

**Inspection under Section 10 of the  
Schools Inspections Act 1996**

**Ysgol Dinas Brân  
Dinbren Road  
Llangollen  
LL20 8TG**

**School Number: 6634027**

**Date of Inspection: 15 May 2006**

**by**

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3508**

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- \* nursery schools and settings maintained or used by local education authorities (LEAs);
- \* primary schools;
- \* secondary schools;
- \* special schools;
- \* pupil referral units;
- \* independent schools;
- \* further education;
- \* adult and community-based learning;
- \* youth support services;
- \* LEAs;
- \* teacher education and training;
- \* work-based learning;
- \* careers companies; and
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Ysgol Dinas Brân 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 Dinas Brân took place between 15/05/06 and 18/05/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Brian William Medhurst undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

**Estyn decides the kind of inspection that a school receives, mainly on the basis of its past performance. Most schools receive a standard inspection. All 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

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>13</b>
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	13
<b>The quality of education and training</b>	<b>21</b>
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	21
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	26
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	30
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>32</b>
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	32
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	36
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	39
<b>Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning</b>	<b>44</b>
Welsh second language	44
Mathematics	45
Science	47
Design technology	49
Music	51
Physical education	52
<b>School's response to the inspection</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>55</b>
1 Basic information about the school	55
2 School data and indicators	56
3 National Curriculum assessments results	57
4 Evidence base of the inspection	59
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	60

## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Dinas Brân is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school within the Denbighshire Unitary Authority (UA), situated in Llangollen. It serves the town and surrounding areas of the towns of Corwen, Chirk and Wrexham, as well as extensive rural areas. Around sixty percent of the pupils come from regions within Wrexham UA. There are 1149 pupils on roll, including 152 in the sixth form. The school's buildings are designed to cater for 946 pupils. Three quarters of the pupils need to use buses to make their way to and from school each day, some of them undertaking long journeys.
2. Just over 10% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Many of the urban areas that the school serves fall within those that are considered as the most economically deprived in Wales.
3. The school's intake represents the full range of ability, but there are more pupils having below average ability than above. On entry, around a third of the pupils have reading ages less than their chronological age. Twenty-four pupils have statements of special educational need and a further 126 are formally recognised as having a range of special educational needs. Fifty-three pupils are disapplied from aspects of the National Curriculum.
4. Around 9% of pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. No pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language. Seven pupils are 'looked after' by a local authority.
5. The school was inspected previously in May 2000. The headteacher was appointed in September 2005. The two deputy headteachers were in post at the time of the previous inspection and the assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2000.
6. Since the previous inspection, the school has been designated as a bilingual school. There is one class in each year from Y7 to Y10, where pupils are taught a range of subjects through the medium of Welsh, according to their parents' wishes. There are, however, constraints imposed by availability of teachers who can teach their subjects through the Welsh language.

### The school's priorities and targets

7. By setting high expectations the school aims to promote the fulfilment of each pupil's potential in those areas in which the school can provide meaningful experiences: aesthetic and creative, spiritual and moral, linguistic, mathematical, scientific, physical and technological.

8. The school's motto is, "Success through effort".
9. The school aims to:
  - develop the whole person - to furnish its pupils with awareness, understanding, sympathy and respect for one another, and for social and cultural diversity;
  - prepare pupils for life in a rapidly changing world, encouraging them to acquire skills and knowledge appropriate to their needs as members of society;
  - develop home-school links, encouraging the joint participation of school and community in all aspects of educational development which are of common concern;
  - develop pupils' powers of self-motivation and self-discipline, encouraging a sense of personal responsibility for one's actions in the learning process and in the community;
  - develop lively, enquiring minds, encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to question ideas, opinions and attitudes with rationality and integrity;
  - enrich the experience of pupils, encouraging them to participate in a varied extra-curricular dimension to school life;
  - ensure that all staff are valued highly for their involvement in the life of the school and for their contributions to the education and wellbeing of their pupils;
  - create a purposeful, caring and supportive environment based on mutual respect and openness, where pupils, parents, school governors, staff and all in the community can work harmoniously together and where there are equal opportunities for all; and
  - promote the understanding that education is a lifelong process suited to different ages, aptitudes, abilities and interests.

## Summary

10. Ysgol Dinas Brân is a good school that offers its pupils and students many opportunities to succeed, within a supportive yet challenging environment. There is a very positive ethos in the school, within which all parties feel valued and willingly contribute to raising standards. The headteacher, the leadership team and all staff are enthusiastic about taking the school forward to new levels of success. This ethos exists despite shortcomings in both the accommodation and the availability of resources.
11. During the week of the inspection, most pupils and students from Y11, Y12 and Y13 were involved in study leave or were sitting examinations. In the absence of lesson observations, inspectors were provided with adequate examples of learners' work upon which to make judgements about standards and the quality of education.

## Table of grades awarded

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

## Standards

### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	KS3	KS4	Post 16
Welsh second language	3	2	3
Mathematics	2	3	2
Science	2	2	2
Design technology	2	1	2
Music	3	3	n/a
Physical education	2	2	2

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

81 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key Stage 3	8	64	22	6	0
Key Stage 4	18	46	36	0	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
Post 16	17	66	17	0	0
<b>Whole School</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

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

13. National targets for 2007 are for 98% of lessons to be graded 3 or better and 65% to be graded 2 or better. As the table above indicates, the school almost matched the first criterion and exceeded the second with 70% at grade 2 or higher.

### Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

14. In most subjects, standards achieved currently are better than those indicated by recent test and examination results. This can be attributed to the unity of purpose amongst all staff and the good learning ethos that are now evident in the school.
15. When pupils' entry-level data is compared with their achievements at the end of Key Stage 4, the outcomes indicate that in many cases pupils exceed expectations.
16. A few of the good features relating to pupils' achievements can be summarised as follows:
  - over time, results in the Key Stage 3 national tests in English, mathematics and science match or exceed local and national averages;
  - the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or better in the Key Stage 3 national tests in all three subjects: English, mathematics and science, is above both the national average and the UA average;
  - in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, many pupils' test and examination results exceed those predicted by prior attainment information; and
  - in 2005, the proportion of pupils achieving GCSE grades A\* to C in English, mathematics and science was well above the comparative UA figure and above the national figure.
17. Notwithstanding the good features above, there are some shortcomings. For instance:
  - when many aspects of GCSE results achieved are compared with outcomes in other schools in Wales having between 10% and 15% of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school falls well below average; and
  - over recent years, too few pupils have been entered for 5 or more GCSEs.
18. Most pupils succeed well within the school's very supportive environment, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background and/or prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve good standards.
19. In Welsh medium and English medium classes, most pupils listen attentively to teachers and to one another and they respond willingly to questions in lessons. In a few lessons, some pupils of middle to lower ability are slow to respond to instructions. Most pupils read a wide range of texts and read aloud with accuracy and fluency. The most able read with expression. All pupils understand and use different forms of writing. Presentation is generally good. Planning and drafting improve structure and technical skills.
20. Pupils' standards in bilingualism are good. Native Welsh speakers move easily between Welsh and English.
21. Pupils gain appropriate information and communications technology (ICT) skills in taught lessons in Key Stage 3, but do not always use them to enhance their standards in all subjects across the curriculum.

22. Overall, pupils' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. There is evidence of some good and very good standards.
23. A few pupils make insufficient progress because:
  - the school has experienced problems in recruiting suitably qualified full-time teachers in one or two subjects; and
  - they leave work unfinished or uncorrected, or fail to catch up on missed work after periods of absence.
24. The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is good. Good progress in the development of skills stems from:
  - the values and expectations promoted by the school and shared with pupils through events such as assemblies;
  - the good relationships between pupils and teachers as well as between pupils and pupils;
  - opportunities for the discussion of social and moral issues and for extra-curricular activities, including many visits to other countries;
  - the strong links with the community; and
  - the very valuable experiences gained from preparing for and helping to stage the annual Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.
25. Pupils make good progress in their wider key skills. They solve problems competently in a number of subjects. When given the opportunity, pupils are often creative in the way they develop their ideas and outcomes.
26. Pupils work well together. In almost all subjects pupils are co-operative in pair and group situations. They willingly discuss and share ideas and resources and, with very few exceptions, pupils are respectful, supportive and considerate of each other.
27. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good. Pupils understand well what constitutes good and unacceptable behaviour. There is a tiny minority who seek to disturb lessons. There are good facilities and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
28. Overall attendance at school for Y7 – Y11 in the three terms of 2005 was 89.8%, a decline from 91.5% at the time of the previous inspection. The current figure is below national averages but on a par with local figures.

### **Sixth form**

29. Students have a good work ethic. They are well aware of how well they are doing and receive very good guidance on how to improve, to which most respond effectively.
30. In 2005, the overall success rate for 2 or more A level grades A to E was 98%, better than both the UA and national averages. The proportion of students achieving success at grades A to C in 2005 was 67%. This figure is above the UA average, but just below the Welsh figure.

31. Students listen attentively to teachers and their peers. Many pose questions, put forward opinions and support their views with evidence. Reading standards are good. Written work is usually well structured and organised. Students write effectively for a range of purposes.
32. Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They are able to use and apply these skills competently in various subject areas.
33. Students do not have access to a discrete computer suite, and in some subjects they make insufficient use of ICT to support their studies.
34. In September 2004, 56% of the Y11 cohort remained in the school to continue their education, and 55% did so in 2005. Such figures confirm the continuing success of this sector of the school, even though facilities are often inadequate. Course completion rates for the school are good.
35. Most Y13 students progress on to higher education. Around 76% of last year's students did so.
36. The development of students' personal, social and learning skills is good because students:
  - are courteous and respectful to teachers, visitors and to one another;
  - collaborate well in pairs and groups in lessons and in voluntary groups;
  - contribute to the life of the school by engaging enthusiastically in charitable projects, duties, the school's council and extra-curricular activities; and
  - are positive role models and mentors for younger pupils.
37. In the sixth form, attendance at lessons is good, but there is widespread student non-compliance with the school requirement to register first thing in the morning.

### The quality of education and training

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

127 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key Stage 3	14	66	16	4	0
Key Stage 4	19	59	22	0	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
Post 16	40	50	10	0	0
<b>Whole School</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

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

39. The above figures were achieved within a context where a good number of teachers have to overcome difficulties. These include: lack of facilities, inappropriate teaching areas and inadequate funding. Despite this, teachers work hard to inspire and challenge their pupils and students.

### Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

40. Teaching is good overall with no important shortcomings because, in most cases, teachers:
  - have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, often kept up to date by individual research and/or through professional development activities;
  - are enthusiastic about what they are doing, and this stimulates and motivates pupils effectively;
  - treat pupils as individuals, whatever their background or ability, and address issues of gender, race and disability in a wide range of subjects;
  - have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and challenge them appropriately to realise their potential for success;
  - deliver lessons at a brisk pace to maintain pupils' interest and involvement; and
  - review and revise schemes of work and teaching styles regularly in order to raise standards.
41. There are some shortcomings. This is because, in a few cases across the curriculum, some teachers:
  - do not challenge pupils sufficiently to think for themselves;
  - do not define learning objectives clearly, focusing more on content rather than issues related to skills, knowledge and understanding; and
  - do not give pupils enough information to allow them to gauge how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, especially in Key Stage 3.
42. Many teachers also willingly 'go the extra mile', giving freely of their own time to provide extra help for pupils.
43. There are clear procedures for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements. Practice is good overall, but there are shortcomings because developments are not consistently in place in all departments, particularly in Key Stage 3.
44. The curriculum overall, extra-curricular activities and work-related education ensures that the learning experiences reflect national priorities and lay a good foundation for lifelong learning.
45. The curriculum is broad and balanced in each key stage. It meets legal requirements. There are many good features, but drama is not timetabled as a discrete subject in Key Stage 3 and information technology is not timetabled as a discrete subject in Y9. Overall, work-related education is good. The school maintains a very good awareness of the needs of employers.
46. Many pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by the varied extra-curricular activities offered by the school.
47. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with no important shortcomings.

48. There are outstanding features in pupils' multicultural awareness, respect for diversity and other people's way of life.
49. Pupils in the Welsh stream study all their subjects through the medium of Welsh in Key Stage 3. This breadth of opportunity is not available to them in Key Stage 4, because of problems encountered in recruiting teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh.
50. The use of Welsh across the curriculum is underdeveloped. The school has recognised this as an area of concern.
51. The bilingual nature of the school is not immediately evident. Many displays and notices around the school are not bilingual. The use of incidental Welsh around the school and in gatherings such as assemblies and tutorial periods is limited.
52. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is embedded into the schemes of work of all subjects.
53. There are many excellent features in promoting the awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship.
54. Entrepreneurial skills are well developed by the school.
55. The school is a happy and supportive community. There is a caring quality to the relationships between staff and learners, who respond positively to the concern shown for them.
56. The quality of the provision for pupils' special educational needs has many good features.
57. The school is highly effective in providing racial harmony, gender equality and a willing acceptance, in learners, of lifestyles that are different from their own.
58. The quality of the provision for equal opportunities has a large number of good features.

### **Sixth form**

59. The good features described above for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are also present in teaching in Y12 and Y13.
60. Teachers often challenge students to undertake individual research projects, using the Internet and other sources of evidence. Through carefully designed problem-solving tasks and probing questions, teachers also challenge students to provide original and innovative solutions in a range of contexts.
61. Through such activities, students are prepared well for lifelong learning in other environments, such as further and higher education establishments.

62. The assessment of students' work is good because teachers:
  - ensure that students know and understand the requirements of examination boards and the criteria for success;
  - identify and mentor those who are underachieving and inform parents; and
  - guide students in a process of review so that they are actively involved in their own progress and agree action for improvement.
63. Students have many opportunities to gain qualifications at AS and A2 levels, and in a range of vocational areas. They also involve themselves in many activities in the school, including helping younger pupils and organising charitable events. They also have many opportunities to benefit from a wide range of extracurricular activities.
64. All the good features of support and guidance found in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are available for students in the sixth form, tailored to meet their differing needs.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4**

65. Since being appointed in September 2005, the headteacher has had a very positive impact on the school. She is an extremely successful leader and manager whose belief in and application of openness and negotiation has moved the school forward in a very short time.
66. There is now a clear unity of purpose in the school, which has already had a beneficial effect on all aspects of school life. Members of staff work together to promote and sustain improvements. The school is successful in promoting equality for all.
67. Members of the leadership team, together with the headteacher, provide very good strategic direction for the school. There is a strong team spirit within this group and members provide positive and directional leadership.
68. Through discussion and consultation, school restructuring has been successfully achieved. A final staffing structure has been agreed and accepted.
69. Target setting is used effectively in some areas of the school, but best practice is not widespread. Challenging whole school targets are set in consultation with officers of the UA, but currently this has little impact on whole school practice.
70. The school's systems for promoting the continuing professional development of all staff and for improving the quality of provision are good.
71. Many members of staff with middle management responsibilities lead and manage well within their subject-specific and/or pastoral areas of provision. Good practice is not, however, fully widespread. There is too much inconsistency in the way in which departments are led and managed.

72. Governors have extensive experience of local and wider community issues. They have successfully maintained the school as a focus and partner for many community activities. They now make a valuable input to strategic management and educational improvement.
73. Governors provide a sense of direction for the school and have an improving role as critical friends. They meet their statutory responsibilities.
74. Self evaluation has been a well established element of planning at the school for some time. On the appointment of the headteacher in September 2005, an extremely comprehensive review was undertaken. This review was rigorous, systematic, and based on first hand evidence, involving all stakeholders associated with the school. Outcomes of this review provided the foundation for the school's development plan.
75. Members of the leadership team have a comprehensive and secure knowledge of the school's strengths and limitations. This is confirmed by the inspection team's findings matching the school's own perceptions for each key question.
76. Many middle managers are good at evaluating and monitoring standards achieved and provision within their areas of responsibility, but there is room for a sharper focus in a number of instances. Not all heads of department use measurable performance data successfully to identify strengths and shortcomings, and to set targets.
77. The success achieved by the school in many areas, in a short time, as recognised throughout this report, confirms the effectiveness of its evaluation procedures.
78. All developmental priorities identified in the school and departmental plans are costed in terms of time, money and resources. Unfortunately, funds are inadequate to support the priorities identified in these plans. The budget is in deficit, grants have been cut and capitation is low.
79. There are sufficient members of staff for the school to run efficiently, but the school has difficulty in recruiting subject teachers to teach through the medium of Welsh. Overall, the deployment, management and development of staff are very effective.
80. The quality and quantity of learning resources are no better than adequate, but the good features outweigh the shortcomings. Overall, the capitation funds available are well below the average for schools of a similar size.
81. The accommodation is just sufficient for the numbers on roll. It just manages to cater for the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum. The quality of the accommodation varies from very good to poor. It has suffered from an historical lack of capital investment and a restricted school budget.
82. Generally, the teachers make the most of their specific teaching areas and often make improvements themselves.

83. The financial management of the school is now very good. The headteacher and the governing body's sub-committee for finance effectively manage the available budget. Overall, the school uses its finances and resources competently and now achieves very good value for money.

### **Sixth form**

84. The sixth form of the school continues to enjoy considerable success. The courses students pursue are usually well matched to their interests and abilities.
85. The good features of leadership and management outlined as a whole are also evident in this section of the school.
86. There are several prominent features of the organisation and management of the sixth form. These include:
- an aim to prepare students for lifelong learning beyond school, and
  - good links with universities and colleges that help students choose appropriate routes beyond school.
87. In the sixth form, there is just an adequate range and supply of textbooks and equipment.
88. Accommodation for the sixth form is insufficient for the academic needs of the curriculum, and it does not meet the pastoral requirements.

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

89. As stated earlier in this report, the school was inspected previously in May 2000. Overall, the good features of progress made in addressing the key issues highlighted in the report outweigh the shortcomings. Marking, assessment and reporting procedures have improved, the staffing structure has been revised, there are vocational and alternative curricular arrangements for pupils in Key Stage 4 and the school satisfies the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 In the previous inspection report, the school was challenged to, "make the strongest representations to secure identified maintenance, refurbishment and improvements to the building, and other issues associated with the growth of the school, to create an effective working environment for all subjects". Despite making many strong and repeated representations to various appropriate authorities, very little progress has been made. Consequently, this key issue still remains to be addressed.
- R2 Continue to raise standards in all subjects, and especially in those where shortcomings have been identified.

- R3 Working together with the unitary authority, resolve the staffing and funding problems associated with the Welsh stream, to secure the bilingual nature of the school.
- R4 Improve the Welsh ethos of the school, by increasing the incidental use of the language around the school and in lessons.
- R5 Continue to refine assessment, recording and reporting procedures to ensure consistency of practice in all areas, especially with reference to informing and involving pupils more effectively.
- R6 Develop further the leadership and managerial skills of middle managers to match the best current practice in the school.

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

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

## Standards

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

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

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

### Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

91. The following table shows the grades awarded for the standards that pupils achieved in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in the six subjects inspected in depth:

75 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key Stage 3	8	64	22	6	0
Key Stage 4	18	46	36	0	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>

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

### Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

92. National targets for 2007 are for 98% of lessons to be graded 3 or better and 65% to be graded 2 or better. As the table above indicates, the school almost matched the first criterion and exceeded the second with 70% at grade 2 or higher.
93. The good features and shortcomings of standards achieved in the six subjects inspected in depth can be found in later sections of the report. In most cases, standards achieved currently are better than those indicated by recent test and examination results. This can be attributed to the unity of purpose amongst all staff and the good learning ethos that are now evident in the school. In most of the subjects, pupils achieve good standards in knowledge, understanding and skills.
94. Pupils entering the school represent the full range of ability, with an uneven distribution across the whole span of prior attainment. The proportion of pupils of below average ability exceeds that of above average pupils. A range of reliable data such as that provided by cognitive ability tests (CATs) confirms this.
95. When pupils' entry-level data is compared with their achievements at the end of Key Stage 4, the outcomes indicate that in many cases pupils exceed expectations.
96. There are several good features relating to pupils' achievements. Amongst these are the following specifics:

- over time, results in the Key Stage 3 national tests in English, mathematics and science match or exceed local and national averages;
  - in 2005, boys outperformed girls in the Key Stage 3 mathematics and science tests, contrary to the national trend;
  - the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or better in the Key Stage 3 national tests in all three subjects: English, mathematics and science, is above both the national average and the UA average;
  - in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, many pupils' test and examination results exceed those predicted by CATs and other prior attainment information;
  - the difference between boys' and girls' performances in GCSE examinations is not so marked as the national figure;
  - in 2005, in just over a third of the GCSE examinations, the proportion of the highest grades achieved (A\* and A) exceeded the national figure;
  - in two-thirds of the 2005 GCSE examinations entered, results at grades A\* to C exceeded the national figure;
  - in 2005, the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* to C was just above the UA average;
  - success in the 2005 GCSE examinations in mathematics and science at grades A\* to C exceeded both the UA and national averages; and
  - in 2005, the proportion of pupils achieving grades A\* to C in all three subjects, English, mathematics and science was well above the comparative UA figure and above the national figure.
97. Notwithstanding the good features above, there are some shortcomings. For instance:
- when many aspects of GCSE results achieved are compared with outcomes in other schools in Wales having between 10% and 15% of pupils entitled to free school meals, the school falls well below average;
  - over recent years, too few pupils have been entered for 5 or more GCSEs; and
  - overall, performance in GCSE examinations over time has not matched the national trend.
98. All members of staff strive to provide opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential. Because of this, most pupils succeed well within the school's very supportive environment, regardless of their social, ethnic or linguistic background and/or prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve good standards.
99. The following comments about literacy refer to both Welsh medium and English medium classes.
100. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and to one another. They respond willingly to questions in lessons. Many know and use subject specific vocabulary to good effect. All engage co-operatively in pairs and small groups. In a few lessons, some pupils of middle to lower ability are slow to respond to instructions and engage in talking amongst themselves when they should be listening and working.
101. Most pupils read a wide range of texts and read aloud with accuracy and fluency. The most able read with expression. Pupils usually demonstrate a good

understanding of what is read. Able pupils use higher order reading skills to interpret and appreciate writers' styles and intentions. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading.

