

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

**Ysgol Brynrefail
Llanrug
Gwynedd
LL55 4AD**

School Number: 6614004

Date of Inspection: 06/11/06

by

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17166**

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

The inspection of Ysgol Brynrefail took place between 06/11/06 and 10/11/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Gareth Wyn Roberts undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a standard inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Brynrefail, Llanrug, is a community comprehensive naturally bilingual school for 11 – 18 year old pupils and students, maintained by the Gwynedd Unitary Local Education Authority. It has 617 pupils from year 7 to year 11 and 107 students in year 12 and year 13 (The Sixth Form). The number of pupils and students has increased by around 100 since the last inspection and it is envisaged that numbers will continue to increase gradually over the next few years.
2. The school is in the village of Llanrug in the county of Gwynedd. Llanrug is on the main road between Caernarfon and Llanberis. The vast majority of the pupils and students come from the school's catchment area which is Llanrug and the villages and the surrounding rural area. The vast majority of the pupils come from areas which are neither socially nor economically privileged or underprivileged. Only six per cent of the pupils are registered as being entitled to free school meals but 44% of sixth form students are in receipt of a maintenance grant. Almost all the pupils and students belong to the white ethnic group. No pupil is receiving support to learn English as an additional language. The local authority cares for three pupils.
3. The school accepts pupils from the full ability range. Twenty one pupils (around 3.4%) have a statement of special educational needs. This corresponds to the national percentage. The National Curriculum has not been modified for any pupil who has a statement of special educational needs. Another two pupils have been disapplied from the requirements of the National Curriculum. In addition, there are 81 pupils (13%) on the 'school action' and 'school action plus' stages of the Code of Practice for Pupils with Special Educational Needs.
4. Sixty five percent of the pupils are from mainly Welsh speaking homes and 35% from homes where English is the main language. Ninety eight percent of the pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to a corresponding standard. The school makes special arrangements for the small number of latecomers. The school uses the Welsh language as the main medium of education for the vast majority of key stage 3 pupils but pupils at key stage 4 and sixth form students are free to respond in either English or Welsh.
5. The school was previously inspected during the Easter term 2001. The school had a 'standard' inspection whereby six subjects were inspected in November 2006.
6. The current head teacher was appointed to his post in 1998.

7. A local further education college provides a rural skills' course for key stage 4 pupils and the school also co-operates with another college of further education and a secondary school nearby to offer vocational courses. Secondary schools in Arfon co-operate on a consortium basis and work with external agencies and the university to provide courses jointly for sixth form students.

The school's priorities and targets
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8. The school's main priorities for 2005 – 2007 are the following:
- i) to review methods of learning and teaching and schemes of work and lessons;
 - ii) to promote good behaviour and social inclusion;
 - iii) to raise standards and reduce teachers' workload in line with the national agreement;
 - iv) to continue to develop the accommodation;
 - v) to develop whole school and departmental self evaluation further;
 - vi) to respond to the growth in pupil numbers and the financial cuts;
 - vii) to deal with developments as regards post-16 students;
 - viii) to implement the restructuring of the workforce in line with statutory requirements.

9. The school's quantitative targets for 2007 are as follows:

Key Stage 3 Indicators	% level 5 or above in the school
Welsh	82
English	75
Mathematics	78
Science	80
Key Subject Indicator	70

Key Stage 4 Indicators	% gaining qualification
5 GCSE subjects at grades A* - C	68
5 GCSE subjects at grades A* - G	92
Key subject indicator	50
% leaving without a qualification	0
% unauthorised absences	0.2

Summary

10. There are good or very good features in all aspects of the school's provision; equal opportunities and pupil and student care are outstanding. The standards achieved by the pupils in class are good or outstanding and reflect their behaviour and attitude to work. External examination and assessment results compare well or very well with those of the county and the whole of Wales and they are good according to a number of other benchmarks.

Table of the grades awarded

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

**The team had to award a grade 3 to key question 3 because the school has not complied with the statutory requirement to provide religious education for sixth form students.*

11. The grades in the above table coincide with the grades in the school's self evaluation document for key questions 1, 2, 4 and 6 and are lower than the grades the school awarded itself for key question 3, 5 and 7.

Standards

Grades for standards in the subjects inspected

Subject	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Sixth Form
Welsh (first language)	2	2	1
English	2	2	2
Science	2	1	2
Geography	3	3	2
Art	2	3	2
Music	2	2	2

12. The following table shows the grades awarded by the inspection team for standards achieved by pupils and students in the six subjects inspected.

93 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	3%	68%	29%	0%	0%
Key Stage 4	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%
Key Stage 3 and 4 combined	6%	65%	29%	0%	0%
Sixth Form	18%	82%	0%	0%	0%
Whole School	8%	70%	22%	0%	0%

13. The team awarded grade 3 or above in every lesson observed. Since the last inspection, the percentage of lessons awarded a grade 1 or 2 at key stage 3 has increased. Now the percentage of lessons awarded a grade 3 for standards at key stages 3 and 4 are quite similar. A few more lessons at key stage 4 were awarded a grade 1 for pupil standards.
14. In the sixth form, the inspectors were of the view that standards were either a grade 1 or grade 2 in every lesson observed.
15. These statistics for pupils' attainments are substantially higher than the national targets for Wales, namely that standards in lessons should be grade 3 or above in 97% of lessons and grade 2 or above in 65% of lessons by 2007.
16. Pupils with additional learning needs achieve well and this is also true of the gifted and talented pupils.

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

Success in external examinations, tests and assessments

17. The inspection team compared the performance of pupils in external tests, assessments and examinations with that of pupils throughout Wales and in similar schools. Further details can be found in the full report.
18. The school's examination and test results are better or much better than those for the whole of Wales and better than those of the Gwynedd authority. According to a number of added value benchmarks, the pupils make good progress across key stage 3 and key stage 4.
19. Results improve substantially between key stage 3 and key stage 4. However, there are small differences in boys' and girls' performances with girls performing slightly better than boys in English and Welsh but the boys tending to perform better than girls in mathematics and science. At key stage 4, the gap has narrowed in English in particular. Currently, the differences are less than county differences and on a par with the national situation. The school obtained its best ever GCSE results in 2006 and they are very good. Every pupil in year 11 gained a GCSE qualification in 2006.

Standards in the key skills and wider key skills

20. Pupils communicate well in Welsh and English alike and their bilingual competency is an outstanding feature. Inspectors saw outstanding examples of pupils and students obtaining information in one language and discussing it fluently in the other and being able to process the information and summarise it quickly in an oral situation. In other instances, they responded in Welsh in writing of a high standard to information gathered from a number of English on-line sources through internet research.
21. They possess good numeracy skills and there are good features in the standards of information and communication technology. Pupils have the patience to solve problems when they are offered opportunities, and their ability to work together is good. At times, pupils work independently but they are not always given opportunities to do so. As a result, they do not always accept responsibility for their own learning. The pupils' ability to assess the quality of their own work and to set quantitative and qualitative targets that are significant to them personally is still developing.

The Sixth Form

Advanced Level Results

22. The quality of the school's advanced level results has been very good over the years. There has been a significant improvement in their quality since the last inspection.
23. The obvious good features include:
 - an increasing percentage of students gaining an A grade over the years and this percentage is substantially higher than that of Wales and the authority;
 - the fact that the quality of students' results is significantly better than those of Wales and the authority from the point of view of average points' score.
 - the fact that the percentage of students gaining A – E grades in 2006 is higher than the percentage for Wales and the county of Gwynedd;
 - the fact that the percentage of students gaining A – C grades in 2006 is higher than the percentage for Wales and the county of Gwynedd.

The key skills and the wider key skills in the sixth form

24. The students' communication skills in Welsh and English are good and their bilingual competency is outstanding. Their standards in numeracy are good. They use their information and communication technology skills to complete their coursework to a good standard. The students are skilful at problem solving. They are developing good skills as independent learners. The students work together in an outstanding manner and their attitudes to learning are particularly good. They are able to evaluate the quality of their own work well.

Attendance, punctuality and behaviour

25. The pupils' and students' attendance levels are slightly lower than the target set for secondary schools by the Welsh Assembly Government. The pupils' punctuality in the morning and to lessons is very good. Usually, behaviour is good and pupils display a high degree of respect towards each other, their teachers and property. However, in a small number of lessons there is some low level disruption.

The Quality of Teaching

26. The following table shows the grades that the inspection team awarded the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons inspected.

131 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	10%	58%	30%	2%	0%
Key Stage 4	15%	62%	23%	0%	0%
Key Stages 3 and 4 combined	12%	61%	26%	1%	0%
The Sixth Form	24%	68%	8%	0%	0%
The Whole School	15%	61%	23%	1%	0%

27. The following table shows the distribution of grades the inspectors awarded the quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected specifically.

The Six Subjects

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole School	14%	65%	20%	1%	0%

28. The grades for the quality of teaching have remained fairly constant since the last inspection but there is some variation within and across subjects.
29. The quality of teaching is variable across the six subjects inspected but, when one looks at the statistics, there is little difference between the quality of the teaching in these subjects and teaching standards throughout the school. In the Welsh department, the teaching in every lesson observed by the subject inspector showed either good features and no important shortcomings or they showed some outstanding features.
30. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Schools in Wales in her annual report for 2004 – 2005 stated that, in the whole of Wales, the quality of the teaching is good in 79% of lessons and 18% of those lessons have outstanding features. In the six subjects, the school has reached the 79% mark but only 14% of those lessons had outstanding features.
31. The working relationship between teacher and pupil is very good and the friendly atmosphere in the classroom encourages the pupils' motivation.

