

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

**Ysgol Maes Garmon  
Conway Street  
Mold  
Flintshire  
CH7 1JB**

**School Number: 6644018**

**Date of Inspection: 27/11/06**

**by**

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Ysgol Maes Garmon 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 Maes Garmon took place between 27/11/06 and 01/12/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Neil Trevor Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a standard inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Maes Garmon is a designated Welsh community comprehensive school for pupils and students aged 11 – 18 years. It is maintained by Flintshire Local Education Authority. Currently, there are 549 pupils, including 70 sixth form students (Y12 and Y13). The number of pupils accepted into the school annually varies substantially, with the result that the number of pupils in a year group varies between 68 and 117. Including the head, there are 40 (full-time equivalent) teachers. There are 37 full-time and five part-time teachers.
2. The school serves towns and villages across Flintshire. The area includes prosperous areas, for example within the town of Mold and some villages, together with the industrial towns of Deeside and several Communities First areas. About 12% of the pupils are registered as ones entitled to free school meals, which is similar to the average figure for the County, but lower than the national percentage (17%).
3. 14 pupils (about 3% of Y7-Y11 pupils) have a statement of special educational needs, which is similar to the national percentage. In addition, 71 pupils (about 15% of Y7-Y11 pupils) are on one of the school's action stages and school action plus stages of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs. The National Curriculum has been disapplied for three pupils. There are no pupils who are cared for by the Local Authority.
4. Nearly all pupils (99.2%) belong to the white ethnic group. Approximately 90% of the pupils come from homes where English is the main language spoken and 10% come from homes where Welsh is the main language at home. About 15% of the pupils come to school as Welsh 'learners', on the immersion scheme but, from year 8 onwards, all pupils follow all their courses through the medium of Welsh. Every subject is taught through the medium of Welsh throughout the school, apart from two subjects (Psychology and Sociology) in the sixth form.
5. The current head was appointed to the school in September, 1997. The school was previously inspected in October, 2000.

### School priorities and targets

6. As identified in the current school development plan, the main priorities of the school for 2006 – 07 are:
  - teaching of the best quality;
  - learning of the best quality;
  - assessment;
  - links;

- academic standards;
- special educational needs;
- pastoral standards;
- spiritual, moral, social and cultural standards;
- standards in behaviour, attendance and punctuality;
- management;
- continuing professional development of school staff;
- school's environment;
- promoting Welshness.

7. The quantitative targets for 2007 are the following:

<b>Key stage 3 indicators</b>	<b>% at level 5 or more in school</b>
Welsh	79
English	82
Mathematics	90
Science	87
Core Subject Indicator	71
Difference in boys' and girls' performance	0

<b>Key stage 4 indicators</b>	<b>% gaining a qualification</b>
% registered on at least 1 GCSE	100
5 GCSE subjects gaining grade A* - C	71
5 GCSE subjects gaining grade A* - G	100
Core Subjects Indicator	46
% leaving without a qualification	0
Difference in boys' and girls' performance	0
% unauthorised absences	0.4

## Summary

8. Ysgol Maes Garmon is a good school and it has many outstanding features including:
- pupils' and students' development in personal, social and learning skills;
  - quality of the curriculum and the learning experiences in school;
  - quality of care, guidance and support for pupils;
  - quality of the provision to promote pupils' bilingual skills;
  - quality of the head's leadership.
9. The school has responded well to the key issues identified in the 2000 report. Although agreeing with the majority of judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report, the inspection team has awarded a higher grade to one key question, namely key question 4.

### Table of the grades awarded

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

### Standards

10. The grades awarded for standards in the subjects specifically inspected are as follows:

Subject	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Sixth Form
Welsh (first language)	2	2	2
Mathematics	2	2	2
Information Technology	3	2	3
Design and Technology	1	1	1
Music	3	3	2
Religious Education	2	2	2

11. In the lessons observed in the above subjects, the percentages of lessons gaining the different grades at stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form are as follows:

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>Key Stage 3</b>	21%	53%	23%	3%	0%
<b>Key Stage 4</b>	17%	50%	33%	0%	0%
<b>Sixth Form</b>	14%	72%	14%	0%	0%
<b>Whole School</b>	18%	56%	24%	2%	0%

12. These are high percentages. The percentage of lessons awarded grades 1 and 2 is substantially higher than the Welsh Assembly Government target for schools by 2007, which calls for standards in 65% of lessons to be grade 2 or better. The school also reaches the second Welsh Assembly Government target for 2007, which is that standards in 98% of lessons should be grade 3 or higher.
13. In the six subjects inspected, there were outstanding features in lessons in Welsh, design and technology and mathematics and important shortcomings in only one lesson.
14. Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed have improved substantially since the last inspection.

### **Quality of test results and external examinations**

15. Although there has been general progress in test results at key stage 3 since the previous inspection, pupils' results in 2005 place the school in the lowest quartile in three of the key indicators and below the median in one other indicator, compared with similar schools across Wales in terms of the level of free school meals.
16. In 2005, the percentage of pupils who succeeded in reaching level 5, or better, is higher than the average for Wales in English and mathematics, similar to the average for Wales in Welsh, and lower than Wales in science.
17. In 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government analyses show that the school provides added value during key stage 3 in English, science and in the Core Subjects Indicator (CSI), placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools in English and above the median for science and the CSI. These analyses also place the school below the median of similar schools in Welsh and in the lowest quartile in mathematics.
18. In 2006, compared with 2005, the percentage of pupils who succeeded in gaining level 5 or higher, in English and on the CSI has increased substantially. The percentage gaining level 5 in science in 2006 is similar to the previous year, with a reduction in the percentage gaining level 5 in Welsh and mathematics.

19. Over the last three years, school results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) compare favourably with results in the county and Wales. The percentage of pupils succeeding in gaining five GCSE subjects A\*-C, the CSI and the average points score, are all consistently higher than averages for the county and Wales in 2004, 2005 and 2006.
20. In 2005, compared with similar schools in terms of the level of free school meals, the percentage gaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-G was in the highest quartile, but with the CSI and the average points score below the median, and the percentage succeeding in gaining 5 or more GCSE grades with A\*-C in the lowest quartile.
21. The Welsh Assembly Government analyses show that the school provides additional value between key stages 3 and 4, placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools for the percentage of pupils gaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-G and above the median for the average points score. The school is below the median for the CSI and the percentage gaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-C.
22. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
23. The school's results over the last three years have been similar to the county and Wales results for 'A' level examinations.
24. The students' average points score is similar to the county and Wales in 2006, slightly lower in 2005 and higher than the county and Wales in 2004. The percentage of students succeeding in gaining grades A-C in 'A' level examinations is substantially higher than the county and Wales in 2004 and 2006, but lower than the county and Wales in 2005.

#### **Standards in the key skills, the broader key skills and other personal skills.**

25. Standards in the key skills are good.
26. The standards of pupils and students' communication and numeracy skills are good and their bilingual skills very good.
27. The standards of pupils and students in the broader personal skills are very good.
28. The good and very good features include pupils and students who:
  - show positive attitudes towards learning, show an interest in their work and contribute enthusiastically to activities;
  - behave well and show respect towards teachers, visitors and fellow pupils. The school is an orderly community with pupils showing high levels of courtesy;
  - co-operate very well, help each other and show a sensitive appreciation of each other's opinion;
  - make an important contribution to promoting the feeling of a caring community within the school.

29. Pupils' ability to work independently is limited in some areas.
30. The progress pupils and students make in their learning is good. In a great number of their lessons, pupils work at the highest level of their ability and complete unfamiliar tasks through effort and concentration. The progress of pupils in the 'immersion' group in Welsh during key stage 3 is outstanding.
31. The pupils with SEN and the most able and talented pupils make good progress and reach standards that are appropriate for their ability.
32. Levels of attendance in school were 93% on average during the three full terms before the inspection. This is higher than the Welsh Assembly Government target for secondary schools, namely 92%, places the school in the highest quartile of similar schools throughout Wales, and is an outstanding feature.

### Quality of education and training

33. The quality of teaching in the six subjects specifically inspected (66 lessons) is as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
21%	64%	14%	1%	0%

34. In the subjects that were not inspected specifically, each teacher was observed teaching at least once. The table below shows the quality of teaching in every lesson observed throughout the school (100 lessons):

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
22%	58%	18%	2%	0%

35. These figures compare well with the national picture described by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report for 2004-2005. Nationally the quality of teaching is good [grade 1 and 2] in 81% of lessons, of which 13% is grade 1.
36. In the lessons where teaching is good with outstanding features, the features of the teaching include:
  - very high expectations in standards of work and behaviour, which motivate and challenge individual pupils;
  - the use of a variety of teaching and learning techniques that encourage pupils to work diligently and make substantial progress;
  - lessons that are prepared particularly thoroughly under conditions of work that are, temporarily, very difficult in some subjects.

