

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

**Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones  
Amlwch, Anglesey LL68 9TH**

**School Number: 660 4025**

**Date of Inspection: 24 – 28 April 2006**

**by**

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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales



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- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
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- ▲ LEAs;
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Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspections. 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 Syr Thomas Jones was held between 24 and 28 April 2006. An independent team of inspectors led by Gareth Wyn Jones HMI undertook the inspection. The inspection was commissioned by Estyn, a statutory body which is independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

Year	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13	Y 14
Ages	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19

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

### Nature of the provider

- 1 Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones is a bilingual, community secondary school situated in Amlwch, Anglesey with about 878 pupils aged 11-18. The school serves the town and a rural catchment area of about ten miles radius. The school has 17% of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. This is slightly above the national average (15.7%). The catchment area has a high rate of unemployment. One area of Amlwch comes under the 'Communities First' scheme.
- 2 The school was last inspected in September 1998. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils who speak Welsh naturally in the home has fallen from 32% to 28%. This is a reflection of the in-migration of families from non Welsh-speaking areas. There has been an increase in the number of pupils with learning difficulties and social problems. Three point seven five per cent of pupils have statements of special educational needs. This is near the figure for Wales (3.4%). There has been a considerable increase in the number of classroom assistants in the school in order to support these pupils.
- 3 Welsh-medium courses are available for Years 7 to 13, and there is an increase in the number of pupils who study Welsh as a first language, although an increasing number of pupils come from non Welsh-speaking backgrounds.
- 4 A range of interesting extra-curricular activities is arranged for pupils.

### The school's priorities and targets

- 5 The school's aims and objectives are as follows:
  - to create an open, supportive and stimulating atmosphere which will assist pupils of all ability to develop to their full potential and to enjoy the educational process;
  - to provide an educational programme which will prepare pupils to be civilised and responsible citizens in a bilingual society;
  - to develop the professional skills of staff to enable them to contribute effectively towards attaining the social and academic aims set by the school; and
  - to establish procedures which will ensure the co-operation of all teachers in moving together towards the agreed targets.
- 6 The School Development Plan includes the following priorities for 2005-2006:
  - attaining the basic skills quality mark;
  - raising standards in the classroom through learning and teaching;

- continue the development of social inclusion;
- improve and strengthen self-evaluation; and
- 14-19 curriculum plans.

## Summary

### Table of grades awarded

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

- 7 Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones is a caring school with a strong and supportive sense of community. The school has an effective pastoral system and there are good contacts with parents and the local community. The managers and all members of staff are all active in responding to the school's aims and objectives and promoting pupils' progress.

### Standards

Subject	Key stage 3	Key stage 4	Sixth form
Welsh (first language)	2	3	3
Mathematics	2	2	2
Science	3	3	2
Information Technology	2	2	2
Modern Languages (French)	3	2	2
Business Studies	No provision	2	2

8 Taking these subjects in total, the standards of achievement in lessons is as follows:

<b>Standards (All lessons)</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
Key stage 3	2%	45%	53%	0%	0%
Key stage 4	0%	43%	54%	3%	0%
Sixth form	4%	68%	28%	0%	0%
The whole school (of the subjects inspected)	2%	50%	47%	1%	0%

- 9 These figures are above the targets set by the Assembly Government for the whole of Wales for 2007, that is, that the total of grade 1, grade 2 and grade 3 lessons is 98%. Despite this, the figures do not meet the national target for 2007, that 65% attain grade 1 or grade 2. The school has attained 99% and 52% respectively for the relevant targets.
- 10 Standards of attainment in the sixth form are generally good. In 2005, the examination results are above the average for Anglesey and Wales, with an increase on the percentage figure for 2004 that attained A-C and A-E grades at Advanced level.
- 11 In key stage 4, there are good features to the results. The percentage of pupils who achieve five or more A\* - C grades at GCSE showed an improvement over recent years and is above the corresponding figures for Anglesey and Wales when compared with similar schools in terms of the levels of entitlement to free school meals. The percentage who attain the core subject indicator has improved from the third quartile in 2003 to the highest quartile in 2005.
- 12 Pupils' results in key stage 3 tests have good features which outweigh the shortcomings. Over 70% of the pupils achieved level 5 in mathematics and science in 2005. This is above the average for Anglesey. There are some shortcomings in pupils' results in key stage 3. When compared with similar schools across Wales, in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 5 or above in the combined total of core subjects, placed the school in the third quartile in 2004. In 2002, with the same indicator, the school was in the highest quartile.
- 13 Standards of pupils' key skills in the sixth form are very good. The students demonstrate a maturity in their personal, social and cultural skills, and many of them make a key contribution to promote a feeling of a caring society in the school.
- 14 Standards of pupils' key skills in key stages 3 and 4 have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Listening, oracy and reading skills are generally good in both Welsh and English. Bilingual and translingual skills are generally very good although only a comparatively small percentage of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. The standard of key skills of SEN pupils is generally good. Standards of wider key skills are generally good.