102. Writing is usually extended when required. All pupils understand and use different forms of writing. They usually adapt style, tone and language to suit their audience and purpose. Presentation is generally good. Planning and drafting improve structure and technical skills. Able pupils in both key stages achieve good standards and the least able make good progress. In both key stages a few pupils of middle to low ability do not make productive use of their time when writing in some lessons.
103. Pupils' standards in bilingualism are good. Native Welsh speakers move easily between Welsh and English. All second language pupils study Welsh in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Results in both the full and short GCSE Welsh second language courses are good.
104. Pupils gain appropriate ICT skills in taught lessons in Key Stage 3, but do not always use them to enhance their standards in all subjects across the curriculum. In the six subjects inspected in depth, there are outstanding applications of ICT in design technology and there are good features with no important shortcomings in Key Stage 3 science and Key Stage 4 physical education.
105. There is good access to computers at lunchtimes and after school, but pupils say that in most subjects they are not often required to use computers outside lessons. In Key Stage 4, good use is made of ICT to support the development of pupils on the alternative curriculum course.
106. Overall, pupils' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. In both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 there is evidence of some good and very good standards.
107. A small minority of pupils have limited numerical skills and lack confidence when applying and using number in everyday situations.
108. The school has a numeracy policy for subjects across the curriculum. However, there is no numeracy co-ordinator and the implementation and development of the policy is a school priority.

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

109. In most subjects, pupils generally make good progress, whatever their ability and prior attainment. Pupils 'looked after' by the UA and those from other ethnic heritages also do well at the school.
110. Pupils are encouraged to participate fully in lessons. They undertake exercises to determine their favoured learning style and are given strategies, so that they may make progress using this preferred method. This is a new initiative, and it is already having a beneficial effect.

111. Pupils set themselves targets that are recorded in their planners and these are reviewed at regular intervals. Best practice is not, however, fully embedded in the school.
112. Most pupils can explain what they are doing, how well they are doing and, sometimes, what they need to do to improve. Their targets, though, are not always sufficiently subject specific, especially in Key Stage 3.
113. Across the curriculum, with varying amounts of success, pupils:
  - make outstanding progress in response to outstanding teaching when it occurs;
  - have at least good recall of previous work and apply this well in new situations and more demanding tasks;
  - are busy and productive and make good use of their time;
  - are aware of progress made in lessons and over time; and
  - are prepared well to move on to the next stages of learning.
114. Most pupils with special educational needs make at least good progress.
115. A few pupils make insufficient progress because:
  - the school has experienced problems in recruiting suitably qualified full-time teachers in one or two subjects;
  - some middle ability pupils are challenged insufficiently by the work they are asked to do; and
  - they leave work unfinished or uncorrected, or fail to catch up on missed work after periods of absence.

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

116. The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is good. This is because pupils:
  - mainly listen with respect and participate willingly in tasks and activities;
  - collaborate well when they work in pairs and small groups;
  - usually show interest in their work, sustain concentration and make effective use of their time;
  - respond to questions and take part in class discussions;
  - are fully aware and particularly respectful of the diversity of lifestyles, beliefs and other cultures. Their appreciation of other cultures is exceptional;
  - are aware of the importance of equality of opportunity in society;
  - understand the demands of the workplace and community life;
  - usually behave well in lessons and around the school;
  - show respect and courtesy to visitors, teachers and fellow pupils;
  - show respect for their environment;
  - make good progress in personal, social and moral development; and
  - have the confidence to work independently.
117. Good progress in the development of skills stems from:
  - the values and expectations promoted by the school and shared with pupils through events such as assemblies;

- the usually effective implementation of the school's code of conduct and system of rewards;
  - the good relationships between pupils and teachers as well as pupils and pupils;
  - the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy. Pupils are confident that any incidents would be dealt with promptly and fairly;
  - opportunities for the discussion of social and moral issues in lessons such as, English, geography, personal and social education, religious education and science;
  - good guidance and support from heads of year, tutors, members of the leadership team and representatives from a wide range of external agencies such as the careers service and learning coaches;
  - the programme for work related education and careers as well as work experience for pupils in Y10;
  - opportunities offered through extra-curricular activities including many visits to other countries;
  - the Comenius project linking with five schools in other countries;
  - opportunities to be part of the enterprise schemes and Duke of Edinburgh project work;
  - the work of the charity group in supporting a wide range of charitable causes both local and international;
  - membership of effective school groups and projects such as the School Council, Eco-council and Nepal link, which actively promotes understanding of global citizenship and sustainable development;
  - the strong links with the community; and
  - the very valuable experiences gained from preparing for and helping to stage the annual Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.
118. The shortcoming in the development of personal, social and learning skills is the poor attendance of a small group of pupils especially in Key Stage 4.
119. Pupils make good progress in their wider key skills.
120. Pupils solve problems competently in a number of subjects. Here they apply their initiative and decision-making skills well, to analyse and construct relevant solutions to a range of open-ended tasks.
121. When given the opportunity, pupils are often creative in the way they develop their ideas and outcomes. This is clearly evident in the work in art; design and technology; French; history and Welsh where pupils produce original, imaginative pieces of written and practical work.
122. Pupils work well together. In almost all subjects pupils are co-operative in pair and group situations. They willingly discuss and share ideas and resources and, with very few exceptions, pupils are respectful, supportive and considerate of each other.
123. Most pupils review their progress and achievement at regular intervals. A good proportion make informed decisions and take full advantage of opportunities to improve their own learning and performance.

124. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good, both in class and around the school. Pupils understand well what constitutes good and unacceptable behaviour. There is a tiny minority who seek to disturb lessons. Most teachers have good class management skills, controlling these pupils well and preventing disruption to learning.
125. There are good facilities and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. The school has recently reviewed its discipline policy. Sanctions for poor behaviour are appropriate and applied with rigour. Exclusion from school is used as a last resort and imposed only after full consideration and discussion with parents. Under the leadership of the new headteacher, there has recently been a temporary increase in short fixed-term exclusions as a result of a successful concerted effort to eliminate bad language and challenging behaviour.
126. Overall attendance at school for Y7-Y11 in the three terms of 2005 was 89.8%, a decline from 91.5% at the previous inspection. The current figure is below national averages but on par with local figures. The decline coincided with a period in which the school did not have established and experienced support from the education welfare services.
127. Recent new appointments have provided staff specifically devoted to improving attendance, and there is now a full time, experienced, educational welfare officer with good knowledge of the locality. Registration procedures and the follow-up of absentees are rigorous. Consequently attendance in the spring term 2006 has shown a 2.5% increase over the same period in 2005.

### **Sixth form**

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

6 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Post 16	17	66	17	0	0

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

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

129. Because of the small sample of lessons observed, the figures in the table above cannot be taken as representative of standards overall in the sixth form.
130. As described in later sections of this report, standards achieved by students in the six subjects inspected in depth are predominantly good with no important shortcomings.
131. Within the small sample of lessons, there was a good work ethic and the few students interviewed informally indicated that they valued their teachers' hard work and support. Students are well aware of how well they are doing and they receive very good guidance on how to improve, to which most respond enthusiastically.

132. In 2005, the overall success rate for 2 or more A level grades A to E was 98%, better than both the UA and national averages. The proportion of students achieving success at grades A to C in 2005 was 67%. This figure is above the UA average, but just below the Welsh figure. The average points score for each student is one point below the national average, but matches the UA figure. These standards have been maintained for some time.
133. The school has an open entry policy for those wishing to continue or begin their studies in the sixth form. In September 2004, 56% of the Y11 cohort remained in the school to continue their education, and 55% did so in 2005. Such figures confirm the continuing success of this sector of the school, even though facilities are often inadequate. Overall, around 80% of Y11 pupils continue their education in school or in other establishments, often within the Dee Valley Consortium.
134. Course completion rates for the school are good, with most students completing their chosen programmes of study at the end of Y12 or Y13. Most of those who leave at the end of Y12 do so to take up employment.
135. Most Y13 students progress on to higher education. Around 76% of last year's students did so.
136. Students listen attentively to teachers and their peers. Many pose questions, put forward opinions and support their views with evidence. There is confident use of a technical vocabulary and most use Standard English in formal situations. There is good collaboration in pairs and groups. Many display a growing confidence when they discuss and present views in a range of extra-curricular activities such as the School Council.
137. Reading standards are good. Students respond to a wide range of challenging texts demonstrating good skills of interpretation, critical analysis, cross referencing and research. They refer to texts to support opinion.
138. Written work is usually well structured and organised. Students write effectively for a range of purposes. They respond positively to critical comments written by teachers so that by the end of their courses final pieces of coursework are of a good quality.
139. Students' bilingual skills are good with no important shortcomings. Skills developed in earlier years in school are developed further as appropriate.
140. Students do not have access to a discrete computer suite, and in some subjects they make insufficient use of ICT to support their studies. However, in design technology and physical education there are good features with no important shortcomings. In the remaining subjects inspected good features outweigh shortcomings.
141. Students' numerical skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They are able to use and apply these skills competently in various subject areas.

## **Students' progress in learning**

142. Most students make good progress during their time in the sixth form, which is confirmed by the subject reports that follow. Value-added data indicate that for about half of the subjects studied students make more progress than suggested by prior attainment. Generally, students are motivated well to learn. They are, in the main, mature and responsible young adults who organise themselves and their time effectively.
143. As assessment procedures in the sixth form are good overall, students' progress and attainment, along with other aspects, are carefully, consistently and successfully monitored. These procedures, including very good support from mentors and senior members of staff, are instrumental in helping students to make progress and realise their potential for success.
144. In many classes, students are encouraged to take the initiative for their own learning. On the whole, they respond positively, make appropriate progress and are thus prepared well for learning beyond school.

