

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Ysgol Rhosnesni
Rhosnesni Lane
Wrexham
LL13 9ET**

School Number: 6654048

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by

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Ysgol Rhosnesni 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 Rhosnesni took place between 22/01/07 and 26/01/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Terence Andrew O'Marah undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

"There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **full** inspection."

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Rhosnesni High School is an English-medium, 11-16 years, community comprehensive school, situated in Wrexham. The school serves seven feeder primary schools on the east side of the county. There are excellent partnerships with this family of schools which provide very strong support for pupil transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3.
- 2 In 2003, Wrexham town centre schools were reorganised. In this reorganisation, the former St David's, Bryn Offa and Groves high schools were closed and two new schools, Rhosnesni and Clywedog were opened. The school has benefited from some new buildings and refurbishment and provides a good quality learning environment. As this is a new school, there is no previous inspection report.
- 3 In January 2007 there were 1150 pupils on roll. The school has continued to attract pupils through and since reorganisation, whilst demographics indicate fewer pupils in the primary schools throughout Wrexham. The head has been in post since the school opened in September 2003.
- 4 Good links exist with the local college which supports additional curriculum opportunities and the provision of a broad, needs led curriculum. This is further strengthened by the school's adult education programme – the largest school based one in North Wales. There is also a close working relationship with the County Borough Leisure Department on the provision of sporting opportunities.
- 5 Pupils are drawn from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds, although there are some distinct areas of significant disadvantage within the school's normal catchment area. Currently 21% of pupils are registered as eligible for free school meals. The full range of ability is represented in the school population. The school has resourced provision for pupils with hearing impairment, speech and language impairment, moderate learning difficulties and English as an additional language. Currently the school has 49 pupils who have statements of special educational needs, and 98 pupils who receive additional support through School Action or School Action Plus. Four pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- 6 Whilst the school is proud of its Welsh heritage, English is the predominant language spoken at home. There are 19 pupils currently receiving support teaching in English as an additional language.
- 7 In addition to the formal curriculum, the school affords its pupils a varied enrichment programme of cultural and sporting opportunities, including residential trips to Andorra, France, Germany and within Wales.
- 8 During the short time period since opening, the school has worked towards a number of nationally recognised awards. Currently this includes the Basic Skills Quality Mark and part 2 of Healthy Schools Award. Also a first assessment for the Careers Wales

Quality Award for Careers Education and Guidance and Work-Related Education has been successful.

The school's priorities and targets

- 9 The school has a clear vision and ethos which underpins its commitment of each pupil achieving their potential. The School Development Plan translates the vision into practice. The school has a clear priority to continue improving attainment through:
- improved teaching;
 - improved learning; and
 - improved leadership and management.

Summary

- 10 The school is now in its fourth year. It was not until its third year that it settled onto its permanent site, free of building work. The merging of staff and pupils from different schools and the forging of an ethos unique to Rhosnesni High School has taken time, but has been undertaken successfully. There are many examples of good, and occasionally very good work in the school. There are also aspects of the school that need to continue to improve. Most of these have been identified by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Table of grades awarded

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

- 11 The grades awarded by the inspection team agree with the grades the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report.

Standards

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Subject Area	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
English	3	2
Welsh	3	2
Mathematics	2	3
Science	2	3
Information technology	2	2
Design and technology	2	3
Modern foreign languages	2	2
History	3	3
Geography	2	1
Art	2	3
Music	2	2
Physical education	2	3
Religious education	3	3
Drama	3	2
Media Studies	-	2
Sociology	-	2
Law	-	2
Psychology	-	2
Vocational		
Textiles	-	2
Food and nutrition	-	2
Catering	-	2
Child development	-	2
Health and Social Care	-	2

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

The standards that pupils achieved in the 205 lessons observed were:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	3%	54%	41%	2%	0%
Key stage 4	3%	58%	35%	4%	0%
Key stages 3 and 4	3%	56%	38%	3%	0%

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

- 12 The school almost meets the current target set by the Welsh Assembly Government for standards achieved by pupils in lessons by 2007 for the proportion of lessons graded 1 to 3 (school 97%; target 98%). It falls short of the target for lessons graded 1 and 2 (school 59%; target 65%)
- 13 In key stage 3, results achieved in the National Curriculum assessments have improved over the past three years. Those in science match national averages; English, mathematics and the core subject indicator (CSI) are just below. The school compares to the top half of similar schools.

- 14 In key stage 4, results in the overall GCSE results have also improved. However, they are still significantly below the national and Unitary Authority (UA) averages. Whilst the school has improved its value added performance since 2004, for most indicators it compares with the bottom half of similar schools.
- 15 There are variations in the performance of different subjects at the GCSE, with a small number of subjects consistently gaining very good results.
- 16 Overall, girls attain better results than boys, sometimes significantly so.
- 17 In key stage 3 the school met most of the targets for test results it had agreed with the UA. It was less successful in key stage 4 where it did not reach its target for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades at the GCSE.
- 18 Most pupils with special educational needs achieve success appropriate to their ability. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
- 19 Across the school, pupils' reading skills are generally good. In many subjects most also listen with interest and respect to their teachers. Some middle and lower ability pupils lack confidence when putting forward a point of view to the whole class.
- 20 Able pupils achieve good standards in writing, particularly where there is good support given. There is, however, insufficient use of extended writing, and a small but significant number of pupils leave work unfinished.
- 21 There is evidence of good standards in pupils' numeracy skills, although a minority of pupils have difficulty recalling facts and lack confidence in applying number skills to everyday situations.
- 22 Most pupils have a good range of computing skills.
- 23 The majority of pupils have a positive attitude towards their work; many work diligently in lessons. There is a minority that is less well motivated.
- 24 In the public areas of the school, pupils are routinely polite and pleasant. In lessons, most pupils behave well, showing respect for teachers and each other. However, there is a minority in some classes in both key stages that are disrespectful and disrupt teaching. This minority impede learning for themselves and others.
- 25 The school has a 'No Blame' policy to the problem of bullying and effective measures deal with any reports of any incidents.
- 26 There are good relationships between most pupils and their teachers, and between pupils. This has a positive effect on teaching and learning. Pupils show a good awareness of equal opportunities issues and have positive attitudes to all aspects of diversity.
- 27 Overall, attendance at the school is above both local and national averages. In key stage 3 it is good, but in key stage 4 it is less good because of the absences of some pupils. In Y10 and Y11, pupils who miss school have their learning interrupted and fail to complete examination coursework. When they are in school, teachers' time is taken helping them to catch up on missed work.

- 28 The majority of pupils co-operate sensibly in pairs and groups and class tasks. There is a minority who are reluctant to think for themselves and who are not sufficiently interested in their work to take appropriate action to improve their own learning.
- 29 In many subjects, pupils are well aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and understand what they need to do to improve. Some subject areas need to improve this aspect of pupils' learning.
- 30 In general, pupils engage well with the curriculum and with extra-curricular activities. They receive a broad work-related education and show, overall, good preparation for participation in the workplace and community.

The quality of education and training

- 31 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 205 lessons observed during the inspection:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	4%	55%	38%	3%	0%
Key stage 4	8%	56%	33%	3%	0%
School	6%	55%	36%	3%	0%

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

- 32 In her Annual Report, the Chief Inspector notes that, for schools inspected in 2005/2006, 17% of lessons were awarded a grade 1, and 52% were awarded a grade 2.
- 33 In many lessons the work is accurately matched to the abilities of the pupils in the class. In some it is not. In these lessons able pupils are sometimes not challenged to produce their best work, and in others less able pupils lose concentration when the work is too difficult.
- 34 Most teachers establish positive working relationships with pupils. These have a positive effect on both teaching and learning.
- 35 In most lessons teachers share the learning objectives with the class, which helps pupils in their understanding. In some cases these objectives are too vague to help pupils judge whether they have achieved them.
- 36 Overall, lessons are well prepared and resources are used appropriately. Occasionally the preparation, presentation and delivery of lessons are outstanding.
- 37 Teachers are well qualified for the subjects they teach, and the school only has to use a small number of non-specialist teachers in order to cover the curriculum requirements.
- 38 Many teachers set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement, which has a direct impact on the standards they achieve. In some lessons these expectations are not always as high as they should be.

- 39 In the best lessons teachers use very effective questioning techniques, ensure that lessons are taught at a challenging pace, and use resources for learning imaginatively.
- 40 Teachers actively and successfully support pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language.
- 41 The school has recently set in place a new policy for the assessment of pupils' work. This has the potential to improve the impact assessment has on learning, but as yet it is not being applied consistently across all subject areas.
- 42 There are a few subject areas where pupils are fully involved in self-assessment. This is an aspect requiring development in other subject areas.
- 43 Parents receive helpful reports on their childrens' progress.
- 44 The school's curriculum meets all legal requirements. Learning in key stage 3 is enhanced by all pupils studying drama and information technology. In key stage 4, pupils can chose from a comprehensive list of GCSE and vocational courses.
- 45 Many pupils' learning is enhanced by the varied extra-curricular programme offered by the school. The range and quality of musical activities is an outstanding feature.
- 46 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has many good features and no important shortcomings.
- 47 The partnerships with parents, the local community, partner primary schools and other education providers, including initial teacher training colleges have good and some outstanding features.
- 48 The school provides its pupils with good work related education and careers guidance.
- 49 Pupils' bilingual skills develop well in Y7 and Y8. Progress is less evident in Y9 where some classes are large. The school has a policy for the development of bilingualism. Welsh is heard in many classrooms and during tutorial periods. This good practice is not yet consistent. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is embedded in schemes of work in most subjects.
- 50 The school promotes sustainable development and global citizenship effectively.
- 51 The school plans and manages care arrangements effectively. It is careful in ensuring the well being of pupils and has a clearly understood child protection policy.
- 52 Progress managers and tutor teams provide high quality personal support to pupils. In key stage 3, there is a strong emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem; in key stage 4 the priority is on tailoring the curriculum to meet individual pupil's needs.
- 53 There is an effective programme for the teaching of personal, social and health education that meets national guidelines.

54 The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with a range of learning needs are fully integrated into the life of the school.

55 The school has an extensive programme for pupils with learning difficulties providing a good range of appropriate courses. A wide range of support agencies are involved in helping these pupils.

Leadership and management

56 The school opened in 2004, developing many policies from the pre-existing schools. It is now reviewing these policies, starting with the recently revised Aims and Objectives for the school.

57 The school works hard to consult with pupils (through the School Council), parents, the staff and governors when major decisions are being considered.

58 The leadership team, well led by the head, has set clear and high expectations for the school. Whilst these are met in full in some areas of the school, in a few further development is needed.

59 There are effective procedures in place, including Performance Management, to identify the professional development needs of the staff. Newly qualified teachers are well supported.