- 15 Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in learning and their personal, social and learning development is good. Despite this, a minority of pupils demonstrate an immature approach to learning in key stages 3 and 4. They do not concentrate or work independently enough to make satisfactory progress, at times, in some classes.

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

- 16 The behaviour of the majority of pupils in class and around the school is good.
- 17 There are some shortcomings in key skills. In key stages 3 and 4, a minority of pupils are reluctant to contribute orally in class. The written work of pupils of average ability and lower ability in Welsh and English, within specific subjects and classes, is erroneous and incomplete.
- 18 Attendance levels for the school over the previous three full terms are slightly below 90%. Attendance levels in Anglesey's secondary schools were affected by sickness at the beginning of the year. The level is below the Welsh Assembly Government's target of 92%.
- 19 There was a high number, about 48, of temporary exclusions during 2005-2006. Of these, five were permanent exclusions. The number of pupils excluded during the current year has fallen.

### **The quality of education and training**

- 20 The table below shows the allocation of grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the six subjects that were inspected.

<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
Key stage 3	17%	51%	29%	3%	0%
Key stage 4	3%	50%	42%	5%	0%
Sixth form	16%	64%	20%	0%	0%
Whole school (subjects inspected)	12%	54%	31%	3%	0%

- 21 This is close to the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government for the whole of Wales for 2007, namely that teaching should be grade 2 in at least 65% of lessons.
- 22 In the subjects which were not specifically inspected, every teacher was observed teaching at least once. The table below shows the quality of teaching in every lesson that was observed throughout the school:

<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
Key stage 3	16 %	50%	28%	6%	0%
Key stage 4	6%	49%	38%	7%	0%
Sixth form	21%	62%	17%	0%	0%
Whole school	14%	52%	29%	5%	0%

- 23 In key stage 3 and 4 lessons, where the teaching is good, there is effective planning and good preparation. Clear objectives for the lessons are shared and used with the pupils. In the other lessons, the tasks are not always sufficiently challenging with expectations being too low and work not being matched to pupils' ability and their previous attainment.
- 24 The school meets the statutory requirements for National Curriculum assessment in key stage 3 as well as examination board regulations in key stage 4 and the sixth form. The school complies with the assessment requirements of pupils and students with additional educational requirements.
- 25 In a number of subjects, pupils' homework is marked regularly and constructive comments and the setting of appropriate targets are a means of promoting work and higher standards. Despite this, in a significant number of cases, there is a lack of consistency and the assessment does not provide enough feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. In some departments outside the six subjects which were inspected, there were examples of work which had not been marked, superficial comments and marking and an incomplete record of assessments.
- 26 The arrangements for presenting information about pupils' attainment are appropriate, although there are inconsistencies in the comments presented and they do not include enough subject-specific details to promote improvement.

### **Learning experiences**

- 27 In general, the organisation of the curriculum ensures the balance, breadth, progression and continuity of the National Curriculum across key stages 3 and 4. In key stage 4, a relevant range of core and optional subjects is available for pupils. Vocational courses are organised for a small percentage of pupils through partnerships with providers at other sites. This year, the school successfully gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
- 28 In the sixth form, a range of 20 subjects for 'A' level is presented, with seven of these being arranged in collaboration with other institutions, off-site, in order to improve the cost-effectiveness of the post-16 provision. One vocational course is also provided. A number of subjects have small classes which are not cost-effective. However, no other provider in the local area offers the same wide range of academic subjects to learners.
- 29 The school promotes pupils' personal, social, cultural, spiritual and moral development well on the whole. The programmes for personal, health and social education and work-related education and careers education and guidance are good.
- 30 A wide range of very good extra-curricular activities is prepared and they are open to every pupil. Sports and cultural activities are strong in the school.
- 31 There is good contact between the school and parents, other schools, colleges of higher education and a further education college, and local employers.