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

145. The development of students' personal, social and learning skills is good because students:
  - show positive attitudes to learning and engage willingly in their work;
  - are courteous and respectful to teachers, visitors and to one another;
  - collaborate well in pairs and groups in lessons and in voluntary groups;
  - contribute to the life of the school by engaging enthusiastically in charitable projects, duties, the school's council and extra-curricular activities;
  - behave with growing confidence, independence and maturity; and
  - are positive role models and mentors for younger pupils.
146. Students work positively, both independently and with each other. They engage well in meaningful debate and problem solving activities. Particularly good examples are evident in the work in design technology, science, sociology and textiles, where ideas, solutions and written and practical outcomes demonstrate high levels of reasoning, innovation and creativity.
147. In the sixth form, attendance at lessons is good, but there is widespread student non-compliance with the school requirement to register first thing in the morning. This results in poor recorded attendance statistics (76.3%) and extraordinarily high levels of unauthorised absence (22%). Strategies are in operation to remedy this situation.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

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

### Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

149. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 lessons observed during the inspection:

117 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key Stage 3	14	66	16	4	0
Key Stage 4	19	59	22	0	0
<b>Combined KS3/KS4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

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

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

150. The above figures, with 79% of the teaching being awarded grade 2 or better, were achieved within a context where a good number of teachers have to overcome difficulties. These include: lack of facilities, inappropriate teaching areas and inadequate funding. Despite this, teachers work hard to inspire and challenge their pupils.
151. Teaching is good overall with no important shortcomings because, in most cases, teachers:
- have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, which is often kept up to date by individual research and/or through professional development activities;
  - are enthusiastic about what they are doing, and this stimulates and motivates pupils effectively;
  - know their pupils well, being aware of their strengths and shortcomings and what they need to do to make progress;
  - have developed good relationships with their pupils that enable learning to occur in structured, yet enjoyable, environments;
  - treat pupils as individuals, whatever their background or ability, and address issues of gender, race and disability in a wide range of subjects;
  - plan their lessons well so that they involve a range of activities suited to pupils' needs and prior attainment;

- have precise learning objectives for each lesson, which they communicate clearly to pupils, and then review progress with them at the end of the session;
  - do their best to ensure that all pupils are involved in learning activities and that no individual pupil dominates the lesson;
  - have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and challenge them appropriately to realise their potential for success;
  - provide extension tasks to challenge appropriately the most able pupils, and make available support activities for less able pupils;
  - deliver lessons at a brisk pace to maintain pupils' interest and involvement;
  - ask searching and demanding questions that require pupils to think deeply before responding, thus helping them to deepen their understanding of what they are studying;
  - work with support staff to good effect, so that all pupils have opportunities to achieve well; and
  - review and revise schemes of work and teaching styles regularly in order to raise standards.
152. As can be seen from the table of grades, there are several instances where the quality of teaching is very high. In these cases, teachers:
- have usually developed excellent relationships with their pupils;
  - have exceptional knowledge of their subject;
  - have very high expectations of success; and
  - challenge their pupils so well that they succeed well beyond expectations.
153. Likewise, the grades indicate that there are some shortcomings. This is because, in a few cases across the curriculum, some teachers:
- have insufficiently high expectations, especially for pupils of average ability and the most able;
  - fail to maintain a good pace of work, and pupils become disinterested;
  - do not challenge pupils sufficiently to think for themselves;
  - do not make full use of the range of teaching and learning styles available, such as group work or investigations to improve pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills;
  - do not define learning objectives clearly, focusing more on content rather than issues related to skills, knowledge and understanding;
  - are inconsistent in managing pupils' behaviour in class; and
  - do not give pupils enough information to allow them to gauge how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, especially in Key Stage 3.
154. The use of Welsh across the curriculum is underdeveloped. The school has recognised this as an area of concern and is doing all that it can to address the issue.
155. Many teachers also willingly 'go the extra mile', giving freely of their own time, and often providing resources to:
- prepare pupils for examinations;
  - help pupils with their coursework and/or homework;
  - help pupils catch up with their work after absence;

- provide extra support for pupils with learning difficulties; and
- enhance pupils' education through a range of extra-curricular activities.

156. Pupils in the Welsh stream study all their subjects through the medium of Welsh in Key Stage 3. This breadth of opportunity is not available to them in Key Stage 4 because of problems encountered in recruiting teachers who can teach through the medium of Welsh.

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

157. There are clear procedures for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements. Practice is good overall because departments and teachers:

- adopt strategies to implement the school's procedures;
- are familiar with the school's database which includes information on Key Stage 2 national tests, reading ages, basic skills in literacy and numeracy and preferred learning styles. There is also identification of pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. As pupils progress through the school, results in Key Stage 3 national tests are added to the database along with predicted and potential grades in each subject at GCSE level;
- assess pupils each half term using the school's grading system and use the results to update the database;
- use the half term assessment results to allocate pupils to groups and sets;
- moderate coursework and other work accurately and fairly;
- set annual examinations in each subject, including end of key stage trial examinations;
- analyse results of external examinations with the leadership team and discuss and set with them realistic yet challenging targets for improvement for year groups and individuals;
- ensure that the requirements of examination boards, National Curriculum and the Code of Practice are met;
- review pupils' progress and complete annual subject reports for pupils, parents and carers; and
- meet parents and carers to discuss their children's progress.

158. Good progress has been made in assessment procedures, but there are shortcomings because developments are not consistently in place in all departments, particularly in Key Stage 3. For example, not all teachers and departments:

- clearly explain the objectives of learning and assessment criteria to pupils so that they are aware of the knowledge, skills and understanding that are being developed in each lesson as well as the purpose of the learning;
- write comments on pupils' work which are related to objectives, identify strengths and set targets for improvement so that pupils know how far they have met the criteria for success and how they might improve;
- award levels to assessed work in all subjects and record and monitor progress of the national curriculum using the school's database;
- involve pupils in self assessment so that they fully understand the criteria, their own strengths and aspects for improvement;

- write subject specific learning targets for pupils in annual reports which inform parents and carers how improvements may be made; and
- use what they learn from assessments to help them plan more effective lessons and, if necessary, modify schemes of work.

159. Heads of year and tutors use the database to monitor effort and progress every half term. They effectively identify underachievement, inform parents and take action. Tutors discuss progress in all subjects with each pupil each half term. They support pupils in setting targets for improvement. Targets are appropriately entered into pupils' planners so that parents and carers are regularly informed of progress. This is good practice, but targets are often of a general nature. Subject teachers do not consistently set clear targets for improvement on work so that pupils are insufficiently guided in identifying specific and achievable subject targets. Heads of year and tutors effectively summarise achievement in annual reports.

### **Sixth form**

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

10 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Post 16	40	50	10	0	0

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

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

161. Although the above figures were awarded as a result of observing a small sample of lessons, the team believes them to be a fair reflection of the quality of teaching in the sixth form.
162. The good features described above for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are also present in teaching in Y12 and Y13.
163. Additionally, in most subjects, students are also encouraged to become independent learners. Teachers challenge students to undertake individual research projects, using the Internet and other sources of evidence. Through carefully designed problem-solving tasks and probing questions, teachers also challenge students to provide original and innovative solutions in a range of contexts.
164. Through such activities, students are prepared well for lifelong learning in other environments, such as further and higher education establishments.

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

165. The assessment of students' work is good because teachers, tutors and the director of studies:

- write comments on work which indicate to students how they might improve;
- ensure that students know and understand the requirements of examination boards and the criteria for success;
- implement the school's procedures by providing information on each student's effort and attainment in each subject every half term;
- use the database to track progress against previous results and predicted grades;
- identify and mentor those who are underachieving and inform parents;
- guide students in a process of review so that they are actively involved in their own progress and agree action for improvement;
- meet parents / carers each year to discuss progress;
- plan assessment activities such as trial examinations within the school's calendar of events; and
- provide information on progress in attainment, effort as well as personal, social and learning skills in annual reports.

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

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

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

167. The school overall meets pupils' learning needs, and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996.

168. The curriculum is generally successful in allowing pupils of all abilities equality of access to the curriculum. They are encouraged to participate in a wide range of experiences offered by the school.

169. In Key Stage 4, pupils can gain a range of qualifications at GCSE level, Entry Level and through the courses offered in the Vocational Pathways provision. Access to the sixth form is open to pupils of all abilities. They have opportunities to gain qualifications at AS, A2 and in some vocational courses.

170. The curriculum is broad and balanced in each key stage. There are a number of good features:

- all pupils in Y7 and Y8 study information technology as a discrete subject;
- all subjects can be studied through the medium of Welsh in Key Stage 3;
- the Vocational Pathways programme in Key Stage 4 successfully meets the needs of a group of pupils; and
- in the sixth form, there is a wide selection of AS and A2 courses.

171. There are some shortcomings:

- drama is not timetabled as a discrete subject in Key Stage 3;
- information technology is not timetabled as a discrete subject in Y9; and
- only a small number of subjects are offered through the medium of Welsh in Key Stage 4, because of staffing difficulties; and
- since Easter, the school has made strenuous efforts to recruit a teacher to teach science classes in Welsh, but has been unsuccessful.

172. There are some good features in the development of pupils' basic and key skills:

- the school has been successful in gaining the Basic Skills Quality award;
- a key skills policy has been approved by the governing body;
- all departments have literacy and numeracy policies;
- support materials to develop literacy and numeracy are included in pupil planners; and
- key skills will be accredited for a small number of students in the sixth form this year.

173. There are some shortcomings:

- information technology is not fully embedded in all schemes of work; and

- key skills have not been audited and mapped out to show progression across all key stages.
174. Many pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by the varied extra-curricular activities offered by the school. The programmes for sporting activities and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme are particular strengths, with many pupils gaining success. Many learners also gain a wide range of opportunities through the school's close link with the International Eisteddfod. Visits to theatres, field studies, involvement in musical activities and trips abroad help enrich pupils' learning experiences and their personal and social development.
175. The school is particularly successful in providing a diverse range of sports activities including fencing, dance and many inter school team events. Strong links with local clubs support these activities well. Many individuals and teams have been successful, achieving county and national honours.
176. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with no important shortcomings.
177. There are outstanding features in pupils' and students' multicultural awareness, respect for diversity and other people's way of life. These are promoted strongly through cultural links with the local community, many links in the curriculum and a wealth of opportunities from the school's involvement in the Llangollen International Eisteddfod.
178. The good features in pupils' and students' spiritual, moral and social development include the following characteristics:
- being caring and helpful;
  - taking responsibilities and working together;
  - respect for each other, the staff and the environment;
  - showing concern for others, by raising money for local and national charities and good causes;
  - having a clear sense of right and wrong;
  - being friendly, polite and ready to help each other and visitors to the school; and
  - having opportunities to worship daily as a whole year or in tutor groups.
179. There is a shortcoming in pupils' spiritual development in that there is inconsistency in the quality of experience across tutor groups.
180. Pupils' learning is enriched by strong positive partnerships with parents, primary schools, community and other education providers. All of the expected liaisons are in place. The links with the community are outstanding and there are good features in all other areas.
181. The outstanding features are:
- the extensive involvement of school staff in local committees considering local government, industry and employment, law and order, youth issues and church matters; and

- the range of activities within the local and wider Dee Valley communities undertaken by pupils on the Eco-Council and the School Council.
182. The good features are:
- the quality of information exchange with parents through surveys of opinion by questionnaire;
  - the pastoral links with primary schools and the frequency with which pupils may visit the school to participate in learning activities across a number of subject areas; and
  - the breadth and quality of links with several initial teacher training institutes.
183. The curriculum overall meets legal requirements. The programmes for personal, health and social education, work related education and careers education and guidance meet Welsh Assembly Government guidelines and are well planned in the teaching programme.