Assessment and Reporting

32. The school satisfies the statutory requirements for the assessment of the National Curriculum at key stage 3 and the regulations of the examination boards at key stage 4 and in the sixth form, as well as the assessment requirements of pupils and students with additional educational needs.
33. There are many good features in the assessment of pupils but assessment is not always consistent within and across departments. The use made of 'Assessment for Learning' in classes is still developing. This is also true of planned opportunities to develop pupils' thinking skills. As a result, the pupils' ability to assess their own work is also at the developmental stage.
34. The school has appropriate arrangements for informing parents of their children's progress. Key stage 3 and key stage 4 annual reports are prepared using statement banks and there is an opportunity for pupils to contribute to them. Parents are also given an opportunity to respond to the reports. This is good practice. In the sixth form reports are personal and many of them are very good.

The Curriculum

35. Despite the school's failure to comply with the requirement to provide statutory religious education for sixth form students, the curriculum ensures breadth and balance in the studies of key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils, and it is very effective in promoting the pupils' and students' communication skills in both languages. There is a good range of courses, including some practical and vocational subjects at key stage 4 and at advanced level. The school co-operates with a number of other establishments to extend the provision well. The curriculum promotes good standards in the key skills and cares very well for the pupils' and students' programme of personal and social education. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities and the quality of work related education is also very good.
36. There are very good partnerships with parents, the local community, primary schools and other educational providers and these enrich the pupils' education significantly.

The care, guidance and support for pupils

37. There is a vast number of outstanding features in the quality of the care, guidance and support for pupils and students and in the attention the school pays to equal opportunity issues. Newcomers are welcomed to the school's community and they integrate naturally. The school is a happy and caring community. The pupils develop healthy values and attitudes towards global citizenship and sustainability. Respect towards peers, teachers and property is a feature of the school's life. The provision for pupils and students with additional learning needs is outstanding.

38. In the full report, there is specific reference to the contribution made by the sixth form students to pupils' values. By taking responsibility for the school eisteddfod and the resulting close links formed with pupils and the numerous parents who attend the eisteddfod, sixth form students make an outstanding contribution to the school's cultural and social development. The sixth form also holds a magnificent party for the pupils of *Ysgol Pendalar* in Caernarfon and raises very substantial sums of money to make this a memorable occasion for the guests.

Leadership and Management

39. There are many good features in the school's leadership and management.
40. The ethos and sense of community within the school are very good and interpersonal relationships are also very good. This is achieved through the head teacher's clear leadership. He is very well supported by his two deputy head teachers who form his senior management team. Each deputy head teacher has specific responsibilities and links with a number of departments. They are very supportive of these departments and possess detailed knowledge of them.
41. The quality of leadership within departments varies from good or very good to departments where good features outweigh shortcomings. On the whole, it is good. Not all departments have ensured that they consistently practise whole school initiatives.
42. The governors have good knowledge of the school's work and performance and this allows them to take an active part in discussions about the school's strategic development but they have not ensured that statutory religious education is offered in the sixth form.

Self evaluation

43. The arrangements adopted by the governors and managers to monitor the school's performance display some good features and no important shortcomings.
44. The school's self evaluation report analyses the school's strengths and shortcomings correctly and thoroughly. It is based on the senior managers' sound knowledge of the school.
45. The quality of departmental self evaluation is variable. Sometimes there are good or outstanding features but at other times good features outweigh shortcomings.
46. The school has responded well to the last inspection in the majority of key issues for action.

Staffing, resources and accommodation

47. The school's managers have ensured that there are appropriate staffing levels. Teachers, learning support assistants, technical, clerical and administrative staff perform well.
48. A good range of resources is available to teach the curriculum throughout the school. Staff produce their own materials which enhance the teaching and the increased provision of computer equipment has, in many instances, improved the quality of the teaching and learning.
49. The accommodation is adequate overall for the number of pupils on roll. Increasing numbers have placed greater constraints on the school and resulted in larger classes in some year groups and subjects. As a consequence, most rooms are too small for the number of pupils in the class as are the school canteen and library. However, the school has made every effort to ensure that this does not adversely affect standards.

Financial Management

50. The financial management of the school is outstanding. The head teacher is responsible for the school budget at a strategic level and is meticulous and thorough in his planning.
51. Overall, the school uses its finances and resources very effectively and achieves very good value for money.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1. maintain the good and outstanding standards achieved and raise standards where shortcomings are noted, paying particular attention to raising standards in those subjects awarded a grade 3 in one or more of the key stages during the inspection;
- R2. continue to improve pupils' ability to work independently and to improve their own learning;
- R3. disseminate the good and outstanding teaching and assessment practices consistently across all the subjects;
- R4. ensure that sixth form students are given a religious education lesson in line with the statutory requirement on schools;
- R5. co-operate with the appropriate authorities in order to attend to matters involving the building and the health and safety issues noted in the body of the report.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

52. The grade awarded by the inspection team coincides with the grade the school awarded itself in its self evaluation report.

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

Grades awarded standards in the subjects inspected

Subject	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Welsh (first language)	2	2
English	2	2
Science	2	1
Geography	3	3
Art	2	3
Music	2	2

53. The following table shows the grades awarded by the inspection team for standards achieved by pupils in the six subjects inspected.

71 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	3%	68%	29%	0%	0%
Key Stage 4	10%	60%	30%	0%	0%
Key Stage 3 and 4 combined	6%	65%	29%	0%	0%

54. Every lesson observed was awarded a grade 3 or above. Since the last inspection, the percentage of key stage 3 lessons awarded either a grade 1 or a grade 2 has increased. Now the percentage of lessons awarded a grade 3 for standards is fairly similar at both key stages. At key stage 4, the percentage of lessons awarded a grade 1 is slightly higher.
55. These statistics for pupils' attainments are higher than the national targets for Wales, namely that standards in lessons should be grade 3 or above in 97% of lessons and grade 2 or above in 65% of lessons by 2007.
56. Pupils with additional learning needs achieve well and this is also true of the gifted and talented pupils.

Success in external examinations, tests and assessments

57. The inspection team compared the performance of pupils in external tests, assessments and examinations with the performance of pupils throughout Wales and in similar schools.

58. The school's external examination and test results are better or much better than those for the whole of Wales and better than those of the Gwynedd authority. According to a number of added value benchmarks, the pupils make good progress across key stage 3 and key stage 4.
59. Results improve significantly between key stage 3 and key stage 4. However, there are small differences in boys' and girls' performances, with girls performing slightly better than boys in English and Welsh but the boys tending to perform better than girls in mathematics and science. The gap has narrowed in English in particular. Currently, the gender gap is narrower than that of the county and on a par with the national situation. The school's GCSE results in 2006 were very good. Every pupil in year 11 gained a GCSE qualification in 2006.
60. Over the years, advanced level results have been very good. In 2006, advanced level results compared favourably with the authority's and those for Wales.

The quality of test and assessment results at key stage 3

61. The main benchmark indicators used to evaluate the results of statutory tests and assessments for key stage 3 are:
 - the percentage of year 9 pupils attaining level 5 or above in individual core subjects, namely Welsh (at this school), English, science and mathematics;
 - the percentage of year 9 pupils attaining level 5 or above in a combination of either Welsh or English, science and mathematics, known as the core subject indicator.
62. It is possible to compare these results with the school's results over a period of time, with the results of all Welsh schools, schools within the same education authority and also schools in the same group by virtue of having similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school is then placed in one of four 'quartiles'. This is a statistical term which corresponds roughly to a quarter of the schools. The first quartile is the highest quartile and the fourth is the lowest. It is also possible to compare the progress individual pupils make over a period of time to find out how much 'added value' the school is providing.

Key Stage 3

63. In 2006, the formal assessment of key stage 3 pupils by teachers was statutory but the corresponding tests were optional and schools were not required to inform the Welsh Joint Education Committee of the results.
64. There has been a gradual improvement in the quality of external test and key stage 3 assessment results over the years.

65. According to a number of indicators that compare the individual pupil's progress over time, the school is offering substantial added value between key stage 2 and key stage 3.

Good features

66. Over the years, results in English, mathematics and science and the percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 3 compare favourably with those of all schools in Wales and with the results of secondary schools in the county of Gwynedd.
67. The school's end of key stage 3 results over the past five years compare favourably with the results of schools in the county, schools in North West Wales and those of Welsh schools.
68. When the school's results in mathematics, English and science are compared with those for the whole of Wales, they are usually above the national median.
69. Results in mathematics were particularly good at key stage 3 in 2006. The school's mathematics results for 2006 are likely to place the school in the highest quartile of all Welsh schools; similarly, results in science are likely to place the school in the second quartile.
70. Results in Welsh have been consistently good over the years.

Shortcomings

71. When the school's key stage 3 results between 2003 and 2005 are compared with those of schools where fewer than 10% of pupils are entitled to free school meals we see that:
- test results in English, mathematics and science have been in the lowest quartile or below the median;
 - there are differences in boys' and girls' results, with girls performing better in the two languages and the boys in mathematics and science;
 - the percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 3 places the school below the median in three out of the last four years.

Key Stage 4

72. The main benchmarks for evaluating GCSE results at key stage 4 are:
- the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE subjects at grades A* - C;
 - the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE subjects at grades A* - G;
 - the percentage of pupils attaining the core subject indicator (see corresponding description above);
 - the average GCSE/GNVQ points score.

73. The same types of comparisons between establishments and areas are made as those noted for key stage 3.
74. Despite variations from one year to the next, there has been good progress in the quality of GCSE results. The school obtained its best ever GCSE results in 2006.