32 However, some aspects need to be improved because there is some inconsistency in class sizes across the school, with examples of very large classes in key stage 3 and very small classes in the sixth form. The organisation of the classes is not wholly effective. There is a high percentage of pupils in classes in which the medium of teaching is mainly English, but who are equally fluent in Welsh, and opportunities to strengthen bilingualism within subjects are being lost. The time allocated for religious education in key stage 4 and in the sixth form is limited.

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

- 33 A caring and homely ethos is successfully created in the school. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good, with a pastoral system which responds effectively to pupils' needs. The school's policies and procedures for protecting pupils and young people are good.
- 34 The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice. The transfer arrangements from primary to secondary are implemented very well and this enables the school to identify pupils' needs at an early stage and to place them on the appropriate stage on the special needs register.
- 35 Pupils' individual education plans (IEP) are clear and helpful and are regularly reviewed. Assistants are used very effectively to provide additional support to pupils in class.
- 36 Additional support is provided for pupils by learning coaches. This procedure has recently been introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government, and it promises to be a successful provision. The school creates a climate in which pupils are given equal opportunities.

### **Leadership and management**

- 37 The school is on the threshold of a period of a change in management due to the retirement of the headteacher at the end of this term. His successor has been appointed for September 2006. There are good features to how leaders and managers provide direction for the school to fulfil appropriate aims and objectives. A range of appropriate cross-school policies are in place.
- 38 Leaders and managers put a clear emphasis on promoting an ethos of activity and developing a bilingual community which has supportive values. Consistent leadership from the headteacher and the support of the senior management team promotes the school's aims and objectives.
- 39 The School Development Plan reflects the priorities of the school, the LEA and the Welsh Assembly Government within a framework of appropriate priorities. There is a good response to the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities, and by means of partnerships, the curricular provision has been extended. There is effective financial management and regular audits of the school's accounts.

- 40 The school is progressive in developing excellent computer resources and using interactive white boards throughout the school in order to improve learning and teaching. The school has made satisfactory progress in the key issues from the previous inspection.
- 41 The governing body provides appropriate strategic direction for the school, and there are active support staff who have a good effect on the school's work.
- 42 The building is attractive and light and is in good condition on the whole. It is well maintained with plenty of space and is suitable for the work. Pupils' work is displayed in every part of the building.
- 43 Despite this positive picture, there are some aspects which need improvement. There are instances where the school does not develop targets which are challenging enough to promote pupils' progress. At times, heads of department are not critical enough of the department's work and they do not give sufficient consideration to what could be done to improve.
- 44 There is some inconsistency in the effectiveness of the performance management system for managing individual staff. There are examples of very good teaching and learning, but there are examples, in a minority of lessons, of ineffective teaching. The performance management system has not developed sufficiently to raise standards of teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- 45 A member of the governing body links directly with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) department in order to provide support and develop awareness of pupils' attainment. As yet, governors have not taken the step of nominating individual members to have links with other departments.
- 46 There are good examples of departmental self-evaluation, such as SEN, but the majority of departmental plans are not sufficiently linked to the School Development Plan. This creates a shortcoming in terms of co-ordinating strategic and operational planning at all levels of management.
- 47 The school's methods of self-evaluation are not sufficiently embedded in direct evidence of pupils' work, observing lessons and analysing data or linking them to the planning processes at a strategic level.
- 48 The building is large and costly to run. It does not retain heat effectively and parts of the building are cold during the winter. At break times, some areas of the site are not under the direct supervision of teachers at all times. Some laboratories are small, even for small classes, and they do not have suitable services.
- 49 When considering the curricular and pastoral provision, pupils' standards of achievement and attainment and the quality of teaching, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## Recommendations

- R1 Maintain and raise standards, especially in the subjects and key skills in which there are shortcomings, and challenge learners to excel;
- R2 Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment in the significant minority of classes where there are weaknesses;
- R3 Develop the curriculum by:
- continuing to promote the 14-19 provision and vocational learning pathways with partners;
  - changing and improving the arrangement for separating pupils into classes according to their linguistic background, in order to promote bilingualism more effectively, and raise standards across the school; and
  - reduce the size of the large classes in key stage 3 and ensure more cost-effective post-16 classes;
- R4 Ensure an effective process of self-evaluation for subjects and across the school by developing the role of senior managers and other managers to monitor, appraise, set targets, raise teachers' expectations and promote high standards; and
- R5 Develop the role of governors and their knowledge of pupils' standards within the departments.
- 50 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

- 51 This grade is lower than the grade 2 in the school's self-evaluation report. There are inconsistencies in the standards between departments and key stages across the school, with good features but also some shortcomings. As a result, the team awarded grade 3 to Key Question 1.