60 There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of middle managers – whilst none are ineffective, not all meet successfully the required expectations or the standard of best practice in the school.

61 Target setting is improving. The new systems in place this year should make the processes, at pupil, subject and school level more accurate and challenging.

62 The governors have a clear understanding of their role in school management. They fulfil all statutory requirements. They operate as critical friends and successfully provide a sense of direction for the school.

63 The system by which the school evaluates its own performance is in transition. The school itself recognised that improvement was needed and recently introduced a new structure. This is designed to address the inconsistencies and lack of rigour in some aspects of the previous system.

64 The school self-evaluation report is an accurate summary of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. Whilst there are examples of very good practice, there is still a lack of consistency in the quality of self-evaluation across the subject areas.

65 The majority of subject areas carry out a very thorough analysis of test and examination results each year.

66 There is a direct link between the school's self-evaluation process and the school development plan. This plan is detailed and appropriate to the current needs of the school. Subject development plans vary in their quality, and in the detail of how improvements will be made.

- 67 There are sufficient, suitably qualified teachers at the school to teach the required curriculum. There are 25 learning support assistants who give help to pupils with a variety of learning needs. Teachers and assistants are deployed well for the benefit of pupils.
- 68 The accommodation is of good quality and is sufficient for the present size of the school. There are a number of classrooms that over-heat when subject to direct sunlight. Plans are agreed to fit blinds in these rooms.
- 69 The quality and quantity of resources for learning is adequate. The school has a wide range of text-books, good materials produced in the school and good overall provision of IT hardware and software. There is a low number of inter-active whiteboards, and of IT hardware in some subject areas.
- 70 Displays in subject areas are attractive and stimulating. They are absent in some corridors.
- 71 The financial management of the school is good. The school achieves value for money.

Recommendations

- 72 In order to improve further, the school should continue to:
- R1 raise achievement in key stage 3 and particularly in key stage 4.
 - R2 improve pupils' standards in the key skills;
 - R3 improve attendance in key stage 4;
 - R4 ensure that all pupils are aware of the progress they are making, and what they need to do in order to improve; and
 - R5 develop the rigour and consistency in self-evaluation.
- 73 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 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 74 The grade awarded by the inspection team agrees with the grade awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report.
- 75 The following table shows the standards achieved in the subjects of the curriculum.

Subject Area	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
English	3	2
Welsh	3	2
Mathematics	2	3
Science	2	3
Information technology	2	2
Design and technology	2	3
Modern foreign languages	2	2
History	3	3
Geography	2	1
Art	2	3
Music	2	2
Physical education	2	3
Religious education	3	3
Drama	3	2
Media Studies	-	2
Sociology	-	2
Law	-	2
Psychology	-	2
Vocational		
Textiles	-	2
Food and nutrition	-	2
Catering	-	2
Child development	-	2
Health and Social Care	-	2

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

- 76 The standards that pupils achieved, at the different stages, were:

205 lessons observed	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	3%	54%	41%	2%	0%
Key stage 4	3%	58%	35%	4%	0%
Key stages 3 and 4	3%	56%	38%	3%	0%

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

- 77 The school almost meets the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government for standards achieved by pupils in lessons by 2007, for the proportion of lessons graded 1 to 3 (school 97%; target 98%). It falls short of the target for lessons graded 1 and 2 (school 59%; target 65%). Standards in key stage 4 are slightly higher than in key stage 3. Standards seen in Y9 lessons were significantly lower than in other year groups.
- 78 For Wales, as reported by the Chief Inspector in her Annual Report on schools inspected in 2005/2006, the average grades for standards were as follows. Lessons graded 1 and 2 in key stage 3 were 63% and in key stage 4 were 59%. The corresponding figures in the school are 57% and 61%.

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 79 On entry to the school, the overall ability of the Y7 intake, as measured by standardised tests, has a higher proportion of lower ability pupils than the national average for all pupils.
- 80 In key stage 3, the good features of achievement are:
- over the past 3 years results in the core National Curriculum (NC) results have improved so that in 2006 the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 or above:
 - in science is at the Unitary Authority (UA) and national average; and
 - in mathematics, English and the core subject indicator (CSI) it is just below UA and national averages.
 - value added analysis shows similar improvement so that in 2006, for comparable schools:
 - for science and the CSI the school is in the top quarter; and
 - for English and mathematics, the school is in the top half.
- 81 The shortcomings are that, in 2006;
- girls did significantly better than boys in English ; and
 - in mathematics boys did significantly better than girls.
- 82 The good features at key stage 4 are that:
- the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE has improved gradually over three years;
 - the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades at GCSE has risen to equal the national average;
 - all three core subjects show small year-on-year improvements, with English showing most gains; and
 - in the past three years, the following subjects show a consistent trend for improvement as shown by GCSE results:
 - English; drama; French; geography; home economics(food); media studies; music and physical education.
- 83 Analysis of value added data shows that:
- there has been improvement over the past three years; and
 - for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades at A*-G, and for the average points score gained by pupils, the school is in the top half of comparable schools.

- 84 The shortcomings are:
- the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades in GCSE remains well below the national and UA average (school 36%, Wales 53%, UA 50 %);
 - in all three core subjects, and for the CSI, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades is significantly below the equivalent national averages ;
 - there are some wide variations between subjects in the proportion of pupils gaining higher grades;
 - value added analysis indicates that, for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more higher grades, and for the CSI, the school is in the bottom half of comparable schools; and
 - girls achieve significantly better than boys at gaining 5 or more higher grades, at gaining the CSI, and in almost all subjects. The overall difference in performance is greater than for both Wales and the UA.
- 85 The school exceeded targets agreed with the UA for key stage 3 NC assessments in the CSI, mathematics and science, and achieved the target for English. In key stage 4, the school was less successful and fell short of achieving its target for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE. The school did, however, slightly exceed its targets for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to G grades and the CSI. The overall success of individual subjects in reaching the targets they had agreed with the school was varied.
- 86 Across the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve success appropriate to their abilities. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
- 87 The good features of pupils' skills in communication outweigh shortcomings. In many subjects and assemblies, pupils listen with respect and interest to teachers, visitors, video and to each other. Able pupils in particular give extended responses, pose questions and use subject terminology confidently. In many lessons, there is effective collaboration in pairs and groups. In both key stages, pupils of middle to lower abilities lack confidence in putting forward a point of view to the whole class and a small number of pupils do not always listen attentively.
- 88 Reading skills are good. Most pupils read fluently and accurately. They read a range of texts and understanding in line with abilities. Many use the library and the Internet for research purposes. They effectively skim and scan to identify and retrieve information. In key stage 3, pupils read for pleasure as part of their programme of study in English. Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress.
- 89 The good features of pupils' writing outweigh shortcomings. Able pupils usually achieve good standards especially in English, drama, geography, health and social care and modern foreign languages. In English and geography, there is good support for writing. In subjects such as art, music and science, the range of writing expected is limited. In many subjects, a small but significant number of pupils leave work unfinished. They do not always check their writing so that errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar persist.
- 90 The numerical skills of pupils in both key stages are such that good features outweigh shortcomings. There is evidence of some good standards. A small minority of pupils

have difficulty recalling facts and lack confidence in their numerical abilities. This is especially apparent when having to apply and use number in everyday situations.

- 91 The school has a policy for numeracy in subjects across the curriculum. An audit of subjects has been carried out but it lacks the detail required for an effectively co-ordinated approach. Within the UA, the co-ordinator is working conscientiously with the adviser, other secondary schools and partner primary schools on bridging units. There is also contact with parents with a numeracy sheet entitled 'Numeracy Counts' sent out once per term, which helps improve standards.
- 92 Most pupils have a good range of computing expertise. They have very good skills in researching topics using the Internet and other sources. However, there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop their skills by using them in meaningful work in too many subjects across the curriculum.
- 93 Pupils' bilingual skills develop well in Y7 and Y8. Progress is less evident in Y9 where classes are very large. Results in the Welsh GCSE full and short courses are good.

Pupils' progress in learning

- 94 Overall, across the school, pupils in key stage 3 make better progress than those in key stage 4. Pupils in Y9 are making the least progress. Learning for a significant minority of pupils is hindered by their absence from school. This is particularly so in key stage 4, where a number of pupils fail to complete coursework for their GCSE examinations.
- 95 In the lessons where pupils make best progress they:
- have good recall of previous work;
 - can apply previous learning to new situations;
 - give extended written and spoken answers; and
 - sustain their concentration through the lesson.
- 96 In many subject areas, pupils are well aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and understand what they have to do in order to improve. Where this is not so:
- pupils may understand their current level of achievement but not their individual target;
 - only the more able students are aware of their progress and targets; and
 - pupils do not know what their individual targets are.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills

- 97 Pupils' attitude toward their learning varies across the curriculum. In some areas they have a very positive attitude, and only occasionally do the less able lose focus on their work. The majority, in many lessons is well motivated, and they want to do well. Many work diligently in their lessons. There is a minority who are less well motivated, and some lessons suffer from some disruption.
- 98 In the public areas of the school pupils are routinely polite, pleasant and courteous. In lessons most pupils behave well, showing respect for teachers and each other.

However, there is a minority in some classes of both key stages who are disrespectful and disrupt teaching. This minority impede learning for themselves and others.

- 99 The great majority of pupils establish good relationships with their class-mates and their teachers. This has a positive impact on most lessons. Pupils show a good awareness of equal opportunities issues and have positive attitudes to all aspects of diversity.
- 100 Over the last year whole school attendance was 91.6%, commendably above both local and national averages. Attendance in key stage 3 is good, with many classes routinely showing 93% attendance or better. In key stage 4, attendance is much more variable and many pupils show intermittent absence that is a concern. Their learning is interrupted, coursework is not completed and they underachieve. When they are in class, teacher's efforts to help them catch up detract from the teaching of other pupils.
- 101 Pupils generally arrive at school on time but punctuality to lessons is an issue in many classes. Whilst most pupils move around the site briskly, the start of lessons is often interrupted or delayed by pupils arriving a few minutes late.
- 102 The majority of pupils are able to:
- co-operate sensibly and productively in pair, group and class tasks. They show appropriate respect, consideration and support for each other;
 - use their creativity, originality and enterprise to generate ideas to investigate and solve open-ended problems and to research activities. Good examples are evident in the work in art, child development, some design and technology areas, health and social care and music; and
 - review their own progress and actively take the necessary steps to improve their own learning.
- 103 However, a minority of pupils are:
- lacking in confidence, reluctant to think for themselves and rely too much on their teachers for ideas and solutions; and
 - passive in class and not sufficiently interested in their work to take appropriate action to improve their own learning.
- 104 In general, pupils engage well with the curriculum and with extra-curricular activities. They receive a broad work-related education and show, overall, good preparation for participation in further education, the workplace and the community.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

106 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 205 lessons observed during the inspection:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	4%	55%	38%	3%	0%
Key stage 4	8%	56%	33%	3%	0%
School	6%	55%	36%	3%	0%

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

107 In her Annual Report, the Chief Inspector notes that, for schools inspected in 2005/2006, 17% of lessons were awarded a grade 1, and 52% were awarded a grade 2. The school is below the figure for grade 1 lessons and the combined total for grades 1 and 2. The 12 lessons that were awarded a grade 1 (Good with outstanding features), were shared across five subjects.