Good features

75. Results in a number of foundation subjects are good or very good.
76. The school's results are significantly better than those of schools in the whole of Wales and as good as or better than those of the county of Gwynedd when one considers the above mentioned benchmarks.
77. Boys perform markedly better than boys throughout Wales and better than boys in the county when one considers the benchmarks. This is partly attributed to boys' strong performance over the years in mathematics, and science in particular, at this school.
78. The vast majority of subjects have positive added value in the WED analysis (Welsh examination results data base) of GCSE results. In the few subjects in 2006 where there was no added value, the deficit was, usually, less than half a GCSE grade.
79. When the Welsh Assembly Government's different models of added value statistics (for 2005) are considered, and a comparison of key stage 4 and key stage 3 is undertaken, the school adds substantial added value as regards average points' score and the percentage of pupils obtaining five grades A* - C and A* - G. The school is in the highest quartile or the second quartile of similar schools. In most of the analyses also, the percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator places the school in the highest quartile of similar schools.
80. When the Welsh Assembly Government's different models of added value statistics are considered, and the three benchmarks mentioned above are considered in order to compare key stage 2 and key stage 4, the school offers substantial added value very frequently and is in the highest quartile of similar schools.
81. Occasionally, the school performs well when its results are compared with those of other schools where fewer than 10% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.
82. Despite the fact that the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSE subjects at grades A* - C, or a corresponding qualification, varies from one year to the next, the school was in the second quartile of similar schools in 2003 and is likely to be in the second quartile again when the final benchmarks for 2006 are announced.

83. In 2003, the school was in the second quartile of similar schools as regards the pupils achieving the core subject indicator; when the benchmarks for 2006 are announced, it is likely that the school will be in either the first or second quartile.

Shortcomings

84. There are subject variations between the standards of boys and girls with:
- girls performing slightly better in Welsh and English;
 - boys performing slightly better in mathematics and science;
85. The school's performance is not as good when some benchmarks and results are compared with those of other schools where fewer than 10% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.
86. The percentage of pupils attaining A* - C grades in at least five GCSE subjects and A* - G grades in at least five subjects placed the school in the lowest quartile in this category of schools in 2004. The school was in the lowest quartile of similar schools again in 2005 in relation to pupils' average points' score. It was in the second quartile in 2003 and the third in 2004. It is likely to be in the third quartile again when the final benchmarks for 2006 are announced.

Standards in the key skills and wider key skills

87. Pupils communicate well in Welsh and English alike. They speak confidently and they understand subject specific terms in almost all subjects. At times, they respond at length although there are also some short responses. The pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They read well in both languages. They write well in both languages and their standards of accuracy are good. Their bilingual skills and ability to use either language as required within the same lesson context is outstanding. Inspectors saw outstanding examples of pupils and students obtaining information in one language and discussing it fluently in the other and being able to process the information and summarise it quickly in an oral situation. In other instances, they responded in written Welsh of a high standard to information gathered from a number of English on line sources through internet research.
88. Pupils possess good numeracy skills. Mental work in mathematics is good. Pupils use number rules effectively. They are able to process statistical information, draw graphs well, measure correctly, draw to scale and create two and three dimensional images.
89. The standards of information and communication technology are good. The standard of information presentation is good and, at times, outstanding. The pupils' data management and modelling skills are good and this is also true of their ability to carry out internet research.

90. Pupils have the patience to solve problems and their ability to work together is good. Pupils do not always learn to work independently or accept responsibility for their own learning. This is partly because they are not constantly offered opportunities to do this. The pupils' ability to assess the quality of their own work and to set either quantitative or qualitative personal targets is still developing.
91. The pupils develop and present their ideas creatively. In a good number of subjects, including Welsh, English, music, art and design and technology the pupils display creativity and imagination.

Pupils' progress in learning

92. The pupils make good progress in their learning. They acquire knowledge and skills quickly and use them effectively.
93. The pupils have a good idea of the progress they are making but they do not always know exactly what the task related criteria for success are and they do not always set themselves sufficiently challenging targets for improvement.
94. Pupils with additional learning needs and gifted and talented pupils make good progress.

Attendance and punctuality

95. The pupils' attendance level (between 90 and 91%) has slipped slightly despite the school's good efforts to prevent this. Currently, the school does not reach the target of 92% set by the Welsh Assembly Government for secondary schools in Wales. Examples of unauthorised absences, however, are low.
96. Pupils are generally punctual to school. They arrive in class punctually despite the fact that the site is large.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills

97. Pupils display very positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils usually concentrate well in class and persevere with their work but, at times, they do not concentrate and persevere. The motivation of pupils from different linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds to succeed is high. Their ability to work independently and to accept responsibility for their own learning is still developing.
98. The pupils' behaviour is good and at times outstanding. Frequently, they know how to control their own behaviour and they display a high level of respect towards one another, their teachers, the school building and equipment. However, at times, low level disruption has an impact on the learning. All the pupils are courteous and this makes a substantial contribution towards creating a positive environment which allows effective learning and teaching to take place.

99. The pupils display a caring and concerned attitude towards other people in the local community and beyond. They respect the views and beliefs of others and people who differ from themselves. They also show respect towards the environment. The level of their social, cultural and moral awareness is outstanding and their spiritual awareness is good.
100. Pupils develop skills that are required for the world of work to a good standard; the standards of the key skills that are lifelong learning skills are generally good.
101. No year 11 pupil left school without a GCSE qualification in 2006. The pupils succeed in their education and either opt to return to the sixth form in this school or to follow courses at a college of further education or leave to enter employment.

The Sixth Form

Grades for standards in the subjects inspected

Subject	Sixth Form
Welsh (first language)	1
English	2
Science	2*
Geography	2
Art	2
Music	2

* *Biology* - grade 2
Chemistry - grade 1
Physics - grade 2

102. The following table shows the grades allocated by the inspection team for standards achieved by students in lessons in the six subjects specifically inspected.

22 lessons	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth Form	18%	82%	0%	0%	0%

Advanced Level Results

103. The quality of the school's advanced level results has been very good over the years. There has been a significant improvement in their quality since the last inspection.

104. Obvious good features include:

- an increasing number of students obtaining grade A over the years and the percentage is substantially higher than that for the whole of Wales and the Gwynedd authority;
- the quality of the students' results is significantly better than that for the whole of Wales and the authority as regards average points' score;
- the percentage of students gaining grades A – E in 2006 is higher than the Welsh percentage and that of the Gwynedd authority;
- the percentage of students gaining grades A – C in 2006 is substantially higher than the Welsh percentage and that of the Gwynedd authority.

The key skills and the wider key skills in the sixth form

105. The students' standards in communication skills in Welsh and English are good and their bilingual competency is outstanding. They speak at length giving reasons and justifying opinions and points of view. They listen very well to one another and to their teachers. They carry out good research before they perform their written and coursework tasks.
106. The students' standards in numeracy are good. In a number of subjects, they deal skilfully with statistics; they process and present data using appropriate methods.
107. They use their information and communication technology skills to complete their coursework to a good standard. The students are skilful in problem solving. They are developing good skills as independent learners. The students work together in an outstanding manner and their attitudes to learning are particularly good. They are able to evaluate the quality of their own work well. In subjects such as art, music, English, Welsh and design and technology, the students think creatively and the most able are original in their thinking.

The students' progress in learning

108. The students acquire good skills as independent learners and they make good progress.

The development of students' personal, social and learning skills

109. The students' attitudes to learning are very good. Their ability to work with others is outstanding and can be seen across the range of subjects. The students help each other and respect the views of others. They respect the environment. The outstanding relationship that exists between students and their teachers promotes learning and teaching significantly and reinforces the outstanding sense of community that exists within the school.

110. The students contribute enthusiastically to a wide range of curricular, social, charitable and cultural activities. They voluntarily help the school's younger pupils, for example, with the reading club.
111. Around 50% of year 11 pupils return to the sixth form. Almost all students entering year 12 are sufficiently successful to continue with their course studies in year 13 or to complete their education in another establishment. A high percentage of students progresses from school to university whilst the others either start work or receive vocational training.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: good features and no significant shortcomings

112. The grade the inspection team awarded this question coincides with the grade the school awarded itself in its self evaluation report.

How well does the education and training meet the needs of pupils and students and curricular and course requirements?

113. The following tables show the quality of teaching throughout the school. The first table shows the distribution of grades awarded by inspectors for the quality of teaching in the six subjects specifically inspected. The second table (All Subjects) shows the distribution of teaching grades in all lessons observed during the inspection. Every teacher was observed teaching at least once.

The Six Subjects

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole School	14%	65%	20%	1%	0%

All Subjects

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole School	15%	61%	23%	1%	0%

114. The grades for quality of teaching have remained fairly constant since the last inspection but there is some variation within and across subjects.

115. The quality of teaching is variable across the subjects but, statistically, there is little difference between the quality of the teaching in the six subjects specifically inspected and teaching standards throughout the school. In the Welsh department, teaching displayed good features and no important shortcomings or some outstanding features in every lesson observed by the subject inspector.

116. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector for Schools in Wales in her annual report for 2004 – 2005 announced that, in the whole of Wales, the quality of the teaching is good in 79% of lessons and 18% of those lessons have outstanding features. The school has reached the 79% mark in the six subjects specifically inspected but only 14% of those lessons had outstanding features. The combined grade 1 and grade 2 percentages for all subjects were slightly lower.

117. In 20% of lessons in the six subjects, good features outweigh shortcomings and in another 1%, one lesson in this instance, there were good features in the teaching but shortcomings also in important areas. When all subjects are taken into consideration, good features outweighed shortcomings in 24% of lessons and no lesson, apart from the one already noted, had shortcomings in important areas.

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

118. The following table shows the quality of teaching at key stage 3 and key stage 4 in all the lessons observed.

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key Stage 3	10%	58%	30%	2%	0%
Key Stage 4	15%	62%	23%	0%	0%

119. The quality of teaching at key stage 3 is grade 1 or grade 2 in 68% of lessons. At key stage 4, 77% of lessons are either a grade 1 or grade 2. This shows a significant difference between the two key stages.