#### Key stages 3 and 4

- 52 In these subjects, in total, these are the grades awarded by the inspectors:

Standards (Total lessons)	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	2%	45%	53%	0%	0%
Key stage 4	0%	43%	54%	3%	0%
Sixth form	4%	68%	28%	0%	0%
Whole school (subjects inspected)	2%	50%	47%	1%	0%

- 53 These figures are above the targets set by the Assembly Government for the whole of Wales for 2007, that is, that the total for grades 1, 2 and, 3 is 98%. Despite this, the figures do not meet the national target for 2007, that 65% should reach grade 1 or 2. The school has attained 99% and 52% in the relevant targets.

- 54 These are the standards in the six subjects that were inspected:

Subject	Key stage 3	Key stage 4	Sixth form
Welsh (first language)	2	3	3
Mathematics	2	2	2
Science	3	3	2
Information Technology	2	2	2
Modern Languages (French)	3	2	2
Business Studies	No provision	2	2

- 55 In general, good features have outweighed shortcomings in pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests in key stage 3 in recent years.
- 56 Between 2003 and 2005, the school's average scores in mathematics and science have been consistently above those for Anglesey, with over 70% of the pupils attaining level 5 in mathematics and science in 2005.

- 57 However, there are some shortcomings in key stage 3, as follows. Compared with similar schools across Wales, in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the percentage of pupils who attained level 5 or above in the combined core subject indicators placed the school in the third quartile in 2004. In 2002, with the same indicator, the school was in the highest quartile. Between 2002 and 2005, the school's average core subject indicator scores have deteriorated.
- 58 In key stage 4 the results have good features. The percentage of pupils who gain five or more A\*- C grades at GCSE shows an improvement over recent years. In 2005, 56% of pupils gained A\*-C grades which is above the figures for Anglesey and Wales. Compared with similar schools in terms of entitlement to free school meals, the percentage that attains the core subject indicator has improved from being in the third quartile in 2003, to being in the highest quartile in 2005. In 2005, 97% of pupils gained at least one GCSE grade A\*-G qualification which is above the figures for Anglesey and Wales.
- 59 Good standards outweigh shortcomings in key skills. The good features are described below.
- Listening and oracy standards in Welsh and in English are generally good.
  - Reading standards in Welsh and in English are generally good. Pupils can cope with reading tasks within specific subjects and they read to acquire knowledge effectively.
  - Bilingual and translingual standards are very good although only a relatively small percentage of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. The school succeeds very well in developing bilingualism amongst newcomers to the school.
  - Numeracy standards are good, and pupils use mathematical skills correctly.
  - In a number of subjects, pupils use ICT to combine pictures and text when presenting information, and standards are good on the whole.
  - The standard of SEN pupils' key skills is generally good.
  - The Cwricwlwm Cymreig is very prominent in the life and work of the school.
- 60 There are some shortcomings in key skills.
- The written work of pupils of average ability and below average ability, at times, is erroneous and incomplete in Welsh and in English, in specific subjects and classes.
  - In both key stages 3 and 4, the written work of cohorts of pupils in Welsh across the range of ability is characterised by limited vocabulary and basic syntax.
  - In English, the written work of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 who are of below average and average ability is unsatisfactory.

- In key stages 3 and 4, a minority of pupils are reluctant to contribute verbally in classes.
- In a minority of departments, there are shortcomings in ICT skills and creative skills.
- In classes in which Welsh is the specified means of communication, a small percentage of pupils speak and work in English. In these cases, pupils' bilingual skills do not develop satisfactorily.

### **Progress in learning**

- 61 In general, pupils make good progress in their learning. The motivation of the majority of pupils is generally good in lessons. The vast majority are diligent and keen to learn.
- 62 Standards in the wider key skills are generally good. There are several examples of pupils working together effectively, solving problems correctly and extending and improving their own performance.
- 63 Despite this, a minority of pupils demonstrate immature attitudes to learning in key stages 3 and 4. They do not concentrate or work sufficiently independently, at times, to make progress within some classes.