108 Nearly all teachers establish positive relationships with pupils. Many teachers – though not all – also set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and standards of work. There are some subjects where working relationships are so strong that pupils accept critical feedback on their work positively because they understand it as being helpful and constructive.

109 In the majority of lessons seen, teachers shared the learning objectives of the lesson with the class. Whilst in most cases this had a positive impact on the lesson, there were examples where the objectives were too vague to help pupils judge whether they had achieved them. Most lessons were well planned, by teachers who are well qualified for the subjects they teach. This planning frequently identified the most appropriate resources to meet the aims of the lesson.

110 In a number of lessons, work is not accurately matched to the abilities of pupils so that:

- the level of challenge to students to achieve high standards is not consistent;
- the more able are not challenged fully to extend their thinking and writing skills;
- some low ability pupils lose interest as they fail to complete work; and
- in these lessons many pupils do not make sufficient progress.

- 111 There are, however, many subject areas where tasks are carefully matched to pupils' abilities, and where planning for this is detailed and thorough. A number of subject areas have good, and detailed documentation to guide teachers in the preparation of work for all pupils.
- 112 In those lessons where the best teaching was seen there was evidence of:
- the use of praise being effective and helpful in motivation;
 - a good pace to the lesson kept pupils focused on their work;
 - teachers setting high expectations for behaviour and achievement;
 - pupils receiving constructive and regular feedback on their progress;
 - the good use of questioning by the teacher which helped pupils extend their understanding; and
 - the good use of interactive whiteboards which improved pupils' understanding and knowledge.
- 113 Where lessons had some shortcomings:
- the level of work was not suitable for all pupils in the class, so some become inattentive;
 - the pace of the lesson was too slow, or slowed towards the end, which encouraged some pupils to lose motivation leading to some disruptive behaviour;
 - not all teachers applied school policies on teaching and behaviour consistently or with sufficient rigour;
 - some ineffective questioning techniques by teachers did little to extend pupils' understanding; and
 - the feedback given to pupils, either written or verbal, was not informative enough to help them understand how to improve.
- 114 A small number of lessons were seen which had outstanding features. In these lessons pupils were engaged in the work by stimulating introductions and high quality resources and tasks.
- 115 In a number of lessons, learning support assistants (LSAs) provide effective support for pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. They are not available to provide support in all lessons where their help would be valuable.
- 116 Approaches to teaching promote effectively the school policies on equal opportunities, diversity and disability equality.
- 117 Teachers have good subject knowledge and are familiar with recent developments in their areas of responsibility.
- 118 Teachers actively support those pupils who have English as an additional language, and they ensure that these pupils are well integrated into lessons. Many teachers also make valuable contributions to the development of bilingualism by the incidental use of Welsh during their lessons.

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

- 119 Procedures for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements have good features which outweigh shortcomings. The leadership team have prepared an appropriate whole school policy to inform departmental practice, based on

Assessment for Learning. This has been introduced in key stage 3, but implementation is not consistent. There are appropriate plans to develop these practices in key stage 4. Standardised tests and teachers' assessments at the end of key stage 2 are used to identify pupils with additional learning needs, and to place pupils in appropriate sets. Tests are also used to predict pupils' grades and to track their progress.

- 120 Achievements of pupils in key stage 3 are summarised by subject teachers each term and each year for pupils in key stage 4. The results are used to update the school's database with current working levels and grades. Members of the leadership team use their link role to support departments and to monitor practice in the tracking of pupils' progress.
- 121 An interim report is prepared each term for parents of pupils in key stage 3 and annually for pupils in key stage 4. In addition, a comprehensive annual report of good quality is prepared for each pupil. The reporting of achievements represents good practice.
- 122 Progress managers and tutors use the school's database to track pupils' progress across the curriculum. They scrutinise annual reports, summarise pupils' efforts and mentor individuals. Tutors discuss progress in all subjects with their pupils. They support pupils in setting their own targets for improvement which are recorded in planners. This aspect of the school's assessment procedures is yet to be embedded in practice and is not fully effective.
- 123 All learning managers analyse results of external examinations with members of the leadership team. Targets for improvement are agreed, and many are realistic and challenging. In addition, learning managers moderate work within departments so that assessments are fair and accurate. They also ensure that the requirements of examination boards, the National Curriculum and the Code of Practice are met.
- 124 Progress in implementing the new policy is good in the English and geography departments. However, there is insufficient monitoring of day to day practice so that there are variations in the quality of implementation within and between departments. For example, not all teachers and departments:
- explain the objectives of learning and assessment criteria to pupils at the start of lessons;
 - agree accurate and challenging targets;
 - write comments on pupils' day-to-day work which are related to objectives and which identify how far pupils have met the criteria and how they might improve;
 - give good verbal feedback which is related to the success criteria;
 - involve pupils in self-assessment so that they fully understand criteria, their own strengths and areas where they need to improve; and
 - use what they learn from assessment to help them plan more effective lessons and if necessary, modify schemes of work.
- 125 Members of the leadership team are aware of good practice within departments and where improvements need to be made, but inconsistency in practice is evident. They formed a useful assessment development group to discuss issues of assessment, recording and reporting. All departments are represented and good practice is shared. Training to support the development of good practice is provided.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

127 The curriculum:

- meets pupils' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Act 1996;
- provides appropriate breadth, balance and progression of study;
- gives equality of opportunity and access for all pupils to a wide range of courses;
- provides personal, social and health education (PSHE), work-related education, careers education and guidance and a daily act of collective worship in accordance with national guidelines; and
- meets legal requirements.

128 There are many good features in the curricular provision:

- all pupils in key stage 3 follow courses in drama and information technology;
- almost all pupils in key stage 4 gain accreditation in information and communications technology (ICT);
- pupils in key stage 4 can choose from a comprehensive list of vocational courses; and
- the Cymorth alternative curriculum project helps pupils at risk of exclusion, adapt to mainstream education, and encourage them to remain on a learning pathway.

129 The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Schemes of work identify many opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy, numeracy, ICT and wider key skills. However the standard of key skills in lessons is variable, and co-ordinators have not evaluated the effectiveness of the provision in sufficient depth.

130 Many pupils' learning and social experiences are enriched by the varied extra-curricular programme offered by the school. The quality and range of musical activities involving bands, choirs, orchestra and ensembles is an outstanding feature.

There are also opportunities to:

- represent the school in a wide range of sporting activities;
- visit both local and national theatres and galleries;
- attend clubs and revision classes; and
- travel overseas for educational and social purposes.

131 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has many good features and no important shortcomings.

132 Pupils' spiritual development is enriched through the outstanding experience of collective worship in whole-year assemblies. The occasions are dignified, pupils and teachers contribute with readings and musical items, and there are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they see and hear. Also in tutor groups the 'thought for the day' is appropriately delivered and helps prepare pupils for the day's

work. The spiritual dimension is planned in some subjects, but not across the whole curriculum.

- 133 The good features in pupils' moral, social and cultural development include the following characteristics:
- being caring and helpful to enable pupils from a range of backgrounds settle in their community;
 - taking responsibilities and working together;
 - on most occasions, showing respect for each other, teachers and the environment;
 - being polite and ready to help visitors to the school;
 - showing concern for others by raising money for charities and good causes; and
 - having an awareness of other cultures and that of their own.
- 134 However, there is a shortcoming where a small minority of pupils, through their behaviour, show a lack of respect to their peers and teachers.
- 135 The partnerships with parents, the local community, partner primary schools and other education providers, including initial teacher training colleges have good and some outstanding features. The links with further education providers, through projects like the Winter College at Yale, offer outstanding opportunities for less academic pupils, and motivate a high proportion to continue in education. The range of supportive links with the 'Family' of primary schools is outstanding. The level of engagement with learning that has been generated is reflected in the very high attendance rates in key stage 3.

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

- 136 Work-related education has good features and no important shortcomings in both key stages. The partnership with Careers Wales supports the school effectively and provides:
- well-structured formal careers education and guidance from Y7 to Y11;
 - appropriate and effective work-experience placements for all key stage 4 pupils;
 - useful opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills through enterprise activities in both key stages and the Dynamo Project in Y9; and
 - supportive interaction with employers through mentoring and provision of mock interviews.
- 137 The links that underpin work-related education and careers guidance also provide the school with a good understanding of the needs of employers. This knowledge is used effectively to inform teaching and modify the range of learning experiences on offer.
- 138 Pupils' bilingual skills develop well in Y7 and Y8. Progress is less evident in Y9 where some classes are large. The school has a policy for the development of bilingualism. The Welsh department, with the support of the leadership team, has been successful in raising the profile of the Welsh language in the school. Welsh is heard in many classrooms and during tutorial periods. There are effective bilingual displays in several areas of the school. This good practice is not yet consistent. While some subjects make appropriate use of the language in their work, opportunities are

missed in other subjects. Extra-curricular activities such as residential courses further develop pupils' bilingual competence.

- 139 Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is embedded in schemes of work in most subjects. An audit has not been carried out to identify how all aspects of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig are addressed effectively across the curriculum.
- 140 There are good features in promoting the awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include:
- a detailed policy for sustainable development and global citizenship;
 - an audit which identifies extensive coverage in geography, personal, social and health education, religious education and science;
 - pupils' involvement in environmental and recycling projects;
 - the formation of an eco-committee with leadership team and governor involvement; and
 - links with a school in Lesotho.
- 141 Overall, the school has planned a curriculum that reflects many of the national priorities. Pupils' range of experiences generally lays a secure foundation for lifelong learning. However, the opportunities for independent learning are underdeveloped.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

The quality of care, support and guidance for learners

- 143 The school plans and manages care arrangements effectively.
- 144 There are good partnerships between the school, parents, carers and employers. There are regular parents' evenings for each year group each year, as well as newsletters to keep parents in touch with school activities.
- 145 An outstanding feature of the school is its induction programme for pupils in transition from key stage 2 to key stage 3, including Y5 pupils in some activities.
- 146 The personal and social and health education syllabus follows the national guidelines closely. The programme is well planned to take into account contemporary issues. It is varied and includes class lessons, visiting speakers and half-day sessions for a year group.
- 147 High quality personal support is provided by progress managers and tutor teams. An interesting innovation is the creation of foundation and link classes providing nurture and support to pupils. These are staffed by members of the leadership team with help from learning support assistants. In key stage 3, the strong emphasis is on raising the self esteem of emotionally vulnerable pupils to aid integration into mainstream. In key stage 4, the emphasis is on tailoring the core curriculum to the needs of pupils who may otherwise be in danger of exclusion.