120. The outstanding features of the teaching include:

- the teachers' infectious enthusiasm and their incisive questioning that motivates pupils so that they are keen to develop their in depth understanding of the subject and to extend their thinking skills;
- expert use of the interactive whiteboard in order to give pupils wide opportunities to participate actively in lessons;
- very high but appropriate expectations at all levels of ability and finding ways of enabling pupils to fulfil these expectations;
- teachers being immediately aware of any difficulties a pupil is experiencing when new work is introduced and dealing with it without delay, effectively and unobtrusively whilst the lesson is in progress.

121. The working relationship between teacher and pupil is almost invariably very good and the friendly and stimulating atmosphere in the classroom encourages the pupils' motivation. One noteworthy feature of this school is the fact that a high percentage of teachers use occasional humour as an appropriate tool to encourage and motivate pupils. The teachers know their pupils well, respect each pupil as an individual regardless of linguistic or religious background, sex, race or disability and they are willing to offer guidance and support appropriately.

122. The good features of the teaching include:

- clear lesson objectives being shared and used meaningfully with the pupils;
- ascertaining pupils' prior knowledge and reinforcing it appropriately;

- detailed planning to include a wide range of appropriate activities that are presented at the appropriate pace and within specific time limits;
 - a range of current techniques and resources being used to ensure the active participation of pupils and to develop their learning, thinking and practical skills;
 - encouraging pupil discussion through planned use of group and pair work;
 - effective feedback and support that promotes pupil motivation;
 - firm, constructive class control;
 - meaningful plenary sessions when pupils are given opportunities to give feedback;
 - appropriate and regular encouragement and praise for individual pupils.
123. The teachers' knowledge of their subject is good across the school and they are familiar with current developments in their field. Some teachers in some subjects use contemporary teaching techniques very successfully and others combine these with more traditional methods very effectively also. The departments provide very good support for those teachers who teach outside their main area of expertise.
124. In the lessons where there were shortcomings some of the following features were observed:
- badly timed lessons resulting in an imbalance of tasks and activities and insufficient time at the end of lessons for pupils to reflect on the learning;
 - insufficient planning to ensure the active participation of every pupil throughout the lesson, not encouraging all pupils to participate orally and only providing a few opportunities for them to exercise their thinking skills;
 - being overdependent on undifferentiated task sheets for the whole ability range;
 - tasks that are not sufficiently challenging for pupils, or to the contrary at times;
 - using the same teaching techniques repeatedly throughout the lesson;
 - teacher led activities and few opportunities for pupils to develop their wider key skills.
125. The school has ensured that there are good opportunities to develop bilingualism throughout the school. The teachers develop pupils' abilities to absorb information in one language and discuss or write about it in the other through well planned activities. The school is keen to highlight the full range of key skills and the majority of teachers specifically plan good opportunities for pupils to use these skills.
126. In line with school policy, pupils with additional learning needs are taught very well in the same classes as their peers, usually, and are given appropriate and unobtrusive support by learning support assistants or teachers who provide learning support for a few lessons each week. This provides the pupils with very good opportunities to integrate fully and to receive additional support in line with legal requirements.

The Sixth Form

127. The first table below shows the quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected in the sixth form. The second table (All Subjects) shows the quality of teaching in all the lessons observed in the sixth form during the inspection.

Six Subjects

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
27%	68%	5%	0%	0%

All Subjects

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
24%	68%	8%	0%	0%

128. The teaching in the sixth form obviously has outstanding features in the six subjects specifically inspected and across the subjects. Over 90% of lessons were awarded either a grade 1 or grade 2. There were outstanding features in all the Welsh and chemistry lessons observed in the sixth form. Overall, only two grade 3 lessons were observed in the sixth form. Many of the good and outstanding features are similar to those observed in lessons at key stages 3 and 4.

129. The features of the good and outstanding teaching seen mainly in the sixth form are:

- very high expectations and active encouragement for students to develop into independent learners;
- the teachers' thorough and current subject knowledge;
- the expertise of many of the teachers as they teach students how to plan their answers in examinations;
- complex subject concepts being explained with clarity;
- incisive subject specific questioning motivating students to think analytically and to broaden their horizons;
- criteria for success being shared meaningfully and relevantly with the students;
- students in unusually large classes being afforded the best opportunities;
- setting work in its wider global, local or vocational context, as appropriate.

130. In the two grade 3 lessons, the following shortcomings were noted;

- restricted teaching techniques and students receiving information passively for much of the lesson;
- use of closed questions and not encouraging students to expand on their ideas;
- restricted opportunities for the students to take responsibility for their own learning during the lesson.

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

131. The school satisfies statutory requirements for assessing the National Curriculum at key stage 3 as well as examination board regulations at key stage 4 and in the sixth form.
132. The school complies with the assessment requirements for pupils and students with additional learning needs.

Assessment and reporting

133. Good features in assessment and reporting include:
 - the senior management team's clear guidelines on assessing, recording and reporting that provides departments with very good guidelines;
 - the use made of end of key stage 2, 3 and 4 assessments to set target grades for every pupil at key stage 3 and 4 and sixth form students;
 - a clear assessment system based on achievement and effort;
 - the assessment co-ordinator's detailed and very effective system to track the progress of pupils of all abilities;
 - clear guidelines for rewarding outstanding effort;
 - targeting underachievement so that pupils and students are recognised early with close links between subject departments, class tutors and heads of year;
 - a tutoring scheme whereby the assistance pupils and students are given to discuss their achievement and progress with their class tutors or head of year is very good;
 - regular contact between teachers and heads of year in order to note obvious progress and underachievement amongst pupils and students;
 - good early co-operation with parents when there is underachievement;
 - very good examples in some departments of marking pupils' work constructively in line with school policy, meeting the needs of individual pupils, setting targets and offering constructive feedback on how to improve the work;
 - as a result of training, some departments responding to the school's aspirations and making good use of 'Assessment for Learning', sharing the criteria for success with pupils and students and encouraging them to assess their own work and that of their peers.
134. The school has appropriate arrangements for informing parents of their children's progress. Parents receive two short reports and one full report annually for each pupil at key stage 3 and key stage 4, based on achievement and effort grades. The full reports are prepared using statement banks and these are regularly updated and improved. The quality of subject comments is particularly good and evaluative in the three language subjects. Science and music set targets and include recommendations as to how to ensure improvement. At key stages 3 and 4, there is an opportunity for pupils to contribute to their reports and there is also an opportunity for parents to respond. This is good practice.

135. The school follows the same pattern in reporting to parents of sixth form students but statement banks are not used. The school provides guidance for teachers in the form of four headings and then teachers prepare handwritten, personal reports. There are examples of reports of outstanding quality and these help students and parents substantially to understand how to improve.
136. Shortcomings in assessing and reporting include some inconsistencies in:
- standards and methods of assessment in some departments with superficial marking and feedback that is too generalised to show pupils and students clearly how to improve their work;
 - the quality of guidance and the opportunities afforded pupils and students to self assess or to assess their peers;
 - the way different departments use 'Assessment for Learning' principles to improve pupils' and students' standards of attainment;
 - the quality of some departmental contributions to full reports.

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

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings.

137. The grade awarded by the inspection team is lower than the grade the school awarded itself for this key question in its self evaluation report because of a statutory shortcoming. However, there are a number of very good and outstanding features in the extent to which learning experiences fulfil pupils' needs and interests and also in the extent to which the learning experiences respond to the needs of employers and the wider community.

The extent to which learning experiences fulfil pupils' and students' needs and interests

138. The provision for personal and social education, work related education and careers' education and guidance are in line with the Welsh Assembly Government's requirements. The school fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum's programmes of study and examination specifications at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school also follows the guidelines for pupils with special or additional learning needs.

Outstanding features

139. The following features of Ysgol Brynrefail's curriculum are outstanding:

- the comprehensive personal and social education programme which makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- ensuring the pupils' bilingual development through very careful and balanced planning of classroom activities and through the daily life of the school so that all pupils and students are able to participate fully in the bilingual society they live in;
- the arrangements to meet the requirements of the *Curriculum Cymreig* (Welsh Curriculum) through broad ranging activities within subjects such as Welsh, English, geography, art, music, history and personal and social education;
- ensuring full access for all pupils to the courses provided;
- the provision for pupils with additional learning needs, particularly in the case of pupils with specific disabilities;

Good features

140. There are also good features that include:

- a broad and balanced curriculum that effectively fulfils the pupils' and students' needs and interests;
- a curriculum that ensures that every pupil is able to gain an appropriate qualification;

- good balance in the key stage 3 curriculum;
- breadth and flexibility in the choices offered to key stage 4 pupils;
- an opportunity for year 10 pupils to obtain a recognised CLAIT qualification in information and communication technology;
- ensuring that pupils' key skills are developed within specific subjects and through personal and social education;
- raising pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship through work in relevant subjects and personal and social education;
- offering a good range of extra curricular activities outside school hours in order to enrich the pupils' personal and social development;
- curricular enrichment through local, national and foreign visits;
- a week of cross-curricular activities whereby the pupils' experiences are enriched and they are afforded opportunities to use basic and key skills for practical purposes;
- enrichment of the pupils' moral and spiritual development through the provision of acts of communal worship of a very high standard twice a week for every pupil as well as three acts of communal worship per week in class;
- providing opportunities for sixth form students to run a reading club with the help of learning support assistants to promote some younger pupils' reading skills;
- developing pupils' interest in the democratic process and local issues of importance by arranging appropriate activities linked to the cross-curricular week;
- very good quality policies and procedures for work and enterprise-related education.

Shortcomings

- The school does not provide a religious education course for students in years 12 and 13 and this is a statutory shortcoming;
- The school does not have a clear strategy to fulfil the needs of very able pupils.