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

- 64 The behaviour of the majority of pupils in classes and around the school is good. There is a high number of temporary exclusions, although the number excluded in the current year has fallen. Detailed records are kept of all these cases. The school conforms to the procedures of Circulars 3/99 and 1/04. One appeal was upheld.
- 65 Attendance levels for the school during the three previous full terms are slightly below 90%. Attendance percentages have fallen since the previous inspection. Attendance levels at Anglesey's secondary schools were affected at the beginning of the year by sickness. Levels are below the Welsh Assembly Government's target of 92%. Punctuality is generally good.
- 66 The school has appropriate policies and procedures for administering and monitoring attendance levels. There is a good partnership with the relevant agencies to promote pupils' attendance and their interests.

### **The sixth form**

- 67 The following grades show that standards in the sixth form are generally good.

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
Sixth form	4%	68%	28%	0%	0%

- 68 The Advanced Level examination results in 2005, were better than the average for Anglesey and Wales, with an improvement since 2004, in the percentage which gained grades A-C and A-E. In general, pupils attain in accordance with expectations of their previous performance in GCSE examinations. A good number of students went on to follow university courses. Standards of key skills are very good on the whole and results reflect this. Standards of bilingualism are very good and students communicate effectively in both languages. Their ability to solve problems and to work independently is good. Pupils' progress in learning is generally good. Pupils demonstrate a maturity in their personal, social and cultural skills and a large number of them make a key contribution to promote a sense of a caring society within the school.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

69 This grade is lower than the grade 2 in the school's self-evaluation report. Good features outweigh shortcomings but there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in the assessment methods. As a result, the team awarded grade 3 to Key Question 2.

70 The table below shows the allocation of grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the six subjects which were inspected.

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole school (subjects inspected)	12%	54%	31%	3%	0%

71 These figures are above the target set by the Welsh Assembly Government for the whole of Wales for 2007, namely that teaching should be at least grade 2 in 65% of lessons. These percentages also achieve another target set by the Welsh Assembly Government, namely that the quality of teaching should be at least grade 3 in 95% of lessons.

72 In the subjects which were not specifically inspected, every teacher was observed teaching at least once. The table below shows the quality of teaching in every lesson observed throughout the school:

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole school	14%	52%	29%	5%	0%

73 It can be seen that there is no significant difference between the quality of teaching in the six subjects inspected, and the cross-school sample of lessons.

74 In the lessons in which the teaching is good with no important shortcomings in key stage 3 and key stage 4, the features of the teaching include:

- effective planning and good preparation for lessons;
- clear objectives for the lessons being shared and used with the pupils;
- effective use of working in pairs and in groups;

- effective feedback and support for individuals;
- use of a good range of teaching techniques including effective use of an interactive white board;
- very high expectations in terms of standards of work which motivate and challenge individual pupils according to their age, ability and understanding;
- specific pace and time for activities; and
- penetrative questioning which leads pupils to reflect in greater depth on the topics which are studied.

75 In the other lessons, the tasks are not always sufficiently challenging and there are some shortcomings, such as:

- low expectations;
- missed opportunities to develop subject concepts;
- a tendency for teachers to make introductions which are too long and which allow pupils to learn in a passive manner;
- teachers asking closed questions, thereby limiting the discussion and the thought process;
- failing to meet pupils' linguistic needs in terms of promoting bilingual teaching;
- the lack of appropriate pace, leading to ineffective use of learning time; and
- work that is not matched to pupils' ability and their previous attainment.

76 The working relationship which exists between teachers and pupils in a number of the lessons ensures that pupils learn in a friendly atmosphere and teachers respect every pupil as an individual whatever their gender, race or disability.

77 Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and there is effective co-operation between teachers and classroom assistants.

### **The sixth form**

78 The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Broadly, the same features exist here as in the rest of the school but with fewer shortcomings. In the lessons inspected, the quality of teaching was judged as follows:

<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
Sixth form	16%	64%	20%	0%	0%

79 Additional features of the good teaching are:

- teachers' good and up to date subject knowledge;
- use of a good range of teaching techniques and varied tasks which lead students to study the work in greater depth;
- appropriate and good opportunities for pupils to work independently, to work together in groups, to solve problems and promote the development of their key skills;
- enthusiastic presentations which deepen students' understanding of the subject;
- high expectations, where students are challenged to achieve high standards; and
- penetrating questions as a tool to measure students' understanding and depth of knowledge.