37. In the lessons where teaching is good and there are no important shortcomings, the features of the teaching include:
- good, up-to-date knowledge and understanding;
  - lessons that are planned well and are organised and structured carefully;
  - good opportunities for students to work independently and to think for themselves and take an active part in lessons;
  - appropriate good opportunities for students to promote their key skills.
38. In the few lessons where there are shortcomings, there is:
- a lack of sufficient challenge in the tasks;
  - limited questioning and as a result, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their work in depth, nor to foster their independent learning skills.
39. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) are taught well and there is effective collaboration between teachers and class assistants.
40. The school fulfils the linguistic needs of pupils very well in order to promote their bilingual skills.
41. The school's assessment procedure shows good features and no important shortcomings.
42. The school fulfils the statutory requirements for:
- assessing the National Curriculum at key stage 3;
  - the regulations of the examination boards at key stage 4 and the sixth form;
  - assessment of pupils and students with additional learning needs.
43. The school has a system that assesses effort and attainment effectively across the school.
44. The work of pupils and students is marked regularly, fairly and accurately. In the best examples constructive comments and appropriate targets are a means of promoting higher standards and work. However, there are examples of a lack of consistency in the quality of comments within and across the departments, and the assessment does not always provide adequate feedback for pupils and students on how to improve.
45. Parents and guardians have information on their children's progress by means of one full report a year, and an opportunity also to discuss their progress at a parents' evening.

## Learning experiences of pupils and students

46. There are a number of outstanding features in the way the school fulfils the learning needs and interests of pupils across the range of ability. These include:
- a broad and balanced curriculum for every pupil including pupils disappplied from the National Curriculum and pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and ALN;
  - the breadth of the key stage 3 curriculum, which has been extended through choir and drama lessons that add to the linguistic, cultural and social development of pupils;
  - additional support and attention provided for Welsh learners as part of their immersion scheme;
  - the flexibility of the key stage 4 curriculum, which allows every pupil to follow a half GCSE course in religious education and information technology;
  - aspects of the Cwricwlwm Cymreig that are very prominent in the schemes of work of every department:
  - a wide provision of courses in the sixth form, considering the size of the school. Very effective use is made of video conferencing, which extends the experiences of students and strengthens links with other schools.
47. The school offers an outstanding range of extra-curricular opportunities and a variety of activities both within the school and outside, which contribute substantially to the personal development of pupils and students.
48. There are outstanding aspects in the way the school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The purposeful corporate worship in the class room, and year group and whole school services which have a religious ethos, all promote the comprehensive PSE programme of the school.
49. The school's partnerships with parents, schools and other institutions reinforce the learning experiences of pupils and students substantially. The outstanding features include:
- strong curricular and pastoral bridging links with the primary schools that feed Ysgol Maes Garmon;
  - close and effective co-operation with other Welsh medium secondary schools to prepare bilingual resources across the curriculum and present subjects through video conferencing.
50. Promotion of the bilingual skills of pupils is a very strong element in the school with respect evident for both languages. The 'immersion' scheme is an outstanding feature of this provision. The broad range of extra-curricular opportunities makes an important contribution to pupils' bilingualism.

51. The school takes positive steps to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and prevent any stereotyping.
52. The school promotes awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship across the curriculum. There are outstanding features to this provision that include:
  - gaining the Eco-schools Green Flag by providing a prominent place for this aspect in all the school's life;
  - pupils' awareness of sustainability and fair trade in a world wide context.
53. The school provides outstandingly for developing skills in initiative and entrepreneurship.
54. The school gives good attention to national priorities, including sustainability, enterprise, citizenship and multilingualism.

### **The care, guidance and support for pupils and students**

55. The care, guidance and support that pupils and students receive are good with outstanding features. The outstanding features in the school's provision include:
  - the emphasis in the school's handbook on the 'congenial atmosphere' of the school and that there is a tradition of caring well for pupils. The quality of care, assistance and support for pupils is outstanding and is one of the notable features of the school;
  - very good co-operation between the heads of year and class tutors. Their knowledge of pupils is outstanding and they organise invaluable experiences for pupils through activities during school hours and beyond;
  - a very good relationship between the school and parents and the community. The recent development of the school as a Community School is a way of extending cultural awareness and enhances the personal and social development of pupils, and is an outstanding feature;
  - an excellent link between the school and Welsh and English medium primary schools that feed the school, and its induction programme that ensures Y7 pupils settle quickly;
  - an intensive course to immerse Y6 learners in Welsh before they come to Maes Garmon as a way of ensuring they settle in happily, and the provision offered to these pupils, pastorally, linguistically and academically is outstanding.

### **Quality of the provision for additional learning needs**

56. The school provides well for pupils with a broad range of additional learning needs including some with behavioural difficulties.
57. The enthusiastic SEN co-ordinator provides good leadership and works hard to raise awareness of additional learning needs in school. The arrangement is inclusive and pupils make good progress. They are seen to enjoy their lessons.

### **Quality of the provision for equal opportunities**

58. The quality of the provision for equal opportunities is good with outstanding features.
59. The outstanding features include:
  - extremely effective systems for transmitting the Welsh language quickly to latecomers to Welsh medium education;
  - the school's many overseas links, which increase the awareness of pupils and students of living conditions in other countries very substantially;
  - pupils and students creating and proclaiming the Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Welsh League of Youth) Peace and Good Will Message 2006.

### **Leadership and management**

60. The leadership and strategic management of the school are good with no important shortcomings.
61. The good features include:
  - the clear vision of the head and his excellent leadership. The head inspires the respect of governors, parents, staff and pupils;
  - the senior management team, recently established as a new team, which co-operates effectively with the head, shares his vision and promotes improvements;
  - managers who ensure the school is a civilised community with sound values to ensure education of the best quality, high standards and a broad range of experiences for pupils and students in a Welsh and Welsh-speaking environment;
  - the school's very good response to national and local priorities;
  - a good relationship with local employers;
  - a governing body that contributes well to the strategic planning processes of the school, which shares the head's vision for his school and which monitors the work of the school critically through its work on the body's sub-committees.

### **Quality of self-evaluation**

62. The way leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards shows good features and no important shortcomings.
63. The school's self-evaluation report analyses accurately and thoroughly its strengths and shortcomings. It is based on the senior managers' good knowledge of the school.
64. The findings of the inspection team correspond very closely to the findings in the school's self-evaluation report but there is a difference in the grade of one of the seven key questions. When coming to a conclusion on the one key question where the school's judgement and that of the inspection team differs, namely key question 4, the inspection team considers that there are a number of outstanding features in the school's provision.
65. The school has appropriate self-evaluation procedures based on the use of a wide range of evidence.
66. The main findings of the self-evaluation process are linked directly to the school development plan.
67. The school development plan is an effective, active document, which includes the school's objectives for a period of three years and which is checked and updated annually.
68. Although there are exceptions, the quality of the departmental self-evaluation reports shows strengths that outweigh shortcomings.
69. The school has responded well or very well to each of the key issues identified in the previous inspection.

### **Staffing, resources and buildings**

70. The school manages its resources effectively and ensures appropriate levels of staffing and resources to teach the curriculum.
71. The good features include:
  - sufficient teaching staff to present the curriculum. Teachers receive good support from skilful and effective class assistants, by subject technicians and effective auxiliary staff and the school's translation department, which produces work of a very good standard for staff and pupils;
  - sufficient rooms for the current number of pupils and the effective use made of them by every department;
  - sufficient resources for teaching in the majority of departments, with the resources, which are generally in good condition, conveniently available;

- careful monitoring of the school budget by the head and administrative officer and their very detailed strategic financial planning;
- effective systems to identify the professional development needs of every member of staff.

72. The shortcomings include:

- shortage of modern information and communication technology resources in some departments;
- the safety of pupils, students and adults on the area of school grounds where cars, buses and lorries can also be admitted.

73. Taking into consideration the standards of achievement and attainment of pupils and students, the good quality of the teaching, the outstanding curricular provision, the very good quality of support and guidance for pupils and the good progress the school has made since the last inspection, the school provides good value for money.

## Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1: \* maintain the outstanding and good standards achieved and raise standards in the subjects where there are shortcomings;
- R2: \* disseminate good and very good teaching practices across the school and ensure that priorities such as assessment for learning are implemented in the classroom;
- R3: \* ensure that the departmental self-evaluation processes are focussed, are thorough and based on direct evidence, and lead to development plans that are monitored against clear targets and benchmarked criteria;
- R4: continue to develop the broader key skills and especially, pupils' independent learning skills and their ability to assess their own work;
- R5: \*continue to develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, to promote standards in subjects;
- R6: \*consider the few safety issues brought to the school's attention and specifically, to ensure the safety of pupils, students and adults on the area of the school grounds where cars, buses and lorries are also admitted.

\* The school development plan for 2006-07 includes steps to deal with these recommendations.

