

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

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

**Ysgol Morgan Llwyd  
Ffordd Cefn  
Wrexham  
LL13 9NG**

**School Number: 665/4032**

**Date of Inspection: 21/01/08**

**by**

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Ysgol Morgan Llwyd 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 Morgan Llwyd took place between 21/01/08 and 24/01/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Ian Garth Higginbotham 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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## A glossary of terms used in this report

<b>Average points score</b>	<p>Key stage 4: GCSE grade A* gains 8 points; grade G gains 1 point.</p> <p>Sixth form: GCE grade A gains 10 points; grade E gains 2 points.</p>
<b>Average wider points score</b>	<p>This is a more complex points score built up from a wider range of qualifications.</p>
<b>Careers education and guidance</b>	<p>A programme to teach pupils about career opportunities and to provide each pupil with individual guidance.</p>
<b>Core subject indicator</b>	<p>Key stage 3: The proportion of pupils gaining at least level 5 in each of the core subjects.</p> <p>Key stage 4: The proportion of pupils gaining grade C or better in the GCSE examinations in each of the core subjects.</p>
<b>Core Subjects</b>	<p>English or Welsh, science and mathematics</p>
<b>Key skills</b>	<p>Important common skills necessary for learning – such as communication skills, number skills, information technology and communication skills and personal and social skills.</p>
<b>Learning Pathways</b>	<p>Developments in the curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 19, which offer an appropriate range of courses and teaching methods, which may involve links to other schools, colleges or providers.</p>
<b>Learning support assistants (classroom assistants)</b>	<p>Trained assistants, who help qualified teachers in the classroom.</p>
<b>National Curriculum</b>	<p>The subjects, and subject content, that all maintained schools must provide for all pupils.</p>
<b>National Curriculum assessment</b>	<p>For secondary schools, this is the assessment of pupils at the end of key stage 3 in English or Welsh, science and mathematics. At key stage 4, this is provided through a range of approved qualifications, the most common of these being GCSE</p>
<b>Public examinations</b>	<p>Nationally recognised examinations (most commonly GCSE and A level) taken by 16 year-olds and 18 year-olds.</p>
<b>Pupils with additional learning needs</b>	<p>These are pupils who, for a wide range of reasons, have been identified as needing additional or modified support to help them learn successfully.</p>

**Pupils with special educational needs**

This is an identified group of pupils, within the overall category of additional learning needs, who have very specific support needs, which may be recognised by the existence of a statement of special needs.

**Similar schools**

Similar schools are all those secondary schools in Wales which have a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. For this school, we looked at two groups of similar schools: group A, where fewer than 10% of pupils have free school meals; and group B, where between 10% and 15% of pupils have free school meals.

**Statutory requirements**

All of those aspects of school provision that the Welsh Assembly Government requires a school to provide.

**Vocational studies (courses)**

Courses of study related to career or employment skills.

**Work related education**

Teaching pupils about the nature of life in the workplace.

## Context

### The nature of the provider

- 1 Ysgol Morgan Llwyd is a designated bilingual community comprehensive school maintained by the Wrexham Unitary Authority (UA). There are about 770 pupils, including almost 100 in the sixth form. Pupil numbers have increased by about 5% over the last six years. Pupils come mainly from the Welsh primary schools in the town but also from villages and rural areas around Wrexham. A few pupils (13 in Year 7 this year) join the school from English-medium primary schools, as part of an 'immersion' scheme (*Cynllun Trochi*) sponsored by the Welsh Language Board.
- 2 The pupil-teacher ratio is 14.0 : 1, more favourable than the average figures for Wrexham UA (16.5 : 1) or the whole of Wales (16.6 : 1)
- 3 Pupils come from both areas that are relatively prosperous and areas that are economically disadvantaged. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is 10.3%; this figure is lower than the figures for Wrexham UA (14.5%) and for the whole of Wales (17.5%).
- 4 About 89% of pupils come from homes where the main language is English and 11% from families who converse in Welsh. Over 98% of pupils speak Welsh to first-language standard. Welsh is the principal language of teaching and learning and all pupils study Welsh as a first language.
- 5 The previous attainment of pupils starting school in Year 7 covers the full range. There are 26 pupils (3.4%) who have a statement of special educational needs. This figure is higher than the percentages for Wrexham (2.1%) or the whole of Wales (2.2%). A further 9.8% of pupils with additional learning needs receive in-school support, while another 4.0% also receive help from other agencies. The school has modified National Curriculum requirements for one pupil.
- 6 At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in the care of the UA.
- 7 The leadership team comprises the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and four assistant headteachers, who lead the work in the two key stages, the sixth form and the learning support department.
- 8 The previous inspection of the school took place in April 2002.

### The school's priorities and targets

- 9 The school aims to:
  - cultivate high expectations;
  - provide learning experiences of the highest quality;
  - foster progressive development and improvement;
  - provide a broad, balanced and relevant education;
  - ensure equal opportunities for all; and
  - promote educational and social inclusion.

- 10 The main priorities of the school, set out in its development plan, are to:
- deepen pupils' understanding of their own learning;
  - extend opportunities for more-able and talented pupils;
  - improve standards in science;
  - improve the key skills of pupils in key stages 3 and 4;
  - further develop partnerships to extend the range of courses;
  - give self-evaluation an even stronger focus on pupils' attainment; and
  - respond to Wrexham families' growing demand for Welsh-medium education.
- 11 These aims and priorities take full account of the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government.

## Summary

- 12 The school makes good provision for its pupils and achieves consistently high standards in almost every aspect of its work. Outstandingly good management has brought about substantial improvements in the six years since the previous inspection. The quality of support and guidance for pupils is outstandingly good. There are outstandingly good procedures to promote social inclusion.

### Table of grades awarded

	Key Question	Inspection grade
1	How well do learners achieve?	2
2	How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	2
3	How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	2
4	How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5	How effective are leadership and strategic management?	1
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

- 13 The grades that we awarded match the grades in the school's self-evaluation report for five of the key questions. For key question 1, we awarded a grade that was lower than managers had awarded. Some aspects of pupils' achievement are very good, but, overall, standards are not outstandingly good. For key question 5, we awarded a grade that was higher than managers had awarded. Some features of the work of senior and middle managers are outstandingly good and have led to significant improvements.

## Standards

### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Key stage 3	Key stage 4	Sixth form
Welsh (first language)	2	1	1
Science	2	3	3
Design and technology	2	2	2
History	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2
Religious education	2	2	2

- 14 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that pupils and students achieved in lessons in the six subjects we inspected. The table also shows comparative figures for standards achieved in the lessons that inspectors graded in the 37 secondary schools inspected during the year 2005-2006.

79 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	5	90	5	0	0
Key stage 4	10	59	31	0	0
<b>Key stages 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Sixth form	17	58	25	0	0
<b>Whole school</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Wales (2005-2006)	11	54	29	6	0

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

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 15 Pupils achieve good standards. Across the two key stages, the percentage of outstanding work is slightly less than the average for schools in Wales, but the proportion of good work is a lot higher. The standards exceed the National Assembly for Wales' targets for standards across Wales.
- 16 Generally, pupils tend to do better than pupils in three quarters of one group of similar schools (where 10% to 15% of pupils are entitled to free school meals), but not as well as pupils in over half of a second group of similar schools (where fewer than 10% of pupils are entitled to free school meals). In key stage 3 last year, the core subject indicator (72%) was one of the highest of all the schools in the first group and better than in half of the schools in the second group. This shows a good level of attainment.
- 17 In key stage 4, pupils do particularly well on a range of indicators that measure the attainment of all pupils, including pupils' average points score in GCSE examinations.
- 18 Last year, the percentage of pupils who gained five GCSE qualifications at grades A\* to C was 61%, well above the all-Wales figure of 54%. Other indicators for the higher-attaining pupils are not so favourable, however. Pupils' performance at grades A\* to C in science in key stage 4 is weak, being one of the lowest in both groups of similar schools. In 2006, the core subject indicator (49%) was higher than in three quarters of schools in one group but lower than over half the schools in the

other group. In 2007, the indicator fell to 40%, making it lower than in over half the schools in one group and one of the lowest of all schools in the other group.

- 19 In almost all aspects of their work, the girls' attainment is better than that of the boys. However, the difference between the attainment of boys and girls is less than the average difference throughout Wales for almost every published indicator in key stage 4.
- 20 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because lessons are carefully adapted to meet their needs. The very good range of courses in key stage 4 allows every pupil to gain a qualification, many of them at levels above the targets set by their teachers.
- 21 Pupils write well in both Welsh and English. Their other communication skills (listening, speaking and reading) are outstandingly good in both languages. Pupils' bilingual skills are also outstanding. Pupils have a good level of skill in numeracy. In key stage 3, pupils have good skills in information and communications technology (ICT). However, pupils' ICT skills do not progress sufficiently in key stage 4.
- 22 Pupils are becoming skilled in assessing and improving their own learning. They tackle problems outstandingly well and show good levels of creativity. They work outstandingly well with other pupils.
- 23 There are outstanding features in pupils' personal, social and moral development. Pupils have a positive attitude towards learning. They behave well. Their average attendance is over 93%.

### **Sixth form**

- 24 All students enrol for the Welsh Baccalaureate. Over the last two years, almost 96% of students have gained the advanced diploma, while the others have gained the intermediate diploma. All students gain qualifications in six key skills, usually four at level 3 and two at level 2. These qualifications significantly boost students' wider points score to 795, compared with an average of 619 for all students in Wales. This is a highly creditable result.
- 25 Over the last two years, students' overall attainment in A level examinations, as measured by their average points score, has been about 0.6 of a grade below the average attainment of students in Wales. In part, this difference is due to a rather high number of students who study two, rather than three A level courses. On the basis of students' attainment in key stage 4, students gained about 0.3 of a grade lower than students across Wales in 2006 and were on a par with students across Wales in 2007.
- 26 Students are outstandingly competent in most key skills. They communicate fluently in both Welsh and English. They have good numeracy skills and use computers confidently. There are outstanding features in students' personal, social and moral development.

## The quality of education and training

- 27 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons we inspected. The table also shows comparative figures for the quality of teaching in the lessons that inspectors graded in the 37 secondary schools inspected during the year 2005-2006.