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

Outstanding features

141. There are also some outstanding features in the school's partnerships with other establishments, employers and the local community that include:

- assisting pupils to make contributions to numerous local sports clubs and projects and as a result, creating an outstanding awareness of the local community amongst pupils;

- promoting the outstanding contribution pupils and students make to the area's cultural scene through choirs, brass bands, jazz bands and local and national eisteddfodau;
- a unique relationship with a local special school for whose pupils' benefit substantial amounts of money are raised and in so doing providing an opportunity for sixth form students to work together and with pupils who have special needs, thus nurturing respect towards people who differ from themselves;
- establishing very good and wide ranging partnerships with local employers and those further afield;
- ensuring success by creating a really outstanding range of local vocational links, including employers, specialists in traditional crafts and practitioners in areas such as education, health and the law;
- the very effective partnership with vocational and careers' agencies which can be seen in the progression and success of these links in curricular projects that enrich the pupils' and students' experiences;
- outstanding links with the area's employers that have ensured that their financial contribution, their provision of resources, their visits to school to share expertise and their willingness to offer quality work experience placements have significantly enriched the pupils' experiences;
- a vocational course at key stage 4 that is held in school or in conjunction with other establishments that enriches the pupils' education and ensures that they get work related education of a high standard.

Good features

142. There are also a number of good features that include:

- co-operating with other schools and colleges of further education to ensure that a broad range of traditional subjects, as well as vocational subjects, are available to students in years 12 and 13;
- good pastoral and curricular links with primary schools in the catchment area that ensure a smooth and effective transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3;
- good links with teacher training establishments in a number of universities and curricular links with two universities;
- The *Cymdeithas Cyfeillion* (Friends of the School) that consists of parents, members of the community and teachers working together for the pupils' benefit and raising sums of money through different activities in order to buy extra resources for the school.

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

Grade 1: good with outstanding features

143. The grade the inspection team awarded this question coincides with the grade the school awarded itself in its self evaluation report.

The extent to which learning experiences fulfil the learners' needs and interests

Outstanding features

144. The outstanding features of the school's provision include the current, carefully structured, wide ranging personal and social education provision throughout the school which offers a wealth of learning experiences and opportunities to deal with matters crucial to a young person's growth and development. Important features of this education are:
- pupils acquiring knowledge and understanding through statutory health education and sex education lessons that are very effectively presented;
 - pupils acquiring very relevant knowledge, skills and values in order to make mature and informed decisions;
 - the pupils' experiences being enriched further through their contact with a very good range of specialist speakers who talk about relevant topics;
 - the benefit that key stage 3 pupils gain from the cross-curricular week held annually that offers them wide ranging experiences and takes advantage of the comprehensive network of links that the school has established within the world of work and business;
 - the school's thoroughly implemented strategies to eliminate any discrimination on the basis of disability, sex, race, language or religion.
145. The school's programme of careers education and guidance is also outstanding. It encompasses all the elements of The Statutory Framework for Careers' Education and has been very effectively planned and co-ordinated and includes:
- careers' education lessons of a very high standard;
 - individual interviews;
 - effective workshops;
 - mock interviews with employers;
 - work experience to suit the individual whenever possible;
 - activities designed to promote entrepreneurship;
 - varied and interesting external speakers;
 - a compact with Careers Wales.
 - very good quality advice for pupils and parents when subject or course choices are being made at key stage 4 and in the sixth form by means of handbooks, appropriate meetings and, in particular, one to one support.

146. There are other outstanding features which are listed below:

- pupils feeling very confident that there are teachers and members of staff on whom they can rely if there is a problem and that the teachers or staff on whom they chose to rely will deal with them in a sensitive manner;
- very effective use of and a very close link with external support services in the areas of health, careers, welfare and education, as well as the police;
- the pupils' and students' school forum that is a very effective body for voicing pupils' and students' opinions, and to whose requests the school has responded on a number of matters;
- the school responding in a very appropriate manner to pupils who misbehave.

Outstanding Practice

The school arranges a variety of activities which are either open to the public or benefit from the expertise of different sectors or individuals within the community. There are two events that are particularly important in the school's calendar, namely the school eisteddfod and the special party for the pupils of *Ysgol Pendalar* (Special Needs' School) in Caernarfon.

The eisteddfod has a high profile. The sixth form are responsible for all the arrangements, the practices and the training and the heads of houses are usually in year 13. There is infectious enthusiasm and healthy competition and a strong sense of community throughout the school on this special occasion. External adjudicators attend the eisteddfod for the whole day and parents and friends of the school join in from six in the evening until around midnight.

The sixth form also arranges a party for the pupils of *Ysgol Pendalar* and have been doing so for twenty five years. Three years ago the school received recognition for the high standard of this work from the Diana Memorial Trust. Students in the sixth form collect large amounts of money, over £2,000 annually, through sponsorship from local businesses and other activities. The money is used for the party and every pupil from *Ysgol Pendalar* receives a valuable Christmas present of his or her own personal choice. Careful minutes are kept of every step in the organisation process and financial balance sheets are drawn up.

The sixth form responds in an outstanding manner to the complete trust put in them and the very substantial responsibility associated with these two very special activities.

147. There are also a number of good features in the school's provision that include:

- a robust pastoral framework based on an arrangement whereby registration teachers and class tutors are responsible in turn to year tutors and to the deputy head teacher;
- very good links with the parents and information being shared with them through the School Handbook and through regular meetings during the year for them to discuss their children's work;
- a trouble free transition from primary to secondary school with an effective induction period for the pupils and very good pastoral links with the primary schools and effective bridging units in English and mathematics;
- complying with statutory registration requirements;
- attendance and punctuality being carefully monitored and a resulting system of contacting pupils' homes on the telephone or by letter if the pupils' attendance is a cause for concern, with the Education Welfare Officer contributing effectively to this work;
- very effective policies and measures in place to deal with cases of bullying and any type of harassment;
- good arrangements to promote the health, safety and welfare of every pupil;
- conducting risk assessments of several aspects of school life and responding promptly to any matter that causes concern;
- holding regular fire practices;
- several members of staff holding current first aid certificates;
- all the teachers being very aware of the guidelines for child protection and in possession of the relevant document;
- a deputy head teacher responsible for managing child protection procedures and fulfilling this task very effectively.

The quality of the provision for additional learning needs

148. There are several outstanding features in the school's provision for pupils with wide ranging additional learning needs. The school's arrangements and strategies to deal with these needs are effective and flexible. The pupils make progress in their lessons.

Outstanding features

149. The following are the outstanding features of the school's provision:

- strong and early links with the primary schools that ensure a thorough analysis of the pupils' difficulties and strengths in order to ensure the most effective support;
- effective, extra help for individuals who have statements of special educational needs;
- using the pupils' strengths and interests when planning work and keeping a careful record of their progress;

- clear and effective lines of referral for minor incidents of unacceptable behaviour;
- emphasis on an industrious ethos in class;
- very good guidance and instruction provided by the co-ordinator and this being reflected in the department's firm arrangements.

Good features

150. There are also a number of good features in the school's provision, including:

- flexible strategies at key stage 3 to support pupils with additional learning needs and these pupils making good progress in the lessons where they have been withdrawn and in mainstream lessons where they are given support and the pupils seemingly enjoying their learning experiences;
- careful planning, giving consideration to the needs of the individual with appropriate differentiation and the best lessons including a variety of tasks and appropriate activities;
- effective support in the classroom provided by enthusiastic learning support assistants who know the pupils well and also using teachers effectively to provide support in some classes;
- good links with other departments in the school through the Special Educational Needs' Panel that includes departmental representatives;
- the panel's role clearly defined;
- the school's departmental policies giving a prominent place to fulfilling the needs of pupils with additional learning needs;
- strategies to improve pupils' literacy skills at key stage 3 during registration periods with the assistance of year 12 and year 13 students and the pupils responding positively to these sessions and making progress;
- implementing very detailed individual education plans and the special educational needs' register;
- targets linked to the plans being discussed with the pupils and their parents;
- the plans available for all the teachers on the school internet site and a copy of the register distributed to all teachers;
- regular reviewing of the targets in the plans and the register;
- the teachers' good knowledge of individual pupil's needs;
- effective use of the local education authority's support services;
- weekly visits from hearing and visual impairment specialist teachers, as well as regular visits from the educational psychologist;
- the above persons providing support for teachers and learning support assistants, and recommendations being implemented;
- offering a suitable balance of accredited vocational courses and appropriate, more academic courses at key stage 4, through effective links with two local further education colleges and these partnerships being a firm response to the "Pathways for Learning" document.

Shortcoming

151. However, despite this very positive picture of the school's provision, there is one shortcoming and that is the fact that not every department makes full and effective use of the learning support assistants.

The quality of the provision for equal opportunities

152. The quality of the provision for equal opportunities is good with some outstanding features. The following are the outstanding features;
- recognising pupil and student needs whatever their social, educational, ethnic, linguistic or religious background and responding to this very effectively from the pastoral and curricular perspective;
 - being particularly successful in promoting sexual equality and challenging stereotyping in pupils' and students' choices and expectations by providing a varied range of activities as an aspect of the school's normal and extra-curricular curriculum;
 - promoting racial relationships very sensitively and ensuring that there is no institutional racism;
 - ensuring very effective measures to safeguard pupils from any type of discrimination or mistreatment.
153. The school has also taken good steps for a number of years to ensure that pupils and students with varied disabilities are not treated less favourably. The school has provided support for the relevant individuals over the years and provided them with every curricular opportunity. However, there is one shortcoming. It is not possible for a wheelchair bound pupil, student, parent or carer to gain full and easy access to the building despite the school's efforts to obtain appropriate improvements to the building. On the special occasion of *Parti Pendalar* when children with physical disabilities are invited, the school makes temporary arrangements by using a ramp.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: good features with no important shortcomings

154. In its self-evaluation report the school judged this key question as grade 1. The lower grade awarded by the inspection team reflects the failure to provide statutory religious education in the sixth form, inconsistent practices in the monitoring of targets within the departments and variable standards in the quality of departmental leadership.