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

74. This grade agrees with the grade awarded in the school's self-evaluation.

#### Standards at key stage 3 and key stage 4

75. The following are the grades awarded for standards in the six subjects inspected:

Subject	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
Welsh first language	2	2
Mathematics	2	2
Information Technology	3	2
Design and Technology	1	1
Music	3	3
Religious Education	2	2

76. In the lessons observed in the above subjects (52 lessons at KS3 and KS4), the percentage of lessons to which each grade was awarded at key stage 3 and key stage 4 is as follows:

Standards	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>KS 3</b>	21%	53%	23%	3%	0%
<b>KS 4</b>	17%	50%	33%	0%	0%
<b>KS3 and KS4</b>	19%	52%	27%	2%	0%

77. These are high percentages. The percentage of lessons awarded grades 1 and 2 is substantially higher than the Welsh Assembly Government target for schools by 2007, which calls for standards in 65% of lessons to be grade 2 or better. The school also reaches the second Welsh Assembly Government target for 2007, which is that standards in 98% of lessons should be grade 3 or higher.

78. In the six subjects inspected, there were outstanding features in lessons in Welsh, design and technology and mathematics and important shortcomings in only one lesson.

79. Pupils' standards of achievement in the lessons observed have improved substantially since the last inspection.

## Quality of test results and external examinations

### Key stage 3

80. Although there has been a general increase in the results of key stage 3 tests since the previous inspection, 2004 results placed the school in the highest quartile for one indicator, above the median for two indicators and in the lowest quartile for one other indicator, compared with similar schools across Wales in terms of the levels of free school meals
81. Pupils' results in 2005 placed the school in the lowest quartile in three of the key indicators and below the median in one other indicator.
82. The percentage of pupils succeeding in gaining level 5, or better, in science places the school in the lowest quartile of similar schools for the past three years.
83. In 2005, the percentage of pupils succeeding in reaching level 5, or better, was higher than the average for Wales in English and mathematics, similar to the average for Wales in Welsh, and lower than Wales in science.
84. In 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government analyses show that the school provides added value during key stage 3 in English, science and in the Core Subjects Indicator (CSI), placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools in English and above the median for science and the CSI. These analyses place the school below the median of similar schools in Welsh and in the lowest quartile in mathematics.
85. In 2006, compared with 2005, the percentage of pupils who succeeded in gaining level 5, or higher, in English and the CSI has increased substantially. The percentage gaining level 5 in science in 2006 is similar to the previous year, with a reduction in the percentage gaining level 5 in Welsh and mathematics.

### Key stage 4

86. Over the past three years, school results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) compare favourably with results in the county and Wales. The percentage of pupils succeeding in gaining five GCSE subjects A\*-C, the CSI and the average points score, are all consistently higher than the county and Wales averages in 2004, 2005 and 2006.
87. In 2004, compared with similar schools in terms of the levels of free school meals, the school is in the highest quartile of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A\* - C, 5 or more grades A\* - G and the average points score. The school is also above the median for the CSI.

88. In 2005, compared with similar schools in the level of free school meals, the percentage who gained 5 GCSE grades A\*-G is in the highest quartile, but with the CSI and the average points score below the median, and the percentage succeeding in gaining 5 or more GCSE grades with A\*-C in the lowest quartile.
89. The Welsh Assembly Government analyses for 2005 show that the school provides added value, between key stages 3 and 4, placing it in the highest quartile of similar schools for the percentage of pupils gaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-G and above the median for the average points score. The school is below the median for the CSI and the percentage gaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-C.
90. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. In two of the last three years, the percentage of boys succeeding in gaining 5 GCSE grades A\*-C is higher than the percentage of girls. The percentage of boys succeeding in gaining grades A\*-C in English is substantially higher than the averages for Wales over the last three years.
91. The school sets quantitative targets that are challenging but also realistic at the end of both key stages. Pupils' progress during key stage 4 is monitored against their individual targets in every subject, and this practice promotes progress.

### **Standards in the key skills**

92. Standards in key skills are good. The good features include:
  - good standards in speaking. Pupils can describe in detail, express opinions, and reason and come to conclusions;
  - very good standards in listening. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and to contributions from fellow pupils. As a result, they offer intelligent responses;
  - good standards in reading. Pupils read well, conveying meaning and feeling;
  - good standards in writing. Pupils write well for a range of purposes. At KS4, standards in writing are very good in English;
  - good standards in numeracy. Across many curriculum subjects, pupils use number rules effectively, draw and interpret graphs well and standards in mental arithmetic are good;
  - good information technology skills from pupils at KS4;
  - very good bilingual skills. Pupils' translanguaging skills are very good and pupils can research a subject in one language and write about it in the other. The development of pupils' bilingualism and awareness of Welsh identity is a notable feature.

93. There are some shortcomings in key skills, which include:
- the skills of KS3 pupils in modelling and information handling in information and communication technology;
  - writing standards of a few pupils, which include errors in expression, spelling and mutation in Welsh.

### **Progress of pupils in learning**

94. Pupils make good progress in their learning. In many lessons, pupils work at the highest level of their ability and complete unfamiliar tasks through effort and concentration. The progress of pupils in the 'immersion' group in Welsh during key stage 3 is outstanding.
95. Pupils with SEN and the most able and talented pupils make good progress and reach standards that are appropriate for their ability.
96. Pupils have a good awareness of their levels of attainment in their subjects and they have a good knowledge of what their strengths and weaknesses are. A minority of pupils at key stage 3 do not respond to their teachers' comments on their work, nor do they take appropriate steps to improve their performance.

### **Standards in personal, social and learning skills**

97. Pupils' standards in the broader personal skills are very good. Pupils:
- show positive attitudes towards learning, show an interest in their work and contribute enthusiastically to activities;
  - behave well and show respect for teachers, visitors and fellow pupils. The school is an orderly community with pupils showing high levels of courtesy;
  - co-operate well and can solve problems appropriate to their age and ability;
  - make very good progress in their personal, social and moral development;
  - show respect for the opinions and beliefs of others and for the beliefs of people different to their own. This is a strong feature of the school. Pupils raise substantial funds for good causes and sponsor the education of a number of children in third world countries;
  - develop a very good understanding of their community and of the world of work, and this prepares them well to achieve their aspirations for the future.
98. Pupils' ability to work independently is limited in some areas.

99. Levels of attendance in school were 93% on average during the three full terms before the inspection. This is higher than the Welsh Assembly Government for secondary schools, 92%, and places the school in the highest quartile of similar schools throughout Wales and is an outstanding feature.

### **Standards in the sixth form**

#### **Graded 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

100. The table below notes the grades awarded for standards in the subjects specifically inspected:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sixth form</b>
Welsh first language	2
Mathematics	2
Information Technology	3
Design and Technology	1
Music	2
Religious Education	2

101. In the lessons observed in the above subjects (14 lessons), the percentage of lessons to which each grade was awarded in the sixth form is as follows:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
14%	72%	14%	0%	0%

102. Standards of achievement in lessons in the sixth form are good, with 86% of all lessons observed graded at 1 or 2; no important shortcomings were seen in any subject area.

### **Quality of results of external examinations**

103. The school's results for the last three years have been similar to the county and Wales ones in 'A' level examinations.
104. The average points score of students is similar to the county and Wales in 2006, slightly lower in 2005 and higher than the county and Wales in 2004. The percentage of students who succeeded in gaining grades A-C in 'A' level examinations is substantially higher than the county and Wales in 2004 and 2006, but lower than the county and Wales in 2005.

### **Standards in key skills in the sixth form**

105. Students' standards in the key skills are good. Students:
- listen very well and respond intelligently to the contributions of fellow students and teachers;

- speak well, using a wide vocabulary confidently when presenting information and expressing opinions;
- are confident in discussing numbers and apply their number skills well when studying their subjects.

106. The bilingual proficiency of students is outstanding. They can translanguage very well between languages and they are familiar with specialist terms in both languages.

### **Progress of students in learning**

107. The progress students make in their learning is good. The good features include students who:

- show positive attitudes towards their learning and a responsible attitude towards their work;
- are aware of their strengths and shortcomings and understand what they need to do to improve;
- take responsibility for their own progress and, consequently, are in a good situation to move forward to the next stage of learning.

### **Standards in personal, social and learning skills**

108. Standards of students in personal, social and learning skills are very good. Students:

- show positive attitudes towards their work and contribute well in lessons;
- show outstanding behaviour and develop into mature and confident young adults;
- solve problems very well, discussing and sharing tasks;
- co-operate very well, help each other and show sensitive appreciation of each other's opinion;
- make an important contribution to promoting the sense of a caring community within school.

109. The attendance levels of students for the three full terms before the inspection were good.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

110. This grade agrees with the grade the school has awarded itself for this key question in its self-evaluation report.

111. The table below shows the distribution of grades awarded by the inspection team for the quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected (66 lessons):

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Subjects inspected	21%	64%	14%	1%	0%

112. In the subjects that were not inspected specifically, each teacher was observed teaching at least once. The table below shows the quality of teaching in every lesson observed throughout the school (100 lessons):

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Every lesson	22%	58%	18%	2%	0%

113. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected, and the sample of lessons throughout the school.

114. These figures compare well with the national picture described by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report for 2004-2005. Nationally, the quality of teaching is good [grades 1 and 2] in 81% of lessons and 13% of it is grade 1.