123 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	16	75	7	2	0
Key stage 4	8	79	13	0	0
<b>Key stages 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Sixth form	20	60	20	0	0
<b>Whole school</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Wales (2005-2006)	17	52	26	5	0

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

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 28 The quality of teaching is high. The profile of teaching grades is better than the profile for Wales and much better than at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is well above the National Assembly for Wales' target for 2010. In the six subjects we inspected, the quality of teaching is highest in the Welsh department and is weakest in the science department. Even here, good features outweigh shortcomings.
- 29 For the most part, lessons are stimulating and challenging and offer a good variety of learning activities. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and get them to think deeply. Classroom assistants work effectively, making lessons accessible to all pupils.
- 30 The assessment policy is based on the principles of 'Assessment for Learning'. The policy is working well but some departments have integrated it into classroom practice more effectively than have others.
- 31 A database of pupils' attainments back to key stage 2 enables teachers to monitor pupils' progress closely. Challenging targets are set for pupils in each subject. Teachers quickly identify pupils who are achieving too little and there are good systems to challenge and support these pupils.
- 32 Teachers generally mark pupils' work well, clearly showing pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, there is variation in the quality of marking from department to department and from teacher to teacher.
- 33 Rigorous mentoring of pupils has helped them achieve higher standards and has improved several aspects of examination performance over the last few years.
- 34 Reports to parents are of good quality. The new format being introduced makes it easier for parents to track their children's progress towards their targets from year to year.

- 35 The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and makes it possible for them to gain suitable qualifications. There is a good variety of course options for pupils aged from 14 to 19, including several vocational courses in key stage 4 and day courses in the local college. There are good and improving strategies to promote pupils' key skills. There is an outstanding range of extracurricular activities. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well and their moral, social and cultural development has outstanding features.
- 36 Managers encourage parents to be partners in the education of their children. Pupils' personal planners help to build a close relationship between parent, teacher and pupil.
- 37 There are sound strategies to help pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle.
- 38 The quality of work-related education is good. Placements in the workplace provide rewarding and worthwhile experiences. There are opportunities for pupils to develop entrepreneurial skills. Pupils receive good-quality careers guidance.
- 39 The provision of care, guidance and support has outstanding features. Very good in-school provision is supplemented by excellent support from a range of agencies.
- 40 There is outstandingly good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The coordinator manages the provision very well. Individual education plans (IEPs) are of good quality. Teachers consult them regularly to check they are giving pupils appropriate learning experiences.
- 41 There are good strategies to promote social and educational inclusion. *Cynllun Trochi* is extremely successful in helping pupils learn Welsh. The school promotes racial harmony and gender equality. There are sound strategies to eliminate bullying and all forms of harassment.

### **Sixth form**

- 42 The quality of teaching is generally good, although the percentage of lessons graded 3 (in which good features outweigh shortcomings) is rather high. The quality of teaching in the Welsh Baccalaureate is very high.
- 43 The quality of assessment, recording and reporting of students' achievements is good. Teachers mark students' work thoroughly and closely monitor the standards they are achieving.
- 44 There is a good range of Advanced Supplementary and A level courses. Students may also study courses in children's care and education and in construction.
- 45 All students follow the Welsh Baccalaureate and gain accreditation in six key skills. Among the many good features of this course is an excellent opportunity to take part in a business enterprise.

### **Leadership and management**

- 46 At the heart of management lies a clear vision of excellence in Welsh-medium education. The vision is shared by governors, teachers and all other members of

staff. Governors have a thorough knowledge of every aspect of the school's provision and of the standards that pupils are attaining. They act as an effective critical friend of the school.

- 47 Management processes are rigorous. They promote good communication and make senior managers fully aware of all aspects of school life, including the work of each department. All managers are integral to the process of regular review of quality and standards. Middle managers lead an ongoing self-evaluation of their departments and regularly share their emerging findings with a deputy headteacher. Every manager is thoroughly accountable for the work he or she leads. Generally, the quality of the work of middle managers is good; in a few departments it is outstanding.
- 48 Self-evaluation processes in all aspects of the school's work are of good quality. Senior and middle managers are well informed about the quality of provision within the areas for which they are responsible. Evaluation of the Welsh Baccalaureate has the same high quality as other self-evaluation procedures. The quality of the school's self-evaluation report is very good.
- 49 Managers have generally taken successful actions in response to the key issues identified in the previous inspection report.
- 50 The school is well staffed and there is a good teacher-pupil ratio. Members of the financial, administrative and technical and support staff work conscientiously and serve the school well. There is a shortage of qualified physics teachers and insufficient technical support in design and technology and science. The quality and quantity of learning resources are generally good. The large site provides good accommodation. There is good accommodation for sixth-form students, but there is no school hall.

## **Recommendations**

- R1 \* Managers and teachers should work to maintain good and outstanding standards in many subjects, and address the shortcomings identified in the report, particularly in science.
- R2 \* Managers and teachers should extend pupils' experience of ICT, particularly in key stage 4, in order to improve pupils' skills.
- R3 \* Managers and teachers should further promote the principles of assessment for learning, extending the good practice found in a few departments to all classes.

Recommendations marked with an asterisk refer to matters that managers address in the school development plan.

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

## Standards

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

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

- 51 The grade we awarded was lower than managers had awarded in their self-evaluation report. Some aspects of pupils' achievement are very good, but, overall, standards are not outstandingly good.

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 52 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that pupils achieved in lessons in the six subjects we inspected. The table also shows comparative figures for standards achieved in the lessons that inspectors graded in the 37 secondary schools inspected during the year 2005-2006.

67 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	5	90	5	0	0
Key stage 4	10	59	31	0	0
<b>Key stages 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Key stage 3, Wales	11	52	31	6	0
Key stage 4, Wales	9	51	33	7	0

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

- 53 Standards are good or very good in about five lessons in every six. We describe the good aspects of these standards in the subject sections at the end of this report, alongside the shortcomings that led us to award a lower grade for one lesson out of six. Across the two key stages, the percentage of outstanding work is slightly less than the average for schools in Wales, but the proportion of good work is a lot higher. The standards exceed the National Assembly for Wales' targets for standards across Wales.

### Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 54 We evaluated pupils' performance in public examinations and national tests by comparing their attainment with:
- the attainment of pupils in similar schools; and
  - the attainment of pupils in all schools in Wales.
- 55 The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals places the school on the border between two of the comparison groups: group A, where up to 10% of pupils have free meals, and group B, where between 10% and 15% of pupils do so. Generally, pupils tend to do better than pupils in three quarters of the schools in group B, but not as well as pupils in over half of the schools in group A. In key stage 3 last year, the core subject indicator (72%) was one of the highest of all the schools in group B and better than in half of the schools in group A. This shows a good level of attainment.

- 56 In key stage 4, pupils' attainment was much better in 2006 than in 2007. Reflecting its aim to promote the social inclusion, the school does particularly well in features of attainment that reflect the success of all pupils, namely:
- the percentage of pupils who gain 5 GCSE qualifications at grade A\* to G;
  - the percentage of pupils who gain 1 GCSE qualification at grade A\* to G; and
  - pupils' average points score.
- Scores in these aspects make the school one of the most successful schools in group B and more successful than over half the schools in group A.
- 57 The weakest aspect of pupils' performance in key stage 4 is their attainment in science. In 2007, the percentage of pupils who gained grades A\* to C in science was one of the lowest for schools in group A and lower than three-quarters of schools in group B.
- 58 This poor performance in science, together with a weak score in English, gave the school a low score (40%) for the core subject indicator. It was lower than in well over half the schools in group B and one of the lowest scores for the schools in group A.
- 59 Comparisons of pupils' attainment against that of the attainment of all pupils in Wales show that pupils in key stage 3 attain higher levels in key stage tests than pupils in over three quarters of all schools. The position in key stage 4 was similarly good in 2006, but was rather lower in 2007. Last year, the percentage of pupils who gained five GCSE qualifications at grades A\* to C was 61%, well above the all-Wales figure of 54%.
- 60 In almost all aspects of their work, the girls' attainment is better than that of the boys. However, the difference between the attainment of boys and girls is less than the average difference throughout Wales for almost every published indicator in key stage 4. In science, it is the performance of girls that lags that of boys.
- 61 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in improving their basic skills of language and mathematics. Teachers and classroom assistants adapt lessons well to meet pupils' individual needs. As a result, the pupils make good progress in all subjects. The very good range of courses in key stage 4 allows every pupil to gain a qualification, many of them at levels above those predicted by their teachers.
- 62 Pupils' communication skills in English are generally good with some outstanding features. Pupils of all ages and abilities listen and speak very well. In almost all instances, pupils listen attentively and follow instructions carefully. They use technical terms correctly. They make reasoned judgements, using selected evidence to support their arguments. From Year 7, pupils read and understand a wide range of texts. They read aloud with excellent expression. Standards of writing are good and there are some outstanding pieces of coursework. However, much of the writing is marred by poor spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- 63 Pupils' communication skills in Welsh are outstandingly good. Oral standards are outstanding. Pupils speak fluently and confidently when they express opinions or answer questions. They listen carefully and respond intelligently to instructions and guidance. Standards of reading are good in key stage 3 and outstanding in key

stage 4. Pupils are able to read fluently with sensitivity and use the correct tone with different types of audiences. Pupils' standards in written work are good. Nearly all pupils write confidently and use technical and complex vocabulary correctly. The writing of a few pupils is marred by grammatical errors and poor expression.

64 Pupils' bilingual skills are outstandingly good. They converse easily in either English or Welsh. They have no difficulty finding information in one language and using it in the other.

65 Standards in numeracy are good. Nearly all pupils handle number confidently in a range of contexts and apply their skills well in science and design and technology. Pupils are familiar with a range of graphs and use them competently.

66 In key stage 3, pupils have good skills in ICT. However, pupils' skills do not progress sufficiently in key stage 4. The course that pupils follow in key stage 3 moves pupils' skills on from those they have at the start of Year 7, but pupils' development in key stage 4 is held back by the limited range of opportunities they have to use ICT in subjects across the curriculum.

67 Pupils' problem solving skills are outstandingly good. Pupils persevere keenly in their attempts to solve a range of open-ended tasks in all aspects of design and technology. In mathematics, pupils formulate well-reasoned solutions to problems. The highest-attaining pupils have very good analytical and evaluative skills and solve problems with little support from their teachers.

68 Pupils are creative. In all subjects, they use their imagination well, whether in telling a story, playing a role, designing an artefact or solving a problem.

69 Pupils work together extremely well in many contexts. They readily engage in discussion and respect the views of others. They pool their ideas well to find better approaches or solutions than they would individually. In practical work, they allocate tasks sensibly.

70 Pupils understand the importance of assessing and improving their own learning. They are developing evaluative skills across a range of subjects and are acquiring the skill to talk about their own or others' work in a constructive and supportive manner. Overall, however, lessons do not give pupils sufficient practice in assessing the quality of their work.