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

155. The school has a very good ethos and sense of community where relationships are particularly good. This is achieved through the clear leadership of the head teacher who actively promotes the school's aim to "Ensure that all pupils are treated and respected as individuals and are supported and encouraged to develop in all ways". This aim is shared by his two deputy head teachers and by all who are involved with the school.
156. The head teacher is very well supported by the senior management team. Each deputy has clear responsibilities and is linked to a number of specific departments. They are very supportive of these departments of which they have detailed knowledge. Heads of department appreciate the help and guidance provided by the senior management team. Recently appointed heads of department particularly value the help and guidance provided. The quality of leadership within departments varies from very good to the satisfactory. Generally, it is good but not all departments have ensured that some whole school initiatives have been taken up consistently.
157. The school development plan is compiled following a detailed and well established planning cycle and takes good account of both national and local priorities. Developments are prioritised into key and necessary or desirable developments. Departmental development plans support the school development plan and set targets for the standards to be achieved. Effective links have been forged with partner primary schools and with local colleges and universities and other providers of vocationally based courses.
158. Policies and school activities promote equality of opportunity and all groups in the school have equal access to all courses and activities. No pupil is disadvantaged on the grounds of his or her linguistic or cultural background. The school provides very good support for those pupils for whom Welsh is not their first language.

159. Performance management arrangements are well established, as is the self-evaluation system. Support from the senior management team ensured that the first departmental self-evaluation report based on the seven key questions of the Estyn framework followed a consistent format, although the quality of the reports varies from department to department.
160. As part of performance management, departments are monitored annually. Heads of departments' lessons are observed by their senior management team link. Heads of department usually observe lessons for staff in their teams. Joint lesson observations between the senior management team and heads of department are not undertaken. A significant amount of informal monitoring also takes place within the school. Pupils' written work is monitored by heads of departments but the practice varies across the school and can be a check on marking rather than focused on a specific aspect of the work.
161. The school has a detailed process for setting targets based on individual pupil performance both within the school and in external tests. Pupils set their own short and long term targets in several subjects but these are often general and not specific enough to support improvement. Within the subjects, written targets for pupils' improvement vary. Occasionally, they are very good. Pupils' knowledge of their personal targets is inconsistent across the school.
162. Staff training and development needs are recognised and met through attendance at suitable courses or within the school organised professional development days. Some staff have successfully applied for grants or bursaries to support their own developmental needs. The quality of the induction and support for newly qualified teachers is very good.

How well governors and other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

163. Usually, governors perform their duties well and they have ensured that the school meets statutory and course requirements at key stage 3 and key stage 4.

Good features

164. The governors have good knowledge of:
- the school's work and performance and this allows them to participate actively in discussions about the school's strategic development;
 - pupils' and students' results in external tests and assessments;
 - how the school performs in comparison with similar schools;

Shortcomings

165. There are two shortcomings, namely:

- that the governing body has not ensured that the school complies with the legal requirement as regards statutory religious education for sixth form students;
- there is no direct curricular link between individual departments and members of the governing body.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

166. The grade awarded by the inspection team coincides with the grade the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report.

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

167. The school's self evaluation report analyses the school's strengths and shortcomings correctly and thoroughly. It is based on the senior managers' good knowledge of the school.

168. The inspection team's findings correspond fairly closely to the findings of the school's self evaluation report but there are differences in grades in three out of the seven key questions. Where differences exist between grades awarded by inspectors and those awarded by the school, the school's weighting of factors and their interpretation have been different from those of the inspection team. Nevertheless, the process has been very similar.

169. The school has appropriate self evaluation procedures based on the use of a wide range of evidence. The process is systematic and based on direct evidence of pupils' work, lesson observation and analysis of external test, examination and assessment data.

170. The regular and structured monitoring of lessons by the senior management team and middle managers for performance management purposes ensures that the school's self evaluation report is based on direct evidence. Lesson observation by the senior management team is a strength at whole school level.

171. The main findings of self evaluation are directly linked to the school development plan.

172. Each department has carried out a self evaluation based on Estyn's seven key questions. The quality of these departmental self evaluations is varied but, on the whole, they provide a comprehensive picture of strengths and shortcomings. The departments analyse test and examination results annually and as a result have prepared standard raising strategies.

173. The school considers pupils' views carefully by various means including questionnaires, the responses of the School's Pupil and Student Forum and other strategies within programmes, such as the personal and social education programme, in order to analyse pupils' attitudes towards their daily experiences.

174. The self evaluation system provides regular formal and informal opportunities for stakeholders such as parents, employers and community representatives to contribute to the process.

175. In-house-training on the self evaluation process and data analysis have raised the awareness of the heads of departments and of the staff in general of the self evaluation process.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

176. The school's self evaluation document is a firm foundation for preparing appropriate departmental and whole school development plans.
177. The school development plan is an effective working document that includes the school's intentions over a period of three years. It notes priorities correctly and concisely.
178. On the whole, departmental self evaluation reports are of good quality. In some instances, they are not sufficiently specific to ensure that departments set down intentions and targets for improvement.
179. Teacher training priorities have ensured that effective, current teaching methods such as thinking skills have been introduced and some departments have adopted them effectively. This practice is not consistent across departments.
180. The school provides sufficient resources and finance to support and implement its main priorities. There is a close link between the school development plan and the budget.
181. The school has responded well to the majority of key issues noted in the last inspection.
182. Self evaluation and strategic planning have had a positive and quantifiable impact on a number of aspects involving the school's work. The standards have improved in all the core subjects and these subjects have benefited from planned strategies to improve teaching and to use assessment as a means of raising standards. The information and communication technology provision has improved substantially and is now used skilfully across the majority of departments.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

183. This grade is lower than the grade the school awarded itself. The school has interpreted resources as those for which it is directly responsible and has used this as the basis of its evaluation. The inspection team has considered all the resources available to the school.

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

184. The school managers ensure appropriate staffing levels in spite of high staffing costs due to the large number of very experienced staff. All staff have qualifications relevant to the subjects they teach. The school makes effective use of the support staff who work closely with the teachers. The support staff also contribute well to the morning reading club and to lunchtime and extra-curricular activities. The administrative and support staff perform their duties well although there is insufficient technical and administrative support. A librarian co-ordinates and supervises the use of the library well. The clerical, technical and administrative staff make a very important contribution to the effective day to day running of the school.

185. A good range of resources is available to teach the curriculum throughout the school. These resources include good quality subject materials, which are often materials produced in-house. The capitation allocation for departments is based on the numbers of pupils taught and subject weighting. Additional funding is available to departments in the form of bids to promote initiatives and projects identified in departmental development plans which support the whole school development plan. The school has invested heavily in information and communication technology equipment, both for pupils and teachers. The information and communication technology provision in the library is well used by pupils and is oversubscribed during the lunch hour.

186. The accommodation is adequate overall for the number of pupils on roll. The school has a large hall and a brand new sports hall and there are a number of very good, relatively new, quality classrooms and facilities. Increasing numbers of pupils have placed greater constraints on the school and resulted in larger classes in some year groups and subjects. As a consequence, most rooms are too small for the number of pupils in the class. This is particularly evident in the music rooms. There is no proper downstairs reception area for visitors or parents. Classes in one department work in demountable classrooms. Corridors are narrow and there are no appropriate cloakrooms for pupils. The school is effective in overcoming the constraints imposed on it by the buildings and has made every effort to ensure that standards are not adversely affected.

187. The school has not been adapted to cope with wheelchair users. Both the canteen and the library are small for a school of this size.

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

188. Staff are deployed economically and efficiently. Resource decisions are linked very closely to the school's priorities and objectives.
189. Staffing and resources are assessed annually on the basis of curricular need and projections over three years. Workforce remodelling has been completed, the statutory non-pupil contact time for teaching staff has been implemented and the school has published its staffing structure for teaching and learning responsibilities. Newly qualified teachers have a planned programme of induction, support and guidance provided by the mentor.
190. External staff development concentrates mainly on keeping staff up to date with the requirements of examination boards. Performance management is used to identify training needs linked to the school and departmental development plans and the needs of individuals. Due to recent cuts in the training budget the number of training days outside school attended by individual teachers has been reduced significantly. However, the school provides quality in-house training for staff development. Several members of staff have availed themselves of additional grants to support their own professional development. No member of staff is currently following NPQH courses for those who wish to apply for posts as head teachers. Training to support the school's priority to develop teaching and learning has not as yet been wholly effective, nor has the training for the development of leadership and management skills for middle managers.
191. The financial management of the school is outstanding. The head teacher is responsible for the school budget at a strategic level and is meticulous and very thorough in his planning. He is supported by the administrative officer who carefully monitors the budget on a daily basis, provides detailed reports to the head teacher, the governing body's finance sub-committee and heads of department.
192. Financial decisions are based on curricular needs and the educational priorities identified in the school development plan. The school effectively pursues all grants and sponsorships that are available.
193. Overall, the school uses its finances very effectively and achieves very good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Welsh first language

Key Stage 3 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
The Sixth Form Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

Good features

194. The attitude of all of the pupils towards their work is positive and they concentrate and listen purposefully in their lessons. They respond well to each other in pair and group work and show respect towards each other. They support one another well and benefit from each others' ideas.
195. The vast majority of the pupils respond orally with confidence and clarity in class. The most able pupils respond at length using accurate and sophisticated language. A high percentage of pupils express an opinion and present a point of view effectively and confidently and the pupils support that view with substantial and relevant evidence.
196. Pupils across the ability range have an increasing understanding of linguistic registers and are able to use a formal or informal register as appropriate.
197. The pupils' oral work at both key stages is one of their obvious strengths. Significant progress can be seen from one year to the next as regards vocabulary, syntax and the subjects they are able to discuss at length.
198. Pupils' standards of reading vary according to age and ability but generally they are good.
199. The majority of pupils can read aloud fluently and meaningfully, using appropriate intonation without previous preparation. The vast majority read a good number of books for pleasure and record responses in an interesting manner. At both key stages, pupils are able to gather information from different sources for a specific purpose and adapt them to meet the needs of specific tasks.
200. The pupils in line with their ability respond well to challenging literary and non-literary reading texts in class. Pupils in year 7 and year 8 usually perform this task orally and they achieve good and very good standards. From year 9 onwards, they respond in writing as well as orally and they produce good quality responses of appropriate length to challenging texts. They are able to use a good number of literary terms successfully.
201. Pupils at key stage 4 build upon this foundation in order to produce coursework of a commendable standard.

