OWEN

DATE: 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2004

UNDER ESTYN CONTRACT NUMBER: C/T/41/03P

© Crown Copyright 2004

This Report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

## CURRICULUM NOMENCLATURE AND KEY STAGES

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

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

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

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

## GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

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

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

## LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER :

ACCAC	-	Awdurdod Cymwysterau Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru (The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales)
AT	-	Attainment Target
CAD/CAM-		Computer-aided Design and Manufacture
CASE	-	Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education
CAT	-	Cognitive Abilities Test
CoP	-	Code of Practice
EBP	-	Education Business Partnership
EWO	-	Education Welfare Officer
GB-		Governing Body
GCSE	-	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	-	General National Vocational Qualification
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
IEP	-	Individual Educational Plan
INSET	-	In-Service Education and Training
IT	-	Information Technology
KS	-	Key Stage
LSA	-	Learning Support Assistant
NC	-	National Curriculum
NFER	-	National Foundation for Educational Research
NQT	-	Newly Qualified Teacher
OCN	-	Open College Network

OCR	-	Oxford and Cambridge/Royal Society of Arts
PSE	-	Personal and Social Education
PTA	-	Parent-Teacher Association
RoA	-	Record of Achievement
SBSI	-	School-Based Social Inclusion
SDP	-	School Development Plan
SEN	-	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	-	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SMT	-	Senior Management Team
SpLD	-	Specific Learning Difficulties
UA	-	Unitary Authority
WAG	-	Welsh Assembly Government
Y	-	Year

# CONTENTS

<b>1. CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>1</b>
THE SCHOOL AND ITS PRIORITIES.....	1
<b>2. MAIN FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT.....	1
EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED.....	2
STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS.....	3
STANDARDS IN KEY SKILLS.....	3
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED.....	4
PUPILS’ SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.....	4
LEADERSHIP AND EFFICIENCY.....	5
<b>3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING.....	6
3.2 STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN KEY SKILLS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM.....	8
<b>4. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 PUPILS’ SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.....	9
4.2 BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES.....	10
4.3 ATTENDANCE.....	11
<b>5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION.....</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1 TEACHING.....	12
5.2 ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING.....	13
5.3 CURRICULUM.....	14
5.4 SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND PUPILS’ WELFARE.....	16
5.5 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SEN.....	17
5.6 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND COMMUNITY, SCHOOLS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS.....	19
5.7 PARTNERSHIP WITH INDUSTRY.....	20
<b>6. MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>21</b>
6.1 QUALITY OF SELF-EVALUATION AND PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT.....	21
6.2 LEADERSHIP AND EFFICIENCY.....	22
6.3 STAFFING, ACCOMMODATION AND LEARNING RESOURCES.....	24
<b>7. SUBJECTS AND AREAS OF LEARNING.....</b>	<b>25</b>
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS.....	25
ENGLISH.....	25
MATHEMATICS.....	26
SCIENCE.....	28
WELSH SECOND LANGUAGE.....	29
DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY.....	30
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.....	31
HISTORY.....	32
GEOGRAPHY.....	33
MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES.....	34
ART.....	35
MUSIC.....	36
PHYSICAL EDUCATION.....	37
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	38
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION.....	39
DRAMA.....	41
FOOD STUDIES.....	41
CHILD DEVELOPMENT.....	42
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:.....	43

VOCATIONAL GCSE ART .....	43
BUSINESS STUDIES – GCSE AND VOCATIONAL GCSE .....	43
GCSE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE .....	44
VOCATIONAL GCSE APPLIED ICT.....	44
VOCATIONAL GCSE MANUFACTURING.....	45
GNVQ - HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE - INTERMEDIATE.....	45
<b>8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT .....</b>	<b>46</b>
8.1    PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION.....	46
8.2    KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION .....	47
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>48</b>
A.    BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	48
B.    SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS .....	48
C.    RESULTS OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM ASSESSMENTS AND PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS.....	49
D.    THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION.....	50
E.    COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSPECTION TEAM.....	51

## **PART 2: THE INSPECTION SCHEDULE**

### **1. CONTEXT**

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

West Monmouth School is an 11-16, mixed, community school in Torfaen. There are 1080 pupils on roll, compared to 986 at the time of the last inspection in May 1998. The school was founded in 1896 as an 11-18 Haberdashers' Boys' Grammar School; in 1982 it became an 11-16, mixed, comprehensive school. It occupies the original building, on a prominent position, adjacent to the local college, with new buildings added on the campus.

Pupils come mainly from part of Pontypool, New Inn and Griffithstown, areas to the south of the school. About half of the pupils come from residential areas which are neither particularly prosperous nor economically disadvantaged, with the other half divided between prosperous and disadvantaged areas. Sixteen per cent are entitled to free school meals, slightly lower than the latest national figure of 18.5 per cent. The vast majority speak English as their first language, and there are very few pupils from minority ethnic heritages.

Pupils represent the full range of ability. There is a smaller proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) than nationally. Twenty-three pupils have statements of SEN and a further 114 have been identified as needing some support.

The school has clear aims and objectives to value the contribution of every individual and to prepare pupils for the future, by encouraging them to fulfil their potential, in a wide range of learning experiences. Its development plan shows how these aims will be achieved.

The headmaster, deputy headmaster and assistant heads were all in post at the time of the last inspection. The two heads of school, who are included in the senior management team, are both new in post but well-established at the school.

### **2. MAIN FINDINGS**

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

West Monmouth School is a good school. It has made significant progress since the last inspection in terms of standards, examination results and the quality of teaching, while retaining its strong sense of community and very good pastoral care. Pupils develop into confident young adults through the many opportunities in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The school is very well led, morale is high and there are very good links with its local community. The well-established culture of self-evaluation and planning for continuous improvement augurs well for continued success.

## Educational Standards Achieved

### Good Features

- Standards were at least satisfactory in 100 per cent of classes observed and good or very good in 70 per cent. These figures compare very favourably with those of the last inspection of 90 per cent and 33 per cent respectively.
- Standards are very good at key stage (KS) 4 in modern foreign languages, music, physical education, vocational art and health and social care (GNVQ).
- Standards are good in the large majority of other subjects.
- Pupils' key skills of communication and numeracy are good. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality award.
- Pupils of differing abilities do well in the vast majority of teaching groups.
- Results in the national curriculum (NC) tests at the end of KS3 have improved year by year and, in 2003, were in line with the national average and the average for schools with a similar intake. In mathematics and science, results were above average in both indicators.
- Results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) have also improved significantly since the last inspection. In 2003, 60 per cent of pupils gained at least five grades A\*-C, compared to 46 per cent in 1997. Results in 2003 were above the national average and above average for schools with a similar intake.
- There have been very good results, by pupils across the ability range. All pupils in recent years have left school with qualifications, 98 per cent of them with at least one GCSE and over 90 per cent on average with at least five, with particularly good results in vocational subjects. These results are also above national averages and well above those for schools with a similar intake.
- Results at GCSE in a number of option groups have been well above national averages.

### Shortcomings

- Pupils' performance in the core subjects, specifically English in NC tests and mathematics and science at GCSE, has been lower than their performance in many other subjects.
- In a small minority of subjects there are some shortcomings, which render standards satisfactory as opposed to good.
- Overall, and in some subjects in particular, boys achieve less well than girls, as nationally.
- Standards in information and communications technology across the curriculum are unsatisfactory.

## Standards in Subjects

Subject	KS3	KS4
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory
Science	Good	Good
Welsh second language	Good	Good
Design and Technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	Satisfactory	Good
History	Good	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Modern Foreign Languages	Good	Very good
Art	Good	Good
Music	Good	Very good
Physical Education	Good	Very good
Religious Education	Good	Good
Religious Studies	-	Good
Personal and Social Education (PSE)	Good	Good
Drama	Good	Good
Food Studies	Good	-
Home Economics: Child Development	-	Good
Vocational GCSE Art	-	Very good
Vocational GCSE Business Studies	-	Satisfactory
GCSE Business Studies	-	Satisfactory
Vocational GCSE Applied ICT	-	Good
Vocational GCSE Manufacturing	-	Good
Health and Social Care	-	Vocational GCSE: Good GNVQ: Very good

## Standards in Key Skills

Key Skill	KS3	KS4
Listening	Good	Good
Speaking	Good	Good
Reading	Good	Good
Writing	Good	Good
Numeracy	Good	Good
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

## Quality of Education Provided

### Good Features

- Teaching was at least satisfactory in 100 per cent of classes observed and good or very good in 78 per cent. These figures are high and compare very favourably with those of the last inspection, of 90 per cent and 42 per cent respectively.
- In 23 per cent of classes, teaching was very good. This is also a high figure.
- There is a broad curriculum which includes drama and a second modern foreign language, and a range of vocational courses at KS4.
- For those at risk of disaffection there are imaginative modifications to the curriculum and to pupils' experiences of learning at both KS3 and KS4.
- There is a very good programme of extra-curricular activities, which supports pupils' learning, by revision clubs after school and in holidays, and develops their talents. There is a particularly wide range of opportunities in music, drama, sports, the Duke of Edinburgh's award and Young Enterprise activities.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good overall.
- There is regular assessment of pupils' achievement within departments.
- Pupils' progress across the curriculum is effectively tracked and underachievement identified at an early stage.
- Pupils in year (Y)9 and Y11, identified as needing extra support prior to NC tests and GCSE examinations, are mentored by members of senior management and teaching staff.
- Links with parents are good and reports to parents give full information on pupils' progress.
- There are good curricular links with primary schools and very good pastoral links, which ease transition.
- The school's position at the heart of its community provides valuable opportunities for pupils, in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.
- There are good strategies for work-related education.

### Shortcomings

- In a very small minority of classes, particularly in lower ability groups, pupils' behaviour adversely affects the quality of learning and standards achieved. There is little support staffing for pupils with SEN in these groups.
- There is no library/resource centre as a focal point for learning and research.

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

### Good Features

- Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Their moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school places emphasis on valuing each individual. Pupils are encouraged to develop into confident young adults in a relaxed yet purposeful environment of mutual respect.
- They have many opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. The school and year councils involve them in decision-making, and they respond with maturity.
- Standards of behaviour overall are good. The vast majority of pupils behave very well in class and around the school and are polite and friendly to visitors.
- The school has been pro-active in setting up a school-based social inclusion area to try

to modify some very challenging behaviour by a small group of pupils.

- Assemblies are generally of good quality. They contribute to pupils' spiritual development and to the celebration of pupils' success in a wide variety of activities.
- Pastoral care is very good. Individuals are supported by the school and, when appropriate, by a range of external agencies.
- They are encouraged to attend regularly. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory at over 90 per cent.
- The PSE programme is well planned and well delivered.
- The Welsh dimension is promoted within many subjects in the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities. The school and local Eistedfodau are very popular.

### Shortcomings

- There is not a daily act of collective worship in all tutor groups on days when pupils do not attend assembly. Thus statutory requirements are not met.

## Leadership and Efficiency

### Good Features

- The headmaster gives very good leadership, with vision, charisma and care for individuals.
- He also promotes the school in the local and wider community and is engaged in professional developments throughout the United Kingdom.
- Governors have very good expertise and fulfil their leadership role effectively.
- The senior management team also gives effective leadership, clearly focused on standards, teaching, learning and pastoral care and on supporting the work of middle management and staff.
- The quality of middle management, both academic and pastoral, is mostly good or very good.
- Teaching staff represent a very effective balance between experience and recent training. In practice, this results in a vibrant atmosphere where morale is high.
- The self-evaluation systems are very good and the resultant reflective culture is well embedded.
- Development planning is closely linked to review and leads to school improvement on a whole-school level and within each area of practice.
- Professional development in these and other areas has been effective and has led to a large measure of consistency among staff in practice. The school has gained Investor in People status for the quality of its staff development.
- Non-teaching staff also contribute substantially to the smooth-running of the school.
- Data are correlated and analysed effectively, to promote achievement.
- Systems for the induction of newly-qualified teachers and for the guidance of initial teacher training students are very good.
- There are very good links with other educational institutions.
- Financial planning and management are thorough and the school has maintained an appropriate surplus in recent years.
- The school has been successful in gaining a number of national awards for good practice and in acquiring funding for various initiatives.
- There has been very good progress in virtually all the key issues from the last inspection, as well as in standards, teaching and learning.