#### Key stage 3 and key stage 4

115. The table below shows the quality of teaching at key stage 3 and key stage 4 in all the lessons observed (82 lessons):

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS 3	27%	53%	18%	2%	0%
KS 4	19%	58%	19%	4%	0%

116. In the lessons where teaching is good with outstanding features at key stage 3 and key stage 4, the features of teaching include:

- very high expectations in terms of standards of work and behaviour, which encourage and challenge individual pupils;
- perceptive questioning that leads pupils to think more deeply;

- the use of a variety of teaching and learning techniques that encourage pupils to work diligently and make substantial progress;
  - enthusiastic presentations that include praise and humour;
  - a good, supportive work relationship;
  - lessons prepared particularly thoroughly under conditions of work that are, temporarily, very difficult in some subjects.
117. In the lessons where teaching is good and there are no important shortcomings at key stage 3 and key stage 4, the features of teaching include:
- good, current knowledge and understanding;
  - lessons that are planned well and organised and structured carefully;
  - good pace and timing in activities;
  - clear objectives that are shared at the start of lessons, used with pupils and reviewed at the end;
  - pupils are respected as individuals, whatever their sex, race or ability;
  - polished presentations, with effective oral explanations;
  - effective use of the interactive whiteboard.
118. In the few lessons where there are shortcomings:
- there is a lack of sufficient challenge in the tasks;
  - teacher presentations are too long;
  - questioning is limited and, as a result, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their work in depth, nor to foster their independent learning skills;
  - the work does not sufficiently match pupils' ability or their previous attainment.
119. In most classes, teachers ensure that all pupils take a full part and monitor and review their progress according to individual departmental strategies.
120. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) are taught well and there is effective collaboration between teachers and class assistants.
121. The school fulfils the linguistic needs of pupils very well so as to promote their bilingual skills.
122. A good number of teachers give their time generously during the lunch hour and after school to provide additional support in work sessions that reinforce pupils' learning.

### **Sixth Form**

123. The quality of teaching and assessment is good and there are no important shortcomings in the sixth form.

124. In the lessons inspected (18 lessons), the quality of teaching was judged to be as follows:

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	11%	72%	17%	0%	0%

125. The same outstanding and good features exist in the sixth form as in the rest of the school.

126. The additional good features of teaching in the sixth form include:

- broad knowledge of subjects and cross-curricular aspects;
- activities that are up-to-date, challenging and extremely interesting;
- good opportunities for students to work independently and to think for themselves and take an active part in lessons;
- good, appropriate opportunities for students to promote their key skills;
- an energetic start and, as a result, a good pace in lessons;
- effective use of a variety of resources and equipment including increasing use of the new technology and the interactive whiteboard;
- a very positive work relationship;
- very effective, constructive support for individuals.

127. Some lessons show shortcomings, such as:

- lessons are too teacher-centred and, as a result, students receive information passively;
- lack of appropriate pace, which leads to ineffective use of teaching time.

### **How thorough is assessment and how is it used when planning and improving learning?**

128. The school's assessment system shows good features and no important shortcomings.

129. The school fulfils the statutory requirements for:

- assessing the National Curriculum at key stage 3;
- examination board regulations at key stage 4 and the sixth form;
- assessing pupils and students with additional learning needs.

130. The school has a system that assesses effort and attainment effectively across the school. As part of this system, the school undertakes a review of pupils' and students' progress each term and teachers use the information from this record of progress to track the progress of pupils and students from term to term.

131. The work of pupils and students is marked regularly, fairly and accurately. In the best examples constructive comments and appropriate targets are a means of promoting higher standards and work. However, there are examples of a lack of consistency in the quality of comments within and across the departments, and the assessment does not always provide sufficient feedback for pupils and students on how to improve their work.
132. Pupils and students understand the process and purpose of assessment.
133. Although there are good systems in some departments to encourage pupils to assess their own work, currently these have not been developed sufficiently and self-assessment is not used consistently enough as a tool for raising standards.
134. Parents and guardians have information on their children's progress by means of one full report a year, and an additional opportunity to discuss their progress in a parents' evening. In Y12, a short report and a full report are provided. Parents appreciate the information in the reports and a few take the opportunity of responding to the comments in them. Pupils also have an opportunity to contribute by providing comments on the reports, and this is good practice.

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

**Grade 1: good with outstanding features**

135. This grade corresponds to the grade in the school self-evaluation report.

**The degree to which learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners.**

136. There are a number of outstanding features in the way the school meets the learning needs and interests of pupils across the range of ability. These include:
- a broad and balanced curriculum for every pupil, including pupils disaffected from the National Curriculum and pupils with SEN and ALN;
  - the breadth of the curriculum for key stage 3, which is extended through choir and drama lessons that add to the linguistic, cultural and social development of pupils;
  - the outstanding additional support and attention given to Welsh learners as part of their immersion scheme;
  - the flexibility of the key stage 4 curriculum, which allows every pupil to follow half a GCSE course in religious education and information technology;
  - aspects of the Welsh Curriculum that are very prominent in the schemes of work of every department;
  - a broad provision of courses in the sixth form considering the size of the school. Very effective use is made of video conferencing, which extends students' experiences and strengthens links with other schools.
137. The school offers an outstanding range of extra-curricular opportunities and a variety of activities both within the school and outside, which contribute substantially to the personal development of pupils. These include:
- cultural experiences through a variety of choirs, singing groups and folk dancing. The school provides extensive support for local and national eisteddfods;
  - a wide range of sports clubs, training and teams. These activities are open to all pupils. The extra-curricular experiences promote their Welsh identity and enhance their development;
  - opportunities to travel locally, nationally and to make visits abroad.
138. There are outstanding aspects to the way the school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The purposeful collective worship in the class room, and the year-group and whole school services, which show a religious ethos, all reinforce the school's comprehensive PSE programme. The emphasis on the contribution of individuals to these services and collective worship sessions is an important element of the spiritual and moral development of pupils and students. This development is reflected in the pupils' support for the school's successful campaigns to support local and national charities. In addition, pupils and students are willing to help each other and visitors to the school.

139. The school's partnerships with parents, schools and other institutions reinforce the learning experiences of pupils and students substantially. The outstanding features include:
- strong curricular and pastoral bridging links with the primary schools that feed Ysgol Maes Garmon;
  - close and effective co-operation with other Welsh medium secondary schools to prepare bilingual resources across the curriculum and offer subjects through video conferencing.
140. The good features include:
- numerous links with parents who support academic and social events. The school parents' association is diligent in raising money;
  - pupil diaries that are a means of regular and effective communication with parents;
  - a good working partnership with the secondary school that shares the same campus, school buses and resources such as a drama studio and sports facilities;
  - good links with two university colleges who send trainee teachers to school on periods of valuable teaching practice.
141. Development of key skills across the curriculum is high on the school agenda. An effective working group has been established with cross-curricular representation to promote these skills. Skills are displayed in every room and reference is made to them in schemes of work and lesson plans. Recently the school has been successful in gaining the Basic Skills Agency Quality Award.
142. The curriculum meets the statutory and legal requirements. The learning experiences and programmes for personal and social education, education relating to work and careers guidance are well planned and fulfil the national and local objectives.

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

143. The school's curriculum responds well to the needs of employers and the wider community.
144. The good features include:
- careers education and enterprise education, which have a prominent place in the KS3 curriculum;
  - periods of work experience in Y10 and Y12 that reinforce the increasing understanding of students of the world of work. The school received the Careers Wales quality award for the work experience provision;
  - regular visits to work-places and frequent visits to school by speakers from the business world;

- the strong links of the science and design and technology departments with the world of work and industry;
  - the popularity of business studies courses at KS4 and in the sixth form;
  - the school's positive response to the requirements of 'Learning Pathways 14 -19'. Important links have been established with two further education colleges who offer appropriate vocational experiences to a small group of pupils from Y10 and Y11.
145. Promoting the bilingual skills of pupils is a very strong element in the school, with respect evident for both languages. The 'immersion' scheme is an outstanding feature of this provision. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities makes an important contribution to pupils' bilingualism.
146. Welsh culture and the Welsh language are central to all school activities. All subjects of the National Curriculum, apart from English, are taught through the medium of Welsh.
147. The school takes positive steps to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and to prevent any stereotyping. All choices at KS4 and in the sixth form are open to boys and girls. Pupils of lower ability are extended, as well as the most able pupils.
148. The school promotes an awareness of sustainable development and worldwide citizenship across the curriculum. There are outstanding features in this provision, which include:
- gaining the Eco-school Green Flag by giving this aspect a prominent place in all school life;
  - collecting rubbish ("Sbwriela") daily and recycling items such as paper, cans and mobile phones;
  - pupils' awareness of sustainability and fair trade in a worldwide context.
149. The school makes outstanding provision for development of entrepreneurship skills by providing regular, conspicuous attention to enterprise education across the school and across the curriculum in PSE lessons, business studies, Activities Week and Youth Enterprise and Dynamo schemes.
150. The school gives good attention to national priorities, including sustainability, enterprise, citizenship and multilingualism. The school forum, with its representation from every year, provides a practical opportunity for pupils to practise democratic processes and to express the views of their fellow pupils.