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

184. Overall, work-related education is good. The principal features are work experience for Y10 pupils and for Y12 students, and a range of useful supporting events. The good features include:
- the programme of activities and presentations offered on the work-related education day;
  - the opportunities for Y9, Y11 and Y12 students to get professional advice and explore option choices in relation to career aspirations; and
  - the use of local business representatives as mentors and for staging mock-interviews.
185. The shortcomings are that:
- Y10 work-experience is too near the end of the summer term for the benefits of de-briefing to be fully realised, and for subject departments to use the experiences as the basis for classroom exercises. The school has recognised this weakness and has adjusted the timing for this year; and
  - in Y12, work-experience is compulsory for all students. Some students satisfy this requirement through their part-time jobs, or voluntary work. There is no guarantee, however, that students will benefit from a career-linked experience of the workplace.
186. The Key Stage 3 curriculum reflects the bilingual nature of the school. The breadth of opportunity to study through the medium of Welsh does not continue into Key Stage 4. All second language pupils study Welsh in Key Stages 3 and 4. However, the bilingual nature of the school is not immediately evident. Not all displays and notices around the school are bilingual. All directive notices are in both languages. The use of incidental Welsh around the school and in gatherings such as assemblies and tutorial periods is limited.
187. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is embedded into the schemes of work of all subjects. It features prominently in history and design and technology through additional project work. In history, Y8 pupils have produced a well-illustrated brochure on

Llangollen Town History Trail. Y9 pupils won the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative Trust award in 2004 and 2005.

188. There are many excellent features in promoting the awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include:
- an enthusiastic Eco-Council which is involved in a number of projects both on the school site and in the community;
  - an activities week linked to the International Eisteddfod, which is totally devoted to sustainable development and global citizenship;
  - the Comenius project, linking with 5 other schools in other countries; and
  - the success in gaining the British Council's International Schools Award on two successive occasions and the Welsh Secondary Schools Award for global citizenship across the whole school.
189. The school maintains a very good awareness of the needs of employers through:
- a strong and well-established partnership with Careers Wales;
  - the very extensive, mutually beneficial links with enterprises in the community; and
  - the Partnership Committee of the governors which permits regular review of these links.
190. Entrepreneurial skills are well developed by the school, with some good features and one shortcoming.
191. The good features are:
- the regular and useful problem solving exercises are a feature of lessons in several subjects;
  - the opportunities in Key Stage 4 to learn from entrepreneurs in classroom presentations under the Dynamo scheme; and
  - the Young Enterprise scheme in Y12, which is well subscribed and well supported by local business, and successfully competes in regional and national competition.
192. The shortcoming is that, in Key Stage 3, there are few opportunities for pupils to explore their entrepreneurial abilities.
193. The school is very successful in providing learning activities that tackle stereotyping and social disadvantage. Comments made by learners confirm this. The school's equal opportunities policy is also very successful in practice. This can be seen in the number of girls who play soccer, rugby and cricket, and the boys who play hockey.
194. The school is generally successful in ensuring that learners acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to make good progress. Pupils and students are developing well as independent learners.
195. The curriculum overall, extra-curricular activities and work-related education ensures that the learning experiences reflect national priorities and lay a good foundation for lifelong learning.

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

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

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

197. The school is a happy and supportive community. There is a caring quality to the relationships between staff and learners, who respond positively to the concern shown for them. Pupils and students are very ready to turn to the staff for advice when the need arises. They praise the care, support and guidance they are given. The school has established a pastoral system that emphasises the personal welfare and the academic achievement of pupils.

198. There are many good features in the quality of care, guidance and support offered to learners, which include:

- the school council and year councils that make a significant contribution to the daily life of the school;
- the effective use made of the support services available to the school;
- very strong relationships between the school, parents and the community;
- good relationships with the school's feeder primary schools;
- good induction courses that help pupils settle down quickly when they join the school and when they transfer from one key stage to another;
- rigorous procedures to deal with bullying promptly and effectively;
- a comprehensive and effective mentoring system to support pupils with social and emotional difficulties, provided by sixth form students and learning support assistants;
- an effective partnership with the local careers company that helps provide learners with good careers advice;
- a good personal and social programme that ensures learners receive appropriate guidance on careers, health and environmental issues;
- a positive behaviour system that rewards good behaviour;
- correct procedures that are followed in the cases where pupils are excluded;
- good supervision of pupils as they arrive at school in the morning and leave the site in the afternoon;
- effective systems for recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality and good strategies to improve attendance;
- registers that are marked in accordance with statutory requirements;
- very effective support for pupils who have social or attendance problems, provided by the assistant heads of year;
- good arrangements for health and safety issues, and risk assessments, that are undertaken conscientiously. Nevertheless, a number of issues were brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection week, related mainly to the poor state of some of the accommodation; and
- child protection procedures that operate effectively.

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

199. The quality of the provision for pupils' special educational needs has many good features that include:
- teachers ensuring that pupils with additional needs are not treated less favourably than others;
  - a comprehensive system of recognising pupils who need extra assistance;
  - effective implementation of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice;
  - good relationships with parents and outside agencies;
  - good support for pupils with specific learning difficulties;
  - social inclusion measures that are particularly effective, with much support provided for those pupils considered to be at risk of exclusion;
  - the pupil support centre, which is well organised and offers good support to a number of pupils with complex social and/or behavioural difficulties;
  - learning support assistants that offer very effective support for pupils in mainstream classes, the pupil support centre, the learning support room and when mentoring individual pupils;
  - the good use made, when appropriate, of the expertise of external agencies;
  - successful monitoring of individual pupils' academic and emotional progress by means of individual educational plans or individual behaviour plans; and
  - making effective use of a number of literacy schemes to develop pupils' reading and spelling skills, including the Buddy Reading Scheme.
200. The special educational needs coordinator offers very good guidance and is well supported by the special educational needs subject link teachers and the learning support assistants. The senior management team and the governors support well their work and ensure that suitable opportunities are provided for pupils with additional learning needs.

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

201. The school is highly effective in providing racial harmony, gender equality and a willing acceptance, in learners, of lifestyles that are different from their own.
202. The quality of the provision for equal opportunities has a large number of very good features that include:
- appropriate provision for all pupils, including opportunities for some pupils to follow broader learning paths by spending part of their course off site;
  - monitoring and comparing of the results of boys and girls;
  - making every subject option available to both boys and girls;
  - challenging stereotyping when advising pupils on subject choices;
  - sensitive and effective support if problems arise in school;
  - good support for the few pupils who are in the care of the local authority;
  - a climate wherein any discrimination or unpleasant attitudes will not be tolerated;
  - making the utmost effort to enable disabled learners to gain access to the full curriculum. Currently, there are a number of areas of the buildings that are inaccessible to wheelchair users; and
  - the few learners from ethnic minority groups who have good friends across the age range and are fully integrated into the life of the school.

## Leadership and management

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

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

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

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

204. Since being appointed in September 2005, the headteacher has had a very positive impact on the school. She is an extremely successful leader and manager whose belief in and application of openness and negotiation has moved the school forward in a very short time. She has a vision to drive the school onward, which has grown from her own perceptions and ideas, informed by those of staff and pupils. Other sections of this report testify to the overall good standards and quality of education provided by the school.

205. The headteacher has worked hard with all staff to review policies, practices and procedures, also to tackle problems and issues. Members of staff commented that they appreciate the headteacher's style of leadership and the positive working relationships that have developed, also that they support her wholeheartedly. There is a clear unity of purpose in the school, which has already had a beneficial effect on all aspects of school life. Members of staff work together to promote and sustain improvements. Expectations are generally high and many beneficial changes have already occurred.

206. Following whole school discussions, developmental priorities have been established and acted upon. Through full consultation, in voluntary after-school sessions, the school's aims and objectives have been redefined and a new motto, 'Success through effort', has been adopted, having been suggested by a teacher and voted upon by all staff and governors. The support for the school's aims and values, and the enthusiasm to realise these are exceptional features of the school.

207. Members of the leadership team, together with the headteacher, provide very good strategic direction for the school. Each member's expertise and strengths are used to best advantage in pursuit of the school's aims. There is a strong team spirit within this group and members provide positive and directional leadership. Members of the team have line management responsibilities, which they undertake effectively.

208. Through discussion and consultation, school restructuring has been successfully achieved. A final staffing structure has been agreed and accepted. The new structure rightly focuses teachers' roles with respect to teaching and learning. The new school development plan (SDP) accordingly supports improvements in these areas. Allied to the performance management systems, staff appraisal is

closely related to determining professional development needs. The school has achieved Investor in People (IIP) status twice and it has won many awards for innovative approaches to training and development.

209. The school takes due regard of the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities. It has been the forerunner in developing the consortium of schools and colleges that constitute the Dee Valley Consortium. It is intended that the consortium should provide benefits for learners and to encourage all to become learners for life. The school embraces the philosophy behind "The Learning Country", but finds it difficult to implement all that it would wish to, because of financial constraints. As mentioned elsewhere in the report, the school has strong partnerships with its feeder schools.
210. The school is successful in promoting equality for all. This success is to be seen in:
- the availability of a broad and appropriate curriculum for all pupils of all abilities;
  - the very good systems for support and guidance that give all pupils the best opportunities to succeed, and
  - the special arrangements made for pupils with a range of special educational needs.
211. Target setting is used effectively in some areas of the school, but best practice is not widespread. Best use of targets to improve performance occurs in the sixth form.
212. Where practice is effective it is because:
- detailed analyses of a range of performance data provide a firm foundation for evaluating current accomplishments and for determining future likely outcomes;
  - targets are set that are challenging yet realistic, requiring effort on the part of those for whom they are set, if they are to be met;
  - targets are discussed and reviewed regularly and, if necessary, amended; and
  - a number of departments have been successful in meeting or exceeding targets in various areas of provision.
213. Absence of some of these good features occurs in a range of subjects.
214. Challenging whole school targets are set in consultation with officers of the UA, and they are reviewed annually. Currently, however, whole school target setting has modest impact on whole school practice. Heads of department have now been asked to be more consistent in using data effectively to inform and improve standards.
215. The school's systems for promoting the continuing professional development of all staff and for improving the quality of provision are good. Good features include:
- rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating standards and other areas of provision;

- all teaching being monitored and evaluated at regular intervals to determine current performance and future training needs; and
  - full involvement of the leadership team and many middle managers in review and evaluation.
216. Many members of staff with middle management responsibilities lead and manage well within their subject-specific and/or pastoral areas of provision. In particular, inspectors noted that many heads of department:
- have a clear vision of where their departments are heading;
  - have produced good departmental handbooks to guide practice and to ensure a measure of consistency of implementation;
  - promote and maintain a good team spirit within the department;
  - make school and departmental aims and objectives clear to teachers within the department;
  - set meaningful but challenging targets to raise standards, based upon analyses of data;
  - engender good teamwork in their department, delegating responsibilities wisely;
  - undertake detailed self-evaluations within their particular areas of responsibility as part of the whole school annual review procedures;
  - make very good use of the capitation available to them;
  - work well with line management members of the leadership team; and
  - make effective use of internal and external support services that are available to raise standards.
217. Such good practice is not, however, fully widespread. There is too much inconsistency in the way in which departments are led and managed.
218. The sixth form of the school continues to enjoy considerable success. The courses students pursue are usually well matched to their interests and abilities.
219. The good features of leadership and management outlined as a whole are also evident in this section of the school. Under the leadership of a deputy headteacher, assisted by assistant heads of sixth form and Y12 and Y13 mentors, high expectations, good monitoring of progress, teamwork, and a commitment to succeed predominate sixth form life. Target setting is a strong and effective aspect of activities here.
220. Many students provide valuable support for younger pupils through reading schemes and as mentors. They often present good role models for these youngsters.
221. There are several prominent features of the organisation and management of the sixth form. These include:
- effective recruitment and advice programmes for pupils prior to entering the sixth form;
  - a well structured induction programme for new students;
  - a very effective system of monitoring students' progress and achievement;
  - regular interviews to review progress on a one-to-one basis;
  - good careers advice and a programme of work experience in specialist areas;

- a very good range of extracurricular activities;
- many opportunities for students to take responsibility;
- an aim to prepare students for lifelong learning beyond school; and
- good links with universities and colleges that help students choose appropriate routes beyond school.