### Shortcomings

- Overall, the quality of the accommodation is unsatisfactory and there are some related health and safety issues.
- There are shortages of resources in some departments, and in ICT resources generally.

## 3. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

### 3.1 Standards Achieved in Subjects and Areas of Learning

Standards of achievement are good overall and represent significant progress since the last inspection.

At KS3, standards are good in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and also in Welsh second language, history, modern foreign languages, art, music, physical education, religious education, personal and social education, drama and food studies. Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects – design and technology, information technology and geography.

At KS4, standards improve. In five subjects, standards are very good and, again, in the large majority of subjects, standards are good. Standards were judged as very good in modern foreign languages, music, physical education, vocational art and health and social care (General National Vocational Qualification - GNVQ). Standards are good in all other subjects except mathematics, design and technology (resistant materials), geography and business studies in which standards are satisfactory.

There is an improving trend in virtually all subjects. Recent appointments of well-qualified and able young teachers are resulting in improving standards, higher than previous examination results would suggest. Performance in the core subjects in particular is improving, but has not yet been reflected in examination results. The grades awarded for teaching in this inspection are higher than for the standards achieved over time and throughout a key stage. For these reasons, there is considerable potential for standards to be very good in a larger number of subjects than at present.

Standards were at least satisfactory in 100 per cent of the 231 classes observed, and good or very good in 70 per cent of classes. These are both high figures and a significant improvement on those of the last inspection of 90 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. There is a much greater proportion of classes in which standards were judged good than were judged very good – 58 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. Standards are better at KS4. The proportion of good and very good standards was 76 per cent, compared to 67 per cent at KS3.

Pupils do well in the vast majority of teaching groups. The good features are that pupil groupings are effective in practice for the most part, the curriculum is appropriate and wide-ranging, teaching promotes achievement and pupils receive much extra support, individually and in small groups. The two features which curtail achievement to some extent across the curriculum are the lack of regular access to ICT resources and to a research centre/library/resources centre. The extent to which pupils of differing abilities are challenged in each subject varies, in close correlation to the standards achieved. Where standards are very good, pupils of all abilities are challenged. Where standards are satisfactory, there is less

challenge for some or all abilities. Overall, pupils achieve well. Detail on individual subjects can be found below and especially in the subject reports in section 7.

Able pupils do well, generally. They achieve very good standards in both key stages in physical education, at KS3 in religious education and at KS4 in music and modern foreign languages. In most other subjects they achieve well, using extended speech and writing to a high standard and learning to think for themselves. In design and technology and geography, these skills are satisfactory as opposed to good. In information technology at KS3 and in business studies at KS4, there is a degree of underachievement.

Pupils of average ability also do well generally. They achieve very well in modern foreign languages and music at KS4 and in no subject do they reach less than satisfactory standards. Key skills are good, pupils are well motivated and they respond well to the good teaching they receive. In a very small minority of classes, mainly in mathematics, geography and design and technology, general chatter sometimes slows the pace of progress.

There is greater variation in the extent to which pupils of lower ability and those with SEN make progress, than in other ability groups. Pupils in the majority of teaching groups and subjects do well but, in some teaching groups, challenging behaviour adversely impacts on standards achieved and there is very little support staffing to help those with SEN. In mainstream classes, most pupils achieve very well in physical education, and well in English, Welsh, history, music, religious education, drama and PSE. Pupils with SEN also achieve well in mathematics and science. The school has been pro-active in setting up a school-based inclusion area for some pupils, with appropriate plans to extend its remit. Standards achieved here are generally good, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Boys achieve less well than girls. The gap in performance was greater in KS3 tests in 2003 than at GCSE. At GCSE, whilst there was a marked difference, it was less than the gap nationally. There was greater disparity in the percentage of grades A\*-C, than across the full range of grades. All boys and all girls leave school with qualifications. In English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, art and music the gender gap has been most apparent in examinations. In classes observed, the content and presentation of girls' written work were usually significantly better than boys'.

Results in the NC tests at the end of KS3 have steadily improved and were the highest to date in 2003. Results in science and in mathematics were above the national average and the average for schools with a similar intake. Results in English were below in both indicators. Thus the proportion of pupils reaching level five in all three subjects was in line with the national average (54 per cent) and was average for schools with a similar intake. Pupils did better in a number of foundation subjects at KS3 than in the core subjects.

GCSE results have improved significantly since the last inspection. Sixty per cent of pupils gained at least five grades A\*-C, compared to 46 per cent in 1997. This figure was above the national comparator of 51 per cent and above average for schools of a similar intake. Results across the full range of grades were also above or well above both indicators and all pupils in recent years have left with qualifications, virtually all at GCSE level. Success in vocational subjects at GCSE and GNVQ level has been very good, and there has been a strong measure of progress in English literature, French, music, physical education and Welsh over the last two years. Results in the core subjects have not matched the results in many option groups. The percentage of pupils gaining a grade A\*-C in all three subjects has hovered around the

national average in recent years and the average for schools with a similar intake. Results in English have been above average, but science results have been below average in both categories. Able mathematicians have been successful in early entry at GCSE, but there has not been a strong measure of progress in the results of pupils of average to lower ability.

### **3.2 Standards Achieved in Key Skills across the Curriculum**

Overall standards in speaking, reading, writing, listening and numeracy are good. Standards in the use of ICT across the curriculum are unsatisfactory.

Listening skills are good and occasionally very good. Most pupils listen attentively in lessons and respond appropriately to demands expected of them by teachers. Furthermore, the great majority of pupils maintain concentration through the duration of lessons. Occasionally, pupils listen rather passively and a small minority becomes inattentive in lessons.

Speaking is good in virtually all subjects in both KS3 and in KS4. The vast majority of pupils contribute enthusiastically to oral work in lessons. They speak confidently and use appropriate technical terms in their responses to questions from teachers in subjects. In science, they discuss environmental and moral issues competently and, in religious education, they are fluent and articulate in giving presentations to the whole class. Occasionally, however, opportunities for discussion or extended speaking are limited and consequently a minority of pupils lack the confidence to develop their initial responses. This is evident to some extent in Welsh second language, personal and social education, religious education and geography.

Standards in reading are good. Most pupils read accurately and with understanding from a range of sources. In Welsh second language, pupils read with good pronunciation and expression and in geography many pupils have good map-reading skills. In several subjects, opportunities are provided for pupils to read aloud in lessons. In science and occasionally in mathematics, pupils of lower ability read aloud with confidence and clarity. For example, in art, pupils read competently for research and this enhances their practical work. However, in geography there are limited opportunities for pupils to read for research purposes and this has an adverse effect on standards.

Standards in writing are good. Generally pupils produce written work that is neat, accurate and coherent in all subjects. In English, pupils undertake a good range of written tasks and the significant majority produce good quality pieces of writing in a variety of contexts. More able pupils produce well-structured and extended pieces of written work in history, modern foreign languages and in Welsh second language. Pupils also produce some very good quality written work in religious education that shows appropriate use of key words. Written work is usually used well to enhance pupils' understanding of subjects but occasionally pupils merely copy work given by teachers and this restricts opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas in writing.

Standards in numeracy are good. In mathematics pupils have a good recall of basic number facts and good opportunities are provided for them to consolidate their skills of using number in appropriate contexts. They are proficient in calculating mentally, use calculators appropriately and interpret data presented in a range of graphical forms. In science they show good numerical and graphical skills and they are competent in using a range of measures in

design and technology and physical education. Good standards are also evident in geography, where pupils interpret statistical data confidently.

Standards in ICT are unsatisfactory. In a few subjects pupils show good and occasionally very good standards in ICT. For example, in science pupils show good use of ICT in a range of applications; they use the internet to search for relevant information and make good use of appropriate software to produce lively presentations. Pupils also show very good standards in physical education in KS4 and in information technology. In a small minority of subjects there is some very good use of the six interactive whiteboards. In mathematics, for example, the use of an interactive whiteboard in one classroom impacts significantly on pupils' understanding of particular concepts. Currently, however, only a small number of subjects provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to make purposeful use of ICT. There are a notable number of subjects including mathematics, design and technology, art, history and geography where ICT is not used effectively. This is a significant shortcoming and has a detrimental effect on overall standards.

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

### **4.1 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Their moral, social and cultural development is good. The school places emphasis on pupils' personal development and there is useful guidance in the staff handbook on ways to promote each aspect through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The school is committed to promoting the human spirit as well as spirituality. There are good opportunities in religious education to reflect on the nature of God, on suffering and on other themes of a religious nature. In art, there is reflection on iconography and meaning in western and non-western art. Pupils respond well to such opportunities and express balanced, considered points of view. However, few such opportunities were observed in other subjects. Assemblies contribute to pupils' spiritual development. There is a strong moral or spiritual message, and pupils participate in the singing of hymns and the reciting of the Lord's prayer with energy. There is, however, little time for reflection and there is little input from pupils into the presentation of the theme of the week. On the three days when pupils do not attend assembly, there is no act of worship in tutor groups and thus statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not met.

There is good involvement of pupils in debating moral issues in many subjects across the curriculum. Ethical and environmental issues are discussed maturely in science, history, geography, information technology, food studies and personal and social education. There is also emphasis on sustainable development in geography and personal and social education, with units of work planned for each year-group. Pupils' moral development is enhanced by the atmosphere of mutual respect which prevails in the vast majority of classes. Relationships are mostly very good and, if problems occur, right and wrong are clarified. Nevertheless, there is a very small minority of pupils who do not respond appropriately. Classes in physical education make a good contribution to a sense of fair-play.

Pupils consider a range of social issues in lessons, particularly in science, geography,

religious education and personal and social education. Examples include population density, the gap between rich and poor, and a range of social problems such as drugs and alcohol. Visiting speakers make a strong contribution, from their expertise and experience in the community. Pupils respond well to such occasions and make pertinent comments in discussion. There are many collaborative opportunities both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities and a good spirit of co-operation within the school as a whole. Pupils also have opportunities to take the initiative and responsibility through the school and year councils. They consult widely and use decision-making opportunities sensibly.

Pupils increase their knowledge of their own and other cultures through a range of activities. They appreciate the cultural heritage of Wales through a number of subjects, especially English, science, Welsh second language, history geography, religious education, art and music, but opportunities are missed in physical education, information technology, business studies and food studies. The extra-curricular opportunities make a strong contribution through the school and local Eistedfoddau, Urdd camps and residential language courses. Music also contributes significantly to pupils' cultural development in assemblies and in numerous extra-curricular activities in school and in the community. Similarly, pupils learn about their own and other cultures through drama in the curriculum and through productions, including visits to theatres. The school celebrates diversity. Visiting speakers raise pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in the community and there is a good awareness of racial equality issues. These are discussed in health and social care, in religious education and in food studies, where pupils show insight into cultural influences on food and family life. The school's racial equality policy sets out a clear framework and offers good guidance to staff on raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.

## **4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes**

Behaviour and attitudes are good.

In class the majority of pupils behave very well and attitudes to learning are generally very good. There is mutual respect between teachers and pupils with pupils obeying instructions quickly and quietly. Most pupils listen attentively and get on with their work conscientiously. This good and often very good behaviour makes a significant contribution to standards of achievement and pupils' progress.

A very small minority of pupils cause low-level disruption in class. They chatter constantly disturbing others, particularly in some lessons in mathematics, design and technology and geography. Occasionally the teacher ignores this, making it difficult for the rest of the class to hear or to concentrate. Some pupils exhibit very challenging behaviour in some lower ability groups and in the social inclusion unit; this is often but not always well managed and the need for appropriate behaviour is constantly reinforced.

In and around the school, pupils conduct themselves appropriately. It is a relaxed and orderly environment. However, in the canteen in some lunchtimes, the room becomes overcrowded, as pupils are not asked to leave once they have finished their lunch. Consequently the noise levels are unacceptably high with some pupils behaving inappropriately.

The school constantly promotes the importance of good behaviour and appropriate rewards and sanctions are used to achieve this and have the desired effect. However, younger pupils

report that there is some inconsistency in the use of rewards and that the three warnings system is also occasionally ignored. The prospectus contains details of the school's very good pastoral care arrangements, informing parents of the school's expectations. Closer home/school links are promoted, should there be a behavioural problem. Exclusions are kept to a minimum and only used as a last resort. Twenty-one pupils (19 boys) have been excluded temporarily over the last 12 months with two boys being permanently excluded.

A very good initiative is the "Little Devils' Club" (named by pupils), which takes place in the summer term, for any Y6 pupils intending to transfer to West Monmouth School who have behavioural or other problems. They have the opportunity to learn about their new school's rules and, if necessary, undergo counselling.