202. Pupils in years 7 and 8 keep a full record of books they read for pleasure and this has a substantial impact on their wealth of vocabulary and idiomatic expression.
203. From year 7 onwards, pupils across the ability range write regularly and for a variety of purposes. They write in a variety of linguistic forms.
204. At key stage 3, increasingly, and at key stage 4, the most able pupils achieve very good standards. They are able to write at length and in an interesting manner in a good number of different styles such as stories, natural sounding scripts or dialogue, diaries and stream of conscience, reviews and memorable descriptions of people.
205. By years 10 and 11, a good number of the pupils are able to write in a sensitive manner that engages the reader's interest. They respond to literature intelligently and analyse in detail using appropriate examples.
206. On the whole, this group of pupils has a wealth of linguistic resources and uses adjectives, similes and metaphors purposefully.
207. A group of pupils in each year produces written work of a very good standard. The pupils' work is mature, original and imaginative. They are able to evaluate points of view and use different sources skilfully.
208. Pupils with additional learning needs perform well in line with their ability. They are able to speak fluently and express definite points of view. They read appropriate texts meaningfully and with assistance they succeed in presenting effective written work.
209. The pupils assess their own work and that of their peers against criteria prepared by the department. These activities and redrafting work further improve their linguistic skills and result in the raising of standards.

Shortcomings

210. Grammatical, spelling and mutation errors impede the expression of a significant minority of pupils at both key stages.
211. A small number of pupils has much difficulty in responding at length orally in class and group discussions.

The Sixth Form

Outstanding features

212. Students in year 12 and year 13 make outstanding progress; they are self-disciplined and dedicated to their school work. They display very good or outstanding standards in every class activity.

213. When they contribute to class discussions or co-operate in groups when discussing literary texts from different periods, the students offer mature comments that display insight and are of appropriate length. They speak fluently and confidently with an increasing sense of audience and purpose of task. They respond intelligently to each others' ideas using a wide and appropriate vocabulary. Their comments reflect extensive background reading and they are able to draw upon evidence from the work of a variety of contemporary poets and prose writers or those who lived in the last century.
214. They read with care when they complete critical analysis tasks. When they discuss what they have read, they are able to draw upon evidence from the work of various writers of prose and poetry and they are able to cross reference and compare the literary styles of different authors and poets.
215. The students produce creative work that holds the reader's interest; the content is original and lively and has been very well planned. The linguistic expression deserves praise and the style is fluent and natural.
216. The work of the most able students is striking and displays all the features of an 'A' grade at advanced level.

Shortcomings

217. There are no significant shortcomings

English

Key Stage 3 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
The Sixth Form Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stages 3 and Key Stage 4

Good features

218. The vast majority of the pupils listen to teachers well and respond appropriately to requests.
219. A small number of pupils at both key stages is eager to participate in oral work and these pupils express ideas succinctly. The most able pupils can expand on their ideas and justify their views confidently.
220. The majority of pupils at both key stages have clear recall of previous work and boys and girls contribute equally to question and answer sessions at the beginning of lessons.
221. All the pupils across both key stages read a wide variety of printed texts and those linked to the media on a regular basis. At key stage 3, the majority of pupils read for pleasure on a regular basis and carries out personal investigations using modern technology, selecting relevant information and images.
222. The majority of pupils at both key stages read aloud well and are able to hold the attention of other pupils when reading aloud.
223. All the pupils, including pupils with additional learning needs, read texts that are appropriate to their age with a good level of understanding. They read and respond to a range of literary texts, including some that are particularly relevant to Wales, or from other cultures and traditions.
224. The most able pupils at key stage 3 display the ability to analyse the texts that they have read and the most able pupils at key stage 4 produce astute analyses that display depth of understanding of character, theme and style.
225. All the pupils across both key stages write in a variety of forms and for different purposes and audiences. A substantial number of pupils display good drafting skills.
226. All the pupils are able to analyse character, plot and theme and support their point of view in line with their ability and writing frames and differentiated worksheets help them in this respect.

- 227. There is discernible progress in the written work of a substantial number of pupils by the end of key stage 3. They have a wide vocabulary and varied sentence patterns. The most able pupils can compare and contrast texts well.
- 228. At key stage 4, the work of the most able pupils displays good understanding of the author's craft and an appreciation of stylistic features in complex texts.

Shortcomings

- 229. A significant percentage of pupils across the ability range at both key stages have spelling problems.
- 230. The ability of a substantial number of pupils to make oral contributions in pair, group or whole class situations has not developed sufficiently.

The Sixth Form

- 231. The vast majority of year 12 and year 13 students make good progress.
- 232. The students show understanding of the wider significance and historical context of the work they study and they are able to refer to their wider reading to support their point of view.
- 233. A significant number of the students develop into independent learners and offer well considered, original interpretations and express views intelligently in class discussions.
- 234. In written work, the most able students show clearly how the author's use of language creates different effects. The students use a wide vocabulary. They are able to recognise and appreciate a range of technical and stylistic features effectively and are able to support their view with relevant quotations.

Shortcomings

- 235. Some students do not promote their understanding of set texts by contributing to group and class discussions.

Science

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

Key Stage 4 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

The Sixth Form Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings*

**In the sixth form it is possible to differentiate between component subjects:*

Biology Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Chemistry Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Physics Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 3

Good features

236. The majority of pupils respond confidently to questions using scientific terms correctly and appropriately. These pupils have good knowledge and understanding of previous work.
237. The vast majority of the pupils listen intently during class discussions, showing an interest in the work. These pupils work enthusiastically and their attitude towards science is good.
238. The pupils develop practical skills well. They also work together well. The pupils are aware of the importance of safety in practical work and a good number of the pupils show understanding of the use of variables and the essentials of a fair test.
239. The majority of the pupils are aware of the contribution science has made to everyday life and its impact on industry and the environment.

Shortcomings

240. A small number of pupils is unwilling to offer answers orally and has difficulties recalling previous knowledge; as a result, these pupils lose interest in their work.

Key Stage 4

Outstanding features

241. The pupils make outstanding progress across the key stage and this is reflected in external examination results.
242. Pupils have outstanding factual knowledge and understanding of every aspect of science.
243. The pupils perform practical work carefully and safely. They are aware of the essentials of a fair test. A large number completes investigations of a high standard in order to complete coursework.

Good features

- 244. The majority of the pupils are enthusiastic and respond well to tasks. These pupils are confident when they write answers to show their knowledge of key scientific concepts in familiar and unfamiliar situations. They remain interested the whole of the time.
- 245. A good number of pupils know how to investigate some moral issues arising out of science.

Shortcomings

- 246. A small number of pupils work passively.

The Sixth Form

Good features

- 247. The students are able to recall, select and use concepts, knowledge and scientific techniques to a good standard. (In chemistry these abilities are outstanding.)
- 248. The students are able to evaluate scientific data and information correctly. They use information and communication technology to do this effectively.
- 249. The students perform practical work confidently and display positive attitudes towards safety. They are able to predict outcomes in unfamiliar situations by looking at patterns and using prior knowledge.
- 250. The students analyse and solve scientific problems to a good standard.
- 251. The majority of students take responsibility for the work and is able to evaluate the work of other students. The work files of the majority of students are comprehensive and are a valuable resource for them.
- 252. The vast majority of the students makes good progress from key stage 4 to advanced subsidiary level and then onwards to advanced level requirements.

Shortcomings

- 253. The students' ability to research and use sources has not fully developed so that they are aware of the contribution the sciences make to daily life.
- 254. A minority of students do not have a firm knowledge or understanding of scientific principles. This impedes their progress when they face new and unfamiliar situations.

Geography

Key Stage 3 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
Key Stage 4 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
The Sixth Form Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 3

Good features

255. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between people and the environment. Their knowledge of the effects of extreme events is good as reflected in their study of the hurricane to strike south east England in 1987. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the formation of hurricanes.
256. Pupils possess a good understanding and knowledge of settlement patterns. They can apply these patterns to real places in the local area using an Ordnance Survey map.
257. Most pupils develop a good understanding of the relevance of geography to economic and social issues. Their study of migration in Mexico provides a sound grasp of the 'pull and push' factors as applied to the free movement of population.
258. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of place. Their work on the local area, Mexico and the location on a world map of all the countries involved in the soccer world cup in relation to Wales re-enforces their knowledge of place location.

Shortcomings

259. A minority of pupils lack an understanding of some aspects of their work.
260. A significant number of pupils do not have sufficient grasp of some geographical terms used in their studies.
261. A minority of pupils fail to apply themselves consistently to their studies throughout the lesson.

Key Stage 4

Good Features

262. The majority of pupils possess a good grasp of the patterns and processes in physical geography. They understand the stages in river valley development and can label accurately the long profile of a river. Their knowledge of the erosion and transportation processes are good.

263. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the differences between low and high order goods. They provide sound examples of the goods found within each category.
264. Pupils appreciate that different types of shop are located in different areas of an urban area. They can name the areas and the type of retail outlet located there. They understand that shops have varying spheres of influence and are able to give reasons for the differences. Pupils' understanding of the patterns and processes in human geography is good.
265. Research, analysis and recording skills are good. The pupils demonstrate these skills particularly well in the completion of course work which is based on fieldwork conducted within the local area.
266. Pupils' competence in a range of geographical skills is good. They use maps, diagrams and information booklets with confidence.