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

222. Governors have extensive experience of local and wider community issues. They have successfully maintained the school as a focus and partner for many community activities. The recent reorganisation of the board, together with the training undertaken by governors has sharpened their understanding of their roles in school management. Consequently, they are now able to make a valuable input to strategic management and educational improvement.
223. The governors are kept well informed about school issues through regular comprehensive reports from the headteacher. Link governors gather further knowledge from subject departments. The minutes of recent meetings show that this information is analysed well and is the basis for effective decision making to secure school improvement.
224. Governors provide a sense of direction for the school and have an improving role as critical friends. They meet their statutory responsibilities.

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

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

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

226. The school's self-evaluation report accurately and honestly highlights the good features of the school, along with areas for future development. It also effectively uses the criteria of the seven key questions of the common inspection framework. The team found the report to be very informative and useful in making judgements.
227. Self evaluation has been a well established element of planning at the school for some time. On the appointment of the headteacher in September 2005, an extremely comprehensive review was undertaken. This review was rigorous, systematic, and based on first hand evidence. Outcomes of this review provided the foundation for the school's development plan.
228. The school is mindful that consultation with the UA and the community is essential to ensure rigour and relevance not only to itself, but to the people it serves.
229. This review included the following items of good practice:
- a staff questionnaire that was analysed; its findings were presented to all staff for further consultation and priorities were highlighted;
  - pupils were consulted via a survey and the student council and the findings were analysed;
  - parents and carers were consulted via a survey, at parents' evenings, at other events and during 'surgeries' with the headteacher;
  - governors' roles were reviewed, meeting structures revised, protocol procedures restructured and links established with departments in the school;
  - to gain as much information as possible, the headteacher held meetings with UA officers and advisers, local community groups, leisure services, support services, police and local councillors;
  - the leadership team met regularly to discuss needs and priorities;
  - whole school out-of-hours meetings were held to share good practice, and to discuss whole school issues and concerns;
  - rigorous departmental reviews were undertaken (see below \*);
  - pastoral meetings were held to review practice and systems;
  - the school's code of conduct and its rules, protocols and ethos were reviewed; and
  - all policies were appraised and reviewed.

230. \*The formal rigorous departmental reviews now form the basis of the school's self evaluation processes. Each department is examined in depth by the leadership team, in consultation with the head of department.
231. The main areas of provision that are considered in these departmental reviews are:
- departmental documentation and policies;
  - examination results and other assessment information;
  - standards of achievement, including quality of pupil's written work;
  - the quality of teaching and learning;
  - health and safety issues;
  - availability and use of resources;
  - development priorities and progress towards achieving targets; and
  - extracurricular and enrichment activities provided by the department.
232. Members of the leadership team have a comprehensive and secure knowledge of the school's strengths and limitations. This is confirmed by the inspection team's findings matching the school's own perceptions for each key question. This exhaustive knowledge is achieved through the thorough and systematic arrangements described above.
233. Many middle managers are good at evaluating and monitoring standards achieved and provision within their areas of responsibility, but there is room for a sharper focus in a number of instances. All are well informed about the areas for which they are responsible, but the information is not always used to best effect. Not all heads of department, for example, use measurable performance data successfully to identify strengths and shortcomings, and to set targets. The school recognises this as an area for further development.

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

234. Subsequent to these self-evaluation activities, the priorities for the SDP are determined. These are then reflected in departmental development plans (DDPs), along with particular issues arising from each department's individual needs.
235. The success achieved by the school in many areas, in a short time, as recognised throughout this report, confirms the effectiveness of its evaluation procedures. For example, the standards observed in lessons in most instances are better than those represented in last year's external examination results, especially in Key Stage 4.
236. The school's self-evaluation processes are now very effective overall. All developmental priorities identified in the SDP and DDPs are costed in terms of time, money and resources. Unfortunately, funds are inadequate to support the priorities identified in these plans. The budget is in deficit, grants have been cut and capitation is low.

237. The key areas for strategic development in the current SDP are appropriate for the school in its current state of progress towards achieving all its goals in full. They are:
- raising standards – focusing on the use of data to inform individual and whole school improvement;
  - raising standards – motivating staff and pupils to achieve highly;
  - improving the quality of teaching and learning;
  - to ensure the school is meeting the needs of all learners and the wider community;
  - to ensure that all pupils are guided and supported through their school lives;
  - to develop leadership and management processes across the school;
  - to evaluate what the school does and review processes to ensure it achieves goals and targets; and
  - to ensure the school runs efficiently and effectively.
238. As stated earlier in this report, the school was inspected previously in May 2000. Overall, the good features of progress made since that inspection outweigh the shortcomings. However, the school has made good progress in addressing those key issues for action for which it was wholly responsible.
239. For example:
- marking, assessment and reporting procedures have improved, but there is still room for further development;
  - the staffing structure has been revised, responsibilities are evenly balanced and now relate to teaching and learning priorities;
  - there are vocational and alternative curricular arrangements for pupils in Key Stage 4; and
  - the school satisfies the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, even though the quality of the provision is variable.
240. The school was also challenged to, “make the strongest representations to secure identified maintenance, refurbishment and improvements to the building, and other issues associated with the growth of the school, to create an effective working environment for all subjects”
241. Despite making many strong and repeated representations to various appropriate authorities, very little progress has been made. Consequently, this key issue still remains to be addressed.

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

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

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

243. There are sufficient members of staff for the school to run efficiently. Just fewer than half the teachers have ten years teaching or less, including five newly qualified teachers. The good features can be summarised as:

- most teachers are appropriately qualified to teach all aspects and subjects, to meet the needs of the curriculum;
- the finance officer and administrative staff ensure that the office, reception and reprographics areas run efficiently;
- technician support in science, design technology, home economics and information technology is good;
- nine learning support assistants in the main school and three in the learning support unit provide good assistance to the number of pupils with learning and behavioural problems. They work effectively with teachers;
- five assistant heads of year make a good and effective contribution in monitoring pupils' attendance and pastoral needs;
- in the first instance, two cover assistants look after classes for absent staff, otherwise they are deployed to support pupils in lessons;
- a librarian ably promotes, co-ordinates and supervises the use of the library; and
- the caretakers contribute to daily routines of the school.

244. The one shortcoming within staffing is the difficulty in recruiting subject teachers to teach through the medium of Welsh. Thus maintaining the bi-lingual aspect of the school is problematic.

245. The quality and quantity of learning resources for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in the six subjects inspected are no better than adequate, but the good features outweigh the shortcomings.

246. Overall, the capitation funds available are well below the average for schools of a similar size.

247. The good features include:

- a range (albeit limited) of text books and equipment across the subject areas;
- a good range of subject booklets that are produced in-house ;
- a limited number of interactive white boards and digital projectors that are used effectively to enhance classroom teaching;
- the good use made of out of school resources to enrich the curriculum. These include visits to museums, art galleries and theatres, trips abroad and field trips;

- a range of visiting speakers who enhance pupils' learning experiences;
  - an adequate provision of ICT equipment that supports the teaching of discrete ICT lessons. When available, these facilities are used by subject areas across the curriculum;
  - a varying range of computers in numerous subject bases across the curriculum; and
  - the good provision of ICT equipment in design technology for computer aided design.
248. The shortcomings in resources for Key Stages 3 and 4 include:
- pupils having to share text books and/or the dated text books and equipment in some subjects;
  - an over reliance on worksheets that have been produced in-house;
  - the rooms for design technology are not equipped for the large classes that are taught in them;
  - Key Stage 3 pupils having to share computers in Information technology lessons;
  - the limited access to the ICT rooms for some subjects across the curriculum;
  - the small number of interactive white boards and digital projectors to enhance teaching; and
  - for nine months the music department has had ten unused new computers. They have not been used because of unresolved set-up problems. There is also a shortage of tuned percussion instruments.
249. In the sixth form, there is just an adequate range and supply of textbooks and equipment. During lessons, when there are no timetabled classes, students use the library for independent learning and research.
250. The library is small for the number of pupils on roll and its book stock is under the recommended levels. However, it makes very good use of the schools' library service. It is used well by subjects across the curriculum and by pupils for independent learning. The library has two computers and learners use these for research on the Internet. The library encourages pupils' reading and independent research. It is well used at lunch and break times.
251. The school is situated on a cramped, complex site. The site comprises of a number of buildings that are interconnected. The Welsh block and the sports hall (shared with the local community) stand alone and there are five hatted classrooms. The buildings overall form a collection of various unrelated architectural styles.
252. The school grounds include a path that is a public right of way to the ruins of the castle, a road used as access to the sports hall and a field that can be used by the community. As a result, the security of the school is at risk. This risk has been minimised by the installation of closed circuit television cameras.
253. The accommodation is just sufficient for the number of pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. It just manages to cater for the academic and pastoral needs of the curriculum.

254. During lessons there is a virtual hundred per cent timetabled usage of all rooms. Teaching rooms that are timetabled include corridors and store rooms.
255. The quality of the accommodation varies from very good to poor. It has suffered from an historical lack of capital investment and a restricted school budget. There is a limited maintenance budget for emergencies and for the future planned refurbishment of subject areas.
256. The school has a service level agreement (SLA) with the UA for school maintenance, but despite providing a prioritised list of projects, the school is never sure which project is to be undertaken next and when the work is to start.
257. One major concern is the multi-usage of the hall facilities, which necessitates the continual rearrangement of furniture. Following its use as a canteen during break and lunch times, litter has to be cleared from the area. This uses a large amount of the caretakers' time and detracts from the amount of minor maintenance needing to be completed.
258. Generally, the teachers make the most of their specific teaching areas and often make improvements themselves.
259. The good features in the accommodation include:
- most rooms cater well for all class sizes;
  - in some corridors and classrooms, displays of pupils' work and subject information provide an effective and sometimes stimulating learning environment;
  - the sports hall and the Astroturf areas that are very good facilities;
  - the improved toilet facilities for pupils; and
  - the school grounds and buildings are kept clean, well maintained and mostly litter free.
260. The shortcomings with accommodation include:
- the dark and drab nature of certain parts of the school;
  - the unsatisfactory condition of some rooms and especially of the huts;
  - a few rooms are too small for some of the larger classes timetabled to use them. This restricts the variety of teaching methods that can be employed;
  - in design technology there is inefficient dust extraction, water leaks through the internal guttering system, the rooms are often too hot and there is a lack of natural light in some areas;
  - in the food technology area a lack of sinks and the state of the blackboards present health and safety issues; and
  - a minority of lessons are taught in non-specialist rooms that do not have subject specific displays, resulting in the need to transport materials and equipment around the school.
261. Accommodation for the sixth form is insufficient for the academic needs of the curriculum, and it does not meet the pastoral requirements. There are insufficient rooms for sixth form students to be registered at the start of each session. As a result, registers have to be taken in lessons, denying students the opportunity to have pastoral contact with a tutor.