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

##### **Grade 1: good with outstanding features**

151. The inspection team awarded a higher grade for this question than the one the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report as the team considered that there were a number of outstanding features in the school's provision.

##### **Quality of care, guidance and support for learners.**

152. There are outstanding features, which include:

- emphasis in the school handbook on its 'congenial atmosphere' and that there is a tradition of caring well for pupils. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and is one of the distinct features of the school;
- very good co-operation between heads of year and their class tutors. They form a very effective pastoral team and hold regular meetings to discuss the care provided for pupils in specific year groups. Their knowledge of pupils in the school is outstanding and they organise invaluable experiences for pupils through activities during school hours and beyond;
- a very good relationship with the parents and community. Regular use is made of the school by the community for meetings, societies and eisteddfods. The recent development of the school as a Community School is a way of extending cultural awareness and enhances the personal and social development of pupils, and is an outstanding feature;
- an excellent link between the school and Welsh and English medium primary schools that feed the school and its induction programme that ensures Y7 pupils settle quickly. This is a strength and this is confirmed by parents and pupils. The opportunity for Y6 pupils from the Welsh medium primary schools that feed the school to go to the Llangrannog camp with Y7 pupils is a manifest success;
- an intensive course to immerse Y6 learners in Welsh before they come to Maes Garmon as a way of ensuring they settle in happily, and the provision offered to these pupils, pastorally, linguistically and academically, is an outstanding feature.

### **Outstanding practice**

The school provides outstanding support for pupils learning Welsh early in their career, and now do so as part of the immersion scheme funded by the Welsh Language Board and the Local Authority. By targeting non-Welsh speaking pupils in Y6 in the primary schools, the school offers an intensive course in Welsh before they transfer to the secondary school, and develop this further in Y7 and Y8. In light of the enthusiasm of pupils and teachers, pupils make excellent progress in Welsh during these years. Afterwards they follow a Welsh first language study programme as well as curriculum subjects through the medium of Welsh. They take advantage of the opportunity to attend residential courses provided for them in the Urdd camp. In addition, a variety of purposeful activities are provided for them, which are a valuable support for them to develop their confidence linguistically and generally in school and outside. The provision, care and support provided for these pupils are outstanding, and a way of ensuring a smooth transfer to the secondary school.

153. Good features include:

- planning and managing care systems effectively. There are relevant, detailed policies in place. By working closely with staff in the health, welfare and education departments, as well as the police, the school makes appropriate use of external support services. The Head is responsible for child protection issues;
- the school's open door policy. Information is shared with parents through the school handbook and regular meetings are held for parents to discuss their children's work during the year. A circular is sent to parents every half term to outline recent news, important dates, appointments and successes. Pupils' personal diaries are an effective way of strengthening the link also. The Friends of Maes Garmon Association provides good opportunities for parents to contribute to school work, both socially and financially;
- the additional support provided for younger pupils by sixth form pupils, as part of the 'Os mêts, mêts' scheme;
- good information for pupils and students on all the opportunities available, and there is a close link with Careers Wales. The school prepares pupils well for their periods of work experience;
- a comprehensive and relevant programme of personal and social education for all pupils that promotes their personal development significantly;
- a school team, including heads of year, the senior management team and administrative staff, that works together closely to promote attendance and good behaviour;

- a comprehensive 'Dewis Di' ("You Choose"), scheme, which contains guidelines and a whole school programme to convince pupils that work and good behaviour are rewarded. This programme is praised by pupils and their parents;
- the school's sensitive response to personal circumstances that may cause attendance, behaviour and attitude problems;
- an experienced careers co-ordinator who interviews every key stage 4 pupil every fortnight as part of the PSE provision. There is close collaboration between the school and Careers Wales;
- relevant policies on health and safety issues, with a designated officer co-ordinating relevant issues in the area;
- effective systems to safeguard the welfare of pupils and protect them from dangers. There is close collaboration with the county inclusion officer and other specialists.

### **Quality of provision for additional learning needs**

154. The school provides well for pupils with a broad range of additional learning needs including some with behavioural difficulties.
155. The enthusiastic co-ordinator provides good leadership and works hard to raise awareness of additional learning needs in school. The arrangement is inclusive and pupils make good progress. They are seen to enjoy their lessons.
156. The good features in the provision for these pupils include:
- early, practical links with the primary schools that feed Ysgol Maes Garmon;
  - a careful and sensitive knowledge of the strengths and shortcomings of pupils with additional learning needs;
  - flexible and effective strategies for improving literacy and numeracy skills for a number of pupils with additional learning needs including support classes and reading and writing sessions during morning registration periods;
  - appropriate learning methods with lessons that are carefully planned to give consideration to the needs of the individual. The department has high expectations in maintaining standards;
  - good links with other departments in the school through the SEN working group, which includes cross-curricular representation;
  - an effective team of classroom assistants who have a good relationship with the pupils;
  - a practical and very detailed SEN register that is distributed to all members of staff at the start of the year;

- a broad range of appropriate courses for pupils with additional learning needs at KS4. Effective links have been developed with local further education colleges for appropriate vocational experiences;
- effective use of the support services of the local education authority and close co-operation with the behaviour support teacher.

157. Despite this positive picture, there are occasional shortcomings in the provision, which include:

- individual education plans in a format that is difficult for teachers to follow.

### **Quality of provision for equal opportunities**

158. The quality of the provision for equal opportunities is good with outstanding features.

159. The outstanding features include:

- very effective systems for transmitting the Welsh language quickly to latecomers to Welsh medium education;
- numerous overseas links, which increase the awareness of pupils and students of living conditions in other countries very substantially;
- pupils and students creating and proclaiming the Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Welsh League of Youth) Peace and Good Will message for 2006. The message is proclaimed in numerous languages across the world and congratulations were received from far and near from those who heard it.

160. There are good features, which include:

- daily collective worship periods, which emphasise respect and tolerance;
- appropriate arrangements for recording any occurrence of a racial nature;
- equal opportunity is shown in practical terms in every activity, with an opportunity for all pupils to take part in every aspect of the curriculum;
- appropriate procedures that enable pupils to draw the attention of teachers and other adults to issues that concern them, including bullying;
- an appropriate assessment has been undertaken of the suitability of the building for disabled people and an Accessibility Plan drawn up;
- effective year group and whole-school forums set up, which give an opportunity for pupils and students to express their views on some aspects of the school's life and work.

161. There are no significant shortcomings.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings.

162. This grade corresponds to the grade awarded in the school's self-evaluation report.
163. There are good features, which include:
- the head's clear vision and his excellent leadership. He inspires the respect of governors, parents, staff and pupils;
  - a senior management team, established recently as a new team, which works effectively with the head, shares his vision and promotes improvements;
  - managers who ensure the school is a civilised community with sound values to ensure education of the best quality, high standards and a wide range of experiences for pupils and students in a Welsh and Welsh-speaking environment;
  - clear policies and procedures based on the needs of pupils and students;
  - school procedures that ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity so that no pupil is disadvantaged on a the basis of linguistic or social background basis, nor because of sex or race;
  - the school's very good response to national and local priorities, promoting bilingualism, inclusion, effective co-operation with other schools and colleges and the use of distance learning methods to enhance the curricular provision;
  - a good relationship with local employers. The engineering projects that are the result of co-operation between the school and a number of local industries provide outstanding experiences for sixth form students;
  - very good leadership on sustainable development. The school has gained the Eco-schools scheme Green Flag. There is evident emphasis in daily activities on recycling, saving energy and other sustainable aspects;
  - quantitative, challenging and realistic targets set for departments and individual pupils following discussion with the head. Targets are discussed and updated regularly and the process effectively identifies pupils and students who are underachieving;

- the Performance Management provision for all staff, which starts with an interview with the head. This provides considerable status for the process at all levels and also a complete picture for the head of the staff's targets and work. As a follow-up to the provision, the school identifies teacher needs and organises appropriate training as funding allows. There is effective use of cascading information and skills following courses. There is clear evidence of courses relating to information and communication technology leading to improved teaching and as a result, there is a direct effect on standards of learning. One member of the senior management team has completed a course that leads to a National Professional Qualification for Heads;
  - a governing body that contributes well to the school's strategic planning. The body is made up of a good cross-section of the local community and they have a good range of skills, experience and appropriate interests;
  - a governing body that shares the head's vision for his school. The body has high expectations of staff and pupils and provides leadership and enthusiastic support to the head and managers, and to all aspects of school life and work;
  - a governing body that monitors the work of the school critically through its work on various sub-committees. It monitors the school budget carefully in co-operation with the head and administrative officer. In addition, it has had a key role in the process of securing new buildings for the school;
  - a governing body that ensures the school fulfils legal and course requirements.
164. The governors' link with individual departments has not developed sufficiently to strengthen the body's awareness of standards in teaching and learning.