- 148 The school has a comprehensive careers education programme in both key stages. There is a wide range of opportunities available. The school has worked hard to meet the needs of pupils, and a large majority gain accreditation. There is a planned programme of activities for disaffected pupils, including Venture activities, run by the youth service.
- 149 Good features in the quality of care, support and guidance include:
- lessons that are matched to pupils' abilities are well embedded in some subject areas;
 - the 23 pupils in Y10 who are well trained by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children as Bully Buddies to work with pupils in Y7 and Y8 who feel vulnerable and isolated;
 - the school's work to ensure the well being of its pupils;
 - clear child protection procedures to ensure swift reporting of any such issues to the appropriate senior member of staff; and
 - that as part of the RAISE programme, learning coaches identify and support pupils in Y10 and Y11 who are struggling to keep up with examination work.
- 150 Shortcomings include:
- some pupils are late for lessons;
 - work set does not always match the abilities of pupils; and
 - a small number of health and safety issues were reported to the school during the inspection.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

- 151 The quality of provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. There is close co-operation between the progress managers, the inclusion leader, the special needs co-ordinator and outside agencies.
- 152 The school has an effective system in place for identifying pupils who have a variety of learning needs. Pupils with a range of special needs are fully integrated into the life of the school.
- 153 Account is taken of the Code of Practice to identify pupils with learning difficulties and provide for their needs. Annual Reviews are thorough and involve all interested parties. Pupils are tested using standardised tests. As a result of these, as well as information gathered from visits to primary schools, pupils with a statement of special educational needs and those on school action and school action plus are given individual, small group and in-class support. Individual education plans (IEPs) are updated regularly and subject teachers include targets in their lesson plans.
- 154 The local education authority provides specialist peripatetic teachers. They follow a programme tailored to individual need during time when pupils are disappplied from a national curriculum subject, for pupils with specific learning difficulties and English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- 155 The school is a unitary authority resourced centre for pupils with hearing impairment and also for pupils with speech and language difficulties. These resources are well and efficiently staffed with specialist teachers and learning support assistants. The pupils are assessed regularly and work is planned to support individual needs. They

are very well supported in mainstream classes. The school community ensures that pupils with disabilities are full and equal members of the school.

156 The school has an extensive programme for pupils with learning difficulties. Good features include;

- progress groups in key stage 3 ensure that pupils have lessons in the core curriculum and support lessons tailored to their needs;
- learning support assistants (LSAs) are provided for small group and in-class support;
- basic skills groups and literacy groups run by LSAs provide well resourced reading, spelling and handwriting lessons;
- the UA initiative, 'Catch Up', is run for pupils who need a boost;
- a learning mentor identifies pupils who need extra care and support;
- a student assistance programme and trained staff provide counselling for pupils suffering severe emotional difficulties such as bereavement;
- gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to study law and psychology in key stage 4, and there is a 'Challenge Club' for them;
- there is close co-operation between the school and support services;
- there is good support from the special needs section of Careers Wales; and
- the effective use of learning support assistants in subject lessons was noted in several areas.

157 Some shortcomings include:

- the school does not have a specific networked progressive literacy package available;
- there are insufficient LSAs to provide support in all lessons where their help would be beneficial;
- the behaviour of a small number of pupils impedes the progress of others; and
- the poor attendance of some pupils in key stage 4 is a cause for concern, as it affects coursework and examination preparation.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

158 The good features in the quality of provision for equal opportunities include;

- the hard work that has been done to ensure that immigrants, particularly from Poland, feel welcome and settle in well; and
- the school's 'No Blame' policy for the problem of bullying, and its effective measures in dealing with any reports of bullying.

159 The school has good provision for pupils who may have a physical disability. The school has wheelchair access to all areas, and lifts to enable pupils to reach upper floors. There are toilets and a shower available. Pupils with disabilities are well supported in class and are included in all aspects of school life.

160 Shortcomings include:

- there is still a large majority of pupils choosing options according to stereotypical gender roles; and
- the wide differential in gender performance in some examinations.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

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

162 The school opened in 2004, developing many policies and aims from the pre-existing schools. Now the school is settled in its own buildings, all policies are being reviewed. The school vision, aims and values were revised, agreed and published in Autumn 2006. They are appropriate and clear, and are widely displayed around the school. These values continue the process of developing the particular identity of the school as being different from the previous schools. There is some variation across subject areas in the effectiveness with which these aims impact on standards and teaching.

163 As the school developed this identity, consultation took place with pupils (particularly through the School Council), parents, the staff, and the governors. The developing values are therefore shared with all participants.

164 Whilst there are appropriate policies in place, some do not, as yet, fully reflect and support the new values and direction of the school, and do not therefore contribute as well as they should to school improvement.

165 The leadership team, well led by the head, sets clear and high expectations which are not as yet fully reflected in all aspects of school provision. There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of middle managers – and whilst none are ineffective, not all successfully meet the required high expectations or the standard of the best practice in the school. There are a small number of subject areas where the direction given to teachers through values and targets is, as yet, a developing aspect of management.

166 The school puts considerable effort into the professional development of teachers, and many are offered opportunities to extend their professional experiences.

167 The leadership team take full account of national and local priorities, and integrate these into their planning.

168 The school is very effective in its policies and practice to ensure the full integration of a significant number of pupils whose first language is not English. The overall promotion of equal opportunities allows all pupils equality of access to all school courses and activities, but their selection of courses often reflects traditional, gender based choices. Examination results show some significant differences in performance, mostly in favour of the girls.

- 169 The school actively supports national priorities such as developing:
- an understanding of sustainability;
 - transition from primary schools;
 - bilingualism;
 - work related education; and
 - 14 to 19 pathways and curriculum development.
- 170 There are very effective links with feeder primary schools, local colleges, initiatives run by the UA, local industry and Careers Wales. The school works with a very wide and appropriate range of support agencies in order to support the development of pupils.
- 171 From this academic year subject areas are required to set and agree targets for individual pupils in relation to their examination achievements. Targets for subjects are reviewed annually following public examinations, and the overall targets for the school are agreed by the governors and the UA. As yet not all targets reflect realistic yet challenging expectations.
- 172 The practice of target setting across the subject areas varies widely. In some areas targets are clearly identified in pupils' work, and pupils can explain what they need to do to achieve their targets; in other areas target setting at individual student level is in need of further development. In some of these subjects, targets are known by pupils, but they do not understand them or what they have to do to achieve them. At present, there is more good work in this aspect in key stage 4 than in key stage 3.
- 173 Increasingly sophisticated analysis of data being introduced this year has the potential to improve the tracking of individual pupil's progress and consequently the impact of agreed targets on standards.
- 174 Members of the leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and shortcomings. The system for the school's evaluation of its own progress is currently in transition. A new structure was introduced in November 2006 which has been agreed in order to address identified shortcomings in the previous system. All teachers and areas of the school are subject to the new system. Currently there is a variation in the quality of self-evaluation at subject level, and for some this has been identified as an area for improvement. In the best practice seen, subject leaders and members of the leadership team observe teachers in the classroom, pupils' work is surveyed regularly, and the whole performance of the subject area is monitored rigorously. Nearly all subject areas conduct a detailed analysis of examination data.
- 175 The school has effective procedures in place, including Performance Management, for the identification of the professional development needs of all its staff. The training is well monitored and there is evidence that much of it has had a positive impact on the school.

How well governors meet their responsibilities

- 176 The governors have a clear understanding of their role in school management. They have received training on a number of educational issues. There are regular meetings of a range of committees, each with an appropriate responsibility. Findings and recommendations are efficiently submitted to the termly meetings of the whole board, which also receives comprehensive reports from the head. Governors are thus well informed and enabled to make appropriate and effective decisions.
- 177 Governors operate well as critical friends and successfully provide a sense of direction for the school. They accept responsibility for implementing regulatory and legal requirements, and keep parents fully informed of progress and achievements in school.
- 178 Governors are also self critical and recognise a need for additional training in some areas, and greater consistency and rigour in some of the links with subject departments.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

- 180 The leadership team and most learning managers have an accurate understanding of the main strengths and shortcomings of the areas for which they are responsible. At whole school level this information is used effectively to prepare an appropriate development plan focused on improving learning and teaching. Whilst there are examples of very good practice, there is a lack of consistency in the effectiveness in the use of this information across the subject areas.
- 181 Learning managers have previously completed an annual subject review for the leadership team and the governors. Many of these are of good quality and accurately reflect the strengths and shortcomings of the subject area. Some of these reviews are less rigorous and there are inconsistencies across the school. The current model, introduced in autumn 2006, has a schedule of required activities timetabled across the school year, which will culminate in a complete Quality Development Review. These documents will inform the whole school self-evaluation, and link directly into subject and school development plans.
- 182 The majority of subject areas carry out a thorough and accurate analysis of examination and test data, and use this information to inform their development planning. For a few subject areas the analysis of data is a major strength. For a small number of areas this work is underdeveloped.

- 183 As of this year, the head will observe all teachers in the classroom, and each Learning Manager will also observe all their subject teachers. Lesson observation until this year was less well structured. In some subject areas, self review is a major strength that contributes to the improvement in standards; in others, it is an area for improvement.
- 184 The whole development of the new school involved wide consultation with the community and parents' groups. The management organisation of the school involves all staff in participation in faculty, department and school reviews, planning and decision making. Pupils are regularly consulted through their School Council. In a small number of subject areas, the views of pupils, shared with their teachers, are beginning to have a positive impact on standards.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 185 The self-evaluation process leads directly into the planning process. The School Development Plan is a detailed document that presents appropriate priorities and identifies the actions needed, success criteria, monitoring procedures, resources and responsibilities. Subject area development plans are inconsistent in their effectiveness. Many are well prepared, well informed and identify clear priorities. However, there are examples of plans that are neither sufficiently detailed nor comprehensive. Some set targets and priorities, but do not explain in sufficient detail how these will be achieved.
- 186 Target setting is only now becoming sufficiently detailed to have significant impact on improving standards. There are areas where it is highly effective, but this good practice has not been shared widely across the school. New procedures in place have the potential to add the required extra quality to the process.
- 187 Priorities for development are supported and resourced by the school through the allocation of funds to subject areas, supported by a bidding system which provides particular support for initiatives and new developments.
- 188 This being a new school there is no previous Inspection report and therefore it is not possible to report on progress.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

- 190 The staffing of the school has good features and no important shortcomings. Overall, the number of staff is sufficient for the school to run effectively and efficiently. The experience profile indicates that 30% of the teaching staff have five years experience

or less, including three newly qualified teachers. The good features can be summarised as:

- nearly all teachers are appropriately qualified in the subjects they teach;
- administrative staff ensure that the office, reception and reprographics areas run efficiently;
- the site manager and his assistant contribute to the maintenance and daily routines of the school;
- technician support in design and technology, information technology and science is good;
- the 25 learning support assistants provide good help and encouragement to the number of pupils with learning and behavioural problems, mainly in the core subjects; they work effectively with teachers; and
- the librarian runs and supervises the use of the library efficiently.