71 Since 2001, the rate of improvement in:

- the percentage of pupils who gain five or more GCSE grades A\* to C;
- the percentage of pupils who gain grades C in a language, mathematics and science; and
- pupils' average points score in their GCSE examinations,

has been twice the rate of improvement across Wales. In mathematics, the rate of improvement has been three times that for Wales, while in English and science, the rates have been similar to those across Wales. High standards have been maintained in Welsh.

- 72 In line with the school's aim to promote educational inclusion, the entry rates for GCSE examinations in English, Welsh and mathematics are over 98%.

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

- 73 Generally, pupils make good progress in their lessons. They have good learning skills and positive attitudes towards their work. Their good language skills in Welsh help them understand and use the technical language of each subject. They are therefore quick to master new concepts and well able to speak or write about them at length.
- 74 Managers monitor pupils' progress and compare it with that of pupils across Wales. Rates of progress are rising to match those found in the 25% of fastest-improving schools in Wales.
- 75 Pupils' developing skill in evaluating their own learning is helping them to learn effectively. However, lessons in some subjects do not encourage pupils to use these skills as much as they do in others.
- 76 Pupils enjoy their learning and are proud of their school. They take pleasure in their lessons and in the wide range of extracurricular activities. They have the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to move on to the next stage of education.

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

- 77 Most pupils are well motivated and have a positive attitude to learning. They show interest in their work and demonstrate appropriate levels of commitment and enthusiasm. They cooperate and concentrate well in their lessons.
- 78 The standard of behaviour around the school and during lessons is generally good. Pupils are considerate and courteous and move around the large campus in an orderly manner. Teachers deal quickly and effectively with occasional disruptive chatter in a few classes. Thirty-two pupils (21 boys and 11 girls) were temporarily excluded in the year prior to the inspection.
- 79 Pupils' attendance over the year before the inspection averaged 93.2%, higher than in Wrexham (91.3%) and across Wales (90.2%). Pupils get to school on time and arrive at lessons punctually.
- 80 Pupils make good progress in learning to work independently and they have appropriate organisational and study skills. They are becoming confident citizens who have appropriate social and moral values. They are well equipped to take their place in the workplace and in society generally. They are gaining the skills and attitudes they need to continue learning throughout their lives.
- 81 Pupils show a good understanding of diversity and have respect for other cultures and traditions. Their values equip them well to live in an increasingly diverse community.

### **Sixth form**

- 82 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that students achieved in lessons in the six subjects we inspected. The table also shows

comparative figures for the 37 secondary schools inspected during the year 2005-2006.

12 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
<b>Sixth form</b>	17	58	25	0	0
Sixth forms, Wales	16	68	16	0	0

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

- 83 We inspected ten lessons in Year 12, but only two in Year 13, as students in Year 13 were sitting examinations.

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

- 84 Over the last two years, students' overall attainment in A level examinations has been below the average attainment of students in Wales. The average points score for students who sat two or more A level examinations was 17 in 2006 and 16 in 2007. Across the whole of Wales, the average score was 20 points. A score of 16 is equivalent to grades of C, C and D; 20 is equivalent to B, C and C.
- 85 In part, this difference is due to a rather high number of students who study two, rather than three A level courses. This factor is removed if we examine students' results in all their examinations in the light of their GCSE results two years earlier. On this basis, students in 2006 gained, on average, about 0.3 of a grade lower than students across Wales. In 2007, they gained the same grade as students across Wales.
- 86 Generally, the numbers of students who study each subject are too small to allow valid comparisons with the attainment of students across Wales. In the few subjects where the numbers of students are larger, students' attainment tends to fluctuate from year to year.
- 87 In addition to their A level and other courses, all students in the sixth form complete the Welsh Baccalaureate. Of the 32 students in Year 13 in 2006, 31 gained the advanced diploma and one achieved the intermediate diploma. In 2007, the corresponding figures were 41 and one. Students can gain these diplomas only if they gain accreditation in the six key skills. In both year groups, all students gained four accreditations at level 3 and two at level 2. This level of attainment is very good. There are currently only a few schools that offer the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification, so it is not possible to compare students' attainment in the Baccalaureate with the attainment of students across Wales.
- 88 The value of the Welsh Baccalaureate and key skills qualifications is recognised in a new 'wider points score' that gives credit to a wide range of qualifications. In 2007, students' average wider points score was 795, much higher than the average of 619 for students across Wales. This is a highly creditable result.
- 89 The percentage of pupils in Year 11 who return to school to study in the sixth form is a little lower than average. In 2006, 57% of students returned; in 2007, the figure was 43%. Of those who started a course in Year 12, fewer than 60% continued into Year 13. The other students take up employment or go to college to study courses at

level 3. In 2007, three quarters of the students finishing Year 13 went on to higher education. All of these gained places in the university of their choice.

- 90 Students' key skills are outstandingly good, as is demonstrated by the qualifications they gain. Students communicate effectively. They listen attentively, converse well, ask questions thoughtfully. When they address the class or make presentations, they prepare well and speak clearly and convincingly. They read widely and can skim articles and search the Internet quickly to find information. They write good quality essays, marshalling a sound basis of facts and arguing a case convincingly. Students demonstrate these high levels of skills in both English and Welsh. They are completely at home in both languages. They are familiar with sayings and figures of speech and appreciate nuances of translation.
- 91 Students reason well and solve problems innovatively. They use ICT competently and present information appropriately in a variety of formats. They collaborate maturely with each other and are also well able to work independently.

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

- 92 Overall, students make good progress in their learning. The Welsh Baccalaureate gives students a wide range of experiences. The work and experiences that lie behind the preparation of their portfolios give students skills that will be invaluable to them in university, in the world of work and in their everyday lives. The commitment that students show in completing work to the required standard demonstrates skills and attitudes that will bring them success in study at a higher level and in employment.
- 93 Life in the sixth form equips students well to enjoy their leisure time and to become good citizens.
- 94 The Welsh Baccalaureate requires students to meet regularly with their tutors to discuss their progress. These regular meetings help students to appreciate how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.

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

- 95 Students are well motivated and their attitude to learning is good. The positive relationships they maintain with their teachers help them learn effectively.
- 96 Students take part enthusiastically in a wide range of social and cultural activities. They behave maturely and responsibly and provide good role models for younger pupils. Students show respect for each other, their teachers and visitors. Their attendance and punctuality are good.
- 97 Students acquire appropriate attitudes and values. They accept responsibilities willingly. They show concern for others and respect different cultures and traditions. Their education equips them well for further and higher education courses and prepares them to be confident and productive members of society.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

- 98 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade that managers awarded in their self-evaluation report.
- 99 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons we inspected in key stages 3 and 4. The table also shows comparative figures for the quality of teaching in the lessons that inspectors graded in the 37 secondary schools inspected during the year 2005-2006.

108 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	16	75	7	2	0
Key stage 4	8	79	13	0	0
<b>Key stages 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Wales (including sixth-form lessons)	17	52	26	5	0

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

- 100 The quality of teaching is high. The profile of teaching grades is better than the profile for Wales and much better than at the time of the previous inspection. The type of shortcoming present in one lesson in three during the previous inspection is now confined to one lesson in ten. The quality of teaching is well above the new National Assembly for Wales' target for 2010, that at least 80% of lessons should be grade 2 or better.
- 101 In the six subjects where we inspected pupils' standards, the greatest proportion of outstanding teaching was in the Welsh department. Teaching of outstanding quality also takes place in several other departments.
- 102 Lessons are stimulating and challenging and there are good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers know their subject well and illustrate their lessons with contemporary issues and recent developments relevant to pupils' lives. Lessons are well planned, have a clear structure and definite goals. They offer a range of interesting learning experiences. Teachers use humour well to engage and stimulate pupils.
- 103 The characteristics of good and outstanding lessons include all the features that managers have observed in lessons they have inspected. These include:
- high expectations of what pupils will achieve and how they will behave;
  - ambitious learning aims shared with pupils at the start of the lesson;
  - lively presentations that deepen pupils' understanding of ideas;
  - detailed questioning that leads pupils to think deeply;
  - expectations that pupils will give extended answers, whether orally or in writing;
  - constant challenge and support for pupils as they work;
  - sincere praise for good work;

- opportunities for pupils to find information for themselves; and
- opportunities for pupils to cooperate.

104 Classroom assistants contribute substantially to the quality of teaching. They make lessons accessible to pupils who cannot maintain the same pace of learning as most of their classmates. They appropriately seize opportunities to help other pupils and to keep their learning on track.

105 In most cases, teachers adapt lessons well for pupils with particular difficulties or aptitudes.

106 Teachers use language extremely well, setting pupils an excellent example of how they should try to talk about the subject. They naturally introduce the subject's special terms in Welsh, but always tell pupils the English terms, so that they can talk about the subject in either language and thoroughly understand any English material they read in books or on the Internet.

107 In the six subjects where we inspected pupils' standards, the greatest proportion of important shortcomings was in the science department. There are important shortcomings also in a few lessons in other departments.

108 The commonest shortcomings are that:

- activities are allocated too much or too little time;
- the teacher's expectations of what pupils can do are too low;
- the teacher's questions do not go to the heart of issues;
- there is too little variety and challenge in the work; and
- a few pupils have most of the teacher's attention.

Nevertheless, in almost all lessons, there are good features that outweigh these shortcomings.

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

109 The quality of assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements is good. Assessment procedures meet statutory requirements for the assessment and reporting of pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 3. In key stage 4, the procedures fully meet examination board requirements.

110 The school's policy for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements is appropriately based on the principles of 'Assessment for Learning'. All departments implement the policy and, overall, it is working well. However, some departments have integrated the policy into classroom practice more effectively than have others.

111 Thorough discussion with teachers in the primary schools means that the needs of each pupil entering Year 7 are well known. Information from the primary schools and key stage 2 assessments are used effectively to identify pupils' additional learning needs and to allocate pupils appropriately to classes in Year 7.

112 Based on key stage 2 assessments, each pupil is set a target of the National Curriculum level they should reach by the end of key stage 3. Similarly, in Year 10,

each pupil has a GCSE target grade in each subject. Regular assessment against these targets is effective in identifying pupils who are underachieving. The targets, if achieved, will lead to improvements on a par with those in the 25% of schools in Wales that are showing the greatest improvement. This procedure ensures that the targets are challenging.