Pupils admit there is some bullying. If it is brought to staff's attention it is immediately dealt with, although the bully and the victim are sometimes not brought together with adult mediation, so that they can themselves resolve the conflict.

Parents who replied to the questionnaire and/or attended the pre-inspection meeting report that they are happy with the standards of behaviour and discipline set by the school.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Overall attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Attendance prior to the inspection was 91.3 per cent (Spring 2003), 90.9 per cent (Summer 2003) and 90.4 per cent (Autumn 2003). This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when rates were around the 86 per cent mark. There is low unauthorised absence. Where levels fall below the benchmark of 90 per cent, this is mainly due to medical reasons, holidays taken in term time and the occasional "day off", the latter occasionally condoned by parents. Y11 attendance is sometimes a cause for concern, mainly due again to illness and holidays in term time but also a few disaffected pupils come to school very irregularly.

The appointment of an attendance officer in the school to work full-time chasing up absence on the first day, and the very good relationship that the school has with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) service has led to this improvement. A target of 94 per cent has been set so the school still has some way to go to achieve this. With new initiatives introduced in Y7 and the constant monitoring and following up of absence, the school believes this can be achieved. There is, however, no computerized system in place which would speed up the process, giving those responsible for analysing and acting upon the data more time for telephoning home and interviewing pupils with poor rates of attendance.

Registers are marked first thing in the morning and in the afternoon, with class registers also being taken. Overall, pupils are punctual to school in the morning and to registration in the afternoon. A system of late marks and signing in is rigorously applied, in an effort to improve punctuality. Movement between classes on the whole works well, although during the inspection some classes were late starting. The school fully complies with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) requirements for the recording and reporting of attendance.

## 5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

### 5.1 Teaching

Teaching is good overall. In 100 per cent of classes observed, teaching was at least satisfactory. In 78 per cent, teaching was good or very good. These are both high figures and a substantial improvement on those of the last inspection of 90 per cent and 42 per cent respectively. In this inspection, teaching was judged very good in 23 per cent of classes. This is also a high figure. Teaching is better at KS4 than at KS3. It was good or very good in 83 per cent of classes at KS4, compared to 75 per cent at KS3.

Teaching is very good overall in art and physical education at both key stages, and, at KS4, in modern foreign languages and music. There is also very good teaching in some classes in English, mathematics, science, Welsh second language, religious education, personal and social education, drama, and health and social care. The quality of teaching overall in subjects is closely related to the standards achieved. Where standards are satisfactory, there are some shortcomings. Overall, teaching is good in most subjects of the curriculum.

Teachers are virtually all subject-specialists and have good knowledge of their subject. A third of the staff have been appointed since the last inspection, many as newly-qualified teachers on appointment. There is therefore a very good balance between experienced teachers and those newly trained. The result is a vibrant atmosphere, with much enthusiasm and many new ideas introduced. There is also an embedded reflective culture and commitment to continuous improvement. Senior managers regularly monitor teaching, support departments and are on call to deal with any incidents. All these factors contribute substantially to the high quality of teaching overall.

Planning for individual lessons and over time, in schemes of work, is good and sometimes very good. When it is very good, such as in art, physical education, modern foreign languages and music, there is due attention to the pace and timing of a variety of activities and strategies and lesson objectives are often shared with pupils. There is mostly a good balance between whole-class teaching, pair, group and individual work to probe pupils' understanding and develop their key skills. However, teaching is sometimes over-didactic and teachers' presentations too long, as observed in some lessons in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, geography, personal and social education and business studies.

Work is usually well matched to pupils' abilities and aptitudes, helped by the banding system. However, the range of ability within such groupings is not always catered for in the booklets provided, for example in information technology. In general, work is matched to the needs and interests of the most able, pupils of average ability and those with SEN in the school-based social inclusion centre more successfully than to the needs of pupils of lower ability in mainstream, some with SEN. Strategies are not always adapted imaginatively and effectively in some lower ability teaching groups.

Relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils are generally very good. There is a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere in lessons and pupils have good opportunities to show initiative in many lessons. A very small minority of pupils overall have challenging behaviour. This is mostly well managed in mainstream classes and in the school-based social inclusion area, though in a very small minority of teaching groups, pupils' behaviour adversely affects the quality of learning and standards achieved.

Whilst resourcing is adequate for the number of pupils overall, there are shortages of resources in some departments and across the school which have an impact on teaching. There are few departmental ICT facilities and interactive whiteboards, and there is difficulty in accessing ICT central resources. Thus ICT technology does not yet have a significant impact on teaching styles and on pupils' learning. Nor is there a central resource area for research, involving written and ICT resources. Thus individual and group research is not an integral feature of lessons. Resources in geography are inadequate, in design and technology there is insufficient equipment for teaching systems and control and in history there are insufficient audio-visual resources for teachers' presentations.

Equally, whilst there is sufficient accommodation for the number of pupils on roll, there are unsatisfactory aspects which have an impact on teaching and learning. These relate particularly to the quality of accommodation in physical education and drama, and in some science laboratories, and to the size of teaching rooms in a number of subjects, given the large size of some classes in KS3. Activities are restricted by the inability of the teacher and pupils to move around the room.

Teachers' expectations of pupils are high, generally, both in terms of achievement and behaviour and sometimes very high. Teachers are also generous in the time they give to pupils outside lesson time, in extra sessions prior to examinations, in extra-curricular clubs and visits and in mentoring individuals at KS3 and KS4. The latter is firmly founded on good assessment by teachers in departments and on effective tracking of progress across the curriculum. The quality and setting of homework are regularly monitored by senior management, to ensure that classroom teaching is extended by work completed at home.

The quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school.

## **5.2 Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

The quality of assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievement is good.

The school policy provides clear guidelines to all staff on the central role of assessment in informing teaching and improving learning. The document refers to the full range of assessment practice, the importance and ownership of accurate records, guidelines in reporting, the use of pupil data and a marking policy. Departmental policies are good on the whole and reflect the school's determination to raise standards through the quality of assessment, recording and reporting practice. Good use is made of computer-generated data to inform the analysis of results and set specific targets for the whole school, departments and individual pupils. The senior managers linked to the departments play a pivotal role in this process. In science, a support technician has established an effective software package which facilitates the storage and analysis of pupils' data. All staff therefore have access to a common framework which is intended to be used with accuracy and consistency.

In the best practice, assessment is well-planned and integrated within the scheme of work. Homework and assessment tasks are focused with graded or levelled mark schemes and results recorded on a common pro-forma. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide valuable feedback through comments on strengths, weaknesses and an indication of what pupils need to do to progress in the subject. Advice on remedial measures and the redrafting

of work is monitored and there are no significant gaps in the pupils' records. Good practice in all aspects of summative assessment is found, for example, in art, information technology, music, modern foreign languages, physical education, religious education, science and Welsh second language, while in English the quality is very good. There are some shortcomings in assessment in history, geography and business studies.

There is some evidence of inconsistency in the day-by-day marking of pupils' work. In a minority of subjects pupils do not complete, redraft or improve corrected work. Where this is the case, pupils generally ignore the written comments of teachers who, in turn, fail to follow up the omission.

The school is developing pupils' self-assessment skills in most subjects from Y7 onwards. They comment on the areas of greatest and least progress and set targets for improvement. They are required to identify their strengths and weaknesses in the appropriate section of the annual report. This encourages pupils to improve and accept responsibility for their progress. In addition, it gives them a better understanding of the NC level at which they are working or target GCSE grade. In KS4, pupils do not always articulate with confidence their grade potential together with their hopes and aspirations for their future in education.

Departments have good systems for keeping records of pupils' progress based upon regular assessments. These assessments are, in general, aligned to NC levels or GCSE grade descriptors. The procedures for monitoring pupils' overall progress are good and underachievement is identified at an early stage. Within the target-setting process, the best practice is observed when teachers state the nature of the underachievement and what pupils need to do to improve their performance. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) and SEN subject co-ordinators provide good support to teachers assessing pupils with special educational needs. The use of individual educational plans (IEPs) is well developed, notably so in science, and teachers in subjects across the curriculum have a good knowledge of the particular needs of pupils in their groups.

The school meets the statutory requirements for reporting to parents and carers and the quality is uniformly good. Reports are constructive and informative. They make reference to attainment targets in individual subjects and provide an accurate statement of pupils' achievements, weaknesses and what must be done to improve.

### **5.3 Curriculum**

The quality, breadth and balance of the curriculum are good in KS3 and KS4. The curriculum fulfils all the statutory requirements for the NC and religious education. Curricular provision is effective and pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, have appropriate curricular opportunities. No pupils are disappplied from aspects of the NC. The fortnightly cycle of 50 hours provides flexibility for timetabling and the time allocated complies with the recommended 25-hour teaching week.

In KS3, pupils follow a curriculum that includes all the subjects of the NC, religious education, food studies and drama. Subjects are broadly allocated the appropriate number of lessons. Pupils are grouped by ability using information provided by the standards achieved in NC tests in KS2 in addition to performance in Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs) undertaken in the first term in Y7 at the secondary school. Thereafter, movement between pupil groups is

limited throughout the remainder of this key stage. While class size is generally good, there are a number of groups in KS3 accommodating 33 and 34 pupils. Pupils study IT and PSE in discrete lessons. All pupils study French as the main foreign language, while in Y8 and Y9 more able pupils also follow a course in German. These groups of pupils spend a little less time studying English, Welsh and French to enable the inclusion of the additional language. Pupils in the lower half of the ability range undertake a course in 'Successmaker' throughout the whole key stage, again by spending a little less time on French and Welsh second language. Both of these modifications work well in practice. The curriculum is suitably adapted for pupils in the school-based social inclusion area, in its first year of operation. They are taught in a dedicated Support Base in KS3 for much of their curriculum, while practical lessons take place in the specialist curricular areas and there are appropriate plans to extend the practical side of the curriculum.

In KS4, the organisation of a common core curriculum ensures that pupils have access to courses in English, Welsh second language, mathematics, science, physical education, PSE and religious education. The well-planned option arrangements allow pupils to pursue a balanced programme, while those who wish to specialise may do so. In addition, particular interests may be pursued through a programme of five vocational GCSE subjects, applied science and GNVQ in health and social care. In both Y10 and Y11, a small number of pupils follow an alternative curriculum which comprises a day's attendance at college following a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) course including work-related experience. The remainder of the week is spent in school to ensure that the curriculum fulfils statutory requirements. The arrangements for PSE are generally good. The subject is taught by a dedicated team through a programme of timetabled lessons with additional contributions identified in other subject areas. The programme of study for PSE and work-related education follows national guidelines from the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACCAC). Careers guidance is given by the subject co-ordinator assisted by Careers Wales Gwent in both key stages and is delivered through the PSE programme. All pupils undertake two weeks' work experience in Y10. The quality of relationships with local employers helps to ensure that pupils find appropriate placements which are well-monitored. In addition, pupils in both key stages experience participation in enterprise initiatives. The quality of the PSE programme is enriched by making full use of a range of external providers. However, the allocation of one hour per fortnight to PSE in KS4 does little to enhance curricular continuity. Time for statutory religious education in KS4 is also minimal.

The quality of the planning for the development of key skills is good and the significant progress made in communication and numeracy reflects the profile they are afforded in highly-structured schemes of work. In addition, there are extensive displays of key skills' materials in teaching accommodation.

The schemes of work are suitably detailed and cover the requirements of the NC. In the best practice, they cover all aspects, giving clear guidance for teaching and learning in addition to continuity and progression between key stages. Opportunities for the inclusion of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig are well-documented in most curricular areas, notably so in English, Welsh second language, music, science, religious education and art. However, in information technology, physical education, food studies and business studies there is little evidence of the development of the Welsh dimension.

Curricular continuity between the key stages is good. Cross-phase links with the partner primary schools and the local college are good. These contacts are nurtured and sustained by

mutual visits, curricular initiatives and joint meetings.

Extra-curricular provision is very good and pupils benefit from a wide range of activities. Most departments build into their programmes of study visits and trips that facilitate curriculum relevance and interest. English and drama organise theatre visits and in-house productions by travelling theatre groups, poets and storytellers. The modern foreign languages department arranges exchanges while in science there are trips to exhibitions and lectures. Pupils take part in a range of local and national competitions and sports events. A group of Y7 pupils with SEN has recently won the Torfaen "Rocket Challenge." The school has a very good reputation for the contribution made by the choir and orchestra to the local music scene.