191 There are shortcomings in staffing. There is some teaching by non-specialists in English, mathematics, religious education and Welsh that limits the learning experiences of a very small number of pupils. The availability of support assistants in non-core subjects is limited.

192 The quality and quantity of learning resources are adequate. Good features outweigh shortcomings. The good features include:

- a wide range of text books and equipment;
- a good range of subject materials produced in-house;
- the overall provision of ICT equipment throughout the school that caters effectively for the teaching of discrete ICT lessons;
- the use of ICT to enhance the teaching of English and mathematics;
- the use of resources out of school to enrich the curriculum; these include visits to museums, art galleries, theatres, field trips and abroad; and
- a range of visiting speakers enhancing pupils learning experiences.

193 The library is well used by subjects across the curriculum. It has a wide range of reference books and over five thousand books that can be borrowed. The induction programme is effective and encourages pupils' reading. Pupils use the bank of fourteen computers for research on the Internet and for independent work and learning.

194 The shortcomings in resources include:

- the low number of interactive white boards available to enhance the classroom teaching;
- the design and technology area, where resources for control and computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) are very basic, limiting pupils' experiences; and
- the lack of ICT equipment in modern foreign languages, music, religious education, and science restricts pupils' opportunities and development.

195 The accommodation has good features and no important shortcomings and is sufficient for the number of pupils currently on roll. It meets the pastoral and academic needs of the curriculum and has the following good features:

- the school has a fresh, clean appearance;
- most rooms are large and cater well for all class sizes;

- all subject rooms are suited;
- the good quality of the music rooms and the setting for peripatetic teaching;
- in most classrooms and corridors close to subject areas, displays of pupils' work, key words in both English and Welsh, subject features and club activity information are bright and colourful. They provide an effective and sometimes stimulating learning environment; and
- the school grounds, buildings and, in particular, the pupils' toilets are kept clean, well maintained and litter free.

196 The refurbishment did not include the small number of rooms in mathematics and science that still have old steel windows. Nearly fifty rooms have large areas of windows which, with excessive sunlight and high temperatures, occasionally affect pupils' learning adversely. These conditions limit the effective use of videos, projectors and other visual teaching aids. There are plans in place for the provision of window blinds.

197 Other shortcomings include:

- lengths of corridors lacking displays providing a dull, non-stimulating area environments; and
- in the drama studio, excessive noise from a fan heater reduces audibility and affects both teaching and learning.

How effectively and efficiently resources are managed to provide value for money

198 Overall, the deployment, management and development of staff have good features and no important shortcomings. Included in the good features are:

- the deployment of nearly all staff makes good and effective use of their time, expertise and experience;
- the training and professional development of staff is very well coordinated and is in line with the school development plan, performance management, and the needs of departments and individuals;
- courses attended are comprehensively evaluated and used to the benefit of the school;
- the programmes and support for newly qualified teachers and for initial teacher training students are detailed and thorough; and
- the professional development of support staff including five as numeracy coaches.

199 The school has nearly completed the implementation of its strategy for the workload agreement. It has made provision in the time-table for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA).

200 The head has consulted all interested bodies and, with the leadership team, is implementing its staggered implementation of restructuring for the new teaching and learning responsibilities.

201 The financial management of the school is very good. The head, the business manager, and the governing body's committee for finance manage the available budget effectively.

202 The following good features are evident:

- the finance committee meets regularly, and it receives detailed up to date reports from the head;
- astute financial decisions are well focused on the curriculum needs and the educational priorities identified in the school development plan;
- the school pursues all grants and sponsorship that are available;
- the distribution of capitation to subject areas is effective and there are opportunities for subject areas to bid for extra funds, to introduce initiatives; and
- the very minor recommendations of the last auditors report have been addressed.

203 The business manager is responsible for the competent day to day running of the school's finances through the UA. She provides the head-teacher and heads of department with immediate breakdowns and current balances. School spending is very effectively monitored.

204 Overall, the school uses its finances and resources adequately and achieves value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

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

Good features

Key stage 3

- 205 Many pupils listen attentively. They ask questions to clarify understanding and recall previous learning. Most contribute to class discussions with enthusiasm. They collaborate well in pair and group work for a range of purposes, including the planning of writing and the analysis of texts.
- 206 All pupils, including those with additional learning needs, read a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, drama and poetry including texts which reflect the culture of Wales. They also read for pleasure. Most demonstrate a good understanding of challenging texts. Reading is often accurate and fluent. The least able are well supported in developing reading skills and good progress is made. Most pupils have a good knowledge of plot and characters in class texts. Able pupils in particular interpret what is read and understand inference and devices used by writers.
- 207 Pupils write in a range of forms and for a variety of purposes. All understand the conventions of different genre, especially those of narratives and promotional leaflets. Portfolios of best written work demonstrate that pupils can improve writing by planning and drafting.
- 208 Skills in presentation are usually good although the work of girls is often better than that of boys. Able pupils structure their work well and produce particularly effective narrative writing. The majority of pupils with additional learning needs make good progress and they are supported by effective use of frameworks and models.

Key Stage 4

- 209 Most pupils listen respectfully to the teacher and to each other and they usually sustain concentration. The most able are confident in putting forward ideas and opinions. All collaborate productively in pairs and small groups.
- 210 Pupils of all abilities read a wide range of challenging texts. When called upon, most read aloud with accuracy and fluency. They have a clear understanding of plots, characters and themes. Most demonstrate good skills of interpretation and there is appropriate reference to texts to support opinion. The more able pupils understand inference and the use of literary devices.
- 211 Standards of final drafts of writing are usually good in relation to abilities. Pupils extend their writing when required and adapt language to purpose and audience. Coursework includes appropriate use of references, quotations and technical terms. Able pupils produce written work which is often well organised and structured. Arguments are clear and well developed and narratives effectively convey mood and

atmosphere when needed. Most pupils with additional learning needs make good progress.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

- 212 A small number of pupils of middle to lower abilities lack concentration and do not always listen carefully to the teacher and fellow pupils.
- 213 A small but significant number of pupils:-
- do not always extend their writing and leave work unfinished; and
 - do not draft effectively so that errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar persist.

Key Stage 4

- 214 The completion and quality of coursework is affected by the irregular attendance of a small number of pupils.
- 215 A small but significant number of pupils of middle to lower abilities lack confidence in putting forward a point of view. They are often passive and are reliant on the teacher.

Welsh second language

Key Stage 3: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 4: Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

- 216 On entry into Y7 pupils' familiarity with the language is variable. Pupils who had daily Welsh lessons in primary school can provide information about themselves and familiar topics confidently.
- 217 Pupils understand the learning outcomes identified at the beginning of each lesson. They discuss the key skills that they will develop through a range of activities to link language skills.
- 218 Pupils make progress in speaking in Y7 and Y8. They create dialogue well in pairs and groups. High achievers recollect previous language well to use in new situations. Pupils' willingness to respond to their teachers' constant use of Welsh outside formal exercises has a significant impact on raising standards in oral work.
- 219 By the end of Y8 pupils hold a conversation on a range of topics within their experience using a variety of sentence patterns.
- 220 Pupils extract information accurately from a range of reading materials to complete related tasks.
- 221 Pupils write a variety of short factual pieces. They vary their sentence patterns effectively and show a sound grasp of grammar and tenses.

Key Stage 4

- 222 In the GCSE full course, pupils make good progress in all language skills.
- 223 Pair and group conversations are fluent, accurate and lively.
- 224 The highest achievers read poetry expressively.
- 225 Pupils produce extended written documents for a range of purposes. The most competent linguists respond well to challenging topics. They put their sound knowledge of grammar and syntax to good use. When expressing opinions, they structure their arguments effectively and justify their viewpoints.
- 226 In the GCSE short course, the highest achievers structure their written work well to produce interesting, accurate extended documents.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

- 227 Progress in speaking is less evident in Y9. Top sets are very large. More reticent speakers are reluctant to contribute in front of such a large gathering of peers.
- 228 Pupils are hesitant when reading aloud. They do not break down words to pronounce them properly. Pupils do little independent reading to further improve their standard.
- 229 Pupils in some classes are less committed to improving their standards. They do not volunteer answers and their written responses are brief.
- 230 Pupils with special educational needs do not make good progress over the key stage when there is no in-class support, and the resources used are not tailored to their needs.
- 231 Pupils do not make good use of ICT to redraft work using functions that aid accuracy and understanding of language.
- 232 Written work in books is often incomplete.

Key Stage 4

- 233 Absence hinders the progress of some pupils. Due to infrequent use of the language they are unable to sustain dialogue and their writing is confined to responses of a few words.

Mathematics

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

Good features

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

- 234 Most more-able pupils answer questions orally with clarity, understanding and accuracy.

235 Nearly all pupils are developing a sound knowledge of number, vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and the relationship between them.

236 They have spatial awareness and understand the concepts of area and volume using appropriate units.

237 Most pupils with special educational needs have effective support and make good progress.

Key Stage 3

238 The standards of pupils' mental arithmetic have improved due to the lesson starter activities.

239 Pupils in Y7 are developing a sound understanding of the basic rules of algebra and the techniques of investigations.

240 Y8 pupils understand the basic concepts of symmetry and can apply this knowledge to simple diagrams.

241 Most Y9 pupils are beginning to understand the concept of the trigonometry of a right angled triangle.

Key Stage 4

242 The more able pupils in Y10 can solve linear equations and quadratic equations using the formula method.

243 In Y10, pupils can apply Pythagoras' Theorem to situations in everyday life.

244 Lower ability pupils in Y11 understand the concepts of basic algebra.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

245 A minority of lower ability pupils do not always complete and present their work in a neat, logical way. They do not always correct work that is wrong.

246 A small minority of pupils lack confidence in their mathematical abilities and are too dependent on teacher support.

247 A small number of lower ability pupils have difficulty recalling facts and knowledge from previous lessons so that they can apply them effectively.

Key Stage 4

248 The achievement of a minority of upper and middle ability pupils in the GCSE examinations was below their potential and this indicates underachievement.