- 113 The quality of assessment is generally good. Termly assessment tests are marked thoroughly. Generally, pupils receive clear practical guidance on how to raise their standards. In five of the six subjects we inspected, teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and helpfully. They give pupils clear guidance on the quality of their work and set them targets for improvement pertinent to the subject. However, the quality of assessment is inconsistent between departments and even between teachers in the same department. In one of the departments we inspected, and in some other departments, quite a lot of the marking is superficial and uninformative.
- 114 In a few classes, pupils regularly assess their own work and that of other pupils. Such assessment is helping pupils recognise their individual strengths and weaknesses, appreciate what higher standards would look like, and plan how they can achieve such standards.
- 115 The quality and regularity of marking are monitored by curriculum leaders and are discussed with the deputy headteachers. These processes have helped raise the quality of assessment but have not yet brought the best assessment practices to all teachers in all departments.
- 116 An electronic database of all pupils' targets and marks is readily available to all teachers and managers. It allows them to identify pupils who are achieving less than they might and those who are doing very well and would benefit from a greater challenge.
- 117 There are rigorous monitoring systems for pupils who are underachieving. The pupils discuss their work regularly with a teacher. They are expected to identify how they can improve their performance. Parents are notified regularly of their children's progress.
- 118 In key stage 4, selected pupils are invited to join mentor groups in order to boost their examination performance. Regular meetings with mentors, reviews of work, target-setting and extra lessons help raise the attainment of these pupils. Managers monitor the effectiveness of this mentoring. From year to year, they can identify improvements in the performance of several groups of pupils. The performance of boys has improved and the percentage of grades A\* and A has increased.
- 119 Almost all departments, including all the core subject departments are developing portfolios of examples of work at different National Curriculum levels. These are giving pupils a clearer understanding of the standards they are expected to achieve. The portfolios will be externally moderated and standardised, to ensure that teachers are assessing pupils' attainments correctly.
- 120 For pupils in key stage 3, the school sends parents one interim and one full report each year. The reports show pupils' targets and their progress towards them and add an informative comment. The reports usefully add information on pupils' use of

Welsh, their behaviour and attitudes to work, their homework and how well they present their work. Teachers offer clear guidance on how pupils can improve.

- 121 A new report format in key stage 4 is giving parents even more detailed information. There is a report each term and a full report at the end of Year 10. Each term, the reports track pupils' progress towards their examination targets. The reports also show pupils' progress in key skills. These reports are of good quality. Teachers' comments are informative and offer specific guidance on how pupils can improve.

### **Sixth form**

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

- 122 The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons we inspected in the sixth form.

15 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
<b>Sixth form</b>	20	60	20	0	0

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

- 123 The number of lessons we inspected was quite small, since many students in Year 13 were sitting examinations. It is therefore unwise to place too much weight on these figures. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. However, if our figures are representative of the whole sixth form, the percentage of lessons where teaching is grade 3 (good features outweigh shortcomings) is rather high.
- 124 The characteristics of good and outstanding teaching in 80% of the lessons seen are much the same as those identified in key stages 3 and 4. These good lessons are enjoyable and challenging. They lead students to be rigorous in whatever they are doing. Students are expected to be thoughtful as they undertake activities, ask and answer questions, conduct research or undertake a written task. They are encouraged to reflect on the quality of their work.
- 125 It is a lack of critical thought that undermines the quality of students' experience in the other lessons. Teachers either dominate the lesson, leaving too little for students to do, or do not insist on sufficiently rigorous thought about basic principles and their application.
- 126 We inspected two lessons in the core element of the Welsh Baccalaureate. The quality of teaching is very high. There are clear, challenging aims for the lesson and high expectation of what students will achieve. The teachers' presentations are lively, stimulating students' interest and determination to do their best. Questions provoke students to think deeply. Students have opportunities to work independently and carry out research.

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

- 127 The quality of assessment, recording and reporting of students' achievements is good. The procedures meet the requirements of examination boards.

- 128 Assessment is well used to monitor students' progress. Detailed marking of written work and informative comments help students improve their standards.
- 129 In each subject, students are told the minimum target grade they should achieve and they are also given a more challenging grade to work towards. Sixth-form assessment records are not entered on the database. Nevertheless, teachers carefully monitor students' progress towards their target grades. Students are encouraged to review their own achievement and to identify how they can raise their standards. As they mature, they become confident in setting themselves realistic and achievable targets.
- 130 Students receive one interim and one full report each year. Interim reports for the Welsh Baccalaureate include assessments of students' progress in study skills and a comment on their progress in each component of the course. Full reports include information on study skills, detailed comments by subject teachers and the students' estimated A level grades. Comments are informative and offer helpful advice. Full reports on the Welsh Baccalaureate include comments on progress in the key skills. These reports are of good quality.

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

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

- 131 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade that managers awarded in their self-evaluation report.

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

- 132 Overall, the curriculum meets learners' needs and gives them the opportunity to achieve accreditation through a number of learning pathways. The school strives to give all pupils equal access to all learning experiences.
- 133 The curriculum offers balance, breadth, flexibility, cohesion and progression. The school has effectively responded to the Learning Pathways 14-19 recommendations through its provision of some alternative courses in key stage 4 and through links with other secondary schools and a local college.
- 134 In key stage 3, all subjects are given sufficient time to cover the programmes of study. In addition, all pupils have the opportunity to study drama throughout the key stage and many take advantage of the wide range of allied extracurricular activities.
- 135 In key stage 4, there are several new GCSE courses, including vocational courses in leisure and tourism, customer care and building. There is also good provision for a small number of pupils who have difficulty engaging fully in the mainstream curriculum. They can attend local colleges to study vocational courses for one day per week.

- 136 The curricular programme in the sixth form offers a good range of Advanced Supplementary and A level courses. Many students select a course in children's care and education (CACHE), taught in conjunction a local college.
- 137 Students' opportunities in the sixth form are extended by pursuing the Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced course. This is an outstanding feature of the provision in the sixth form. Students have a wide range of learning experiences that include:
- a study of developments in Wales, Europe and the World;
  - an exploration of issues relating to citizenship, drugs and alcohol and sustainable development;
  - involvement in work-related and enterprise activities; and
  - the gaining of accreditation in six key skills, at least three at level 3 and three at level 2.
- 138 Overall, learning experiences promote pupils' basic and key skills well. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality award. The high quality work on key skills in the sixth form, as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate course, is being extended to key stages 3 and 4. The main key skills (communication, application of number and ICT) are identified in all schemes of work. In addition, all pupils in key stage 4 have a skills lesson and can gain level 3 accreditation in problem solving through their work in design and technology. The key skills working party is investigating opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation in information technology and application of number in key stage 3. Altogether, this is good quality provision.
- 139 Many pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by the outstanding range of extracurricular activities. A large number of pupils take part in sporting, musical and drama activities and many of them gain considerable success in sporting activities and local and national eisteddfodau. A link with a school in Wisconsin has resulted in a drama group touring venues in America. Regular visits to theatres, field trips and opportunities for foreign travel also broaden pupils' experiences and the Welsh Baccalaureate programme is enriched by many events and visits. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
- 140 Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well in personal and social education (PSE), Welsh and religious education lessons. Pertinent topics are also taken up in the themes for acts of worship in registration groups, year assemblies and the whole-school assembly.
- 141 Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. The school is a civilised, caring community that promotes good behaviour and respect towards individuals and the environment. Through many activities both in school and in the community, pupils demonstrate maturity and self-discipline. Pupils are regularly commended for their respect and consideration for others during visits and work placements. They frequently show practical concern for others by raising substantial sums of money for local, national and international charities.
- 142 Many aspects of the curriculum and extracurricular activities give pupils a rich awareness of the Welsh culture. Aspects of the programmes of study in art, drama, music and religious education, the input of visiting drama groups and artists in

residence and visits, locally, further afield and abroad, all enrich pupils' understanding of other cultures.

- 143 Parents' evenings and open evenings are well attended. The parent-teacher association provides good opportunities for parents to meet teachers, discuss general concerns, contribute their ideas and support the school's endeavours.
- 144 A 'Striving for Excellence' programme has established strong pastoral and curricular links with the primary schools, particularly in the core subjects and physical education. This year, there is to be a week of activities to help pupils in Year 6 become familiar with their new school.
- 145 There are many links with employers, the media, caring agencies, members of the UA, the Member of Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales. The school takes good advantage of these links to enrich pupils' experiences in the PSE programme and the Welsh Bacalaureate course.
- 146 The curriculum meets legal requirements. The school provides a daily act of collective worship and the programmes for PSE, work-related education and careers education and guidance meet Welsh Assembly guidelines.

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

- 147 The quality of work-related education is good. The school has drawn up a policy with *Careers Wales* to meet the guidelines set out in the new Framework: *Careers and the World of Work*. In placing key stage 4 pupils and sixth-form students with employers, managers strive to ensure that the experience is rewarding and worthwhile. Invited speakers from business and industry extend pupils' awareness of the world of work. Teachers who have attended short placements in local businesses discuss their experiences with pupils to enhance their understanding of the world of work.
- 148 The school keeps abreast of the needs of employers through:
- its strong partnership with *Careers Wales*;
  - governors' understanding of the local community; and
  - close links with a wide range of employers in the community.
- 149 There are many outstanding features in the development of pupils' bilingual skills. Pupils often need to research information in one language and present their findings in the other. Participation in eisteddfodau, residential courses and educational visits also extends their bilingual skills.
- 150 The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is integrated naturally into the life and work of the school, and is a strong feature of the curriculum in each subject. It also features strongly in the rich programme of extracurricular activities.
- 151 Work on sustainable development and global citizenship is at an early stage. Managers have written a draft policy and issues are explored in PSE, religious education and science lessons and in the skills lesson in key stage 4. The school council has been active in organising recycling initiatives involving paper, metal and plastic.

- 152 There are limited opportunities for pupils in key stage 3 to develop entrepreneurial and workplace skills. In key stage 4, several activities, such as the *Dynamo Project* and experiences within the customer care course, help to raise pupils' awareness.
- 153 There are outstanding features in the enterprise opportunities for sixth-form students as part of the Welsh BaccaLaureate programme. At present, a drama group 'Theatr Y Ddraig' is preparing a production of 'Grease'. Students take responsibility for all aspects of the production including planning, marketing, costumes and budget management.
- 154 Overall, the school has made good progress in addressing many national priorities. There are strengths in the levels of pupils' attainment, in the development of bilingualism and in the quality of the transition arrangements for pupils starting secondary school. The development of key skills in the Welsh BaccaLaureate programme is outstanding, and there is good progress in promoting the key skills of pupils in key stages 3 and 4. The range of Learning Pathways for pupils aged 14 to 19 is developing.

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

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

- 155 The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by managers in their self-evaluation report.