Teachers give generously of their time beyond that contracted to help individuals and to offer extra-curricular opportunities to extend and broaden pupils' learning.

#### **5.4 Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare**

The quality of support, guidance and pupils' welfare is very good and is a notable feature of the school. The school is a caring community which gives clear personal guidance and support to individual pupils. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy being in the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils with SEN are well supported.

The pastoral care system is very well structured. It is effectively led by the pastoral assistant head who oversees the provision. He is ably assisted by the two heads of school who are very well supported by heads of year, their assistants and a team of form tutors. The heads of year, their assistants and form tutors remain with their groups as they progress through from Y 7 – Y 11. Staff, therefore, know their pupils very well. Pupils' individual needs are understood and appreciated. Communication between members of the pastoral team is very good and there is a very good team ethos. Regular team meetings are held. The school nurse plays an invaluable role in the welfare of pupils.

Daily support is provided through contact with form tutors during registration period. They monitor homework diaries, check attendance, punctuality and uniform. Heads and assistant heads of year oversee effectively this process. A specific extended pastoral lesson taken by form tutors is held every fortnight when all year groups follow a set programme compiled by the pastoral team. Attention is given to developing key skills and completing personal files.

Pupils receive their entitlement of PSE. The programme is comprehensive, well co-ordinated and well delivered and covers a number of social issues and aspects of health and sex education. Careers advice for pupils is very good and develops pupils' awareness of work opportunities. The quality of arrangements for work experience is good. This is evaluated by pupils and the whole experience thoroughly monitored. The school has good links with Careers Wales Gwent.

The school has developed a number of very effective initiatives and policies to embrace several aspects of pastoral care. These include a behaviour management policy, an anti-bullying policy and a youth access programme, in which disaffected pupils work with community workers. School rules, policies and systems are made clear and understood by pupils.

Pupils are well known on entry to the school and the head of lower school has developed strong and productive links with partner primary schools. Good guidance is given to pupils when they make their option choices in Y9 and as they prepare to move out of the school in Y11. Many teachers give freely of their time during lunch break and after school to support pupils' academic progress.

Pupils' academic and pastoral progress are tracked by heads of school and pupils needing extra support are identified at an early stage and linked to a specific member of staff. The process is carefully monitored and is effective in its implementation.

The school has very good links with external partnership agencies who visit school on a regular basis. Impact meetings are held involving external personnel including the EWO and educational psychologist. Multi-agency meetings to support individual pupils are held as required.

The school has well-understood procedures for child protection with the head as the identified contact person. Procedures are clear and effectively implemented. The school is aware of health and safety issues and is caring in promoting the safety of its pupils and staff.

All staff play a vital role in providing support, guidance and welfare of a high standard.

## **5.5 Provision for Pupils with SEN**

The school's provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school's response to the requirements of the 2002 Code of Practice is good.

There are 137 pupils on the SEN register. Three gifted and talented pupils are also included on the register. 59 pupils are on school action and 55 are on School Action Plus. There are 23 pupils with a statement of educational need. An additional list is kept of pupils who cause concern.

At KS3, provision for pupils with SEN is very good in physical education, music and mathematics. It is good in history, English, drama, Welsh second language, PSE, art and food studies. It is satisfactory in geography, religious education, information technology, design and technology and science.

At KS4, provision for pupils with SEN is very good in physical education and music. It is good in history, art, child development, health and social care, design and technology, Welsh second language, English and drama. It is satisfactory in geography, religious education, information technology and science. It is unsatisfactory in business studies.

Pupils on the SEN register who are taught in mainstream classes make satisfactory or good progress, depending on teaching group. In KS3, the behaviour and attitude of some pupils with SEN in Y8 and Y9 have a detrimental effect on their own learning and the learning of others.

There are good arrangements to support the learning of pupils with different needs. 77 pupils are withdrawn for one lesson of reading support over a two-week period. Pupils are supported

either individually or in small groups of up to six pupils by a team of 13 teachers, and they make good progress. The school attracts all of the secondary-aged itinerant children from the local site, currently 22 pupils. The majority have SEN. These pupils are either withdrawn or supported in classes by the specialist teacher provided by the Unitary Authority (UA) for .5 full-time equivalent each week. Pupils with specific learning difficulties (SpLD) are supported by two specialist teachers provided by the UA for 12 hours each week on a withdrawal basis, and they make good progress.

Pupils with SEN are successful in accredited courses at KS4 and all leave school with qualification. They follow GCSE, GNVQ or Entry level qualifications at school and they can also access courses at Coleg Gwent (Pontypool site) for Building and Construction, Motor Vehicle Maintenance and Hairdressing. Three pupils were identified as requiring additional support for their difficulties. They accessed The Learning Zone at a neighbouring comprehensive school. Additional support for pupils with SEN or disaffected pupils at KS4 is provided by the Youth Service Team and via Youth Access. Pupils gain accreditation via Oxford and Cambridge/Royal Society of Arts (OCR) and Open College Network (OCN) Units and / or the Prince's Trust Scheme. The XL Prince's Trust Club run by the Youth Access team in Y11 is very good. Pupils are well motivated and show very good progress in all aspects of key skills. Pupils can opt into this.

A school-based social inclusion centre (SBSI) has been recently set up. It caters for one Y7 group of up to 12 pupils and one Y8 and Y9 group of up to 14 pupils. Its curriculum concentrates heavily on the development of basic skills through the core and foundation subjects. It is staffed by one qualified SEN teacher, one mainstream teacher and a learning support assistant (LSA). The quality of teaching and support in the SBSI is good and often very good. Pupils' learning is also good, commensurate to their abilities. The support provided by the LSA is very good. SBSI staff meet regularly with the school SENCO, subject SENCOs and heads of departments to discuss schemes of work and pupils' progress. Links with the mathematics department are very good. Pupils are taught most of the curriculum in the centre but go to specialist teachers for a few subjects. However, timetabling is not yet matched between the centre and lower ability mainstream classes. Therefore pupils are not offered the opportunity to dip in or dip out of the support given by the SBSI. As pupils make progress they are able to return to mainstream classes. Since its inception four pupils have been successfully moved back into mainstream classes. Pupils with SEN in mainstream classes are disadvantaged as they do not have access to a LSA.

The use of ICT to support pupils with SEN across the curriculum is generally poor. The two SBSI classes have just received five computers but they do not yet have suitable software or printers. An ICT suite comprising 15 PCs dedicated to an integrated programme for supporting literacy and numeracy (Successmaker) has been purchased by the school. This allows teachers to track, evaluate, record and report pupils' progress in basic skills. The SBSI classes and KS3 lower ability mainstream classes are timetabled to access the suite. However, due to large class sizes in many of the lower ability sets at KS3, not all pupils can access this facility each lesson.

Early identification and continuous monitoring of pupils with SEN are seen as priorities by the school and this is achieved via KS2 NC test results, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) reading/spelling test scores in Y6, Y7, Y8 and Y9, CATS scores in Y7 & Y10 and departmental assessment. All pupils on the SEN register have up-to-date IEPs written by the SENCO. These are reviewed annually. However, targets for many pupils

remain the same on the IEPs over a three-year period. IEPs are in evidence in most teachers' record books and differentiation of work for pupils with SEN is evident in most subject areas.

The School SENCO is a member of the leadership group and the senior management team (SMT). Although he does not have a SEN specialist background, he provides good leadership of the SEN team. He liaises closely with core-subjects SENCOs and the designated governor. The SEN team also has good links with parents, the UA and outside agencies. These include the educational psychologist, the EWO service, Youth Service, social services and the hearing and visually impaired service. However, the teaching staff as a whole have received little in-service training (INSET) on dealing with pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and examples of good practice in teaching pupils with SEN in the school are not sufficiently disseminated.

The school leadership group and senior management team are aware of the requirements of the SEN and Disability Discrimination Act but, because of the structure and layout of the school and poor wheelchair access to almost all areas, statutory requirements will probably not be met for September 2004.

## **5.6 Partnership with Parents and Community, Schools and Other Institutions**

The partnership with parents, the community and other schools is good; with other institutions it is very good.

The school sees working closely with parents as being fundamental to providing good quality education and it successfully achieves this through the very good quality of information provided about the school. The prospectus is very clear and gives very good information and there are regular newsletters and other communications, such as the school calendar, sent out fully informing parents about the life and work of the school. The majority of parents have signed the home/school agreement, which appropriately identifies the main points and is reviewed regularly.

A band of dedicated parents, small in spite of efforts to increase the membership, supports the Friends' Association, which successfully organises fund-raising and other events. The governors report annually to parents but these meetings are very poorly attended; last year no parents came to the meeting. The governors' annual report to parents and prospectus fully meet statutory requirements.

Community links are strong and the school works hard to improve its profile in the local community. Pupils are encouraged to take part in activities in the community outside the normal day; for example there are very good links in music with the big band initiative, jazz performers and other Gwent Ensembles. The physical education department is also very involved with the local sports' clubs and the leisure centre. Individuals visit local churches for projects and members of the local churches occasionally visit to take assembly. The artist in residence has a very good impact on learning. Links between the community and the vocational courses are very good with the department working closely with the health visitors and other community workers who help in the delivery of the curriculum and with visits to the area hospitals and local residential homes.

Pupils are able to learn about other countries and their way of life through the school's very good liaison with schools in France and Germany. Groups visit on exchange and regular contact is made, all of which introduce pupils to other cultures and languages and effectively broaden their horizons.

Pastoral links with the partner primaries are very good. Great care is taken to ensure smooth transition, with the primaries providing detailed breakdowns of the NC KS2 mark sheets, anecdotal information on pupils and friendship groups and health issues being flagged up. There are also some very good curricular links, in the core subjects where bridging units have been published for initiation in the primary and completion in the secondary sector. There has, however, been little collaboration with other secondary schools in the area to ensure that the primary schools are not swamped with different schemes. A very good initiative is the visit by 38 secondary teachers to the primary sector where they spent a week teaching Y6. This experience helped them understand more fully the needs of pupils on transfer to secondary.

Lecturers from the local college regularly visit the school to discuss courses with pupils and all departments have links with their counter-parts. There are strong curricular links, with vocational courses at the college being attended by the school's pupils and some good joint training initiatives also in place.

The school prides itself in involving members of the community in the everyday life of the school. This ranges from early intervention with parents on issues of concern through to community members sharing in the delivery of vocational courses. There is an impressive list reflecting the school's commitment to involving adults in the every-day life of the school.

A strength of the school is its links with six universities offering teacher training. Each department has an appointed subject mentor reporting to the senior professional tutor to enable the school to meet fully each training course requirement. Student teachers report that they are well looked after in the school, given full information on its rules and routines and are well monitored and mentored.

## **5.7 Partnership with Industry**

The school's partnership with industry is good. Pupils are well prepared for the world of work as part of the PSE programme and benefit from the input from many members of local industry and business.

The Y9 Young Enterprise Week is a particularly noteworthy feature when pupils, advised by the business community, are able to take part in planning, making and marketing a chosen product. Entrepreneurs also talk to Y9 as part of the "Dynamo Project" and they learn first-hand how they, too, can start-up and run a successful business. This is very good preparation for the world of work and gives pupils first-hand information about the pleasures and pitfalls of working for yourself.

Y10 pupils are able to spend two weeks out on a job placement in a wide variety of employment situations. They are fully involved in the choice of work, well advised as to the appropriateness of the placement and the programme de-briefings are shared with their peers so each learns from each other's experience. Safety and other issues are well monitored and

staff visit the pupils on placement in accordance with requirements. Most of the providers send in very useful feedback about the experiences pupils undertake and their ability to do the job. Local industrialists also play an active role in the school's careers programme. They give talks to groups of pupils and hold mock interviews for Y11, usefully advising them as to appropriate conduct, dress and other aspects of applying for a job. As part of the Compact Scheme, local industrialists also mentor small groups of Y10 & Y11 pupils.

Very good liaison also takes place with the Careers Wales service and the local education-business partnership. Pupils are interviewed individually and a career plan is drawn up. There is a small stock of books in the careers office as there is no school library but access to these is dependent on the office being vacant. There is computer access to CD ROM information about career paths in other parts of the school to enable pupils to research information for themselves but again access is limited.