249 Investigational techniques of pupils in Y11 in 2006 were underdeveloped.

250 In some classes across the ability ranges, the more able pupils are not always challenged in lessons and this has an adverse effect on achievement.

251 A minority of the pupils have difficulties in learning to use a calculator.

Science

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

Key stage 4: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

- 252 A majority of pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of many topics covered in the programme of study.
- 253 Many able and a majority of average ability pupils recall some key concepts well. They often apply them with good understanding to a range of problems and applications of science.
- 254 Pupils have a sound appreciation of the importance of healthy living and of how human activity and processes affect our environment.
- 255 Pupils generally use scientific terms accurately in class tasks and in explanations of outcomes from practical activities.
- 256 Pupils are generally developing good practical skills in some tasks set. They work safely and record results with reasonable precision.
- 257 A minority of pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Key Stage 4

- 258 Able and a minority of average ability pupils have a sound understanding of the more complex principles that they study.
- 259 Able pupils can use their understanding of some scientific concepts to solve problems in familiar and unfamiliar situations.
- 260 A small majority of pupils develop a good understanding of the way that scientific developments have contributed to the development of industry, influenced the economy, and addressed healthy living issues.
- 261 Able and a minority of average ability pupils carry out investigations competently, work systematically and write good quality reports.
- 262 Able pupils use their knowledge and understanding well to guide their planning and carry out preliminary work to check they are working along the right lines.
- 263 A small majority of pupils analyse their results using appropriate graphs or numerical methods. A few pupils evaluate their work in depth, critically commenting on their procedures and suggesting ways to improve their investigation.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

- 264 A minority of average ability and around half the lower ability pupils are less secure in using some scientific terms. They also have difficulty applying some concepts in familiar and unfamiliar situations.
- 265 Pupils' ICT skills are insufficiently developed especially in practical work and research activities.

Key Stage 4

- 266 A small majority of average and lower ability pupils do not have a secure recall and understanding of certain topics within the programme of study.
- 267 They frequently have difficulty applying some concepts to questions set.
- 268 Many average and lower ability pupils do not access the higher marks in planning, analysing and evaluating in their investigational work.
- 269 For a small minority of pupils, progress is hindered by irregular attendance.

Information technology

- Key Stage 3 Grade 2** Good features and no important shortcomings
Key Stage 4: Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

- 270 Most pupils have good practical skills and manage a computer well. They demonstrate good confidence and competencies in handling icons, menus, functions and in the loading, saving, printing, and retrieving of their work.
- 271 The majority of the most able pupils have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks. They are able to explain and discuss their work using an appropriate level of technical vocabulary.
- 272 From early in Y7 most pupils can readily find, select and use information obtained from the Internet. The most able are very discerning in their selection of source information to use in their tasks.
- 273 Most pupils can communicate information very effectively using word processing, desktop publishing and presentation software. In the best work they show a good awareness of the audiences for whom they present information.

Key Stage 4

- 274 Most pupils have very well established practical computing skills and readily and skilfully access the network, load and use a range of computer software with little need for help from their teachers.

- 275 In the best work, pupils can communicate information with confidence, combining text and images in their communications projects very effectively. They have a very good awareness of the audience that they prepare information for.
- 276 Most pupils use search tools well to research topics on the Internet. They use their findings to good effect in their work.
- 277 A significant proportion of pupils with special educational learning needs show good motivation levels and achieve to their potential.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

- 278 A small minority of pupils, mostly of lower ability, lack confidence. They are over reliant on their teachers. They have insufficient depth of knowledge and understanding of some of the more complex formatting facilities of the software used.

Key Stage 4

- 279 Independent learning skills are generally weak in the work of lower ability pupils.

Design and technology

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

Good features

Key Stage 3

- 280 Most pupils are developing a good understanding of the design process and the most able can apply the principles of designing competently in their project work across all material areas.
- 281 All pupils plan well for the making stage of their work. In the best work in food, textiles and resistant materials practical skills are good. In textiles most pupils successfully use basic computer aided design and manufacture equipment well as seen in their hat projects.
- 282 In food technology the most able can carry out effective sensory evaluation of produce and can describe their views well using good technical descriptors.
- 283 Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve to their capabilities.

Key Stage 4

- 284 In engineering,
- the majority of the most able pupils make effective use of a design process to guide their project work;
 - the best work projects are well researched and the design solution accurately reflects the design specification. In this respect most pupils are effectively

developing their understanding of the link between design specification and evaluation;

- the graphical communication and presentation skills of the most able pupils are generally good; and
- in the best GCSE project work there are good levels of creativity, innovation, flair and imagination.

285 In resistant materials and systems and control:

- most pupils understand the design process and can design products to meet the specifications required;
- the most able pupils' knowledge and understanding of materials, processes, and procedures is developing effectively;
- in systems and control the most able pupils have a good understanding of mechanisms and can design and make products to meet the required specifications;
- most pupils' making skills are at least satisfactory and good in the work of the most able pupils; and
- all pupils plan well for the making stage of their work. In the best work practical skills are good.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

286 Spatial awareness and general graphical communication skills are weak in the work of a significant minority of pupils.

287 Too many pupils make insufficient use of IT in resistant materials to research, design and make products.

Key Stage 4

288 In engineering:

- lower ability pupils' knowledge, understanding, and implementation of the principles and processes of engineering drawing is a weak element of their work;
- too many pupils do not present their ideas effectively in a structured and well-researched manner; and
- a significant proportion of pupils in Y11 engineering have very weak graphical communication skills.

289 In resistant materials and systems and control:

- pupils' developmental drawing skills are the weaker elements of their designing;
- pupils do not make sufficient use of the computer to research and present their projects; and
- pupils' knowledge and understanding of computer-aided design, and manufacturing is at a very basic level. Pupils do not readily use the computer to design their product or to manufacture elements of their work.

Modern foreign languages

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

- 290 In general, pupils listen and understand spoken French well, at a level appropriate to their ability.
- 291 They read well, using dictionaries competently to check or research vocabulary.
- 292 Well over half the pupils, particularly the youngest, are developing confidence in speaking.
- 293 The ablest pupils adapt language well to make their responses personal.
- 294 Pupils with special educational needs usually talk simply but effectively in French. They follow the trend of their classmates in making good attempts to copy a proper accent and intonation.
- 295 Around three quarters of pupils write multiple sentences well from Y8, moving into paragraphs by Y9.
- 296 Their written work shows that in Y9 pupils of all abilities regularly use past or future tenses as well as the present.

Key Stage 4

- 297 Most pupils listen and read well enough to grasp the main relevant points.
- 298 The ablest pupils are quick to use for themselves new words and expressions almost as soon as they meet them.
- 299 Nearly all pupils try to speak as much French as they can, even asking in French for permission to revert to English when particular needs arise.
- 300 About three quarters of pupils write clearly and express their intentions well.
- 301 They use a good range of vocabulary and appropriate language structures.
- 302 Boys are increasingly doing as well as girls, this is especially apparent in Y10 where they amount to almost half the take-up.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

- 303 Up to a quarter of pupils need prompts in order to keep up a conversation. Their accents and intonation are not well developed.
- 304 In written work, they make mistakes in gender and spelling.

Key Stage 4

- 305 Too many pupils lack the confidence to take the lead and show initiative in conversations.
- 306 For about a quarter of pupils, the quality of written work is compromised by errors in grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

History

Key Stage 3: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 4: Grade 3 Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

- 307 Pupils develop appropriate investigative techniques, in line with their abilities, when considering historical problems. They ask relevant questions of primary and secondary sources of evidence, and can extract relevant information from a variety of sources and texts.
- 308 Above average and most average ability pupils achieve sound standards in comparing and contrasting differing interpretations of historical developments. As a result, they provide convincing reasons to explain the process of change over time.
- 309 The majority of pupils are successful in testing the sources of evidence for reliability, bias and usefulness. They make sound evaluations of the sources and use them appropriately when challenged to produce balanced oral and written arguments.

Key Stage 3

- 310 Pupils have secure levels of background knowledge and understanding and successfully recall their previous learning. Most pupils have a sound understanding of chronology and the majority are able to apply their knowledge and understanding to sources of evidence when addressing historical problems. They use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and in the correct context.
- 311 By Y9, a large percentage of pupils can distinguish between long-term and short-term causes of change.
- 312 Most pupils acquire confidence in selecting, organising and communicating information in written and oral tasks.
- 313 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress relative to their ability.

Key Stage 4

- 314 Most pupils successfully build upon the historical and key skills acquired in key stage 3, exhibiting a growing maturity in the depth of their response to problem solving. These pupils provide convincing explanations for the motivation and attitudes of people in the past by asking more searching questions of the sources of evidence.

- 315 Generally, written work is well organised and well presented. The majority of pupils show sound progression of their extended writing skills by the end of key stage 4. Many of these pupils take the initiative in developing their research and independent learning skills, and this improves the quality of their extended writing, for instance in their coursework.
- 316 Pupils' knowledge of the history and culture of Wales is well developed and enhanced by the use of the historical background of the locality.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

- 317 A minority of pupils produce indifferently presented written work; their standards of spelling, punctuation and use of appropriate language are underdeveloped.
- 318 A lack of confidence in presenting an extended oral argument in response to questioning hinders the progress of a minority of pupils.
- 319 There are significant variations in the standards of written work of a minority of pupils. These pupils do not regularly complete their written tasks in order to record their learning and to develop their extended writing skills.
- 320 A minority of pupils lack the confidence to select, use and compare sources of evidence to enable them to arrive at convincing interpretations of historical problems.

Key Stage 4

- 321 Pupils are particularly hindered by their inability to complete coursework exercises.

Geography

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features.

Good features

Key Stage 3

- 322 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress relative to their ability.
- 323 Pupils are confident in using maps, textbooks and a range of stimulating resources to develop their knowledge of people and places.
- 324 Y7 pupils make effective use of map work skills to understand their local area and plan a route way for a school walk.

- 325 Throughout the key stage pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of Wales. Y8 pupils successfully explore the changing features of Welsh culture and industry.
- 326 Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the issues of sustainability and global citizenship.
- 327 They have a good awareness and understanding of the relationship between people and environments in different parts of the world.
- 328 Y9 pupils use indicators of development to understand the social and economic differences between more and less economically developed countries.