80 Some lessons highlight shortcomings such as:

- teachers' initial introduction being too long so that pupils receive information passively for part of the lesson;
- assessment objectives not fully explained as a yardstick to measure progress; and
- opportunities to learn independently being missed.

**How thorough is the assessment and how is it used in the planning and improvement of learning?**

81 The school's assessment procedure shows good features which outweigh shortcomings.

82 The school meets statutory requirements in respect of:

- assessing the National Curriculum in key stage 3;
- the regulations of examination boards in key stage 4 and the sixth form; and
- assessing pupils and students who have additional educational needs.

83 Since the previous inspection, the school's assessment system has been developed to facilitate the method of collecting information, analysing data, setting targets and reporting to parents. Despite this, the use made of assessment as a tool to raise standards across the school is not sufficiently consistent.

84 Information about pupils' progress is collected each term and detailed data is maintained in terms of attainment and effort. This system is not yet fully embedded

or developed. The school's use of data to identify and to respond to underachievement is inconsistent.

- 85 In a number of subjects, pupils' work is marked regularly. In the best examples, constructive comments and appropriate targets are a means of promoting work and high standards. However, in a significant number of cases, there is a lack of consistency in the quality of comments within departments and the assessment does not provide enough feedback for pupils on how to improve their work.
- 86 In some departments beyond the six subjects that were inspected, there are examples of unmarked work, superficial comments and marking and incomplete records of assessment.
- 87 Parents and guardians receive information about their children's progress in one full report and two interim assessments each year and the opportunity for discussion at a parents' evening. The best annual reports have detailed comments and targets for improvement. In a number of cases, the quality and sharpness of the targets which are set are inconsistent, and they do not include enough subject-specific details.

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

<b>Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings</b>
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- 88 This grade is lower than the grade 2 in the school's self-evaluation report. There are inconsistencies in the organisation of the curriculum, with very large classes in key stage 3 and very small classes in the sixth form. The time allocated for religious education in key stage 4 and the sixth form is limited.

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

- 89 In general, the organisation of the curriculum ensures the balance, breadth, progression and continuity of the National Curriculum across key stages 3 and 4 in a satisfactory way. Effective support is given to pupils to develop basic skills across the school through the individual support of teachers and assistants.
- 90 In key stage 3, the time allocated to core and foundation subjects is generally appropriate. Two separate periods are introduced in year 7, one for literacy in Welsh and English, and the other for numeracy, and it is intended to develop the provision gradually every year. This year, the school successfully acquired the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
- 91 In key stage 4, a relevant range of core subjects and options is available, and the time allocated for each subject is generally appropriate. Vocational courses are arranged for a small percentage of pupils through partnerships with providers at other sites. This is an innovative and promising arrangement, but, at present, not all the courses offer a qualification to pupils.

- 92 In the sixth form, a range of 20 subjects are available at A and AS levels with seven of these arranged in collaboration with other institutions, off-site, in order to improve the cost-effectiveness of the post-16 provision. One vocational course is also provided. A number of subjects have a small number of pupils which is not cost-efficient. However, no other provider in the area offers the same wide range of academic subjects for learners.
- 93 The time allocated for religious education in key stage 4 and the sixth form is limited.
- 94 The school continues to develop the curriculum to meet the needs of learners who will be pursuing the Welsh Assembly Government's 14-19 Learning Pathways. The school is working towards developing this provision.
- 95 Organising and accrediting the core key skills in the sixth form is good with levels 2/3 communication skills being introduced and accredited through religious education lessons. There are promising plans to develop the key skills across the school but, at present, there is no co-ordinator in key stages 3 and 4 to promote the provision.
- 96 The programmes for personal, health and social education, and work-related education, and education and careers guidance, are generally good across the school. The school promotes pupils' personal, social, spiritual and cultural development well, on the whole. Pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and worldwide citizenship are satisfactory although there is no whole-school policy at present. The school operates satisfactorily with regards to sustainability and global citizenship.
- 97 A wide range of very good extra-curricular activities is prepared and they are open to every pupil. Sports and cultural activities feature strongly in the school with many visits to theatres and exhibitions as well as to competitions. External organisations regularly visit the school to address pupils about their activities. In the main, the Cwricwlwm Cymreig is very good.
- 98 One of the school's aims is to promote pupils' bilingualism and there is a significant increase in the numbers that now study Welsh as a first language. The classes are organised on the basis of the language of pupils but classroom organisation is not wholly effective. A high percentage of pupils who are in classes in which the medium of teaching is predominantly English, are equally fluent in Welsh and opportunities to strengthen bilingualism in subjects are being missed. The current organisation of classes does not present enough opportunities to extend pupils' bilingual skills.
- 99 There is some inconsistency in class sizes throughout the school with examples of:
- very large classes in key stage 3; and
  - very small classes in the sixth form.
- 100 At times, the large classes restrict opportunities for pupils to undertake practical work in subjects such as science.