Although industrial links are described in the staff handbook, there is no whole-school policy nor one person or department in charge of the school's links with business and industry. Some departments, for example science, which is working with industry to obtain a grant for a solar-powered telescope linked to the inter-active whiteboard and have worked on a package informing on the development of Cardiff Bay, have very good links. Industrial links, too, make a positive contribution to design and technology. Pupils can attend an engineering initiative run on a Saturday. The information technology department follows case study visits as part of the applied ICT GCSE course, visiting three large local firms, enhancing pupils' knowledge of the role of information technology in the workplace. Very good use of links with businesses is also made by the vocational education department to improve learning.

The school rightly considers teacher placements are an important element of West Monmouth School's links with the local Education-Business Partnership (EBP). A programme has been set up which aims to give all teaching staff a work placement every five years. Teachers who have taken up this opportunity are encouraged to present a report on the experience to the school governors but few have taken advantage of this opportunity in recent years. Vocational education staff have undertaken recent industrial placements with a food company to enhance their understanding of nutritional and other needs.

## **6. MANAGEMENT**

### **6.1 Quality of Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement**

The quality of self-evaluation and planning is very good. Not only are the systems comprehensive but the quality of self-evaluation is unusually robust and reflective at all levels of management. There is also corporate commitment to its purpose, of continuous improvement.

The policy document on self-evaluation outlines a clear, cyclical process in which each strategy contributes to the whole. Self-review by departments at the end of each academic year is detailed, evidence-based and an honest appraisal of performance. The headmaster's reviews at the beginning of the autumn term also include analysis of examination results and, again, clearly evaluate good features and shortcomings. They lead effectively to target setting for improvement. In both these systems, and on an on-going basis, the links between senior and middle managers are supportive, objective and effective. The school also makes good use

of parents and pupils in its self-evaluation, using questionnaires and feed-back to inform management of perceived strengths and shortcomings. Monitoring of practice is regular and robust. Link senior managers observe classroom practice on a weekly basis, both formally and informally, monitor the setting of homework and monitor pupils' attitudes and preparedness for learning at the start of the day. They also review a whole-school theme each year. The only area in which monitoring is less robust is pupils' written work, for standards of presentation, marking and completion rates vary somewhat within and between subjects.

At middle management level, there is much good practice and some very good self-evaluation in departments. In only a few subjects is self-evaluation less than rigorous. Most heads of department and individual teachers have a highly reflective attitude to performance and a strong drive for improvement. Self-evaluation is very good in English, mathematics, science, music, physical education and health and social care. It is good in most other subjects, and where it is satisfactory, there have been recent staffing changes. Heads of department monitor practice, there is informed discussion within teams and collaboration for improvement.

The analysis of data is equally robust in quality. All data on pupils' prior attainment and aptitudes are supplemented by results in school assessments and examinations in a comprehensive and clear format. They are usefully analysed by senior and middle managers, heads of year, form tutors and classroom teachers to reward progress and identify underachievement at an early stage. Other forms of data, such as attendance figures, are also analysed thoroughly and conclusions drawn. At a whole-school level, data on performance are critically examined to assess value added and to inform reviews with middle managers, where there are anomalies.

The systems and culture of self-evaluation effectively lead to development planning on a whole-school and individual basis. Action planning on the key issues from the last report has resulted in numerous strategies which have resulted in improvement. Amongst these initiatives has been improvement in development planning. Very good progress has been made in that targets for the whole school are now clear, with resource implications, responsibilities, timescales and success criteria included. They are linked to those of the UA and set within a three-year context, with annual priorities. Whole-school targets are clearly communicated to staff and responsibilities devolved effectively, with departmental plans clearly linked to whole-school targets. In practice, development planning has resulted in improvement. Plans are regularly reviewed and progress measured, with further targets set appropriately.

In the above areas, governors make a substantial contribution, as outlined in the next section of the report.

## **6.2 Leadership and Efficiency**

The school is very well led and managed. It has a clear and shared vision and a large measure of consistency in practice. Standards, examination results and the quality of teaching have improved substantially since the last inspection and the quality of self-evaluation and planning provides well for continuous improvement. There are many opportunities for pupils, in line with its mission statement, many of these in collaboration with the local community which it serves well.

Governors have considerable expertise in varied fields in the local community. They fulfil their role as 'critical friends' very effectively. Their knowledge of the school is comprehensive and detailed, based on thorough analysis but also on first-hand observation. They have an appropriate working structure which enables them to give due consideration to issues and they complement the leadership of senior management very effectively. Their role in planning and in evaluating is very well carried out.

The headmaster gives very good leadership, with vision, charisma and care for individuals. His vast experience of headship and involvement in professional developments throughout the United Kingdom benefit the school. There have been very good appointments of staff, significant developments in the working of senior management and continuous promotion of pupils' welfare since the last inspection. The improvement in standards owes much to his enthusiasm for teaching and learning and to his robust self-critical approach. It is a 'thinking school' where morale is high. His personal involvement in many activities in the local community also gives a strong lead to the school's high profile in the area.

The deputy and assistant headteachers, who form the leadership team and the two heads of school who are included in the senior management team, also give effective leadership in all aspects of practice. They have introduced many good initiatives and are reflective of current practice. The links between senior and middle managers, both academic and pastoral, work well and have improved standards, opportunities and the quality of pastoral care. Senior managers are also supportive of staff on a daily basis, being 'on call' during lessons. There is a very good team spirit and effective maintenance of the whole-school ethos, as well as developing each area of practice. In the last year, there have been no women in senior management.

The quality of middle management, both academic and pastoral is mostly good or very good. Many appointments are relatively recent and, in most areas, there has been very good progress in a short space of time. There are four acting heads of department because of problems of illness or maternity leave. Where standards are satisfactory as opposed to good, there are some shortcomings which management has not yet eliminated. These are the small minority. Leadership and management are very good in English, mathematics, science, Welsh second language, information technology, art, music, physical education and health and social care. They are good in most other subjects. Pastoral management is very good. There is appropriate emphasis on concern for individuals and the tracking of all pupils' progress across the curriculum, to support learning. Attendance is also well managed. Administrative staff make a valuable contribution to the management of data.

Resources are well managed in most respects. Staff are effectively deployed, time is used well, good use is made of departmental resources in most departments and the accommodation is used well. However, ICT facilities are not used to best effect and do not have sufficient impact on teaching and learning and there are shortages of ICT and other resources in some departments in particular.

Despite some underspending in geography, design and technology and business studies in particular, financial planning and management are thorough in all other respects. They are closely linked to development plans, for the school as a whole and for areas of practice. There is an equitable system of capitation allowances and opportunities for developmental bids. There have also been pro-active and successful bids for external funding for new ventures. The grant received for extending sports' facilities for school and community use will make a

considerable difference to current facilities. Financial matters are meticulously handled by the bursar, who is appropriately involved in management discussions concerning finance. They are also carefully monitored by governors and there has been an appropriate surplus in recent years. The latest auditor's report found a number of the school's financial systems to be of a good standard and made some recommendations for action.

On a day-to-day basis, the school functions smoothly. There is a daily staff briefing and weekly bulletin to staff, together with a staff handbook containing guidance on many aspects of teaching and learning. The prospectus is very well presented and informative. The vast majority of parents who replied to the questionnaire or came to the pre-inspection meeting found the school approachable and helpful.

The school complies with statutory requirements apart from the daily act of collective worship, follows WAG guidelines and takes note of advice received from ACCAC.

### **6.3 Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources**

#### **Staffing**

Staffing is good. The level of staffing is appropriate to deliver the curriculum, though the pupil-teacher ratio is above the national average. There is a good blend of experienced teachers and new teachers to the profession across most subjects. Morale amongst staff is high. Over the last five years the staffing profile has changed a great deal and approximately one-third of the staff has changed. Many newly qualified teachers (NQTs) have been appointed. There is a good induction programme for NQTs which is effectively delivered and well co-ordinated. Members of staff are well qualified, display good subject knowledge and are motivated and committed. They have clear job descriptions. They are deployed effectively within subject areas. Support staff are effective in those subjects in which they are available. There is little staffing support for pupils with SEN in lower ability groups where pupils' behaviour has an adverse effect on the quality of learning and standards achieved. The school is in possession of an 'Investors in People' award for its work in staff development. The school has good links with local universities for initial teacher training.

The needs of in-service training are well identified and there are numerous INSET opportunities for staff which have been of benefit. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning and the quality of education. INSET is linked to whole-school issues and to departmental and pupils' needs. The effectiveness of staff development is consistent across subject departments. Teachers within departments work well as a team and are fully supportive of one another. Overall departmental leadership is good. Systems for professional development are in place and well monitored. Effective support by administrative and technical staff helps the smooth running of the school.

#### **Accommodation**

Accommodation is adequate but the quality is unsatisfactory. The main building is 106 years old and contains many fine features but parts of it are rather drab and in need of attention. The décor in places is poor. Over the last five years there have been several building changes. The old swimming pool has been redeveloped as the first stage of a performing arts initiative to house all of the music facilities.

Some of the science laboratories have been refurbished and one altered to provide an ICT suite. New demountables have been installed to house Welsh second language and religious education and a new PSE base room has been established. The SBSI area has been introduced. Both canteens have been refurbished. Security has been improved by installing closed-circuit television (CCTV) and a new perimeter fence. However, the toilets are badly in need of attention and refurbishment.

Most lessons are taught in specialist rooms. Attractive learning environments have been created in many subject areas by means of displays of learning resources and pupils' work. Corridors are enhanced by good quality displays. Accommodation is sufficient in most subjects. The condition of teaching rooms varies across subjects. There are shortcomings in several subjects notably physical education, art, science, drama, design and technology and food studies and there are some related health and safety issues.

### **Learning resources**

The provision of learning resources is satisfactory overall and they are well utilised although there are shortages of resources in some departments and especially so in geography where the quantity and quality are unsatisfactory. In history, learning is in need of visual stimulus. In child development there are insufficient text books. The provision of resources for ICT is unsatisfactory in many subjects including art, design and technology, physical education, religious education, PSE, business studies and geography. In IT, many computers are old and unable to run most recent operating systems and network software. Interactive White Boards are used in the core subjects. Teachers have produced a considerable amount of learning resources. The school at present has no library as due to rooming pressure it has been converted to the new PSE base room.

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

### **Standards achieved by pupils**

#### **English**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Pupils are confident speakers who respond well to a range of relevant topics.
- The great majority of pupils have good listening skills. They are able to absorb information, take notes and respond to instructions.
- Pupils are able to work productively in pairs and groups as well as in whole-class situations
- In reading, the majority of pupils read proficiently. Most pupils read fluently and accurately in line with their indicated levels of ability. Pupils experience a wide range

of texts from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to non-fiction that effectively explores environmental concerns.

- Pupils write well and the majority express their ideas with good levels of technical accuracy.
- Pupils with SEN are taught with sensitivity and they make gradual progress at KS3.

#### **KS4**

- Pupils express their verbal opinions readily and demonstrate that they can explore a range of topics effectively.
- Pupils display the ability to engage in productive discussions and debates and demonstrate good listening skills.
- Pupils encounter a suitably broad range of texts from Shakespeare to writers from other cultures and the Welsh dimension, in line with the demands of GCSE.
- Standards of reading are good and pupils show that they can read with expression and understanding.
- Writing is done with interest and enthusiasm and much is sustained to good effect and is the product of considered drafting beforehand.
- Some pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, make good use of computers at home in the presentation of their word-processed assignments for GCSE.
- The less able are well catered for at KS4 and make good progress in smaller mainstream sets.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **KS3**

- A small minority of pupils produce written work that is more prone to technical error.

##### **KS4**

- A small minority of pupils produce written work that displays technical weaknesses.

#### **Mathematics**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and satisfactory in KS4.

#### **Good Features**

##### **KS3 & KS4 (common to both)**

- Generally, pupils make good progress in set tasks in lessons and show reasonable understanding of current work; the significant majority of pupils work well through the duration of lessons.
- Pupils display at least satisfactory and often good standards of work across all attainment targets.
- Most pupils are proficient in calculating mentally in a range of contexts.
- Recall of previous work is usually secure.
- The standards of achievement of pupils with SEN are good and sometimes very good.