Good and Outstanding Features

Key Stage 4

- 329 Pupils field work and coursework assignments are of outstanding quality and make a very significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of urban processes and patterns in Wrexham.
- 330 Pupils' coursework assignments show the pupils outstanding command of the geographical investigation techniques of research, analysis and presentation.
- 331 Pupils have an outstanding range of appropriate and relevant terminology. They use their geographical vocabulary with accuracy and precision in their study of storms and depressions.
- 332 Pupils use a good range of thinking skills to explore successfully issues of the impact of a weather event, Hurricane Katrina, on the people of New Orleans.
- 333 Pupils in Y10 showed a clear understanding of the impact of different forms of tourism on people and environments around the world.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

- 334 A small number of pupils show a poor attitude to learning which impacts negatively on their standards and achievement.
- 335 A small number of pupils in Y8 show a limited knowledge and understanding of Wales and their local area.

Key Stage 4

- 336 There are no important shortcomings.

Art

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

- 337 Pupils make rapid progress in acquiring essential practical skills in both two- and three-dimensional craft activities. Most arrive with below average ability and experiences. By the end of key stage 3, the majority are achieving to the nationally expected standards.
- 338 Most pupils demonstrate that they know how to look and record accurately when drawing from nature. They use line, tone, shape, pattern and texture confidently. Colour is understood well and often used with verve in print and textile work. They are acquiring and using an appropriate art vocabulary.
- 339 Pupils demonstrate a growing appreciation of the visual culture of Wales by working with local artists. They also show an awareness and appreciation of the art of other cultures.
- 340 Pupils are becoming more knowledgeable about the work of a range of artists from different periods and are able to use different styles and new media creatively in their own work.

Key Stage 4

- 341 The number of pupils opting for art who have not achieved the expected level by the end of key stage 3 is well above the average. This limits the overall pupil achievement at GCSE. Standards in examinations are, however, rising, with boys achieving particularly well.
- 342 The majority of pupils are successfully building on their previous practical skills. They are developing as independent artists. They know how to work in new media, producing vibrant, large-scale, portrait paintings. They show problem-solving skill in devising new card-based sculpture and joy in their discovery of natural forms when using microscopes to observe closely the colour of a butterfly.
- 343 They show imagination in the use of their sketchbooks when researching and developing their ideas. They are able to exploit their bilingual knowledge in letterform graphic designs when researching local heritage trail topics. Pupils following the vocational option develop good craft-work practices. From first-hand study at the zoo, they are able to develop their own original two-dimensional designs into delightful well-crafted ceramic sculptural animal forms.
- 344 Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

- 345 Pupils have inadequate knowledge of how to use computers as a creative tool.

Key Stage 4

- 346 Pupils do not understand clearly how to improve their work and how to meet their individual targets for improvement. This limits the standards they are capable of achieving.
- 347 When working with ceramics or textiles, pupils are unable to demonstrate that they are familiar with the work of craft-workers and designers.
- 348 Although they work with artists and visit galleries, pupils do not develop personal opinion or judgement about art. When writing about art or artists, they restrict their comments to facts and do not adequately support their practical and sketchbook work with useful annotation.

Music

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

- 349 Pupils can sing and perform confidently on a number of classroom instruments. They can maintain an individual part in group performance showing an understanding of style and occasion.
- 350 Pupils explore a range of sound sources and select, combine and arrange sounds effectively in their compositions. The improvisations of pupils in Y8 were musically interesting and showed a sound understanding of the principles of jazz.
- 351 In appraising tasks, pupils can identify the musical elements, and apply their knowledge successfully when responding to music of different styles and cultures.
- 352 Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress.

Key Stage 4

- 353 Pupils of all abilities demonstrate fluency and accuracy in individual performance. In group performance, pupils show a great deal of awareness of and empathy with other members of the ensemble. The pupils' obvious enjoyment in making music is reflected in their performance.
- 354 Compositions illustrate the personal taste of the pupils and are musically satisfying. The most successful outcomes display style and character; there is good development of musical ideas and effective use of devices and contrasts to obtain colour and mood.

355 Pupils have developed their understanding and appreciation of a range of different kinds of music. They can make judgements about musical quality, based on the elements of music.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

356 A small minority of pupils in key stage 3 find it difficult to keep in time to a common pulse, and to maintain accurate pitch in part songs.

Key Stage 4

357 A small number of pupils in Y10 and Y11 lack confidence when appraising music and their responses are brief and superficial.

Physical education

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

Key Stage 4 Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

358 Pupils work consistently to practice and refine their actions in gymnastics and swimming. Pupils make good progress during the lesson. In swimming they improve the technique of their stroke and in gymnastics they improve the quality of their actions.

359 In football and basketball pupils play competitively, and show good decision making skills when working as a team. The more able pupils show good control. Most pupils play fairly and show a good understanding of the rules of the game.

360 Most pupils know how to warm up at the start of a lesson and understand the need for this activity. The more able pupils in Y9 are able to suggest exercises suitable for specific activities.

361 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress relative to their ability.

Key Stage 4

362 All pupils in the GCSE badminton group work consistently and make good progress during the lesson. They develop their skills to the best of their ability. All pupils practice to improve the accuracy of their serve and also improve the strength and direction of their smash.

363 About half of the pupils, working on the GCSE video paper, are able to recall information from previous practical sessions and use the information to answer the questions on fitness.

364 Pupils working on the BTEC course contribute confidently to discussion. The best pupils provide fully developed responses to questions. These pupils use their ICT skills to develop good quality assignments.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

365 Around half of the pupils in hockey and the middle ability pupils in football do not listen carefully enough to instructions. They tend to complete the tasks without challenging themselves to do the task correctly.

366 Pupils' evaluating skills are under-developed and many make very basic statements when commenting on other pupils' work.

Key Stage 4

367 In the core physical education lessons, pupils in the badminton class do not work consistently. The majority find the skills of the game difficult to master and meet with little success when playing the game.

368 In the GCSE and BTEC theory lessons, about a third of the pupils do not concentrate fully on the work and there is a lot of unnecessary talking.

369 In the GCSE theory session, pupils are reluctant to answer questions and do not use their research skills to develop their written answers fully.

Religious education (including religious studies)
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Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

Key stage 3

370 Pupils of all abilities show knowledge and understanding of the units of work studied and this reflects the requirements of the agreed syllabus.

371 Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of other faiths practised in Wales through exploring their main features and customs.

372 All pupils can describe the historical events surrounding the origin of Islam and Judaism.

373 Pupils show an appreciation of key Christian teachings such as forgiveness and wealth and are developing the ability to apply them to present day situations.

374 All pupils can recognise key religious terms and the more able can explain their meaning orally.

375 The oral and written responses of less able pupils demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding.

376 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress relative to their ability.

Key stage 4

377 All pupils demonstrate appropriate knowledge and understanding of the units of study of both the full and short GCSE courses.

378 They can describe and explain the diversity of beliefs and practices within Christianity and Judaism and the more able demonstrate empathy with differing viewpoints.

379 Pupils can begin to relate religious beliefs and practices to their own experiences of life.

380 Key religious terms are used accurately and in context.

381 Less able pupils make progress in their understanding of key concepts.

382 In the GCSE full course, pupils demonstrate good factual knowledge of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and Judaism. They can explain how commitment to a particular religion influences lifestyles and behaviour. They understand and explain how religious beliefs can be expressed through symbols and imagery. Coursework is accurate and well presented and organised by pupils of all abilities.

383 In the GCSE short course, all pupils can investigate current moral and social issues such as abortion and environmental problems and show increasing knowledge and understanding of religious responses to them.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

384 Pupils' ability to explain their ideas about religious beliefs is limited, lacking depth and detail, and they make less progress in developing the skill of evaluation.

385 A small number of pupils have incomplete work which hinders progress.

Key Stage 4

386 Pupils do not explore and evaluate topics in sufficient depth and detail and do not draw on religious ideas to support arguments.

387 Average ability and less able pupils do not develop independent learning skills. They tend to be over dependent on information found in textbooks and worksheets rather than prepare a personal response.

388 A small number of pupils studying the GCSE short course have incomplete work which limits progress.

Drama

Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 4 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 3

389 Throughout the course pupils gain a good understanding of the use of lighting, costume and sound.

390 Most pupils listen attentively and ask appropriate questions when they need to.

391 Around half the pupils write imaginative and lively scripts.

Key Stage 4

392 Most pupils improvise well, using movement and simple sound effects imaginatively.

393 Pupils understanding and use of lighting, costume and sound in performance is good.

394 Pupils work co-operatively in teams.

395 They read scripts from different times and cultures critically. They confidently discuss ways to perform them.

396 When evaluating their script writing and performance they show a good understanding of the quality of their work and ways to improve it.

Shortcomings

Key Stage 3

397 In a few classes, some pupils do not make good progress as they are unable to work effectively in groups.

398 Most pupils have a limited use of drama terminology that is appropriate at this stage.

399 Some pupils lack confidence in performance, particularly in movement and positioning.

Key Stage 4

400 Some pupils are reluctant to offer ideas, or do so only briefly.

401 Occasionally the questioning and discussion of the text lacks depth.

Media studies

Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key Stage 4

- 402 Most pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- 403 Most are able to recognise and explain the important features of media texts, film posters, covers for CDs and multi-media games. Over half the pupils can analyse these effectively.
- 404 About half the pupils present their work to a high standard, designing and producing their own media texts.
- 405 Standards of coursework are good, and are in line with pupils' targets.
- 406 Pupils know how well they are doing. They are able to evaluate both their work, and the way they go about it.

Shortcomings

- 407 A few pupils, including some more able pupils, do not extend their written or spoken explanations. This limits their learning.

Sociology

Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

- 408 Pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding of subject matter and recall their previous learning successfully. They make appropriate links with contemporary attitudes and social developments. Pupils make good progress in applying their knowledge and understanding to a range of complex social problems and situations.
- 409 Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and many of them ask interesting and relevant questions. Class discussions are of good quality and help pupils to clarify difficulties.
- 410 Most have a good grasp of the methodology and conceptual basis of the subject. They can use a variety of methods of sociological enquiry and research, such as designing relevant questionnaires. They extract relevant and accurate information from a range of sources of evidence.

- 411 The majority of pupils respond confidently when asked to identify whether there are elements of crime and/or deviancy in a range of challenging sociological situations. Problem-solving skills are developing well when pupils work in groups or pairs.
- 412 The majority of pupils produce good quality pieces of extended writing and develop well balanced arguments. Very detailed notes enable them to revisit their learning successfully and their independent research work extends their enquiry skills.

Shortcomings

- 413 The written work of a small number of pupils lacks adequate depth and detail to address fully the problems they are considering. Spelling and punctuation are insecure in a small minority of cases.
- 414 A small number of pupils are reluctant to participate in discussions and to provide extended answers to questioning.

Law

Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

- 415 This was taught at the local college and therefore no lessons were observed. Y10 pupils were interviewed and their work was scrutinised.