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

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

165. This grade corresponds to the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.

**How effective is the process of monitoring and evaluating the school's performance?**

166. The school's self-evaluation report analyses accurately and thoroughly the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is based on the senior managers' good knowledge of the school. The senior management team took into account the opinions of staff and governors when formulating it.
167. The findings of the inspection team correspond very closely to the findings in the school's self-evaluation report apart from a difference in grade in one of the seven key questions. When coming to a conclusion on the one key question where the school's judgement and that of the inspection team differs, key question 4, the inspection team considers there are a number of outstanding features in the school's provision.
168. The school has appropriate self-evaluation systems that are based on the use of a broad range of evidence. Members of the senior management team and heads of department observe pupils' lessons in two school years across the subjects. The senior management team looks at examples of pupils' work in another three school years and the senior management team and middle managers analyse the results of tests and external examinations. As a result, the school's self-evaluation report on standards in class and the quality of teaching in particular, is based soundly on direct evidence. This self-evaluation by the senior management team is a strength at a whole school level.
169. The main findings of the self-evaluation process are linked directly to the school development plan.
170. For a number of years, departments or pastoral heads have undertaken informal self-evaluations before devising their departmental development plan or development plan for the year. Members of staff are very familiar with this system; they understand it and take part in it. All departmental and pastoral plans follow the same format.
171. This year, every department has undertaken a written self-evaluation based on Estyn's seven key questions, paying particular attention to key questions 1 and 2. The quality of these departmental written self-evaluations varies but, in general, they provide a picture of strengths and what needs to be improved. These self-evaluations have not yet been fed into the next versions of the departmental development plans.

172. The departments and senior management team analyse test and examination results annually but they do not use the whole range of benchmark information every time. However, the analysis is thorough enough to lead the department to agree quantitative targets for examination results with the head. As a result, it motivates departments to consider ways and strategies of raising standards.
173. The school considers pupils' viewpoints carefully in various ways. Amongst them are the responses from the school pupils and students' forum and the year forums together with informal questioning to analyse pupils' attitudes about their everyday experiences.
174. The self-evaluation system provides good informal opportunities for other stakeholders such as parents, employers and representatives from the community to contribute to the process. Additionally, the school provided a formal questionnaire for parents last year. However, there is no formal, regular system for gauging the opinion of these stakeholders.

#### **How effective is the planning process in ensuring improvement?**

175. The school's self-evaluation document forms a sound basis for creating suitable development plans for departments and the whole school.
176. The school development plan is an effective, practical document, which includes the school's objectives for a period of three years and which is checked and updated annually. It is a comprehensive development plan in a form that has been familiar to staff for a number of years and it identifies priorities in a concise, accurate way.
177. Although there are exceptions, the quality of the departmental self-evaluation reports shows strengths that outweigh shortcomings. They follow the main four headings of the school development plan, which considers raising standards, quality of teaching, pupil experiences and Welsh identity. In a good number of cases however these departmental self-evaluation reports are not specific enough to ensure that departments show in detail their goals, strategies and outcomes for improvement.
178. The process of performance management for teachers contributes to ensuring they use effective teaching and learning methods. This has a positive effect on the experiences of pupils and students and promotes standards in subjects.
179. The school provides sufficient funding and resources to support and implement the main priorities. There is a close link between the school development plan and the budget.
180. The school has responded well or very well to each of the key issues identified in the previous inspection.

181. Self-evaluation and strategic planning have had a positive, measurable effect on a number of aspects of school work over the years. It has been possible to improve provision through the schemes about to be completed to improve the facilities and buildings for pupils. Although uneven at times in terms of examination and external test results, standards have benefited from specific strategies to improve teaching and learning. The information and communication technology provision for teachers has improved substantially and is used skilfully as an effective teaching tool across the majority of subjects.

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

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

182. This grade corresponds to the school's grade in its self-evaluation.

### **Adequacy, suitability and use of staff, learning resources and buildings and rooms**

183. The good features include:

- enough teaching staff to present the curriculum. They have good qualifications and have a profound, broad knowledge of the areas of learning;
- good support by capable and effective classroom assistants;
- a team of ancillary staff who provide good support for the head and senior management team in running the school smoothly from day to day;
- good support for teachers by the subject technicians and translation department who produce work of a very good standard for staff and pupils;
- very effective management of the busy school library by the librarian, and a library that is an attractive and popular place to work;
- the school caretaker, together with his team of cleaners, who succeed well in keeping the school and its surroundings clean;
- sufficient resources for teaching in the majority of departments with the resources, mainly of good condition, easily available and at hand;
- the school's success in attracting funding from external sources to reinforce its own provision;
- new rooms currently being built for two departmental rooms and administrative offices;
- a school staff who cope well with the challenges caused by the substantial building work currently taking place;
- the numerous resources for physical education in the leisure centre that is located on the school campus;
- sufficient rooms for the current number of pupils, and the effective use made of them by each department;
- a large hall allowing whole school assemblies, which promotes the family atmosphere that is found in the school;
- an appropriate maintenance programme implemented by the governors. As a result, the condition of the building is good on the whole;
- purposeful displays in the main corridors that remind pupils of activities such as Eco-schools, the PSE programme, Respecting Wildlife and Our World.

184. There are shortcomings, which include:

- lack of modern information and communication technology resources in some departments and other resources in music;
- facilities in the design and technology department, which limits the possible range of practical activities in the subject, although staff have succeeded in overcoming difficulties very effectively;

**How efficiently are resources managed to ensure value for money?**

185. The school manages its resources effectively and ensures appropriate levels of staffing and resources to teach the curriculum.

186. Good features include:

- careful monitoring of the school budget by the head and administrative officer, with appropriate financial reports provided for the governors at least once a term. It is projected that about 4.5% of the school budget will be in reserve at the end of the current financial year, which is close to the percentage (5%) recommended by the Audit Commission;
- very detailed strategic financial planning by the head and administrative officer. By using projections of the school's population and financial information from the county, they model the school budget for the next three years;
- effective use of teachers and support staff. The school also makes very effective use of partnerships with other institutions to expand the curricular provision for pupils and students;
- an appropriate response by the governing body to the recent Local Authority audit report (January 2006)
- effective systems for identifying the professional development needs of every member of staff;
- thorough and detailed procedures for ensuring the school gains the best value from suppliers and contractors;
- appropriate systems for providing safeguarded time for teachers to plan, prepare and assess;
- effective use of resources to remodel the workforce.

187. There are some shortcomings, which include:

- the difficulty of ensuring access for pupils or disabled people to some parts of the building, although the school does its best to cope;
- the safety of pupils, students and adults on the area of school grounds where cars, buses and lorries can also be admitted.

188. Taking into consideration the standards of achievement and attainment of pupils and students, the good quality of teaching, the outstanding curricular provision, the very good quality of the support and guidance for pupils and the good progress it has made since the last inspection, the school provides good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Welsh first language

**Key stage 3: Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 4: Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings**

**Sixth form: Grade 2 – good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 3 and key stage 4**

#### **Good features**

189. The great majority of pupils across both key stages display a positive attitude towards their work and endeavour to accomplish work of a high standard.
190. At both key stages, they listen intently to teachers' presentations and concentrate diligently so as to respond to questions from teachers and each other.
191. Orally, the vast majority of pupils are prepared to contribute to class discussions, co-operating successfully when undertaking activities in pairs and groups. With the help of suitable resources, such as opinion expression cards and vocabulary mats, pupils across the range of ability progress in their ability to reason and form an opinion.
192. The most able, especially by key stage 4, respond at some length and with confidence, doing so in refined and appropriate language.
193. Pupils use a variety of techniques and resources to promote their learning including opinion and style cards, moving images and language games. In using them pupils progress in their understanding of the work in question and in their confidence and grasp of the language.
194. At both key stages, standards in reading are good. The large majority of pupils show a good understanding of the literary and non-literary texts they read. In taking advantage of various media images, pupils across the range of ability can respond to challenging texts according to their ability.
195. They can gather information from varied reading pieces, including material from the web, appreciating authors' techniques with increasing success.
196. Pupils across the range of ability increase in their ability to read aloud clearly and sensibly, and the most able can do so freely.

197. Pupils also make extensive and effective use of different ways of showing their understanding and when evaluating their own contributions and those of others. Reflecting independently or together on what they have achieved orally and in writing is also beneficial to them.
198. In their written work, pupils in both key stages can write in a variety of forms, factual and creative, and for different purposes, successfully showing an awareness of their features. The standard of extended work of the most able, especially by key stage 4, is very good.
199. The most able also, increasingly at both key stages, show an appropriate grasp of good quality Welsh and improve their expression, both orally and in writing.
200. At key stage 3, those pupils who are learners make considerable steps towards developing to be bilingual. They make excellent progress in a short period, and can follow a Welsh first language study programme before the end of the key stage.
201. Pupils with Additional Learning Needs contribute well across the skills in accordance with their ability.

### **Shortcomings**

202. Obvious linguistic shortcomings, for example mutations and verb endings, and the use of English words, intersperse the work of a significant number of pupils and often affects the ease of written expression in particular.
203. Owing to lack of confidence and motivation, a small number of pupils across both key stages remain passive and do not respond, or are satisfied with offering short answers.