### KS3

- In Y7, more able pupils estimate and measure angles of various sizes competently and have a good knowledge and understanding of the angle properties of triangles and quadrilaterals. Pupils of average ability have a secure knowledge of decimals and can place them in order of size.
- In Y8, more able pupils show good standards in algebra. They use calculators effectively to solve equations using a trial and improvement method and can solve simple cases of simultaneous linear equations. Pupils of average ability recognise co-ordinates in four quadrants and recognise features of straight-line graphs.
- In Y9, more able pupils reflect simple 2D shapes in various lines, recognise planes of symmetry in 3D shapes and translate simple shapes using vectors. Pupils of average ability calculate mean, mode and median of a small set of numbers. Pupils of lower ability work out the areas of simple shapes such as rectangles competently and have a competent understanding of perimeter.

### KS4

- In Y10, pupils following the higher tier GCSE course are aware of the properties of similar triangles and most are competent in algebra. Pupils in intermediate tier classes apply Pythagoras' theorem to find missing lengths in simple right-angled triangle problems. Pupils in foundation tier classes reflect simple shapes in horizontal and vertical mirror lines presented on a given grid and can rotate simple shapes through given angles such as 90° and 180°.
- In Y11, pupils in higher tier classes solve quadratic equations by factorisation competently. They also show a good knowledge and understanding of trigonometry. Most pupils in intermediate tier classes have a sound knowledge and understanding in basic algebra and several interpret and analyse data well in GCSE project work. Pupils in foundation tier classes use percentages in simple contexts proficiently.
- In Y11, there is a small class of very able pupils who entered for GCSE in Y10. They have completed one module in pure mathematics (P1), one module in statistics (S1) at AS level and are currently studying a second module in pure mathematics (P2). Standards are very good and the significant majority of them have a very good knowledge and understanding in pure mathematics and statistics in the modules undertaken at AS level.

### Shortcomings (KS3 and KS4)

- Understanding of work is often lacking for a small proportion of pupils mainly of average to lower ability. They display a tendency to follow rules given to them without sufficient understanding. This is particularly significant for average ability pupils in KS4.
- The progress of a small minority of pupils is more limited in lessons. They tend to lose concentration in the middle of lessons and this hampers progress. This is evident to some extent across the ability range in both KS3 and in KS4 but features more prominently for average ability pupils in KS4.
- A small minority of pupils are hesitant in previous work and lack confidence in their own ability. This also features more prominently for pupils of average ability in KS4.

## Science

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

### Good features

#### KS3

- A significant majority of pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the principles in the study of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes.
- In oral and written work, pupils at all levels of ability use scientific vocabulary with accuracy and in the appropriate context.
- The Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education (CASE) work commencing in Y7 encourages the development of higher-order thinking skills, in particular those of analysis and evaluation.
- Pupils develop an appropriate range of practical skills which enables progression into scientific investigation at an early stage in KS3. They work safely and collaborate well.
- Most pupils recall key concepts and ideas well and apply them to a range of problems and applications in everyday life.
- They understand a range of environmental and health issues.
- The standards achieved in class contribute to the high level of performance in the end of the key stage tests.

#### KS4

- The majority of pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the increasingly complex topics covering all aspects of the NC.
- More able and average ability pupils can apply their scientific understanding to a range of problems, including the moral and social issues related to health and the environment
- These pupils also apply their knowledge and understanding to explain industrial processes.
- The quality of investigations is generally good, and sometimes very good among more able pupils. In these cases, pupils apply their scientific knowledge to the planning process, and display good analytical and evaluative skills.
- Good standards are achieved in GCSE examinations when compared with schools of a similar intake.

### Shortcomings

#### KS3

- A small minority of pupils in the lower ability groups have an insecure knowledge and understanding of current and previous work. They are therefore unable to apply scientific principles and ideas to a range of applications in everyday life.
- This same minority, on occasions, exhibits disruptive and boisterous behaviour in class and this has an impact on the standards and progress made.

- There is some inconsistency in the standards achieved by pupils with SEN.

#### **.KS4**

- A small minority of pupils have an insecure knowledge of current and previous work. This is reflected in a significant degree of passivity in lessons on the part of this cohort of pupils.
- In a minority of investigations, standards are limited by weak planning and by pupils' lack of the detailed scientific knowledge to analyse and evaluate their work effectively.

### **Welsh second language**

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

#### **Good features**

##### **KS3**

- Pupils make good progress in all language skills.
- They understand the consistent use of Welsh in class by the teachers and the contents of video and information recorded on tape. They participate in follow-up activities.
- In oral tasks, pupils respond correctly to structured questions in specific situations conveying information relating to the class topic. The more able give extended responses.
- Pupils gain confidence in their oral work and the majority demonstrates good knowledge of a range of language patterns.
- Pupils in all classes interact and work very well in pairs. They remain on task and ask and answer set questions.
- Pupils read extracts from course booklets with good pronunciation and intonation.
- Pupils complete a variety of written tasks and the majority achieves good standards. The more able write extended passages and use a number of sentence patterns.
- Pupils with SEN work on differentiated tasks and make good progress.

##### **KS4**

- Pupils make clear progress in all language skills and apply themselves well to tasks.
- They express opinion on class topics when working in pairs. They use the target language and expand their knowledge of sentence patterns. The more able give extended responses and display confidence in their oral work.
- Pupils read clearly and understand the meaning of passages. They respond well to follow-up tasks.
- The majority of pupils achieve good standards in their written work. In the better examples, pupils write accurately with good knowledge of grammar. The content is interesting. They compose extended passages and express opinion on course topics.

## Shortcomings

### KS3

- A minority of pupils lack confidence in giving extended oral responses and are unsure of their language patterns and more limited in their vocabulary.

### KS4

- A small percentage of pupils is uncertain of the correct sentence patterns in written work and hesitant and less confident in oral work

## Design and technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and KS4.

### Good Features

#### KS3

- Pupils competently follow a design process in their work.
- By the end of the key stage, pupils can produce good technical drawings.
- Knowledge and understanding of materials, properties and applications are satisfactory within the range of materials experienced.
- Making skills are satisfactory and at times good.
- Where opportunities exist, pupils have a good understanding of electronic and mechanical principles and components.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress.

#### KS4

- Pupils show satisfactory and, at times, good practical skills, through projects produced mainly in wood.
- Pupils can produce good three-dimensional technical drawings, using mainly traditional methods.
- Understanding of materials, their properties and characteristics is satisfactory overall.
- Lower ability pupils generally reach satisfactory and sometimes good standards.
- Most pupils respond well to the demands of producing design folders and practical solutions.

## Shortcomings

### KS3

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to increase their understanding of the Structures, Systems and Control programme of study and a wider range of materials.

- Pupils' progress is limited by the time provided by the subject.
- Whilst the majority of pupils apply a set design process, many pupils do not understand the purposes and relationships of the elements involved.
- Standards in designing and problem-solving are restricted by the over-prescriptive nature of some projects and the limited use of ICT and source materials.
- The informal drawing skills of many pupils are weak.

#### KS4

- Pupils' informal drawing skills for ideas generation and project development are weak.
- Pupils' assignments are not enhanced by the use of ICT for research, presentation and computer-aided design (CAD).
- Pupils' practical abilities are inhibited by the range of materials used.
- Pupils' design ideas and solutions to problems are in the main too stereotypic.

### Information technology

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and good in KS4.

#### Good features

#### KS3

- Most pupils make good progress in lessons working quickly, competently and co-operatively.
- Pupils communicate ideas clearly, producing high quality presentations combining many forms of information from a variety of sources.
- Pupils' work is suitable for the intended purpose and audience.
- Pupils work accurately and handle data sensibly. They recognize the need for care when processing and analyzing data, for instance when modelling with spreadsheets or working with databases.
- Many pupils can use ICT to organize, refine and present information in a variety of ways to suit a particular task.

#### KS4

- Pupils have a good understanding about theoretical issues such as data protection and can explain about the various technologies used to input, process and output data securely.
- Pupils explore practical tasks sensibly, specifying the problem before working on the solution.
- Pupils' ICT work is of a high standard and most pupils can explain the careful choices that they make in its production, considering its purpose and its users.
- Many pupils can fully document their projects explaining testing procedures and

providing user instructions.

- Pupils produce systems that store, process and present information in realistic contexts, paying careful attention to validation of data, data security, ease of use and efficiency.
- A few pupils can fully evaluate their work and suggest improvements.

## Shortcomings

### KS3

- The most able pupils do not have the opportunity to achieve at the highest levels of the NC.
- In some classes pupils share computers and make less progress.
- Some pupils do not always explicitly consider their audience.
- Some pupils have little understanding of the wider impact of IT in society.

### KS4

- There are no major shortcomings.

## History

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

### Good Features

#### KS3

- Able pupils in Y7 can produce well-structured explanations of the outcome of the battle of Hastings.
- By the end of Y9, abler pupils can produce well-observed reconstructions of life in Merthyr in the early 19th century and make critical use of source material to test interpretations of the significance of the Newport Rising.
- Less able pupils in Y9 can make valid inferences from source material to develop an understanding of conditions governing emigration to Australia.

#### KS4

- GCSE pupils in Y10, studying Ku Klux Klan activities in the 1920s, are beginning to understand that sources of evidence are not all of equal value or use.
- Pupils in Y11 can go further, making critical use of source material to produce measured accounts of life on the home front during the Second World War, and to test the validity of competing interpretations of the career and achievement of Winston Churchill.
- The same pupils are able to analyse and depict patterns of change over time, using such lines of development to answer historical questions, for example about the extent of consistency in the policy of a succession of post-war US presidents.

## Shortcomings

### KS3

- In Y7 and Y8, pupils often lack the contextual knowledge they need to carry out role-play or decision-making activities.
- In general, pupils in these early stages of KS3 lack a working understanding of what historical sources are and, consequently, why interpretation of sources can be problematic.

### KS4

- Pupils in Y10 are more confident in discussing the reliability of source material than its usefulness to an investigation. Few pupils offer critical observations about the limitations of the source for its chosen purpose.

## Geography

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS3 and KS4.

### Good Features

#### KS3

- Most pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the location of places. They use the atlas confidently to locate on a global and continental basis the placement of Brazil and its neighbouring countries.
- Mapping and graphical skills are of a good standard with most pupils able to draw and interpret line and bar graphs with confidence.
- Many pupils possess a good range of geographical vocabulary. They apply key words with accuracy in a variety of contexts.
- The majority of pupils can classify selected occupational activities into the four recognized industrial categories of primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary. They demonstrate a good understanding of the changes that have occurred in man's economic activities over time.

#### KS4

- Work on population growth, distribution and density shows that the majority of pupils can use and interpret statistical and graphical data with accuracy.
- Individual assignments completed on a variety of human and physical themes, mostly from within the local area, illustrate the pupils' thorough understanding of the processes and patterns in physical and human geography.
- Most pupils have a sound knowledge of geographical terminology which they use with accuracy and understanding.
- The majority of pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between people and the environment. They display an understanding of the application of the phrase 'sustainable development' to practical situations. Pupils appreciate the impact of the use of natural resources such as renewable and non-renewable energy supplies on the environment at the present time and for future generations

## Shortcomings

### KS3

- A number of pupils have an insecure grasp of geographical terminology.
- A significant minority of pupils have a limited understanding of the location of places.
- Incomplete or missing work, accompanied by poor presentation of completed tasks depresses the standards achieved by a significant minority of pupils, especially within the lower bands.

### KS4

- The written and map work of a minority of pupils, especially those of lower ability, is inconsistent. Some work is left unfinished.
- A minority of pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration and focus totally on the set tasks, thereby leading to lower standards in understanding, knowledge and the acquisition of geographical skills.
- Many pupils display shortcomings in their skills of enquiry, analysis and recording.

## Modern foreign languages

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and very good in KS4.

### Good features

#### KS3

- The majority of pupils make good progress in all four skills.
- Pupils are generally able to listen to authentic spoken language for gist and detail.
- Most pupils speak confidently and clearly and have good pronunciation.
- Pupils show increasing awareness of grammatical concepts across the key stage and most can produce extended writing which is characterised by a high degree of accuracy and idiom and a good range of vocabulary.
- Pupils are able to apply grammatical rules.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of the cultural context of the language.

#### KS4

- Pupils in both French and German make significant progress in all four skills across the key stage.
- Written work in both French and German shows excellent grammatical awareness with many pupils able to apply grammatical rules confidently.
- In both French and German pupils have a confident knowledge of tenses and use them throughout the key stage to produce extended writing.
- Pupils use appropriate clues to help them understand authentic texts.
- Pupils are able to recycle language from previous contexts to extend their written and oral work.
- Pupils are able to produce extended speech accurately and with good pronunciation.