- 101 There is a supportive relationship between the school and parents, the community and other educational institutions. These include schools, initial teacher training contacts with Bangor University and Aberystwyth University, a training company, and a further education college.
- 102 There are good pastoral contacts with primary schools and a pilot project to promote French is being run, but the curricular contacts have not yet matured enough.
- 103 The governors have appointed a member to act as a link with the special educational needs department and this is successful. However, there is minimal contact between governors and individual departments.

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

- 104 The school works well with Careers Wales in developing a good, relevant careers education. Every pupil in key stage 4 receives a work experience programme which is monitored well. Appropriate work opportunities are also provided through vocational courses which are offered in key stage 4 and the sixth form.
- 105 The Business Studies department has successfully participated in the Young Enterprise Scheme for several years. The contribution of Careers Wales, and personal and social education assists in moving the school forward in developing entrepreneurial skills.
- 106 Every pupil is encouraged to succeed in every key stage and to participate fully in the life of the school. The extensive curriculum and extra-curricular activities present appropriate experiences to the pupils. All this nurtures knowledge, understanding and citizenship skills and lifelong learning.

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

<b>Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings</b>
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- 107 The findings of the inspection team correspond with the school's self-evaluation.

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

- 108 The school has an effective pastoral system which is based on the organisation of class tutors who are, in turn, responsible to the heads of year and the deputy headteacher. A caring and homely ethos is successfully created. The pupils are confident that members of staff will deal quickly and sensitively when they speak to them about their personal concerns. A small number of year 13 students have been trained to be part of the support network.
- 109 In general, there are good contacts with parents. They appreciate the open door policy which enables them to discuss any problem promptly; and they receive information about the opportunities and options available to pupils by means of handbooks, meetings and personal support.

- 110 Pupils are given the opportunity to express their opinion on a number of aspects of school life through regular meetings of the school council. This arrangement is developing well.
- 111 The school offers a wide and valuable programme of personal and social education to pupils by following the guidelines of the national framework.
- 112 The school ensures that the transfer from primary to secondary is as smooth as possible. There are effective induction periods for pupils and good pastoral contacts with primary schools.
- 113 The school's policies and procedures for child protection are good, as are arrangements for appeals and complaints. All staff have been given training on the child protection policy.
- 114 The school's links with statutory authorities, such as social services and the police are good. The system of cross-referencing child protection cases with absence and behavioural problems is effective.
- 115 The school complies with the statutory requirements in relation to health and safety. Any issues that are a cause for concern are given prompt attention. Appropriate attention is given to risk-assessments.
- 116 Good careers education and guidance is given to year 9 to year 13 pupils and students in partnership with Careers Wales. The school complies with the statutory careers framework. Pupils are well supported and are provided with good guidance to assist them in choosing the most suitable courses. In the same way, there is good provision for students. A period of relevant work experience is provided for pupils and students.

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

- 117 The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice. The arrangements from primary to secondary are implemented very effectively and this:
- enables the school to identify the pupils' needs at an early stage; and
  - to place them on the appropriate stages of the special needs register.
- 118 Pupils' individual education plans (IEP) are clear and helpful and they are reviewed regularly. Parents are invited to attend annual reviews and they are encouraged to participate in the process of setting and reviewing pupils' targets. The parents' response is good. The vast majority of pupils succeed in reaching the targets set for them, and they make good progress as they move from one key stage to the next.
- 119 The majority of teachers are aware of the contents of the pupils' individual education plans and differentiate appropriately for them.

120 Full access to the national curriculum is ensured by integrating pupils with special educational needs into mainstream classes. Some pupils are withdrawn from some lessons in order to have specialist help when necessary. Assistants are used very effectively to give additional support in the classroom. Assistants also:

- assist the school by mentoring pupils weekly;
- run the homework club and the reading club;
- assist pupils during the lunch hour; and
- prepare additional resources for them.