### **Sixth Form**

#### **Good features**

204. In Y12 and Y13 students can express opinions on various literary texts, including media texts, showing a good knowledge and understanding of the fundamental aspects of authors' styles.
205. The ability of students to deal with set texts, poetry and early and modern prose, is good throughout the sixth form, and they show their understanding orally and increasingly extensively in their written work.
206. They succeed in identifying with characters in the drama text they study through the oral and practical activity of 'hot seating', asking questions and responding maturely and confidently.

207. Students also succeed increasingly effectively in analysing and appreciating examples of challenging texts that are new to them, cross-referring successfully between them.
208. The most able write perceptively, with accurate, appropriate expression. They have a good awareness of the requirements of different linguistic registers.

### **Shortcomings**

209. The language errors of a small number of students often impair the ease and accuracy of their expression and at times are a barrier for them to extend their contributions confidently.

## Mathematics

**Key stage 3 – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 4 – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

**Sixth form – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

### Key stage 3

#### Good features

210. The work accomplished by pupils across the range of ability when undertaking basic calculations is of good standard. This is true of both mental calculations and written ones.
211. The standard of work in drawing geometric shapes is good. Pupils can also investigate the features of these shapes well to different depths, according to their ability.
212. In work on calculating the surface and volume of various shapes and solids, all pupils accomplish work of a good standard.
213. All pupils can gather and display statistical data successfully in a variety of ways. The most able pupils can interpret data in the form of graphs and charts to a good standard.
214. All pupils can estimate to a very good standard. They can also round off accurately to a number of decimal places, or to a number of significant figures.
215. Pupils with special educational needs make substantial progress, and they accomplish work of a good standard.

### Key stage 4

#### Good features

216. The work accomplished by pupils across the range of ability when making basic calculations is of a good standard.
217. All pupils accomplish work of a good standard in finding the surface and volume of various shapes and solids. There is also work of a good standard in geometry.
218. In work on algebra, the most able pupils accomplish work of a very good standard. Pupils of middle and lower ability accomplish work of a good standard in this area.

- 219. All pupils are confident in gathering and displaying data, and the majority accomplish work whose standard is at least good.
- 220. Work on probability is of a very good standard amongst the most able pupils and of a good standard amongst pupils of middle and lower ability.
- 221. The most able pupils reach a very good standard in their work in trigonometry.
- 222. The use all pupils make of calculators is sensible and of a good standard.
- 223. Pupils with additional learning needs continue to make progress and accomplish work of a good standard.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

- 224. The work accomplished by students in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics is of a good standard.
- 225. Students have good recall of mathematical facts learnt lower down the school and can apply them to solve problems at a higher level.
- 226. All students can deal with complex concepts very successfully and can express their opinions in a mature way. They can make contributions of a good standard in lessons.
- 227. The work seen in students' books and files is of a good standard.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 228. There are no significant shortcomings at any key stage.

## Information technology

**Key Stage 3 - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key Stage 4 - Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

**Sixth form\* - Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

\* Y12 only

### Key Stage 3

#### Good features

- 229. Pupils have a good knowledge about the use of computers in society.
- 230. The great majority of pupils present information to a good standard. They use a good, appropriate range of skills when doing so. They can combine picture and text easily.
- 231. Pupils can create a simple database, analyse the information and present it in appropriate graph format. They can interrogate a prepared database on the internet to find specific information.
- 232. Y8 pupils record data in the form of a spreadsheet and can use software to model. The most able pupils understand that one of the main applications of this kind of software is to predict.
- 233. Y9 pupils begin to understand that it is possible to combine more than one kind of software when completing tasks and can identify opportunities to do so.

#### Shortcomings

- 234. A significant number of pupils have difficulty explaining the purpose of different kinds of software.
- 235. A significant minority of pupils work slowly as they do not remember, nor have they practised, some basic computing skills.
- 236. Language errors of a small minority of pupils impair the quality of the finished work.

### Key stage 4

#### Good features

- 237. Pupils have a good knowledge of the implications of the use of computers in society.

- 238. Pupils apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of information and communication technology in a good range of situations. They use different kinds of software effectively, combining them at times, to accomplish specific tasks.
- 239. Standards in presenting information are good and at times very good. Pupils can create a variety of types of work that is fit for purpose and audience. They choose the most appropriate computer program to do this.
- 240. Standards in data handling and the pupils' ability to model by spreadsheet are good.
- 241. Pupils can plan their use of information and communication technology and test the systems to a good standard.

### **Shortcomings**

- 242. A significant number of pupils have difficulty in explaining their use of information and communication technology and giving valid reasons for doing this.
- 243. Solutions are not always fit for purpose and a small number of pupils find it difficult to ensure the accuracy of the data they input.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

- 244. Students can use a variety of computing programs, understand their purpose and, at times, can combine the use of different kinds of software.
- 245. All students know the fundamental aspects of some computing concepts and can explain the use of information and communication technology in society and identify some of the dangers.
- 246. Students present information to a good standard. They can import pictures, sound and video appropriately.
- 247. The most able students have computer skills of a high level and they have a good understanding of computing concepts.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 248. Some of the students of middle ability have difficulty in using some of the basic computing skills.
- 249. Students of middle ability have difficulty inputting data accurately.
- 250. Students of middle ability have difficulty explaining what they have done and provide valid reasons for justifying their method of working.

## **Design technology**

**Key Stage 3 – Grade 1: good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 4 – Grade 1: good with outstanding features**

**Sixth Form – Grade 1: good with outstanding features**

**Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4**

### **Outstanding features**

251. Pupils have outstanding knowledge and understanding of the requirements of design processes in the different areas of study.
252. They use design processes and skills particularly effectively and very skilfully to develop their design and make tasks successfully. As a result, the work produced is particularly creative.
253. The drawing and annotation work includes technical drawing of a very good standard and there are examples of high quality work in resistant materials.

### **Good features**

254. Pupils design and make a variety of products that fulfil a specific need, through a good range and combination of materials.
255. Pupils make use of a variety of sources to gather information relevant to the task, to enable them to amass different and interesting ideas.
256. Pupils produce striking and purposeful image boards and complete successful modelling work that leads to creative outcomes.
257. The work of disassembling and evaluating ready-made products is thorough.
258. They produce specifications, the making is planned, quality is controlled, there is continuing evaluation and the final product is tested against the specification.
259. Pupils have a good, current knowledge and understanding about a range of materials and techniques, and very often they consider the requirements of sustainability when choosing materials.
260. Pupils make suitable use of information and communication technology skills to present information and data, investigate and gather information on the internet, control, analyse nutrition, and design and make using the computer [CAD/CAM], including extensive and appropriate use of Pro Desktop software.

- 261. Pupils use specialist terminology regularly and with consistency and accuracy. Their numeracy skills are good and are reinforced regularly.
- 262. Pupils handle equipment and machines skilfully.
- 263. They possess a good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of hygiene and health and safety when building and finishing products of a good standard.
- 264. Pupils use the links with industry or references to industrial methods of working for specific purposes within their work.

### **Shortcomings**

- 265. There are no significant shortcomings at key stage 3 or key stage 4.

### **Sixth Form**

#### **Outstanding features**

- 266. Students have an outstanding understanding of the requirements of design principles. They produce designs and products that are original, creative and useful.
- 267. They produce design folios that are particularly thorough and there are individual examples of an outstanding standard.

#### **Good features**

- 268. They deal with contemporary contexts and are aware of the contribution of the area within the world of work.
- 269. Students take advantage of their links with industry and participation and success in local and national competitions, to expand their experiences, set a challenge for their work and extend their standards of achievement.
- 270. Students make varied and effective use of information and communication technology, including designing and making on the computer [CAD/CAM], and the use of Pro Desktop to produce, present and develop images of a good standard.
- 271. They experiment boldly with different materials and techniques, and develop real problem solving strategies very effectively.
- 272. They produce products of a good quality. The products fulfil a clear need and creativity is prominent in the work.

273. Students plan well for a placement in industry. They produce case study reports of a good standard. They make positive use of these experiences to develop their course work further when they are back in school.

**Shortcomings**

274. There are no significant shortcomings in the sixth form.

## Music

**Key Stage 3 – Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key Stage 4 – Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Sixth Form – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

### Key Stage 3

#### Good features

275. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, a warm tone and with secure intonation. The majority of Y7 and Y8 pupils perform a variety of pieces with confidence and a good measure of accuracy on class instruments and keyboards. The majority maintain good ensemble when performing with others.
276. Pupils compose by responding to various stimuli. Some of the compositions show imagination when combining sounds.
277. Pupils have an awareness of the elements of music. Many can identify instruments and basic features in recorded extracts and in their own practical work. Some of the pupils make perceptive comments when appreciating each other's work.

#### Shortcomings

278. At times, the quality of singing is not sufficiently refined. Y9 pupils' performance skills when playing in ensembles where different melodic parts are combined is not sufficiently developed.
279. Many of the compositions do not develop initial sounds adequately. In general, original melodic work, including impromptu, is limited.
280. The comments of some pupils when appraising are superficial. They are less experienced in appraising each other's compositions.

### Key Stage 4

281. The majority of pupils make appropriate progress in vocal performance and individual instruments. A minority achieve good standards.
282. Some of the composition work displays an interesting treatment of core ideas as well as a good understanding of structure, medium and style.
283. Many of the pupils identify technical and expressive features well when appreciating musical extracts from different periods and styles.