## Shortcomings

### KS3

- Pupils show little initiative in their use of the target language.
- Some pupils have difficulty recycling language from previous contexts and make little use of the target language during lessons.
- A minority of pupils in lower ability groups have difficulty with listening.

### KS4

- Pupils show little initiative in their use of the target language.

## Art

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

### Good features

#### KS3 &KS4

- In KS3, pupils work confidently with a wide range of two and three-dimensional materials using a variety of techniques. These include collage, painting and drawing construction, modelling, surface design, printmaking and textiles.
- Pupils in both key stages demonstrate good levels of understanding when talking about the work of other artists, crafts people and designers. This aspect is particularly well developed with regard to contemporary art and the work of artists working in Wales. They use what they have learnt to inform their own practice.
- KS3 pupils make good use of their sketchbooks to store information, try out new ideas, make notes about new work, and evaluate their progress. They make use of this visual resource during their art lessons.
- In Y9, pupils have had the opportunity to work with an artist in residence on a ceramic project for the local community. This has enabled them to experience new techniques and further develop their craft skills.
- The good practice in KS3 provides the foundation for KS4 pupils to produce mature, individual and experimental work of a good standard. Mixed media, printmaking and three-dimensional work are particularly well developed.

## Shortcomings

#### KS3 & KS4

- In KS3 and KS4, pupils have insufficient opportunity to use ICT to develop their paint, craft and design work. This applies equally to their practical work as well as their research work.
- There is evidence, in sketchbooks and folders at both key stages, of some incomplete work.

## Music

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and very good in KS4.

### Good features

#### KS3

- Overall, performing standards are good.
- Standards of singing are usually good particularly in Y7 Welsh songs and Y8 pentatonic music. Most pupils produce good tone and diction.
- In keyboard work, abler instrumentalists achieve very good standards. Overall, keyboard performance standards are satisfactory to good. By Y9, pupils are able to utilize the sound qualities of keyboards competently, maintaining good chord and bass line patterns.
- Composing work is satisfactory overall, with abler performers achieving good standards.
- In appraising activities, pupils generally use technical terms related to the elements of music competently.

#### KS4

- In recent years, pupils have achieved very good standards in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils produce very good standards in all aspects of courses studied.
- Instrumental performance standards are very high in orchestral and band instrument playing and rock musicians similarly achieve performances of very good quality. Singing standards are good to very good with some outstanding three-part mixed voice singing in Y11.
- In all their practical studies, pupils incorporate the benefits they receive from the school's peripatetic and extra-curricular provision.
- Composing standards are usually very good. Pupils explore a wide range of musical styles and several produce computer-generated scores of real quality.
- Less musically able pupils achieve good to very good standards in relation to ability.
- In Y10 and Y11, pupils are fully challenged to develop good listening and aural skills and standards in this area of study have significantly improved in recent years.

### Shortcomings

#### KS3

- Due to insufficient numbers of class percussion instruments, KS3 pupils are not always able to experience the full spectrum of instrumental performance.
- In a very small minority of lessons pupils could further improve their composing skills if the time spent on practical work was maximised.
- A minority of pupils experience difficulties related to keyboard finger technique.

#### KS4

- There are no major shortcomings.

## Physical education

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and very good in KS4.

### Good features

#### KS3

- Pupils demonstrate good standards of planning, performing and evaluating their own work, and the work of others.
- Pupils have good ability in leading warm-up activities and are able to evaluate and provide corrections when assessing skill execution.
- Pupils are able to teach and coach each other with confidence, explaining good technique and emphasising positive achievements.
- In athletic activities, running techniques and throwing skills are proficient. Pupils respond well to the challenges of enhancing reaction times and are able to sustain demanding activities.
- In baseball and cricket, techniques are well developed. Pupils demonstrate good ability in catching and throwing, bowling and striking the ball.

#### KS4

- Pupils demonstrate very good standards of planning, performing and evaluating their own work, and the work of others.
- In games activities, pupils are confident in leading warm-up situations, they can improvise in practice organisation and they are able to provide very good analysis of both tactics and technique application.
- Pupils are able to teach and coach each other with confidence, explaining good technique and emphasising positive achievements.
- Standards in examination courses are very good, in both practical work and in theoretical aspects of the syllabus.
- Pupils' performance in athletics is good, with throwing techniques and sustained effort being strong features.
- In cricket, standards of skill acquisition, positional play and appreciation of tactics are very good.

### Shortcomings

#### KS3

- General fitness levels inhibit the full development of potential in a significant number of pupils.
- Fine motor skills and more complex technique acquisition are limited in some pupils.

#### KS4

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## Extra-curricular provision

The designation of the school as a Physical Education and School Sport development centre is a commendable recognition for the department. County, national and international sporting success continues to be a strong feature in the work of the department.

## Religious education

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

### Good features

#### KS3

- Pupils have an accurate and informed knowledge and understanding of the religion and topics they study. These include places of worship, festivals and pilgrimages. There are appropriate links with the agreed syllabus for religious education.
- Pupils display a sympathetic understanding of believers' perspective of life through empathetic writing.
- They show an understanding of the conceptual framework underpinning much religious belief by relating religious beliefs and practices to the nearest equivalent in their own experiences such as special journeys and significant times and events in their lives.
- They are able to see the relevance and value of their study and how a person's belief can help and guide them through life with reference, for example to the life and work of Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King.
- Pupils show how religions often use symbols to express beliefs and teachings in places of worship and illustrate this with reference to a classroom shrine.
- They have good recall of previous work and are able to see the relationship between the topics they study, for example, the teachings of Jesus that lie behind the work of Christian charities.
- Pupils effectively engage in research and problem-solving exercises such as researching their own ancestors, the effectiveness of charities and the meaning of artefacts used in an infant baptism.
- They are able to appreciate the importance of sacred writings in religion and express balanced views on questions on the nature of God revealed in these writings.

#### KS4

- Pupils sensitively and intelligently discuss course content and actively engage in classroom activities.
- They are able to show how the issues addressed, such as the environment, relate to their own and other peoples' lives.
- They are aware of the danger of stereotyping and are able to show how views on contentious issues such as euthanasia and abortion vary within religions.
- They give brief, well-considered and balanced views on controversial ethical issues such as suffering and conflict. In doing so, they fully consider the religious perspective on these matters.

- They listen to others, share their own views and reconsider these in the light of the ensuing discussions.

### Shortcomings

#### KS3

- Some pupils only offer basic and undeveloped responses to topics covered.
- A minority of pupils are confused between religions studied.
- Some adopt a passive attitude to their work, compliantly following instructions but without actively initiating questions.

#### KS4

- Some pupils fail to extend their initial basic responses to questions.
- A minority of pupils fail to engage fully with their study.
- Some pupils fail to consider fully the religious input into the topic being considered.
- The progression and achievement of some pupils are inhibited by the limited time allocated to the subject..

## Religious Studies

Standards of achievement are good in KS4.

### Good features

- Pupils display a good knowledge and understanding of the course content.
- They give articulate and fluent presentations to each other on key aspects of the course such as Shabbat and the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.
- They effectively apply their learning about religion to a range of different situations such as the implications of Jewish dietary laws and practices and divorce in Judaism.
- They use key religious words and terms correctly and in context.
- Coursework shows a considered evaluation of complex contentious issues such as the tension between orthodoxy and modernity within Judaism when considering ritual slaughter and miracles in Christianity.
- Some pupils write measured answers at length to questions on the place of the law in Judaism and Christian help for the less fortunate.

### Shortcomings

- Some pupils struggle with tasks and rely excessively on the teacher for guidance and support.

## Personal and Social Education

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

### Good features

### KS3

- Most pupils confidently express opinions and views and often support these with considered reasons, such as the importance of special relationships when discussing sex education.
- Most adopt a mature attitude towards sensitive aspects of the course and listen respectfully to the views of others.
- They are able to evaluate their own strengths and areas for further development as part of the well-structured careers development programme.
- Pupils have a good recall of previous work.
- Pupils appreciate the significant and valuable contribution made to their learning by outside agencies such as the Gwent Police, health authority and local business people and participation and events such as 'Wings to Fly' (looking at substance abuse), the Dynamo Project (discussing entrepreneurship) and visits to the Welsh Assembly Government.
- They work co-operatively and ask relevant questions.

### KS4

- Pupils thoughtfully discuss a range of issues both local and national.
- They effectively express considered opinions individually and in groups, demonstrating a good knowledge of current affairs and the needs of the community.
- They ask interesting and thoughtful questions on a range of issues such as the lowering of the voting age and university fees.
- They are able to present a balanced argument giving both sides of particular issues.
- Pupils are able to consider sensibly their career prospects in an informed manner.

### Shortcomings

#### KS3

- Some pupils fail to extend their initial brief responses and make little contribution to class discussion and the sharing of views.
- Some pupils display inappropriate behaviour and are off task too often.
- Pupils do not sufficiently express themselves in writing.

#### KS4

- A minority of pupils are uninterested in the work and consequently fail to make progress or participate in class activities.

## Drama

Standards of achievement are good in KS3 and KS4.

### Good features

#### KS3

- Pupils are able to work confidently in groups using a range of drama techniques to explore a variety of situations.
- Pupils show that they can portray a range of suitable characters and convey meaning effectively through actions and voice.
- Throughout the key stage, pupils are familiar with the conventions of drama and plan and structure their work in an efficient manner. They are able, for example, to offer brief evaluations of the work of others and to absorb the constructive criticism provided by teachers.
- The majority of pupils demonstrate imagination in work which requires them to create, respond and perform.

#### KS4

- Pupils display a good knowledge of drama techniques and understanding of drama concepts and conventions in line with the demands of GCSE
- Pupils use their voices well and their improvisational techniques are well developed. Their ensemble pieces show that they can work together well to produce performances of good quality.
- Appropriate texts are studied that include, for example, the plays of Willy Russell and Alan Ayckbourn. Pupils actively interpret these plays and work produced fully meets the demands of GCSE. These standards are reflected in the GCSE results.
- Written work is also of good quality and demonstrates pupils' capacities to reflect on key aspects of their experiences. They are also able to evaluate performances seen and comment usefully on work in progress.
- The less able work well and produce good work that is commensurate with their ability.

### Shortcomings: KS3 and KS4

- The quality of pupils' performances is marginally inhibited by the accommodation for drama, which is not adequate for the range of work the subject demands. It lacks a studio with lighting, props and other equipment.

## Food Studies

Standards of achievement are good in this KS3 subject, which is delivered outside NC requirements.

## Good Features

- Pupils acquire a good understanding of nutrition and healthy eating guidelines.
- They have a sound awareness of current food trends and are able to discuss a range of influences on food choice and eating habits.
- When preparing food items they consider healthier options to traditional food products and usually more sensible choices.
- Pupils accurately identify health and safety hazards and generally follow hygiene rules within the classroom.
- Pupils enjoy practical work. They plan well, use tools and equipment confidently and competently and make good quality products.
- Research and homework tasks are well undertaken.
- Pupils with SEN respond well to sensitive support and make good progress particularly in relation to practical skills.

## Shortcomings

- The evaluation of practical work is often superficial and pupils in Y8 and Y9 do not use sensory evaluation skills.
- A minority of written work is incomplete.

## Child Development.

Standards of achievement are good in KS4.

## Good Features

- Pupils display good knowledge and understanding of factors affecting the care, development and upbringing of children.
- Pupils' understanding of physical aspects of development is increased via a professional input from visiting speakers.
- Investigation into a range of issues is carried out effectively and often presented in a variety of visual forms.
- Placements in local child-care establishments enhance pupils' knowledge and facilitate valuable first-hand observation of individual children's progress. Pupils record their results well and make appropriate comparisons to statistical norms.
- Pupils focus well on coursework activities. Many examination assignments show good research skills, relevant ideas and sound understanding of the benefits of play and numerical toys.
- Innovative and well-finished educational items are made to support design ideas.
- Pupils make good use of whole-school ICT facilities to improve the presentation of coursework.

## Shortcomings

- A minority of coursework assignments lack depth, detail and analysis.
- Erratic attendance inhibits the progress and standards of a significant minority of Y 11 pupils.

## **Vocational education:**

### **Vocational GCSE Art**

Standards of achievement are very good in KS4.

#### **Good features**

- Pupils following this course have highly developed skills.
- Work in folders is refreshingly experimental and challenging. Making skills in three dimensional work, mixed media, printing, drawing and painting, are particularly well developed.
- Very good levels of investigation and understanding have been established. Pupils discuss their own work, and the work of others, with confidence using an appropriately subject-specific vocabulary.
- Pupils are well informed about a wide range of contemporary issues in art and design and apply what they have learnt to further develop their own work.