262. Other accommodation for the sixth form includes a small study room that is timetabled for 30% of the lessons and a large common room. The two areas are inadequately furnished. In the library there is room for only ten students to carry out research and independent study. Generally, students use any available space, including sitting with classes that are being taught, for independent work.
263. Economics, psychology and sociology are taught to sixth form students in the Old Court House in Parade Street, Llangollen. All other subjects are taught in the main school buildings.
264. The school is working with UA and other external agencies to plan and create the Llangollen Learning Centre for lifelong learning in the community. This would cater for sixth form teaching. It would enable the school to provide specialist facilities in school and for drama in particular.

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

265. Overall, the deployment, management and development of staff are very effective. The good features include:
- the deployment of staff that makes good and efficient use of their time, expertise and experience;
  - staff development activities that are now organised with the participation of all members of staff. It is linked to the professional development of staff in line with performance management requirements, the SDP and the needs of departments and individuals. It is well managed and coordinated;
  - training courses attended are evaluated and used to the benefit of the school;
  - programmes and support for newly qualified teachers and for initial teacher training students that are very good. They are detailed and thorough; and
  - there is good professional development available for support staff.
266. The school has completed plans for the workload agreement and is to appoint a business and site manager. It has made provision in the timetable for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA).
267. The headteacher and leadership team have consulted all interested parties and, with the governing body's approval, have finalised their structure for the new teacher and learning responsibilities.
268. The financial management of the school is now very good. The headteacher and the governing body's sub-committee for finance effectively manage the available budget.
269. Through circumstance, a deficit budget has had to be set this year. The unitary authority has approved this.
270. The following good features are evident:
- the finance sub-committee meets regularly and it receives detailed up to date reports from the headteacher;

- financial decisions are well focused on the curricular needs and the educational priorities identified in the school development plan;
  - the school pursues all grants and sponsorships that are available;
  - the distribution of capitation to subject areas is effective; there are opportunities for subject areas to bid for extra funds to introduce initiatives;
  - the finance officer is responsible for the day-to-day running of the finances;
  - the headteacher and heads of department have immediate breakdowns and current balances from the finance officer;
  - spending is effectively monitored; and
  - the minor recommendations of the last auditors' report have been addressed.
271. Overall, the school uses its finances and resources competently and now achieves very good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Welsh second language

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

#### Good features

##### Key Stage 3

272. In the majority of classes, pupils make good progress in all language skills. They show a positive attitude to learning the language. They understand the consistent use of Welsh by their teachers. They respond enthusiastically to activities and resources when they are tailored to their needs and provide them with an appropriate challenge.
273. Standards in speaking are good in the majority of classes. Pupils listen respectfully to their teacher and their peers. They answer questions on familiar subjects confidently. They work effectively in pairs and groups to create dialogue. Their use of incidental Welsh outside formal exercises has a significant impact on raising standards in oral work.
274. Pupils recall language well. They add new vocabulary to familiar structures to extend speaking and writing.
275. Standards in reading are good in the majority of classes. Pupils read aloud well with good intonation in classes where they are required to consider the content of the text carefully before they begin. Pupils extract information well from simple texts for use in oral or written work.
276. Pupils, relative to ability, are competent writers. They are encouraged to write in extended format from the beginning of Y7. By the end of Y9, the highest achievers use a range of language patterns and a wide vocabulary.
277. Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress over the key stage.

##### Key Stage 4

278. GCSE results on both the full and short course are consistently above national averages.
279. On the full course, pupils continue to make progress in all language skills. They speak with increasing fluency during class discussions. Their pair and group conversations are accurate and lively.
280. Pupils on the short course conduct brief conversations on familiar topics. They respond accurately to questions.

281. Standards in writing are good. Pupils structure their extended writing effectively. They express opinions clearly using appropriate examples to support their viewpoints. They use figures of speech effectively. The highest achievers can explain rules of grammar and apply them in their writing to produce extended documents, to achieve impressive results.

### **Post 16**

282. Students' understanding of the language is sound.

283. The highest achievers engage in natural conversation with teachers, peers and visitors. In class discussions they offer perceptive comments on a range of issues.

284. Students' written work is structured effectively. Folio work shows the ability to adapt their style of writing to suit audience and purpose. They successfully explore characters and themes in set works. They justify their viewpoints when addressing moral and social issues.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key Stage 3**

285. Because of staffing problems, in a few classes, pupils rarely respond beyond one-word answers. Their pronunciation is insecure and their writing is brief.

286. A minority of pupils are reticent to tackle unfamiliar words when responding to questions or reading aloud.

#### **Key Stage 4**

287. Pupils on the short course have more language than they are willing to use

288. They do not always commit to improving their standard. They respond to questions in one-word answers. Their written work is often brief.

### **Post 16**

289. Quite a few students are reluctant to contribute to class discussion. Their ability to move a discussion forward is limited.

290. Some students' written work is descriptive rather than analytical and often contains basic grammatical errors.

## **Mathematics**

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

### **Good features**

#### **Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4**

291. Most pupils across the age and ability ranges answer questions orally with clarity, understanding and accuracy.

292. They have spatial awareness and understand the concepts of area and volume using appropriate units.
293. They are developing a sound knowledge of number, vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and the relationship between them.
294. Most pupils use calculators appropriately.
295. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
296. Pupils' learning is enhanced by readily available extra support.

### **Key Stage 3**

297. Pupils in Y7 are able to apply their knowledge of investigations to tackle mathematical problems logically.
298. The more able pupils in Y8 have a basic knowledge of the concept of axes in co-ordinate geometry and understand the equations of lines parallel to the axes. They apply appropriate averages to data that have been gathered from situations in everyday life.
299. Most Y9 pupils understand the concept of simple probability in everyday events and successfully apply this knowledge to games.
300. More able pupils in Y9 have a good basic knowledge of the trigonometry of a right-angled triangle and can use calculators to work out answers to problems finding the lengths of sides.

### **Key Stage 4**

301. A minority of pupils in Y11, who have achieved GCSE grade B from the intermediate tier November examinations, are studying for the higher tier papers to extend their knowledge.
302. The more able pupils in Y10 can solve both linear and pairs of simultaneous equations.
303. They have a thorough knowledge of the properties of right-angled triangles and can solve appropriate problems.
304. Lower ability pupils in Y10 can answer questions on the perimeter and areas of complex rectangular shapes using appropriate units.

### **Post 16**

305. In the sixth form, over recent years, there has been a consistently high pass rate in external examinations, with a good number of students achieving the highest grades.
306. Y13 students have a good understanding of a range of concepts in pure mathematics, further mathematics, mechanics and/or statistics. They can adapt this knowledge to solve associated questions.

307. Y12 students are making good progress in understanding the basic concepts of pure mathematics, further mathematics, mechanics and/or statistics.
308. Students' learning is enhanced by readily available extra support.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4**

309. In some classes across the ability ranges, the more able pupils are not always challenged in lessons and do not fully achieve their potential.
310. A minority of lower ability pupils do not always complete and present their work in a neat, logical way. They do not always correct work that is wrong.
311. A small number of lower ability pupils have limited numerical skills.
312. In a minority of classes, pupils lack confidence in their mathematical abilities and are too dependent on teachers' support.

#### **Key Stage 4**

313. A small number of pupils in Y11, who have achieved GCSE grade B from the intermediate tier November examinations, are not studying any further mathematics.
314. A small number of pupils are content with minimal achievement.

#### **Post 16**

315. No noteworthy shortcomings.

<b>Science</b>
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Key Stage 3:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

### **Good features**

#### **Key Stage 3**

316. Many pupils have secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics covering all aspects of the National Curriculum, at levels appropriate to their stage of development.
317. Many pupils recall key concepts well, and apply them to a range of problems and applications of science in familiar and unfamiliar situations.
318. A majority of pupils have a good understanding of the link between scientific principles and applications associated with the environment, healthy living and aspects of sustainable development.

319. Many pupils use scientific terms accurately and apply principles with confidence in a number of problem-solving activities.
320. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress relative to their ability.
321. Pupils develop good practical skills. Most pupils work safely and collaborate well in shared practical activities.
322. By the end of the key stage, many pupils are developing good investigative skills.

#### **Key Stage 4**

323. Most pupils have a good understanding of the more complex principles developed in the key stage in life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical properties.
324. They have a good recall of previous work and can apply their knowledge to a range of tasks and applications across many topics in the National Curriculum.
325. Many pupils develop a good awareness and understanding of the contribution that science makes to society and of its impact upon industry, the environment and the economy.
326. More able pupils complete investigations to a very high standard. Most investigations are completed to at least a good standard and give pupils access to the higher marks in all skill areas.
327. Most pupils use detailed scientific knowledge and understanding to inform their plan and record the outcomes of preliminary work. Actual measurements are systematically recorded and repeated when anomalous results are observed.
328. The majority of pupils are able to analyse their results in detail using appropriate graphs or numerical methods, and assess the validity of their findings. More able pupils evaluate their outcomes in considerable depth, often commenting critically on procedures and suggesting ways to further develop the investigation.

#### **Post 16**

329. Most students in biology, chemistry and physics make at least good progress in the respective programmes of study.
330. Most students have a good recall and understanding of key concepts and principles.
331. Many students are able to apply their theoretical understanding to a number of problems involving the analysis of data and the application of scientific principles.
332. In the Y13 lessons observed, many students achieved good standards in the past questions considered in revision programmes.

## Shortcomings

### Key Stage 3

333. A minority of average and lower ability pupils have a less secure recall and understanding of current and previous work.
334. They have difficulty in applying scientific principles to a range of tasks and applications in both familiar and unfamiliar situations.

### Key Stage 4

335. A small minority of average and lower ability pupils make only modest progress.
336. Their recall of current and previous work is not secure, resulting in difficulties when applying a number of scientific principles to a range of tasks and scientific problems.

### Post 16

337. A few students have a less secure knowledge and understanding of some of the topics covered.
338. A minority of students in Y13 were not secure in their responses to tasks set linked to past examination questions.

## Design technology

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

## Outstanding features

### Key Stage 4

339. Standards are outstanding in all major aspects of GCSE textiles technology project work.
340. Pupils' making skills are outstanding in GCSE food technology and resistant materials.
341. Pupils make outstanding use of ICT in project work, research, designing, presentation, and computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM).