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

- 156 The provision of care, guidance and support has outstanding features. The well-established and strong pastoral structure ensures that all members of staff know the pupils well. Effective communication between assistant headteachers for each key stage, learning coordinators (heads of year) and group tutors promote a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. Regular team meetings ensure consistency in the care and support of pupils. Pupils and staff have excellent relationships. Several specialist agencies provide additional support for vulnerable pupils.
- 157 Managers welcome parents as partners in the education of their children and maintain strong links with them. Pupils' personal planners help to build a close relationship between parent, teacher and pupil.
- 158 Pupils receive helpful guidance on their choice of courses in key stage 4 and the sixth form. The school is part of a *Careers Wales* pilot scheme in choosing options on line. Booklets describing the options are informative and comprehensive.
- 159 The provision of support and guidance for pupils has several outstanding features. Support is particularly strong for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural problems. All pupils and students have pastoral mentoring sessions with their form tutors. A high-quality PSE programme is taught sensitively and supportively.
- 160 Careers guidance is well planned and there are effective links with *Careers Wales*. The school uses schemes such as 'Ewch Amdani' (Go For It) and 'Porth Ieuencid'

(Youth Bridgeway) that help to build pupils' confidence and challenge them to take control of their future. Pupils are well prepared for their work experience placements. Pupils learn important skills through mock interviews held in cooperation with the local Rotary Club. A careers convention takes place every two years in conjunction with Ysgol Maes Garmon and is well supported by local employers, parents and pupils.

- 161 There are good arrangements for monitoring pupils' punctuality, attendance and behaviour. In key question 2 of this report, we evaluate the monitoring and mentoring arrangements that quickly detect and challenge underachievement. These arrangements have improved pupils' attainment year on year.
- 162 The school encourages pupils to be healthy and to take regular exercise. The school council has contributed to the introduction of healthier lunchtime menus. Units in the PSE programme reinforce these issues. Procedures for child protection are effective and two assistant headteachers regularly attend training. Members of staff are fully aware of appropriate procedures.

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

- 163 The quality of planning and management of provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) is outstanding. A range of assessment procedures and strong links with primary schools help managers implement individually targeted provision. Progress of pupils with ALN is thoroughly monitored and appropriate action is taken.
- 164 A number of very effective strategies are used to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Small groups of pupils take part in sessions to improve their basic skills. These sessions focus on specific skills, as identified in pupils' IEPs. Reading clubs are led by pupils in Year 10 and by teaching assistants. Multi-sensory programmes are led by experienced teachers. Pupils who attend these sessions are enthusiastic about them and make good progress.
- 165 The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) provides excellent direction and leadership. She has a thorough knowledge of the pupils and keeps careful records of their progress. She is well supported by the staff of the learning support department, teaching assistants, senior managers and the designated governor for ALN.
- 166 Subject departments are responsible for providing suitable work for pupils with ALN. The SENCO works with each department to ensure there is appropriate provision for each pupil. There are regular meetings of the inclusion forum, where the SENCO meets representatives from each department. The headteacher or a deputy headteacher also attends, giving the group appropriate status. Managers ensure that all aspects of the school's provision are inclusive: all pupils have full access to the curriculum and pupils with ALN work effectively alongside their peers in mainstream classes.
- 167 Teaching assistants are well managed. They provide sensitive support to individual pupils and small groups. Their work is monitored by the SENCO and is discussed in weekly meetings. Pupils welcome their support and respond to it positively.

- 168 IEPs are of good quality and are shared with all departments. Pupils' targets are regularly reviewed and discussed with parents. Parents are given guidance in how to help their children. Statements of special educational needs are reviewed annually. The appropriate assistant headteacher and learning coordinator attend these reviews. All subject departments submit reports of pupils' successes and difficulties to these annual reviews. This is outstandingly good practice.
- 169 In key stage 4, provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They follow an appropriate mix of Entry Level Qualifications (ELQ) and GCSE courses. Pupils complete some ELQ courses in Year 10, allowing them to concentrate on GCSE courses in Year 11. This is good practice. Pupils make good progress and all pupils on the special educational needs register last year achieved a recognised qualification, many significantly higher than predicted. There are effective vocational links with local colleges of further education and curricular links with a special school. Overall, there is a good and developing range of learning pathways for these pupils.
- 170 The 'Cynnal' resource is an outstanding feature. It provides effective and sensitive support for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties giving them confidence to continue with their work in school. There is a drop-in centre for shy and vulnerable pupils during break and lunch times. Pupils who have received fixed term exclusions are gradually re-integrated by attending Cynnal. Subject departments ensure that appropriate work is available for pupils working in Cynnal. However, ICT resources in Cynnal are poor.
- 171 Support agencies, including NSPCC, CAMHS (mental health support), the Education Welfare Service, the Youth Service and the school nurse, provide additional sensitive and confidential support for pupils who need their services.
- 172 Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. Pupils generally respond well to an appropriate system of rewards and sanctions. Consistent approaches by all teachers help them to re-engage disaffected pupils.

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

- 173 Social inclusion is high on the school agenda. The value that members of staff place on diversity is reflected in the high quality of relationships. Teachers are aware of pupils' diverse linguistic and social backgrounds and have established effective systems that meet the needs of all pupils. *Cynllun Trochi* is extremely successful in helping pupils to learn Welsh and to take part fully in school life. The highly effective inclusion of pupils with emotional and social difficulties is evaluated above.
- 174 Managers carefully monitor the progress of all minority groups of pupils. These groups are very small and it is not appropriate to mention their success. However, in recent years, a number of pupils who are looked after by the UA have gained GCSE grades above those predicted on the basis of their earlier attainment.
- 175 The school strongly promotes social and racial harmony and gender equality. Comprehensive policies reinforce teachers' and pupils' understanding of these matters. The issues figure prominently in the PSE programme and school assemblies and pupils are encouraged to discuss them during their morning tutorials.

Senior managers carefully monitor pupils' choice of courses and how well they achieve, to ensure boys and girls have the same opportunities.

- 176 The school provides a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils. There are sound anti-bullying strategies, of which pupils are fully aware. Managers regularly evaluate the strategies. Parents and pupils are confident that the few incidences of bullying are dealt with promptly and sensitively.
- 177 There is easy access to all parts of the school for disabled pupils, including those in wheelchairs. The Accessibility Plan is comprehensive and has clear outcomes. The UA has not fully implemented its accessibility strategy. As a result, the school has not implemented a Disability Equality Scheme.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

- 178 The grade we awarded was higher than the grade 2 that managers had awarded. Some features of the work of senior and middle managers are outstandingly good and have led to significant improvements.
- 179 We graded key question 5 higher than key question 1. Management is of outstanding quality. Although standards of attainment are not outstandingly good, there have been substantial improvements. Managers have effectively addressed nearly all the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection report. The rate of improvement of several aspects of standards has been much greater than across Wales as a whole.

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

- 180 At the heart of management lies a clear vision of excellence in Welsh-medium education. This vision, set by the headteacher and governors, is shared by all teachers and all those who work to support them, whether inside or outside the classroom. Alongside this vision goes a strong conviction that education should be inclusive. Many policies have their roots in this philosophy.
- 181 Managers have been highly successful in promoting pupils' bilingual skills. These skills are enriching pupils' lives and giving them broader career opportunities. In piloting the Welsh Baccalaureate, managers and sixth-form tutors have established systems that promote students' key skills and give them additional qualifications. Managers are also developing a range of learning pathways for pupils in key stage 4 and for sixth-form students, and are continually looking for ways to broaden this provision.
- 182 Central to the management process, and a key strategy for improving the quality of provision and raising standards, is a programme of weekly or fortnightly one-to-one meetings of the deputy headteachers with each middle manager. The focus of these meetings is the evaluation of the department or aspect of provision for which the middle manager is responsible. Issues are discussed within the Estyn framework of key questions. In this way, managers regularly review every aspect of standards and provision.
- 183 The deputy headteachers report the main discussion items to the headteacher. Senior managers therefore have a thorough knowledge of the current situation in every aspect of the school's work. The close monitoring by deputy headteachers ensures that every middle manager regularly reviews quality and standards with the members of their department or area of work.
- 184 This structure of regular meetings helps to make managers thoroughly accountable for the work they lead. Middle managers are accountable to a deputy headteacher and the deputies are accountable to the headteacher. The headteacher, who is

accountable to the governors and the UA, has ready access to the information he needs to manage the school effectively.

- 185 This management structure provides not only accountability but also support. Senior managers share the successes and concerns of those whom they manage and are in a position to help and support them. Teachers report that they have the full support of the headteacher and senior managers.
- 186 Generally, the quality of the work of middle managers is good; in a few departments it is outstanding. Managers' job descriptions give top priority to the promotion of good quality provision and the attainment of high standards. Management of the departments of Welsh and learning support is particularly rigorous, with a shared vision, exceptional organisation and strong teamwork.
- 187 Managers use data well. Value-added figures for schools across Wales are used to set end-of-course targets for each pupil. Managers use the improvement figures based on the 25% of schools where progress is greatest. The targets are therefore realistic and appropriately challenging.
- 188 Managers regularly observe lessons. They are becoming increasingly skilled in grading lessons using the Estyn criteria. They write perceptive comments and report their findings supportively. Teachers welcome these quality reviews. Lesson observation is being extended as a strategy to make teachers aware of the best practice in different aspects of teaching and learning.
- 189 Performance management procedures work well. Teaching and non-teaching members of staff attend professional development courses in line with the priorities they identify and to support departmental and whole-school developments.
- 190 The introduction of the Welsh Baccalaureate has been well managed. Course managers have appropriate responsibilities. The project is enthusiastically led and carefully coordinated by an assistant head. Sixth-form tutors effectively lead the work on the key skills and monitor students' progress. The core components of the course are thoroughly planned. The two sessions we inspected were well taught.

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

- 191 The governing body is made up of highly competent and committed members. It is strongly led by a former head of a Welsh-medium school. Members have a broad range of experience in education and in many other walks of life. Several are local business people with expertise in managing budgets – a skill that they use effectively in their management of the school. Governors share the headteacher's vision for Welsh-medium education. They act as an effective critical friend of the school.
- 192 Governors have a thorough knowledge of every aspect of the school's provision and of the standards that pupils are attaining. They listen to presentations by curriculum leaders and other managers. Committees thoroughly scrutinise papers laid before them. They discussed the school's self-evaluation report and are fully aware of its findings. Many governors have links with individual departments, including the learning support department. They meet the curriculum leaders and occasionally

attend lessons. They are aware of the school's performance and how pupils' attainments compare with those in other schools in Wrexham and across Wales.

- 193 The governors thoroughly considered the implications of the Welsh Baccaulaureate before agreeing to its implementation. They closely monitor students' success and the financial and human resources that the course requires.
- 194 The governors are keen to introduce new courses in order to extend pupils' opportunities in Welsh-medium education. Their planning is far-sighted. They fulfil all their statutory obligations well.