#### **Shortcomings**

- There are no significant shortcomings.

### **Business studies – GCSE and Vocational GCSE**

Standards of achievement are satisfactory in KS4.

#### **Good Features**

- Examination results are improving in Business Studies GCSE.
- Pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of cash flow forecasts and are able to complete a simple break-even analysis.
- Pupils demonstrate an understanding of marketing and its elements.
- They use business terminology confidently.
- Pupils can explain current work and show an understanding of previous study.
- Pupils use graphs and diagrams effectively to demonstrate their understanding of business concepts.
- They work well in pairs and in groups.
- Pupils are able to use spreadsheets to present cash flow analysis.
- Pupils use the local community effectively for market research.

#### **Shortcomings**

- Pupils are over-reliant on teachers' input.
- Pupils are passive in their learning.
- Pupils' oral responses are brief and lack detail.
- More able pupils are not provided with opportunities to extend their knowledge.
- Pupils do not make regular use of assessment criteria to inform their learning.

- Lack of appropriate ICT resources impedes pupils' progress.
- Pupils do not have the opportunity to use the internet as a research tool on a regular basis.

## **GCSE Health and Social Care.**

Standards of achievement are good in KS4.

### **Good Features**

- Pupils display good knowledge and understanding of local health and social care provision and the role of professional carers, in their class and portfolio tasks.
- Achievement in lessons is related well to realistic settings by drawing on personal experiences gained on work placements and visits.
- Most pupils work well independently and in whole-class situations to share information and discuss issues in a mature, informed manner.
- Assignments are completed successfully, many showing sound awareness of the influences on an individual's health and lifestyle.
- Research and investigation into potential health risks are undertaken well, and meaningful targets for improvement are recorded.
- Pupils carry out appropriate tests to measure physical health and use numeracy skills accurately to calculate height, weight and pulse rate.
- Pupils use personal and whole-school ICT facilities for research and to enhance the quality of presentation.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of work is less detailed and less well presented.
- A few pupils lack focus and are reluctant to contribute to class discussions unless specifically asked.

## **Vocational GCSE Applied ICT**

Standards of achievement are good in KS4.

### **Good features**

- Pupils are able to explain about the impact of ICT on individuals and society as a whole and understand issues about data protection for instance.
- Pupils produce high quality presentations which contain appropriate information and are well designed to meet the brief and meet the needs of the audience.
- Pupils have developed useful insights about the different uses of ICT in industry following their case studies in local businesses.
- Most pupils have a good understanding of ICT related careers and career pathways.
- Most pupils design and produce well-documented projects for collecting, processing and presenting information in a realistic context.

## Shortcomings

- A few of the less able pupils lack confidence when choosing appropriate information and processes.

## Vocational GCSE Manufacturing

Standards of achievement are good in KS4.

### Good Features

- Pupils have a good understanding of product design principles, practices and related terminology.
- Pupils can produce good three-dimensional technical drawings, using mainly traditional methods.
- Lower ability pupils generally reach satisfactory and sometimes good standards.
- Understanding of materials, their properties and characteristics is good and at times very good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of industrial processes and manufacturing systems.
- Most pupils draw effectively on the industrial and business related inputs provided by teachers and the local industrial community.

## Shortcomings

- Pupils' informal drawing skills for ideas generation and product development are weak.
- The use of ICT for research, presentation and computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) is not well integrated into assignments, but is improving.
- Pupils' practical ability across a wide range of more modern materials is limited.

## GNVQ - Health and Social Care - Intermediate.

Standards of achievement are very good in KS4.

### Good Features

- Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of issues relating to the organisation and professional roles within health and social care establishments, in particular local provision.
- They can relate the work they do in class to realistic settings, often drawing on experiences gained from visits, placements and speakers.
- Pupils demonstrate good independent learning skills. They undertake relevant investigation via questionnaires, interviews and case studies.
- They understand the importance of effective communication between client and carers and increase their own communication skills through personal interaction with individual clients, role-play exercises and oral presentations.
- Pupils are aware of the main human body systems and their functions and are able to

identify potential health risks and accidents. They all successfully achieve a St John's Young Life Award Certificate.

- External tests and portfolio assignments are completed to a good and often very good standard and show much extended writing and use of subject-specific language.
- ICT is used effectively to access website information and to enhance the quality of written and visual work.

### Shortcomings

- There are no significant shortcomings.

## 8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

### 8.1 Progress Since the Last Inspection

1. **Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils, particularly boys and those of average ability, can achieve.**

**Good progress:** teachers' expectations of pupils generally have risen substantially, as have standards and examination results. However, the achievement of boys and of some pupils of lower ability is lower than the achievement of other groups of pupils.

2. **Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning by senior and middle managers is more focused and regular in order to:**
  - Disseminate good classroom practice more effectively, and thereby promote greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning within and across faculties;
  - Ensure greater consistency in the quality of schemes of work;
  - Provide for more systematic follow-up to initiatives, and to ensure that the desired results are being achieved.

**Very good progress:** links between senior and middle managers are now effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, in ensuring a large measure of consistency across the curriculum and in sharing good practice. Planning, including curricular planning, is closely linked to the results of monitoring.

3. **Further improve the quality of development planning at both whole-school and faculty levels by:**
  - Setting out targets and the means to achieve them with greater precision;
  - Indicating timescales and resource implications in more detail;
  - Being more specific in the success criteria used to judge progress.

**Very good progress:** development plans for the whole school and for each area of practice are now very good, with precise targets, timescales, resource implications and criteria for success.

4. **Improve the degree to which assessment, marking and homework impinge on the standard of pupils' achievement and the quality of their learning, by extending the good practice which exists in some subjects more consistently**

across the curriculum.

**Very good progress:** there is a good degree of consistency across the curriculum in formal assessments and the overall quality is good. The quality of day-to-day marking is the only area in which there is scope for greater consistency. Tracking of pupils' progress across the curriculum is very good, as is the identification of those who underachieve. Homework is regularly set and monitored by members of SMT. Assessment, formal marking and homework all impact on standards of achievement.

5. **Ensure a more satisfactory deployment of teachers and an improvement in timetable arrangements.**

**Very good progress:** there are no issues related to the deployment of teachers or the timetabling of classes.

6. **Comply with the statutory requirements in respect of religious education in Y11 and a daily act of collective worship.**

**Satisfactory progress:** standards in statutory religious education at KS4 are now good. All pupils have two assemblies per week but do not have a daily act of collective worship and this remains a key issue.

## 8.2 Key Issues for Action

In order to build further on current good practice, the school should:

1. Continue to improve standards and examination results generally, and in particular:
  - The percentage of pupils gaining success in all three core subjects in NC tests and at GCSE;
  - The achievement of boys;
  - The standards in subjects judged satisfactory as opposed to good;
2. Improve standards in ICT across the curriculum, by increasing its use in subjects and facilitating greater access to resources.
3. Develop a library/resource centre for learning and research.
4. Continue to improve the accommodation and address the health and safety issues.
5. Meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

## APPENDIX

### A. Basic Information About the School

Name of School	West Monmouth School
School type	Community
Age -range of pupils	11 – 16
Address of school	Blaendare Road Pontypool Torfaen
Post-Code	NP4 5YG
Telephone Number	01495 762080

Headteacher	Mr Peter Phillips
Date of appointment	September 1988
Chair of Governors/ Appropriate Authority	Councillor Maurice Morgan
Registered Inspector	Miss Glynis Owen
Dates of inspection	19 – 23 April 2004

### B. School Data and Indicators

<i>Number of pupils in each year group</i>								
Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	228	211	236	201	204	-	-	1080

<i>Total number of teachers</i>			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	56	1	56.6

<i>Staffing information</i>	
Pupil:teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	19:1
Average teaching group size	23
Overall contact ratio	83.1%

<i>Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection</i>								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	93.0	91.8	90.2	89.7	91.8	-	-	91.3
Term 2	88.7	90.0	89.4	91.4	97.0	-	-	90.9
Term 3	92.5	89.7	88.7	91.9	87.4	-	-	90.4

<i>Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection.</i>	<i>21 temporary 2 permanent</i>
------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

## C. Results of National Curriculum Assessments and Public Examinations.

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2003																
Total number of pupils in Y9: 194																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	N	B	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
EN	Teacher assessment	School	0	3.1	0	0	0	0	1.0	3.1	31.4	39.7	16.5	5.2	0	
		National	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	9	22	33	22	9	0
	Test	School	0	3.1	0	-	-	-	-	-	6.2	34.0	26.8	23.2	6.7	-
		National	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	8	21	31	23	10	0
MA	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	6.7	16.5	23.7	39.7	12.9	0	
		National	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	20	25	29	14	0
	Test	School	0	3.1	0	-	-	-	-	-	7.2	17.5	24.7	37.6	9.8	-
		National	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	19	21	32	14	0
SC	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	3.6	15.5	40.2	33.0	7.2	0	
		National	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	21	32	25	11	0
	Test	School	0	3.6	0	-	-	-	-	-	2.1	16.0	39.7	30.9	7.7	-
		National	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	6	19	31	25	14	0

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:	59.3%	In the school:	53.6%
In Wales:	54%	In Wales:	54%

D – Pupils who have been disapplied under section 364 and 365 of the Education Act 1996

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

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

B – Pupils not entered for tests because they are working outside the levels of the tests.

W- Pupils who are “working towards” level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for level 1

n – tests do not cover these levels

n/a – not applicable

### For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, CoE, GNVQ and NVO

Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2003: 187

#### The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2002

	School	UA	Wales
were entered for 5 or more GCSEs	91	88	87
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C	60	49	51
achieved 5 or more GCSE grades A*-G	88	86	85
achieved GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language)	37	35	38
entered at least one CoE, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	97	97
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-C	87	72	74
achieved one or more GCSE grades A*-G	98	94	93
achieved no graded GCSE	2	6	7
achieved one or more CoE only	3	2	3
achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVO level 1	0		
achieved a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVO level 2	45		
achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	60		
achieved at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	88		

## **D. The Evidence Base of the Inspection**

- 19 inspectors spent the equivalent of 60 days at the school.
- 231 lessons were observed, including full and part sessions.
- Inspectors attended assemblies, registration periods and some extra-curricular activities.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headmaster, members of the senior management team, heads of department, some heads of year, staff with whole-school responsibilities and members of the administrative and support staff.
- Inspectors in the core team met representatives from other schools, institutions and outside agencies linked to the school.
- Work across the curriculum, from representative pupils in Y7-Y11 was examined, together with work in each subject at both key stages.
- There was formal discussion with a group of pupils from KS3 and KS4, as well as informal discussion with many other pupils.
- The Registered Inspector met the staff and governing body prior to the inspection.
- Nine parents attended the parents' meeting and 46 replies to the questionnaire were received.
- Documentation provided by the school was analysed before and during the inspection.
- Feedback was given to departments and to the headmaster and deputy head during the week of the inspection and to the senior management team and governors after the inspection.

## E. Composition and Responsibilities of the Inspection Team

NAME	ASPECTS	SUBJECTS
Miss G Owen	1. The school and its priorities 2. Main findings 3.1 Standards achieved 4.1 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 5.1 Teaching 6.1 Self-Evaluation 6.2 Leadership and Efficiency 8.1 Progress 8.2 Key Issues	
Mr C Rowlands	5.4 Support, guidance & pupils' welfare 6.3 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	Welsh second language
Mr D Williams	3.2 Key skills	Mathematics
Mr D Bullock	5.2 Assessment, recording and reporting 5.3 Curriculum	Science
Mrs R Boardman	4.2 Behaviour and attitudes 4.3 Attendance 5.6 Partnership with parents and community, schools and other institutions 5.7 Partnership with industry	
Mrs R Gardner	5.5 Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs	
Mr C Harris		English, Drama
Mrs R Ridge		Science
Mr M Prankerd		Design & Technology, Manufacturing
Mr M Pickin		Information and Communications Technology
Mrs M Herbert		Food Studies, Child Development, Health & Social care
Mr A Kelly		History
Mr H Llewellyn		Geography
Mrs L Meiring		Modern Foreign Languages
Mr G Bradford		Art
Mr J Jenkins		Music
Mrs J Hopkins		Business Studies
Mr M Rawle		Religious Education and Studies, Personal and Social Education
Dr S Lloyd		Physical Education