## Good features

### Key Stage 3

342. Pupils understand and apply design processes in their project work; researching well and producing appropriate design specifications. Pupils understand the link between design specifications and evaluations.

- 343. Pupils plan well for the making stage of their work and have a good understanding of making processes in a wide range of materials. The quality of their finished products is often exceptional.
- 344. Pupils have a good understanding of ways in which devices can be controlled by using a computer, and of ways in which mechanisms can be used to change direction and speed.
- 345. They make good use of computers for design, CAD/CAM, control and modelling electronic circuitry in project work.
- 346. Pupils' work shows that they understand basic structures and the application of triangulation in bridge building.
- 347. Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, with the more able being challenged effectively.

#### **Key Stage 4**

- 348. Pupils make effective use of a design process to guide their project work. Research work is relevant and well directed, and the link between design specifications and evaluation is well developed.
- 349. The presentation skills of most students are good. Pupils use ICT design packages effectively to enhance the research, design and presentation of their work.
- 350. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials, processes and techniques is well developed.
- 351. GCSE project work is often innovative.

#### **Post 16**

- 352. Standards in A Level product design are good.
- 353. Students' design work is good overall, showing effective use of a design process to guide the development of the products they create.
- 354. Students effectively research, analyse and evaluate both commercial products and their own work.
- 355. Projects are often innovative, showing excellent planning and quality.
- 356. Effective use is made of ICT for a variety of purposes including designing, CAD/CAM, research and presentation.
- 357. Theoretical understanding is good.

## Shortcomings

### Key Stage 3

358. Pupils' developmental drawing skills are weaker than other elements of designing.
359. Pupils make insufficient use of their good understanding of mechanisms and electronic control in the projects they design and make.

### Post 16

360. Quick developmental drawing skills, particularly in sketchbooks, are weaker than other elements of designing.
361. Design specifications do not always identify the issues that are priorities.

<b>Music</b>
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- Key Stage 3: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings  
Key Stage 4: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

## Good features

### Key Stage 3

362. Most pupils sing with a pleasing tone, clear diction and secure intonation. They perform melodies and individual parts on keyboards with a good degree of accuracy. Many maintain good ensemble in whole class performance.
363. Recorded evidence of pair and group compositions by pupils from certain classes show pupils able to combine different sounds imaginatively. Some improvisations, based on the 12 bar Blues structure, are stylish, melodically well shaped and rhythmically interesting. .
364. Pupils can identify instruments and basic features when appraising recorded extracts. A few make detailed pertinent comments about what they hear.

### Key Stage 4

365. Most pupils make suitable progress in vocal and instrumental performance. A few perform with confidence and a good sense of style.
366. A few compositions demonstrate imaginative treatment of ideas and have a good sense of style and structure.
367. More able pupils can discern features well when appraising recorded extracts of music from the different areas of study.

## Shortcomings

### Key Stage 3

368. Intonation is not always secure in the singing of certain classes. Certain pupils cannot play in time with others in pair or whole class performance. More able pupils are not always fully extended in such activities.
369. The ability and experience of pupils in certain classes to explore different sounds and combine them imaginatively in composing tasks is limited. Resulting compositions are limited in musical interest.
370. Certain pupils, when appraising, are reluctant to respond or only make brief, superficial comments.

### Key Stage 4

371. Results at GCSE, in recent years, have been well below the UA and all Wales averages.
372. The performing skills of a few pupils are limited. Some compositions develop from good ideas, but are rather repetitive and show limited development.
373. The appraising skills of certain pupils are uneven. They are good in some tasks, but insecure in others.

<b>Physical education</b>
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Key Stage 3:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings
Post 16:	Grade 2	Good features and no important shortcomings

## Good features

### Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

374. Behaviour is good. Pupils are enthusiastic, well motivated and attentive to teaching points.
375. Pupils are able to collaborate in pairs and small groups to achieve learning outcomes.
376. Most pupils appreciate the effects of exercise on the body. They understand the importance of warming up and warming down.

### Key Stage 3

377. Boys in Y7 are able to perform the sprint start accurately. The most able pupils demonstrate effective peer evaluation.
378. Pupils in Y8 and Y9 are competent in demonstrating a range of techniques in athletics and are able to evaluate their performance effectively. Most boys are able to diagnose key faults in throwing events and suggest appropriate targets

for improvement. Pupils understand the pacing concept in athletics and its practical role in suitable running events.

379. In tennis, the majority of girls are able to maintain a rally. The most able pupils utilise space effectively and select the appropriate shot.

#### **Key Stage 4**

380. In GCSE lessons, pupils are focused and contribute readily to class discussion. They demonstrate an understanding of the physical, mental and social benefits of exercise. The most able pupils can analyse practical data collected using the correct terminology.
381. In tennis, most pupils are able to maintain a rally and demonstrate a variety of shots. The more able pupils display effective shot selection, preparation and execution.

#### **Post 16**

382. Students in Y13 display coherent and confident communication skills. They are conscientious and willingly share opinions using appropriate terminology.
383. They are able to present a performance action plan orally, recalling information from prior learning and applying it effectively. The most able students demonstrate effective peer evaluation.
384. Written work is well presented, planned appropriately and of a good standard.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **Key Stage 3**

385. Less able pupils are unable to coordinate the basic movements involved in athletic events effectively.
386. Average and less able pupils find it difficult to perform tennis techniques with accuracy and quality.

##### **Key Stage 4**

387. In GCSE lessons, average and less able pupils are unable to give extended answers to questions.

##### **Post 16**

388. No noteworthy shortcomings.

## **School's response to the inspection**

The governors, headteacher and staff at Ysgol Dinas Brân are delighted that the Estyn report accurately reflects the school's assessment of itself based upon effective and broad-based self-evaluation processes.

The good standards achieved by pupils reflect the high quality teaching, which is described as one of the school's strong features. The quality of teaching, which is supported by very good opportunities for continuing professional development, is described as exceeding Welsh Assembly targets with 70% being grade 2 or better (65% - Wales target). Recognition is also given to the very good relationships between teachers and students and the 'good learning ethos', which allows learning to occur in a 'supportive yet challenging environment'. The school accepts the recommendation to refine the use of assessment practices and to make better use of statistical and standardised data to further raise standards across all subjects and indeed, has been working towards this.

Recent changes to the curriculum, to make it accessible to all pupils, including those with SEN, are reported as good features. Advice to further develop and integrate special, alternative courses will be given priority. The planning for the development of Welsh and the bilingual stream, both as taught language and a key element as school's cultural life will continue to be one of the school's top priorities.

The quality of pastoral care, support, guidance and careers advice is given the highest praise and this reflects the school's strong commitment to its aim of giving every pupil the best level of care. The good behaviour of pupils, in classrooms and about the school generally, is commended, as are the school's systems of dealing with bullying and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.

The active and positive contribution of the governing body to the success of the school is acknowledged and governors will continue to monitor and challenge staff to improve.

The Estyn inspection came at a crucial moment in the history of the school. It occurred at a time of immense change and the fact that there has been little investment in the site will support our battle to improve our learning environment with a new headteacher in post and at a time of development.

The findings will be used as another tool to help us make a good school even better.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Dinas Brân
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11 -18
Address of school	Dinbren Road Llangollen Denbighshire
Postcode	LL20 8TG
Telephone number	01978 860669

Headteacher	Ms Alison Brown
Date of appointment	1 September 2005
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mrs Elizabeth Pybus
Reporting inspector	Mr Brian Medhurst
Dates of inspection	15 to 18 May 2006

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	182	197	206	214	198	92	60	1149

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	69	5	71.7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16 : 1
Average teaching group size	20.6
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	78

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	92.2	90.1	89.9	88.9	80.1	69.2	65.1	86.6
Term 2	91.1	89.2	86.7	89.0	92.2	83.7	88.5	89.2
Term 3	94.9	93.0	91.1	89.9	89.2	77.5	73.6	90.4

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	10.3
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	134

## Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2005															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 213															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0.5	0	0	0	0	0.5	9.5	32.4	29.0	19.0	9.0	0	0
		National	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.4	1.7	8.1	21.3	33.6	23.5	9.4	0.2	0
	Test	School	0.0	2.4	1.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	11.0	15.7	41.4	20.5	8.6	n/a	n/a
		National	0.5	3.5	2.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.5	20.4	32.6	22.7	10.1	n/a	n/a
Welsh <b>16 pupils</b>	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	12.5	6.3	56.3	25.0	0	0	0
		National	0.1	0.4	0	0	0.1	0.4	6.1	19.5	34.2	29.1	9.8	0	0
	Test	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.8	0.0	50.0	31.3	0.0	n/a	n/a
		National	0.2	2.1	0.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.8	18.4	35.0	28.4	10.1	n/a	n/a
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.5	0	0	0	1.0	5.2	16.7	28.1	35.7	12.9	0	0
		National	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.9	6.8	18.9	25.7	31.6	13.7	0.3	0
	Test	School	0.0	4.3	1.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.8	19.5	20.0	40.0	11.0	n/a	n/a
		National	0.3	5.1	1.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.1	17.2	19.9	36.0	15.0	n/a	n/a
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	4.3	23.8	32.4	32.4	6.7	0	0
		National	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.4	6.0	20.1	32.8	27.1	11.6	0.1	0
	Test	School	0.0	3.3	1.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.3	17.1	28.1	31.9	16.2	n/a	n/a
		National	0.3	0.4	0.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.7	16.6	32.5	28.2	13.0	n/a	n/a

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	53.1	In the school	58.6
In Wales	57.7	In Wales	57.1

## Public Examination Results:

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ</b>	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2005	197
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	36

<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:</b>	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	82	85	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	50	49	52
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	81	83	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	40	33	38
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	96	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	75	72	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	91	90	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	9	10	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	4	4	3

<b>For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2005	161
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2005	52
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2005	10

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	67	64	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	98	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	19	19	20

UA Unitary Authority

## Appendix 4

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

Fifteen inspectors (including the school's nominee) spent the equivalent of 49 days at the school.

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

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

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

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

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

Inspectors held formal discussions with groups of pupils and students selected from Y7 to Y11. They also talked with many learners informally.

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

Parents of thirteen pupils attended the pre-inspection meeting. Ninety-two replies to the questionnaire were received and analysed. A few parents also wrote to the registered inspector.

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
Mr Brian W Medhurst Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 2, 5, 6
Dr Michael H L Snow Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4, 5
Mr Glyn Davies	Key Question 3; Sixth form co-ordination; Science
Mrs Lynn Bithell	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 3
Mr Heddwyn Evans	Key Question 4; Contribution to Key Question 3
Mr Alan Edwards	Key Question 7; Contribution to Key Question 1; Mathematics
Mrs Mary Crandon	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3; Welsh (second language)
Mr Selwyn Gale	Contribution to Key Question 1; Design technology
Mrs Margaret Herbert	Contribution to Key Question 1; Design technology
Mr Gareth Jones	Physical education
Mr David Jones	Science
Mr Alan Wynne Williams	Music
Mrs Anne Newman	Support role
Mr Martyn Williams	Support role
Mr Robert Ellis	School's nominee

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### Acknowledgement

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