Shortcomings

267. The work of a number of pupils demonstrates a lack of detail. There is some incomplete work.
268. A significant number of pupils experience difficulty in understanding and remembering geographical terms.
269. A minority of pupils lack concentration thereby failing to achieve work of the required standard.

The Sixth Form

Good features

270. Students have a good understanding of plant succession. Their knowledge of the different types of succession is good. They know how the activities of mankind interrupts plant succession.
271. The majority of students demonstrate a good grasp of a wide range of statistical techniques, map skills and information and communication technology to research, analyse and record their coursework findings.
272. Most students display a sound understanding of the concept of development. They are aware of the inequalities in world development. Their knowledge of the distribution of developed and developing countries is good.
273. They have a good understanding of the indicators of development such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Human Development Index (HDI). They describe and explain the differences in the development patterns in a selected list of countries with a high degree of accuracy.

- 274. The majority of students have a sound grasp of geographical terms. They use the vocabulary appropriately and accurately in a variety of situations.
- 275. Files are generally well organised with neatly presented notes, diagrams and maps on the various aspects of their course.

Shortcomings

- 276. Some aspects of completed work shows a lack of detail and depth in response to set tasks.

Art

Key Stage 3 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
The Sixth Form Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

Good features

- 277. Pupils at both key stages are well motivated and demonstrate a sound command of the visual language of line, tone, colour, pattern, texture, shape and space when discussing their own work.
- 278. Pupils understand the principle of colour mixing and how different colours can be used to convey different moods. They can refer to artists who have preferred to work with particular colour ranges, including Gwen John.
- 279. They successfully explore methods of conveying movement in a project, which culminates in the production of cartoons and mobiles
- 280. Pupils respond imaginatively to the work of artists such as William Morris, Richard Wilson and Victor Vasarely when developing their own compositions.
- 281. Pupils develop an increasing understanding of art relating to a variety of periods, cultures and contexts including 'op art', African masks and street art. They draw upon these traditions when creating their own compositions.
- 282. They make effective use of information and communication technology when undertaking research into the work of famous artists and when presenting their findings.
- 283. They explore and develop effective making skills such as mark making, observational drawing, painting, collage and printing when undertaking a range of projects which includes the innovative technique of mark making on slate.
- 284. Pupils make increasing use of sketchbooks to develop their observational drawing skills.

Shortcomings

- 285. Pupils' ability to record images and visualise ideas from memory, feelings and imagination is underdeveloped at key stage 3 and key stage 4.
- 286. In key stage 3 and key stage 4 the use of information and communication technology as a medium for developing ideas and image manipulation is limited.

- 287. Pupils do not study and realise artefacts in ceramics.
- 288. In year 10 a number of pupils are underachieving. They have difficulty in maintaining the expected pace of progress and are easily distracted from their task.
- 289. In year 11 a small number of pupils who are of a middle or lower ability are underachieving. They are uncertain of their direction and expectations when developing their individual themes and topics.

The Sixth Form

Good features

- 290. Students are well motivated and often work independently in areas of the studio, outside formal timetable time. They make skilful use of a range of resources and materials to develop a deepening understanding of the visual language of art.
- 291. They make effective use of sketch books to collect and record materials, which have different textures and visual properties
- 292. Students select and make skilful use of a range of materials when developing their compositions.
- 293. Students are confident when experimenting with colour and shape and while they develop a deepening understanding of the visual language of art.
- 294. They incorporate digital photography in a creative manner into their work.

Shortcomings

- 295. The students' use of information and communication technology as a medium for developing ideas and image manipulation is underdeveloped.

Music

Key Stage 3 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings
The Sixth Form Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Key Stage 3

Good features

296. The majority of pupils in years 7 and 8 sing well and with clear diction. They can sing in two parts and maintain a four part round. The quality of sound is good on the whole, and they make good use of warm-up exercises to ensure correct posture and breathing.
297. The majority of pupils perform a variety of music to a good standard, using percussion instruments, keyboards, and their own instruments. The pupils place emphasis on good technique, and a number of pupils use two handed techniques. A number also perform fluently, with ease and musically.
298. The pupils are able to compose a range of compositions for instrument and voice. They can make effective use of information and communication technology for this purpose. Year 9 pupils create extremely effective improvised melodies that make good use of rhythm and pitch.
299. The majority of the pupils have a good understanding of the musical elements and can discriminate within them when listening to music. They make good use of the correct terminology when responding orally and in writing, and are able to self-evaluate their work and set targets for improvement.

Shortcomings

300. There is insufficient variety in the quality of the sound when pupils sing.
301. The standard, quality and interest of pupil compositions is restricted by the pupils' lack of independence.

Key Stage 4

Good features

302. The majority of pupils are good performers. They are confident soloist, and perform well in an ensemble or classroom orchestra.
303. They create a number of original, varied and interesting compositions. They can make good use of information and communication technology.
304. When listening to music and appraising it, a number of the pupils differentiate well within the musical elements, and use the correct terminology.

Shortcomings

305. The standard of appraising is more uneven than other elements of the syllabus.

The Sixth Form

Good features

306. The advanced subsidiary group are talented performers, and perform confidently in a class ensemble.
307. The advanced subsidiary group's compositions are of a good standard. They show imagination, and also demonstrate effective use of information and communication technology.
308. When they listen to music, all the students show a good understanding of the musical elements, and are able to identify the fine detail of pieces.

Shortcomings

309. There are weaknesses in the compositions and essays of the current advanced level group level group.

School's response to the inspection

No School's Response was received before this report was sent for printing.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Brynrefail
School type	Secondary, community, comprehensive, naturally bilingual
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18 years
Address of school	Llanrug Gwynedd
Postcode	LL55 4AD
Telephone number	01248 672381

Headteacher	Mr Eifion Jones
Date of appointment	1998
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Ann P. Jones, Gwynedd Unitary Authority, County Offices, Castle Street, Caernarfon, LL55 1SH
Reporting inspector	Mr Gareth Wyn Roberts
Dates of inspection	6 – 10 November 2006

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	120	130	109	132	126	54	53	724

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	42	1 (0.5)	42.5

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.23
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	--
Average teaching group size	22.7
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	79.9%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Autumn Term 2005	94.5	91.7	90.9	90.8	90	91.3	85.1	91.2
Spring Term 2005	91.9	91.2	90.1	81.3	90.4	90.1	82.8	90.4
Summer Term 2006	90.8	88.4	86.9	88.3	95.1	79.9	88.7	88.8

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	6
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	23 temporary, 3 permanent (no one from an ethnic minority)

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 128															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	-	0	0	1	4	32	37	21	5	0	0
		National	1	0	-	0	0	2	8	21	35	24	8	0	0
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	-	0	0	0	8	22	31	24	15	0	0
		National	1	0	-	0	0	1	4	19	35	30	10	0	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	-	0	0	1	6	12	34	31	17		0
		National	1	0	0	0	0	1	6	18	24	32	15	0	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	17	30	26	17	0	0
		National	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	19	33	27	12	0	0

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment			
In the school	64	In Wales	56

Key Stage 3 tests were not statutory in 2006 and schools were not required to report on these to the WJEC.

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	111
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	46

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	100	100	97
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	68	60	53
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	92	90	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	58	47	39
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	100	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	90	84	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	100	98	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	0	2	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-	-	-

For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2006	48
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent	44
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent	4

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	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	68	68	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	98	96	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	23	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	-	-	-
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	-	-	-

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Twelve inspectors spent a total of 40 inspection days at the school and 93 lessons or part lessons were inspected in the six subjects. Thirty eight lessons or part lessons were inspected in other subjects to obtain evidence of the pupils' standards in the key and personal skills. In addition, inspectors visited a cross section of registration periods, extra curricular activities during the lunch hour and after school and morning acts of communal worship. Interviews were arranged with members of the senior management team, heads of departments and years as well as members of staff, including ancillary staff, with specific responsibilities.

A cross section of the work of able, average and low ability pupils from year 7 to year 11 and a cross section of year 12 and year 13 students' work was inspected. In addition, more examples of pupils' work were seen when inspectors visited classes, workshops and laboratories. Regular discussions were held with pupils about their work and formal interviews were held with pupils and students selected to represent their different school years. There were members of the school council amongst the representatives.

Every document the school presented before and during the inspection was analysed. Pre-inspection meetings were held with members of the senior management team, the staff, the governing body and parents. Twenty four parents attended the parents' meeting and 95 questionnaires were returned. Four letters and 6 comments on the questionnaires were received from parents and 10 letters from bodies and establishments in the local community.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities and contribution to key questions
Gareth W. Roberts Registered Inspector	Context; Summary; Recommendations Responsible for key question 1 Contributions to key questions 4 and 5 Appendix
William Owen Lay Inspector	Contribution to key questions 3 and 7
Anna Roberts Team Inspector	Responsible for key question 2
Trefor Lewis Team Inspector	Responsible for key question 6; Welsh (first language)
Janet Hughes Team Inspector	Responsible for key Question 4; English
Gwilym Williams Team Inspector	Responsible for key question 3; Contribution to key question 7; Science (chemistry)
Keith Davies Team Inspector	Responsible for key question 5; Contribution to key question 7; Leader of science team
Delyth Williams Team Inspector	Science (biology)
Huw Llewelyn Team Inspector	Geography
Graham Edwards Team Inspector	Art
Emyr Wynne Jones Team Inspector	Music
Gwyn Griffiths Team Inspector	Contribution to key question 4
Mari Dalis	Peer Assessor
Eifion Jones	School nominee, head teacher

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Acknowledgement

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