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

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

- 195 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade that managers awarded in their self-evaluation report.

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

- 196 Self evaluation processes in all aspects of the school's work are of good quality. Senior and middle managers are well informed about the quality of provision within the areas for which they are responsible. The regular management meetings, which we assess in key question 5, guide managers' writing of their self-evaluation reports. Each report evaluates standards and quality within the Estyn framework of key questions. Generally, the quality of self-evaluation is good. A few reports are particularly thorough, critically evaluating pupils' standards of attainment, and outlining carefully planned improvement strategies.
- 197 Self-evaluation is a feature of the work of every manager. Every middle manager (i.e. each curriculum leader and the coordinators of each key stage, the sixth form and the Welsh Baccaulaureate, and the learning support department) writes a self-evaluation report. In writing the reports, they discuss matters thoroughly with the staff of their department. The reports provide the evidence and judgement for the school self-evaluation report. Senior managers regularly update this report following the departmental evaluations of each key question. There is an annual cycle for the review of key question 1 and a two-year cycle for the other questions.
- 198 The quality of the school's self-evaluation report is very good. It identifies good features and shortcomings. In areas where managers judge the work to be grade 1, it describes features that managers consider to be outstanding.
- 199 We agreed with almost all the detailed evaluations in the report, including the grading of five of the key questions. Our grades for key questions 1 and 5 differed from those of the school. While recognising excellent attainment in certain aspects of the work, we judged that standards overall are good, but not outstanding. In key question 5, we judged that the thorough self-evaluation process is contributing to outstandingly good management. The quality of management is good in all aspects of the school's work: in several departments and areas, it is outstanding.

- 200 Evaluation of the Welsh Baccalaureate has the same high quality as other self-evaluation procedures. The report sets clear strategies to maintain and improve course quality. There are clear records of students' attainment. Senior managers visit lessons in the core programme to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- 201 Managers have sought parents' views on many aspects of school provision and have consulted closely with them on the introduction of the new format of reports. Procedures for school and year councils are of good quality. Managers respond well to pupils' comments and suggestions.

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

- 202 The school development plan (SDP) lists ten priorities. All flow from shortcomings or development issues identified in the self-evaluation report. The plan is of good quality. It sets out a timetable for each development, says who is responsible for leading it, identifies the resources and training that will be required and states the cost. It cites the evidence that will be used to measure success and shows where the review will appear – normally in the self-evaluation report of the relevant department. The SDP includes strategies in relation to each of the matters on which we make recommendations in this report, demonstrating that self-evaluation has brought to light all the school's shortcomings and development needs.
- 203 Departmental development plans follow the same pattern as the SDP. These, too, are of good quality and arise naturally from each department's self-evaluation processes.
- 204 Provision for the Welsh Baccalaureate is regularly and systematically reviewed and a development plan is written by the coordinator and sixth-form tutors.
- 205 Since the last inspection, standards in art and design and technology have risen significantly. The high standards in Welsh have risen further. Standards in science are unchanged in key stages 3 and 4 but have fallen in the sixth form. A new head of department has written an appropriate development plan.
- 206 Managers have generally responded effectively to other key issues in the previous inspection report. Pupils' standards in key skills have risen substantially. They remain too low in ICT in key stage 4. Self-evaluation is now at the heart of management and is driving improvements in all areas. Partnerships with industry have been strengthened. All pupils attend a daily act of collective worship and students in the sixth form follow a religious education course. Parents receive appropriate information and have signed home-school agreements. There are effective self-evaluation procedures to monitor the work in subject departments and in key skills.

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

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

- 207 The grade we awarded agrees with the grade that managers awarded in their self-evaluation report.

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

- 208 The staffing of the school is good. There is a good balance between experienced and younger teachers. New and temporary members of staff receive clear information about the school and their responsibilities and very good support. Teachers are well qualified in the subjects they teach. There is a shortage of qualified physics teachers.
- 209 Members of the administrative staff run the office, reception and reprographic areas efficiently. The bursar deals very effectively with all financial matters. The site is well managed and caretakers ensure that the buildings remain in very good condition. The librarian organises and supervises the use of the library well. Classroom assistants receive good training and work effectively. There is a good level of technical support for information technology but insufficient for design and technology and science.
- 210 The quality and quantity of learning resources in the six subjects we inspected are generally good. There are sufficient text books and equipment in most departments. The whole school is networked for Internet access. The ratio of computers to pupils is similar to the average for schools across Wales. However, there are too few computers in the art, religious education and Welsh departments and there is insufficient use of ICT facilities by several departments. About a third of classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards; most of the other rooms have data projection facilities. Computer manufacturing equipment in design and technology is very basic and restricts pupils' learning opportunities. Learning materials that teachers and classroom assistants produce are of good quality. The library is well stocked with a good range of books. It also houses good computer facilities linked to the Internet. Pupils use the provision well during lunchtimes and after school to undertake independent work and research.
- 211 There is a good range of reference books, text books and equipment. Resources for the Welsh Baccalaureate and for all other sixth form subjects are good.
- 212 The accommodation is good. The school manages the large site well. The buildings and grounds are well maintained, clean and free of litter. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. Its good features include:
- the adequate size of almost every teaching room apart from one art room;
  - the provision of departmental teaching rooms conveniently clustered together;
  - stimulating and colourful displays of pupils' work in corridors and classrooms;
  - a professional standard theatre and drama studio;
  - a sports hall, playing fields, and an all-weather pitch;
  - easy access to rooms on all floors for any disabled person; and
  - covered walkways between buildings.
- 213 Accommodation for the sixth form is good. There is a small, well-equipped conference room. Students have a suitably sized common room, study and recreational facilities and several quiet rooms for independent study. They also have access to a modern computer suite and they use the facility well.

214 There is no hall large enough to accommodate all the pupils. Whole-school assemblies, meetings or special events take place in the sports hall, which has very poor acoustics. For several months each year, the sports hall is used for examinations and is not available for sporting activities. This affects standards in physical education.

215 There are few suitable hard-surfaced areas where pupils can play during break times.

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

216 The finance officer, the headteacher and the governing body's finance committee manage the budget effectively. Financial planning is driven by curriculum needs and the priorities set out in development plans. There is effective monitoring of day-to-day expenditure by the headteacher and the finance officer.

217 Managers take every opportunity to gain sponsorship and bid for grants. They allocate money to departments equitably and in support of development plans. The latest audit report recognises the school's sound financial management.

218 The deployment of teachers and other members of staff allows them to use their time and expertise effectively. Managers successfully ensure that teaching groups in key stages 3 and 4 are of an appropriate size, despite maintaining some very small classes in Year 13.

219 There are appropriate job descriptions for teachers that focus sharply on teaching and learning. A good feature is that all teachers have a minimum of 10% curriculum time set aside for planning, preparation and assessment work.

220 The school provides good value for money by:

- helping pupils and students to attain well;
- providing good quality teaching;
- offering a broad and balanced curriculum, including the Welsh Baccalaureate; and
- providing outstanding care and support for all pupils and students.

221 Several health and safety issues were drawn to the attention of the headteacher.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Welsh first language

<b>Key stage 3:</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	Good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Key stage 4:</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	Good with outstanding features
<b>Sixth form:</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	Good with outstanding features

222 In two of the last three years, the percentages of pupils who have gained GCSE grades A\* to C have been much higher than for the whole of Wales and on a par with those in the top quarter of similar schools.

223 In two of the last three years, the percentages of students who have gained A level grades A to C have been higher than for the whole of Wales.

#### Outstanding features

##### Key stage 4

224 In all classes, pupils make excellent progress towards their individually challenging targets.

225 Pupils' listening skills are outstanding. These enable pupils to develop their other linguistic skills and apply them appropriately to their work.

226 Pupils of all abilities make significant progress in all skill areas.

##### Sixth form

227 Students' oral skills and classroom contributions are outstanding. They show a willingness to contribute maturely, confidently and intelligently to the topics they study and demonstrate a keen desire to succeed.

228 Students confidently interpret texts from different periods. They analyse their work in great depth. They enjoy argumentative discussions and can justify their opinions and present evidence.

229 Students use their time constructively to improve their written work and their self-critical linguistic skills are very well developed.

#### Good features

##### Key stage 3

230 Pupils' listening skills are very good. They listen very carefully to class introductions and respond by using their skills appropriately. They respond well to each other in pair and group work and whole class discussions.

231 Pupils' speaking skills are developing well. The majority of pupils can converse and discuss effortlessly in Welsh and are able to present information and express opinions.

- 232 On the whole, reading standards are good. Older and higher-attaining pupils read very well. They understand the texts and appreciate both their superficial and deeper meaning.
- 233 Pupils are good at presenting information and produce interesting creative written work. The highest-attaining pupils are able to use a wide range of literary terms effectively.
- 234 Pupils with special educational needs demonstrate good standards in listening, speaking, reading and writing. They work effectively with the classroom assistants and many of them can undertake tasks independently.
- 235 The oral standards of pupils learning Welsh in the 'immersion' groups in Years 7 and 8 are very good. Their writing skills develop well.

#### **Key stage 4**

- 236 Pupils of all levels of attainment demonstrate confidence and maturity. The great majority of them speak clearly. The highest-attaining pupils speak accurately and thoughtfully. They offer extended oral responses when they debate and justify their opinions.
- 237 Pupils read fluently and confidently and use the correct tone when reading aloud. They show a good understanding when undertaking research and comparing different literary and non-literary texts.
- 238 Pupils produce written work of a high standard in their classwork and coursework. The higher-attaining pupils are able to use a wide range of different styles to produce work of a mature nature and the standard of their extended written work is very good.
- 239 The vast majority of pupils are confident in their written work, which shows a significant improvement in standards from year to year.
- 240 Pupils with special educational needs demonstrate good standards in the four skill areas. They work effectively with the support of classroom assistants and many of them are able to work independently.

#### **Sixth form**

- 241 Students express their opinions very well orally and contribute fully to class and group discussions.
- 242 Students' knowledge of the essentials of grammatical and mutational rules is good. They use these skills well in their research and coursework.
- 243 The higher-attaining students write skilfully with style and ease to produce creative work of a high standard.
- 244 Students read widely outside the prescribed texts to consolidate their understanding of different literary forms. Their ability to cross-reference and make comparisons ranges from the good to the sophisticated.
- 245 Students' ability to cope with complex texts, early prose and poetry is good throughout the sixth form.