Good features

- 416 Standards in written work show that pupils' standards are good with no important shortcomings.
- 417 Pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding of legal principles and can apply their knowledge to a range of cases and legal problems. They have a good knowledge of the English court system and understand the differences between civil and criminal law.
- 418 Pupils make good use of legal terminology, which they use in the correct context. Their written work shows that they achieve good standards in applying their knowledge of legal theory to offences in specific cases, and they have a good understanding of the efficacy of a range of punishments.
- 419 In extended writing exercises, the majority of pupils make good use of relevant examples to back up their judgements. Their written work is well organised and well presented. They are conscientious in their attitudes to private study, using the Internet well to extend their knowledge and understanding.

Shortcomings

- 420 The written work of a few individuals is less detailed and focused than that of the large majority of pupils.

Psychology

Key Stage 4: Grade 2 Good features and no important shortcomings

421 This was taught at a local college and therefore no lessons were observed. Y11 pupils were interviewed and their written work was scrutinised.

Good features

422 Standards of achievement in written work show that pupils achieve good standards with no important shortcomings.

423 Pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding of theoretical structures and hypotheses. They make good progress in developing their research techniques and skills of data analysis and evaluation. There is evidence of a good range of practical applications of theory when pupils design experiments, using variables and hypotheses.

424 Pupils have a good grasp of methodology and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and confidently. They make good use of case studies to back up their well structured and well balanced arguments in written work.

425 Pupils show a growing confidence in using investigative and experimental techniques in their psychological enquiries. They have a good ability to apply psychological theories to real life situations and problems. Most pupils produce good quality essays, for instance on prejudice; this enhances their extended writing skills.

Shortcomings

426 A few pupils do not write in sufficient depth and detail to develop fully the argument which they seek to make.

Vocational

Textiles

Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

427 Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the principles of designing and apply this well to their class and coursework tasks;

428 Research and investigational skills are good. Pupils carry out appropriate experiments to test production methods and the properties of fabrics. They research well into commercial sources of soft furnishing and fashion items including current designers;

429 Pupils acquire sound knowledge of construction and creative techniques;

430 Practical skills are mainly good and with very few exceptions completed outcomes show innovative use of colour, material and decorative processes; and

431 Effective use is made of ICT for CAD/CAM and to support research and presentation.

Shortcomings

432 Whilst evaluations are detailed, they seldom make relevant links to original design specifications.

Food and nutrition

Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

433 Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of nutrition, food commodities and safe food preparation. The majority show good awareness of dietary guidelines and influences on eating habits. They clearly understand the link between a balanced diet and good health for a range of individuals; and

434 Practical and experimental work is well executed. Pupils prepare and follow work plans and use equipment competently. They demonstrate appropriate technical skills and produce a variety of well finished food items.

Shortcomings

435 Approximately 20% of pupils, mainly boys, have weak recall of nutrients and are unsure of how they contribute to a healthy diet; and

436 Their oral and written answers lack depth and analysis.

Catering

Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

437 Pupils develop appropriate theoretical knowledge of the structure, organisation and health and safety regulations relating to catering establishments;

438 They have a secure understanding of nutrition, food commodities and menu planning. Overall, they make healthy choices;

439 Pupils prepare well for assignment tasks. Here they choose relevant food items and prepare logical work plans. They show good accuracy when they calculate timescales, costings and sensory and nutritional evaluation;

440 Practical skills are good. Pupils use tools and equipment competently and safely. They pay careful attention to garnishes and presentation and completed products are of good quality; and

441 Pupils display good investigative skills and carry out in depth research into food outlets and food related health problems. They record well structured conclusions in their coursework projects which are enhanced by good use of ICT for presentation and analysis.

Shortcomings

442 There are approximately 20% of pupils who are unsure of catering terminology; and

443 Erratic attendance hinders the progress and achievements of at least 20% of pupils.

Child development

Key Stage 4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

444 Pupils have good recall of previous work and display sound knowledge and understanding of the key areas of children's development. They show appropriate awareness of cultural and community influences in the care and upbringing of babies and young children;

445 Investigation into a range of issues relating to safety, family structures and parenting is carried out well. Here the work shows relevant research and is often presented as informative leaflets and posters;

446 Pupils carry out a number of perceptive observations of individual children. They record their visits in detail and produce thoughtful, well analysed judgements on their progress and development; and

447 Pupils are able to describe and review the educational benefits of toys and play activities. They usually produce useful, imaginative and well constructed practical items for their coursework tasks.

Shortcomings

448 The evaluation of work does not always fully justify the outcomes in relation to the original task requirements; and

449 Irregular attendance impedes the progress and achievement of approximately 20% of pupils.

Health and social care

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

Good features

- 450 Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of community health and social care services. They are able to identify a range of care settings and describe the role of professional carers.
- 451 They gain an insight into work related situations using data from primary and secondary sources. They apply this information well to their class and coursework tasks.
- 452 Numeracy skills are applied well to carry out various tests to measure physical health. Pupils analyse their results and are able to identify potential risks to health and set targets for improvement.
- 453 With very few exceptions, pupils can identify a range of factors that affect personal development at different life stages and within different life styles.
- 454 Coursework assignments are completed to a good standard overall, and competent use is made of ICT to access current information and to improve the overall presentation of work.

Shortcomings

- 455 There are about 15% of pupils who are less confident in their own knowledge and understanding and are reluctant to contribute orally in class discussions.
- 456 Erratic attendance hinders the progress and completion of coursework of approximately 20% of pupils.

School's response to the inspection

The leadership, staff and governors of Rhosnesni High School welcome this report. We recognise and appreciate the contributions within it and will make full use of these elements in our school improvement process.

We are pleased to read that the team has acknowledged the successful merging of staff and pupils from different schools and the forging of an ethos unique to Rhosnesni High School. We are also pleased that reference has been made to the clear, high expectations set for the school by the leadership team.

We note the Inspectors' statement that the grades awarded by the inspection team agree with the grades the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report. We value this endorsement that our school is capable of identifying its main strengths, shortcomings and actions required for continuing school improvement.

We are particularly pleased that the team has acknowledged the improvements in key stage 3 and key stage 4, in relation to National Curriculum tests and GCSE results, over the past three years. Our aim is to continue this improvement.

Inspectors confirmed a range of outstanding features such as:

- the quality and range of musical activities;
- the range and supportive links with the Family of Schools and pupil induction from key stage 2 to key stage 3;
- aspects of our school's partnership with the community;
- collective Worship in whole-year assemblies; and
- aspects of geography in key stage 4.

We recognise the contribution staff have made to this report and also the support provided to the school by governors and LEA advisers.

It is encouraging to note that the financial management of the school is good, and that we achieve value for money.

An action plan will be put in place to address the recommendations in the report, however, our current school development plan already incorporates most of the recommendations. We believe we can address all aspects as part of our strategy for improvement.

Overall, we are very pleased with this report and appreciate the professionalism and expertise shown throughout the week by the whole of the inspection team. The whole process has confirmed our belief that our school is positively moving forward.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Rhosnesni High School
School type	Community
Age-range of pupils	11 to 16 years of age
Address of school	Rhosnesni Lane, Wrexham
Postcode	LL13 9ET
Telephone number	01978 340840

Headteacher	Mr. B. Knowles
Date of appointment	September 2003
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr. M. Jones
Reporting inspector	Mr. T O'Marah
Dates of inspection	22/01/07 to 25/01/07

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	233	218	224	245	239	-	-	1159

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	70	3	72.1

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	22.6
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	71%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	School
Term 1	94.0%	92.4%	91.3%	90.5%	89.6%	-	-	91.4%
Term 2	91.1%	91.3%	90.8%	89.2%	93.9%	-	-	91.3%
Term 3	92.5%	91.0%	92.0%	86.0%	96.2%	-	-	91.5%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	20.14%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	98

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of Key Stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment Results (Teacher Assessments only) End of Key Stage 3

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2006													
Total number of pupils in Y9: 241													
Percentage of pupils at each level													
		D	N	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	School	1	6	0	0	0	5	27	42	16	3	0	0
	National	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.3	1.5	7.4	21.6	35.8	23.9	8.0	0.0	0.2
Mathematics	School	1	1	0	0	1	11	19	22	29	15	0	0
	National	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.3	1.1	7.4	18.4	25.0	30.4	15.78	0.0	0.6
Science	School	1	2	0	0	0	7	17	35	29	9	0	0
	National	0.2	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.5	6.0	18.8	34.1	27.6	11.5	0.0	0.1

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by Teacher Assessment	
In the school	53
In Wales	58

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006	242
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	36

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 20__ :	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	87%	88%	88%
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	36%	50%	54%
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	86%	87%	86%
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	25%	36%	40%
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	100%	100%	98%
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	64%	72%	77%
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	92%	94%	93%
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	8%	6%	7%
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	6%	5%	3%
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	2%	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-	-	-

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Prior to the inspection, full discussions were held between the registered inspector and the head based on the school's self-evaluation report and the school's development plan. In addition, meetings were held with the staff of the school, with parents and with the governors. 136 questionnaires were returned by parents and analysed by the inspection team. Whole school and appropriate subject documents were collected and reviewed by inspectors. All of this information was used to inform the organisation of the inspection and the deployment of inspectors.

During the inspection all subjects of the curriculum were inspected in detail and a total of 205 lessons were observed. All teachers at the school were seen teaching at least once. Formal and informal interviews were held with pupils and the full daily life of the school was observed. The inspection team reviewed pupils' work in exercise books and folders and looked at pupils' work diaries and the school reports sent to their parents.

During the week the inspection team saw 26 tutor periods and three year group assemblies. Visits were made to a wide range of clubs and activities. Interviews were held with all learning managers (heads of department), and with those teachers and managers holding positions with whole school responsibilities.

The performance of the school in public examinations and tests was analysed in detail so that trends in performance over time, and comparisons to local and national data could be identified and accounted for.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities
Terry O'Marah	Registered Inspector: Key Questions 1;2;5;6
Mike Snow	Lay Inspector; Contributions to Key Questions 1;3;4
Glyn Davies	Science; Key Question 3
Lyn Bithell	English: Key question 2B: Literacy
Alan Edwards	Maths; Key Question 7; Numeracy
Mary Crandon	Welsh; Bilingualism
Keith Hopkins	Design and Technology; Information technology and Information communications technology
Margaret Herbert	Design and Technology and vocational courses; Wider Key Skills
Anne Newman	History; Law; Sociology
John Radford	Geography
Martin Williams	Modern foreign languages
Eric Forster	Art
Susan Williams	Music
Sheila Steer	Physical education
Nerys Cossey	Religious education
Elizabeth Hinkley	Drama; Media studies.
David Jones	Science
Rachel Jones Worsley	Key Question 4
Robert W Ratcliffe	School Nominee

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Acknowledgement

The Registered Inspector and his Team wish to record their thanks to the pupils, staff and governors of Rhosnesni High School for their tolerance and co-operation.