### **Shortcomings**

- 284. Generally, the majority of pupils are less certain and experienced in group performances.
- 285. Core ideas have not been developed sufficiently in much of the composition work. The use of information and communication technology in improving the quality of work is limited.
- 286. The appraisal skills of a minority of pupils are uneven. They are good in some tasks but uncertain in others.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

- 287. The majority of students are able and experienced performers. They perform confidently and achieve good standards. Occasional individuals perform to a high standard.
- 288. In general, the initial work in composition displays an interesting treatment of core ideas and a good understanding of the different styles chosen. Y13 students have a good understanding of the features of Serialism.
- 289. Generally, students develop a good knowledge and understanding of their different areas of study. Skills in aural work develop well in Y13 and very well in Y12.

#### **Shortcomings**

- 290. The work of Y12 students shows some uncertainty in harmony technique for composing in Baroque style. Some Y13 students have difficulty in developing ideas when composing without the teacher's support.
- 291. In general, the appraisal skills of some students are not as certain as their practical ones.

## Religious education (including religious studies)

**Key stage 3 – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 4 – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

**Sixth form – Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings**

### Key stage 3

#### Good features

292. Pupils across the range of ability have a sound knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and other religions, especially Judaism.
293. They use a broad range of terms to discuss religious and moral issues. They show a good awareness of religious symbolic language, for example the symbols of christening and Shabbat.
294. Pupils understand that beliefs affect the lives of individuals and society. When studying a unit of work on 'Community', they can discuss sensibly their own responsibilities and also the responsibilities of other individuals within different communities, including Christian and Jewish communities.
295. They can discuss intelligently religious concepts and attitudes such as conflict, forgiveness, reconciliation and love, drawing on their personal experiences and standpoints as well as religious examples.
296. Pupils show an appreciation of the importance of religious traditions and festivals to the identity of the believer.
297. Pupils across the range of ability can express their views confidently orally and many can expand on their answers.
298. Pupils co-operate very well in pairs and groups and respond enthusiastically to the variety of experiences provided for them.

#### Shortcomings

299. At times, the more able pupils do not examine the issues studied in sufficient depth.

### Key Stage 4

300. Pupils study the short GCSE Religious Studies course in the statutory religious education lessons.

### **Good features**

301. The majority of pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the work units they study and they see the relevance of the course to their everyday lives.
302. They can discuss the religious and moral issues in question intelligently in pairs, groups and as a whole class. They co-operate very well, listen to each other's ideas and viewpoints and respond in an appropriate way.
303. The evaluation skills of pupils develop well orally and in writing during the key stage. Pupils across the ability range can evaluate religious and moral standpoints.
304. The writing standards of pupils of higher ability are very good. They write extensively to justify their views, using evidence and valid reasons, and taking different standpoints into consideration.

### **Shortcomings**

305. In Y11 there is a lack of commitment by a small minority of pupils to the subject and this affects their progress and standards of achievement.

### **Sixth form**

#### **Good features**

306. In the joint lessons between Y12 and Y13, students deal with issues on the topic 'Medical Ethics' with sensitivity and maturity.
307. When considering the sanctity of life, students examine complex questions about life such as, when does the human life begin – at conception or later? They understand the different answers people give to these questions, including religious standpoints.
308. When considering abortion, students gather information from different sources, including newspaper articles, and they use this information in their discussions. The majority of them are very willing to contribute to the discussion and some of them show depth of understanding in their responses.
309. They co-operate well and can argue their case, listen to each other's ideas and respond sensibly, often perceptively.

#### **Shortcomings**

310. A minority of students are less willing to contribute orally in lessons and their answers are therefore rather superficial.

## School's response to the inspection

The school takes pride in this report, and in the Main Findings which note that Ysgol Maes Garmon is a good school which has a number of outstanding features including:

- the development of pupils and students in their personal, social and learning skills;
- the quality of the curriculum and the learning experiences of the school;
- the quality of the care, guidance and support for pupils;
- the quality of the provision to foster pupils' bilingual skills;
- the quality of the head's leadership.

The school is glad also that the inspectors have acknowledged the good work carried out in responding to the key issues noted in the Inspectors' report in 2000.

We believe that the fact that the Inspectors agreed with the school's judgement in six of the seven key questions is a sign that the school should have confidence in its self-evaluation processes. The fact that the Inspectors raised the grade that the school gave itself for Key question 4 is a matter of pride to the school, and reflects the importance that the school places on pastoral care and support for each pupil as an individual.

The recommendations noted in the report are priorities for the school and highlighted in the SDP, apart from one. These key issues will provide a specific focus for the school to work towards for the future so as to improve standards and ensure an even better provision for pupils and students.

The school will formulate an Action Plan in response to this report, and to the Key Issues specifically. These will be incorporated in the SDP for 2007-8 in due course.

The school wishes to thank the members of the inspection team under the leadership of the registered inspector for their professionalism and thoroughness throughout the inspection. We are sure that they came to know the school well. This report gives a clear direction for the school to maintain and build on its good work for the future.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Maes Garmon
School type	Designated Welsh, community comprehensive
Age-range of pupils	11-18 years
Address of school	Conway Street, Mold,, Flintshire
Postcode	CH7 1JB
Telephone number	01352 750 678

Head	Mr. Huw Alun Roberts
Date of appointment	September 1997
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Iwan Jones / Flintshire Education Authority
Reporting inspector	Dr. Neil Trevor Jones
Dates of inspection	27 November-01 December 2006

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	99	95	90	117	68	48	22	549

### Total number of teachers

	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	37	5	40.0

### Staffing information

Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	14.0 :1
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	17.6
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	79.4%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	95.9	94.4	94.1	92.9	94.1	94.1	89.8	94.1
Term 2	92.9	93.5	91.2	91.2	91.6	92.1	82.8	91.5
Term 3	94.4	93.6	91.8	92.2	98.2	86.3	92.7	93.4

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	12.2%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to the inspection	21 temporary 1 permanent 0 ethnic minority pupils

## Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006															
Total number of pupils in Y9:															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.9		0	0	0	5.2	16.4	38.8	36.2	2.6		
		National		1	1		1	2	10	25	34	20	6		
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0		0	0	4.3	12.9	21.6	37.9	23.3	0		
		National			1			1	7	24	37	23	7		
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0.9		0	0	0	6	25	27.6	31.9	8.6		
		National		1	1			1	7	18	23	32	16	1	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0		0	0	0	10.3	22.4	38.8	25.9	2.6		
		National		1	1			1	7	19	32	27	12		

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

**Public Examination Results:**

<b>For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ</b>			
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006			103
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil			48
<b>Percentage of 15 year old pupils in 2006 and:</b>	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	97	93	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	60	57	53
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	95	91	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	47	44	39
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	99	98	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	85	82	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	99	95	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	1	5	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-	-	-

<b>For pupils aged 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>			
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2006			
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2005			34
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2005			0
	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	74	63	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	97	95	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	19	19	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	3	-	-
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	-	-	-

A – Unitary Authority

## Appendix 4

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

Ten inspectors spent a total of 39 inspection days at the school and 100 lessons or parts of lessons were inspected. In addition, inspectors visited a cross-section of registration periods, extra-curricular activities during the lunch hour and after school and acts of corporate worship. Interviews were held with members of the management team, heads of department and year and with tutors, as well as with members of staff including ancillary staff with particular responsibilities.

The work of a cross-section of pupils from years 7 to 11 and year 12 and 13 students was inspected representing upper, middle and lower ability. In addition more pupils' work was seen when visiting classrooms, workshops and laboratories. Regular discussions were held with pupils and students about their work and formal interviews were held with pupils and students chosen to represent the different school years, including members of the School Forum.

Every document which the school presented before and during the inspection was analysed. Pre-inspection meetings were held with members of the management team, staff, the governing body and parents. 17 parents attended the meeting and 54 questionnaires were returned. Three letters were received and there were five observations on the questionnaires received by parents.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities and contributions to the Key Questions
Dr Neil Trevor Jones Registered Inspector	Summary, recommendations Responsible for key question 1 Contribution to key questions 5 and 7
Gwyn Griffiths	Responsible for key question 3 Contribution to key question 4
John Roberts Lay Inspector	Contribution to key questions 1, 3 and 7
Gloria Davies	Contribution to key question 4 Welsh first language
Dr Emrys Price-Jones	Contribution to key question 7 Mathematics
Gwilym Williams	Responsible for key question 5
Gareth Wyn Roberts	Responsible for key question 6 Information Technology
Beryl Portlock	Responsible for key question 2 Design and technology
Alan Wynne Jones	Music
Mary Parry	Religious Education

The school's nominee was Mr. Huw Alun Roberts, headteacher of the school.

There was no peer assessor.

**Contractor:** Cwmni Cynnal  
Technology Unit  
Bridge Street  
Llangefni  
Anglesey  
LL77 7HL

### Acknowledgement

The inspection team would like to thank the governors, staff, pupils and students of Ysgol Maes Garmon for their assistance during the inspection.