## Shortcomings

### Key stages 3 and 4

- 246 Several pupils make many mutation, spelling, punctuation and syntax errors and this hampers their linguistic progress in their written work.
- 247 A few pupils are reluctant to give extended oral responses and settle for brief monosyllabic answers.

### Sixth form

- 248 There are grammatical errors and incorrect verb endings in some of the students' work.

<b>Science</b>
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<b>Key stage 3:</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	Good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Key stage 4:</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	Good features outweigh shortcomings
<b>Sixth form:</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 249 The percentages of pupils who have gained GCSE grades A\*-C over the last two years have been a little higher than the figures for Wrexham UA and similar to those for the whole of Wales.
- 250 In AS and A level examinations in biology, chemistry and physics over the last two years, the mean grade has been lower than the figures for Wrexham UA and those for the whole of Wales in almost all examinations.

## Good features

### Key stage 3

- 251 The majority of pupils across the ability range have a sound knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics.
- 252 Many pupils recall and use concepts well to solve a range of scientific problems.
- 253 Generally, pupils use scientific terms correctly.
- 254 The majority of pupils have a good understanding of some scientific principles in areas such as healthy living, transfer of energy and how human activity affects our environment.
- 255 On the whole, pupils develop good practical skills, work safely, and are beginning to develop good investigational skills in a number of areas of the programme of study.
- 256 The majority of pupils record and analyse measurements appropriately.
- 257 Many pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Supported by classroom assistants, they maintain a neat record of each piece of work.

#### **Key stage 4**

- 258 Able pupils and a minority of pupils of average ability have a good understanding of the more complex concepts they study.
- 259 A small majority of pupils can recall previous work with confidence and apply key principles to solve scientific problems.
- 260 A small majority of pupils is able to use good understanding of the way that scientific developments have contributed to the development of industry, the economy and sustainable development.
- 261 The majority of able and average ability pupils complete investigations to a good standard. They measure accurately and draw appropriate graphs.
- 262 A small majority of pupils are able to analyse their findings in depth, and link their conclusions to the prediction of scientific behaviour being considered.
- 263 Pupils with special educational needs take part eagerly in practical tasks and complete them well.

#### **Sixth form**

- 264 A minority of students make good progress.
- 265 A minority of students have a good understanding of previous work and a ready recall of concepts and principles.
- 266 A minority of students communicate their knowledge and understanding well, and make appropriate use of scientific terms in descriptions and explanations.
- 267 A minority of students use their understanding well when analysing scientific problems in questions and practical applications.

#### **Shortcomings**

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

- 268 Some pupils of average attainment are not sufficiently secure in their recall of previous work, or their understanding of how to use some of the scientific concepts to answer questions or solve problems.

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

- 269 Many pupils whose attainment is average or below average have not mastered some scientific concepts thoroughly enough. They often have difficulties applying their knowledge to solve scientific problems. Their recall, even of recent work, is not secure enough.
- 270 When they carry out investigative work, a majority of average and lower attaining pupils fail to reach a good standard in analysing and evaluating their outcomes.

##### **Sixth form**

- 271 Many students have an unsure understanding of previous work, and have difficulties applying important concepts in scientific problems.

- 272 A number of students do not carry out sufficient independent study to consolidate their understanding of work covered in lessons.

### Design and technology

**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

- 273 Over the last two years the percentages of pupils who have gained GCSE grades A\* to C have been higher than the figures for Wrexham and for the whole of Wales. Last year the percentage of pupils who achieved an A\*/A grade was a significant improvement on 2006 and was in line with the averages for Wales. Almost every pupil achieved above their predicted targets.
- 274 The numbers of students in sixth-form classes are too small to allow useful comparisons of their attainment with that of other students in Wrexham or across Wales.

#### Good features

##### Key stage 3

- 275 All pupils make good progress in developing their design and making skills throughout the key stage. They can describe the processes and principles involved confidently, using a very good level of technical vocabulary.
- 276 Whatever material they are using, almost all pupils show good problem solving skills as they investigate, research and modify their design ideas.
- 277 Most pupils develop good skills in using computer-aided-design (CAD) software in both resistant materials and graphics. In electronics, most of them use software well to build and test simple circuits. A high proportion of pupils also use basic computer-aided-manufacture (CAM) equipment well to make simple products such as key fobs.
- 278 Pupils with special educational needs produce well-reasoned design ideas and effectively develop them into good product outcomes. They make good progress and achieve well.

##### Key stage 4

- 279 In all aspects of the subject, at least two thirds of pupils have a good understanding of a design process and the principles of design work. Pupils work methodically and accurately. Product outcomes show that almost all pupils have good skills in using hand tools. The best work is of a very good standard.
- 280 In graphics, almost all pupils use a good range of sources, including the Internet, to help them generate ideas. In a small number of project files, pupils have used their graphical communication skills imaginatively.

- 281 In textiles, pupils experiment well with a range of creative styles. Pupils' work demonstrates their good knowledge and understanding of fibres, fabrics and technical processes, including computer manufacturing techniques.
- 282 In food technology, pupils' evaluation skills develop well. Pupils carefully consider the appeal of their food to all the senses. In the very best GCSE coursework files, pupils display good presentation and graphical communications skills.
- 283 All pupils with special educational needs take a course in the material area of their choice. Most are entered for GCSE examinations in the subject and nearly all achieve above their target grades.

### **Sixth form**

- 284 All students' design work is developed well. Students effectively use a design process to guide their product development. Their theoretical understanding is generally good. Students have a good command of the principles of designing and are able to discuss their projects with confidence, using a high standard of technical terms.
- 285 Where appropriate, most students use anthropometric data and ergonomic studies well to influence their design ideas. They also thoroughly research, analyse and evaluate commercial products and the work of famous designers, such as Dyson.
- 286 At least half the students use computers well for a variety of purposes that include research, designing and presentation. Most students can use CAD software well in their design work. There is a good balance between freehand work and computer-generated work.
- 287 About two thirds of students' produce practical work of a good standard. They all show a good and developing knowledge and understanding of "Smart" materials which they incorporate in their design ideas.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stage 3**

- 288 Presentation skills are weak in the work of a significant number of pupils. Too many pupils make insufficient use of computers in their research, designing, presentation of ideas or making of products.

#### **Key stage 4**

- 289 A very small number of pupils have weak presentation skills and do not structure their design folders in a sufficiently logical sequence. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to see clearly the progression in the design process and the links to the original design specification.

#### **Sixth form**

- 290 A very small number of students have weak presentation skills.
- 291 Most students have only limited skill in using CAM equipment, because of the small range of hardware and software that is available to them.

## History

<b>Key stage 3:</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	Good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Key stage 4:</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	Good features and no important shortcomings
<b>Sixth form:</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	Good features and no important shortcomings

- 292 Over the last two years, the percentages of pupils who have gained GCSE grades A\* to C have been rather lower than the figures for Wrexham UA and for the whole of Wales.
- 293 Over the last two years, the percentages of students who have gained A level grade A to C have been a little higher than the figures for Wrexham UA and similar to those for the whole of Wales.

### Good features

#### Key stage 3

- 294 Pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding and can recall their previous learning effectively. They make relevant links to new topics and historical problems, using technical words accurately. Pupils answer questions confidently.
- 295 Pupils have good ability to identify and explain causation and are able to trace the consequences of change. They extract information from a wide variety of sources of historical evidence and, by the end of the key stage, can identify the difference between the long-term and short-term causes of change.
- 296 Pupils with special educational needs learn to develop their historical skills successfully. They recall their previous learning well and can extract relevant information from a range of sources of evidence.
- 297 By Year 9, pupils gain confidence in testing sources of evidence for reliability, bias and usefulness. They use the sources to construct well-balanced oral and written arguments. Pupils understand how differing interpretations of historical events can emerge. Many of them develop good approaches to historical enquiry.
- 298 Pupils achieve good and sometimes very good standards in selecting, organising and communicating information. They produce some impressive examples of extended writing. The majority of pupils' books contain well-written notes and essays that enable them to reinforce their knowledge and understanding.

#### Key stage 4

- 299 Pupils successfully build on the historical knowledge and skills acquired in key stage 3. Their extended writing skills develop well and they respond to tasks and challenges in greater depth and with increasing confidence.
- 300 Pupils continue to develop their skills in source evaluation. They have a good recognition of the problems posed by propaganda in the sources. Pupils provide convincing explanations for the motivation and attitudes of people in the past, comparing and contrasting them with their own experiences.

- 301 Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress in consolidating their historical skills. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the key vocabulary linked to the topic being studied.
- 302 By Year 11, pupils show a good enquiring approach to the questions raised by Hitler's growth in power. There are examples of very good source evaluations and of note taking skills by pupils of above average attainment.
- 303 Pupils' essays and coursework show good standards of research, selection and organisation of relevant material. Pupils' extended writing skills develop well and most pupils produce well-organised written work.
- 304 Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the historical and cultural development of Wales.

### **Sixth form**

- 305 Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of the historical debates surrounding the outbreak of the First World War and of the rise of Fascism.
- 306 Several students have very good oral skills. Extended responses to challenging questioning contribute to high quality discussions. Many students read widely and independently.
- 307 Students make good progress in mastering the historiography of the periods they are studying. They are increasingly confident in explaining the differences in interpretation found in the work of famous historians.
- 308 Students ask increasingly interesting and relevant questions of sources of evidence and readily recognise bias and propaganda. They use their developing analytical skills effectively to adopt an evaluative approach to problems. They have a good ability to pick up clues from the attributions of the sources they evaluate.
- 309 Most students produce well-argued, balanced essays and source evaluations. They show good skills in selecting and organising materials in order to respond to the challenging problems they are required to consider.

### **Shortcomings**

#### **Key stage 3**

- 310 A small number of pupils do not regularly complete their written assignments. Some of their written work is not neatly and systematically presented.
- 311 The written and oral work of a minority of pupils does not contain the necessary depth of response or the detail needed to answer the question they are considering.
- 312 A small minority of pupils have difficulty in evaluating the sources of evidence.

#### **Key stage 4**

- 313 The work of a minority of pupils continues to lack adequate depth and detail in order to address fully the problems with which they are presented. A small minority do not always complete their written tasks.

314 A minority of pupils are reluctant to provide adequate oral contributions to class discussions.

### **Sixth form**

315 A few students are reluctant to engage in class discussions and to develop their speaking and analytical skills.

316 A small number of students continue to find source evaluation difficult. As a result, they are unable to construct a balanced and convincing argument. These students do not provide enough examples to justify the points they make in their written work.

<b>Art</b>
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**Key stage 3: Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

317 In 2006, the percentage of pupils who gained GCSE grades A\* to C was substantially lower than the figures for Wrexham UA and Wales.

318 In 2007 the percentage of pupils who gained GCSE grades A\* to C was a little lower than the figures for Wrexham UA and Wales. A particularly high number of pupils gained grades A\* or A.

319 In 2007 the percentage of students who have gained A level grades A to C was similar to the figure for Wrexham UA and much higher than that for the whole of Wales.

### **Good features**

#### **Key stage 3**

320 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the development of a range of skills including drawing, print making on textiles, ceramics and block printing.

321 Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the visual language of art including shape, form, pattern, line and tone, and are able to create paper-based models to represent the fundamental aspect of each.

322 Pupils are confident when applying mark-making techniques to interpret mood and feeling.

#### **Key stage 4**

323 Working on the theme of portraits, pupils confidently explore the use of colour, collage and tone to develop a range of ideas that culminate in a variety of creative compositions.

324 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, demonstrate good evaluation skills and use appropriate visual language to comment upon each other's compositions.

325 Pupils choose and use a range of resources and materials confidently and they employ appropriate techniques to convey ideas in two and three dimensions.

326 Pupils are well motivated and demonstrate a good understanding of perspective and scale when developing observational drawing skills.

#### **Sixth form**

327 Students are confident when making a critical analysis of each other's work.

328 Students make effective use of their sketchbooks to record their investigations and observational drawing work.

329 Students have a clear understanding of how they wish to develop their compositions and how they intend to achieve their desired effect.

330 Students are assured when experimenting with new techniques and employ a range of layering and joining strategies to achieve a variety of creative compositions.

331 A creative and colourful range of compositions is achieved when students explore the potential for working with oil-based paints and collage.

#### **Shortcomings**

##### **Key stages 3 & 4**

332 Although some pupils demonstrate good use of ICT in art, most do not develop skills in using computers to generate or manipulate images.

333 On occasion, pupils do not apply their understanding and making skills to reach their full potential.

334 The production of larger-scale three-dimensional work is limited.

#### **Sixth form**

335 The use of ICT to manipulate images and develop concepts is underdeveloped.

### **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

336 In 2006, 50% and, in 2007, 60% of pupils gained GCSE grades A\* to C. The number of pupils who sat the examination was very small so it is not possible to make a valid comparison with national figures.

337 In 2007, the percentage of pupils who gained grades A\* to C in the GCSE short course was higher than the figures for Wrexham UA and similar to those for the whole of Wales. All pupils in Year 11 sat this examination.

338 There were no entries for the A level examination in 2007, but, in 2006, all candidates gained grades A to C. As the number of students who sat the examination was very small, it is not possible to make a valid comparison with national figures.

### **Good features**

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

339 Pupils acquire specialist terms well, and this enables them to understand and discuss religion.

340 Pupils work well together and readily share ideas. They present their work in a variety of appropriate formats.

#### **Key stage 3**

341 Pupils have a good knowledge of how religious beliefs influence behaviour and actions and can accurately describe and explain the significance of religious practices such as baptism and dietary laws.

342 Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, can describe and have a good understanding of symbols in the religions they have studied. They can explain their significance. Higher-attaining pupils do so in quite sophisticated terms.

343 Pupils put forward well-considered opinions on fundamental questions of life and religion, offering reasons for their points of view and drawing on their own experiences. Some higher-attaining pupils are able to speak at length on such matters.

344 Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs use subject terms well. They present factual information correctly and can express a simple viewpoint.

#### **Key stage 4**

345 Nearly all pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the units of study of both the full and short GCSE courses. These are reflected in the good quality of class discussions and written work.

346 Pupils appreciate how religious beliefs influence behaviour and lifestyle, for example when studying marriage and divorce and symbols of belonging.

347 All pupils can investigate current moral and social issues such as care of the environment or the sanctity of life. They develop an increasing knowledge and understanding of religious responses to these issues.

348 Pupils' ability to evaluate differing standpoints develops well across the key stage. The majority of pupils can express a thoughtful point of view, having considered both sides of a debate. Higher-attaining pupils offer extended, reasoned and often mature responses.

349 Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs contribute well in lessons and demonstrate good basic knowledge of the units they have studied.

350 In the GCSE full course, the majority of pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the key beliefs and practices of Christianity and Judaism and of the diversity within both religions. Coursework is accurate, well presented and organised.

#### **Sixth form**

351 Students are aware of the social and religious background against which Buddhism emerged.

352 Nearly all have a good understanding and can explain and evaluate Buddhist doctrine and concepts and their usefulness as a philosophy for life.

353 Students can select and present relevant factual information and argument in an organised manner, making good use of appropriate terms.

354 Students are developing the ability to analyse and evaluate information from a variety of sources.

355 All students can discuss, both orally and in writing, difficult concepts with increasing confidence and effectiveness.

#### **Shortcomings**

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

356 The written work of a minority of pupils does not show the same level of confidence as their oral contributions.

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

357 A minority of pupils do not always extend their knowledge and understanding through discussion and written work.

#### **Sixth form**

358 A minority of students do not include sufficient critical evaluation of the questions asked in their written work.

## School's response to the inspection

Everyone at Ysgol Morgan Llwyd, pupils and students, staff and governors, welcomes the report on the inspection conducted in January 2008. We all take great pride in the main finding which is that the school

*“makes good provision for its pupils and achieves consistently high standards in almost every aspect of its work. Outstandingly good management has brought about substantial improvements in the six years since the previous inspection. The quality of support and guidance for pupils is outstandingly good. There are outstandingly good procedures to promote social inclusion.”*

We also appreciate that the inspectors noted that, at the heart of the school *“lies a clear vision of excellence in Welsh medium education”* and *“a strong conviction that education should be inclusive.”* These are the main reasons for Ysgol Morgan Llwyd's existence and everyone here will work tirelessly to maintain and develop these ideals.

The three recommendations made by the inspectors have already been included within the School Development Plan and we look forward to putting that plan into action to ensure the school's further development, thereby turning a good school into an even better one.

Above all else, however, is the finding that *“pupils enjoy their learning and are proud of their school. They take pleasure in their lessons and in the wide range of extracurricular activities. They have the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to move on to the next stage of education.”*

Our thanks go to the inspection team, under the leadership of the registered inspector, for their professional, careful work and for their thoroughness in looking in detail at every aspect of the life and work of the school. They came to know the school well; they came to acknowledge that the school knows itself very well and they had the opportunity to confirm that we are on the correct pathway that will enable us to build on the significant progress that has been made since the inspection of 2002.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Morgan Llwyd
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Address of school	Ffordd Cefn, Wrexham
Postcode	LL13 9NG
Telephone number	01978 315050

Headteacher	Mr Huw Foster Evans
Date of appointment	1 September 2000
Chair of governors	Dr J Philip Davies
Reporting inspector	Dr Ian Garth Higginbotham
Dates of inspection	21 – 24 January 2008

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	145	123	133	144	123	58	41	767

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	52	4	54.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	14.0 : 1
Average teaching group size (key stages 3 and 4)	21.0
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	74.8

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Spring 2007	95.9	93.9	92.6	94.4	94.6	93.9	95.6	94.3
Summer 2007	95.0	92.3	90.2	94.2	94.5	97.0	95.7	88.1
Autumn 2007	95.7	94.2	91.3	90.5	93.6	95.7	95.8	93.8

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	10.3
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	32

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2007													
Total number of pupils in Y9: 145													
Percentage of pupils at each level													
		D	N	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	5+
English	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	15.2	50.3	28.3	2.1	0.0	80.7
	Wales	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.4	1.4	6.8	21.4	35.7	24.1	8.5	0.2	68.6
Welsh	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	20.7	37.2	31	6.9	0.0	75.1
	Wales	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.4	6.3	20.0	37.0	26.2	8.8	0.5	72.6
Mathematics	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	5.5	17.9	31	30.3	13.8	0.0	75.1
	Wales	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.3	1.1	7.8	19.7	27.6	27.1	14.4	0.8	69.9
Science	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	11.7	48.3	24.2	11.7	0.0	84.2
	Wales	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.8	6.5	20.9	34.7	25.7	10.0	0.1	70.5

- D Pupils who have been disapplied under sections 364 - 367 of the Education Act 1996  
 N Pupils not awarded a level for reasons other than disapplication  
 W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment	
In the school	72
In Wales	57

## 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 2007	134
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	50

<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2007:</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Wrexham</b>	<b>Wales</b>
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	96	90	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	61	52	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	93	88	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	40	36	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100	100	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	75	75	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	99	96	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	1	4	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	1	4	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	0		
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0		

<b>For students aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of students aged 17 in January 2007	57
Number of students entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2007	43
Number of students entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2007	21

	<b>School</b>	<b>Wrexham</b>	<b>Wales</b>
Percentage of students entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	60	55	67
Percentage of students entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	95	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	16	17	20
Number of students who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0		
Number of students who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0		

## Appendix 4

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

Thirteen inspectors (including the school's nominee) spent the equivalent of 45 days in the school.

We observed 123 lessons.

We attended three assembly and ten registration periods.

We scrutinised the written work of pupils in the six subjects we inspected and the work in other subjects of a small cross-section of pupils from each year group. We also inspected pupils' work during our inspection of lessons.

We held formal discussions with groups of pupils from each year group. We also spoke to pupils informally.

The registered inspector and a colleague met the governing body before the inspection week and reported the main findings to them after the inspection.

Before the inspection, the registered inspector met members of the staff.

Twenty-three parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector before the inspection. We received 68 replies to our questionnaire. A few parents also wrote to the registered inspector.

Before, during and after the inspection, we scrutinised a wide range of documents about the school, including the school's self-evaluation report and data on pupils' key-stage test and examination results.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Ian Garth Higginbotham	Registered Inspector <b>Key Questions 1a, 1b, 2a, 5a &amp; 6</b>
Dylan Jones	Lay Inspector <b>Key Question 5b</b> Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3 & 4
Anne Newman	Core Team <b>Key Question 2b</b> History
Glyn Davies	Core Team <b>Key Question 3</b> Science
Gwyn Griffiths	Core Team <b>Key Questions 1c &amp; 4</b>
Keith Hopkins	Core Team <b>Key Question 7</b> Contribution to Key Question 1 Design and Technology
Darren Davies	Contribution to Key Questions 1 & 3 Welsh
Nerys Cossey	Religious Education
Keith Davies	Lessons across the curriculum
Susan Williams	Lessons across the curriculum
Graham Edwards	Art
Anna Williams	Contribution to science
Huw Robertson	Nominee

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### Acknowledgement:

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the headteacher, governors, staff and pupils of Ysgol Morgan Llwyd for their cooperation with us throughout the inspection.