121 Effective use is made of the finance which is allocated to the department.

122 Additional support is provided for pupils by learning coaches. This arrangement is part of the National Assembly of Wales' national scheme to introduce additional support to promote progress amongst specific pupils who require help. This process has only recently been introduced, and it is much appreciated by the pupils.

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

123 The school creates a climate in which pupils, in general, receive equal opportunities. A number of subjects, in addition to PSE lessons, provide specific opportunities for pupils to succeed in learning about racism and human rights.

124 Arrangements are made for pupils with severe physical disabilities to attend a nearby school which has been specifically modified for them.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 125 This grade is lower than the grade 2 in the school's self-evaluation report. The inspection team judges this aspect to be grade 3 because of the inconsistency in the effectiveness of the performance management system for individual members of staff. There are also instances where targets for pupils are not challenging enough.
- 126 The school is on the threshold of a period of change management, due to the retirement of the headteacher at the end of this term. His successor has been appointed and will begin in September 2006.
- 127 There are good features to how leaders and managers provide direction for the school to attain appropriate aims and objectives, including:
- a range of cross-school policies in the curricular, pastoral, finance and organisational areas and valid procedures;
  - a clear emphasis on encouraging an ethos of activity and community development with supportive social values;
  - particular attention to national and local priorities in terms of promoting bilingualism;
  - consistent guidance from the headteacher and support from the senior management team for this work within a framework of appropriate duties and responsibilities;
  - aims and objectives which promote positive approaches and equal opportunities for the majority of pupils;
  - a good response to the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government;
  - the acceptance of the Basic Skills Award;
  - appropriate partnerships with other secondary schools within the local education authority, a further education college and a training company. Curricular provision has been extended through these partnerships;
  - a school development plan which reflects the priorities of the school, the local education authority and the Welsh Assembly Government within a framework of appropriate priorities;

- innovation in developing excellent computer resources and using interactive white boards throughout the school in order to improve learning and teaching; and
- the influence of the governing body in meeting regulatory and legal requirements, setting a strategic direction and monitoring the results.

- 128 However, there are some weaknesses. While good support is given to the school by the local authority on the use of data to measure pupils' performance, sometimes the school does not set targets that are challenging enough to promote progress. Some departments have begun making good use of the analysis of previous results. However, specific departmental heads are not sufficiently critical, at times, of the work of their department and they do not give enough consideration to what can be done to improve.
- 129 There is inconsistency in the quality of learning and teaching within the school with examples of very good work, but also examples of ineffective teaching, assessment and learning within a minority of lessons. At present, the performance management system has not been developed sufficiently in order to raise standards of learning and teaching across the curriculum. Although the school's in-service training system is appropriate, the mechanism for identifying training needs is not wholly effective.
- 130 A member of the governing body links directly with the special educational needs department in order to provide support and to develop an awareness of pupils' attainment. Governors have not yet taken the step of nominating individual members to have links with other departments.
- 131 The size of a minority of classes in key stage 3 is too large, and there are small post-16 classes which are not cost-efficient.

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

<b>Grade 4: Some good features but shortcomings in important areas</b>
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- 132 This grade is lower than the grade 3 in the school's self-evaluation report. The inspection team judges this aspect to be grade 4 because, despite good features, there are some shortcomings in important areas.
- 133 The school's self-evaluation report is a document which is based on the seven key questions in the common inspection framework. However, the school has self-evaluated itself as grade 2 for every key question with the exception of grade 3 for Key Question 6. The inspection team judged grade 3 for five of the key questions with the exceptions of a grade 2 for Key Question 4 and a grade 4 for Key Question 6.

- 134 The school receives very high quality data from the local education authority which analyses pupils' performance throughout the school. These are the good features of the self-evaluation of some departments such as Special Educational Needs:
- good-quality organisation which gives appropriate attention to standards of work and the quality of learning and teaching;
  - detailed and accurate analysis of external test and examination results; and
  - obvious links between the findings of the self-evaluation process and the priorities of the departmental and school development plans.
- 135 Middle managers collect comprehensive evidence for departmental evaluations. However, the findings do not always identify areas for improvement which are linked to development plans. Although departmental self-evaluation reports have developed, they do not all provide a sufficient challenge to teachers and pupils to attain excellence.
- 136 The school development plan identifies priorities and actions which are appropriate up to 2008. In the main, good progress has been made in the provision and use of computer technology and, in particular, the use of interactive white boards to promote learning and teaching.
- 137 However, the procedure for monitoring learners' work within departments and throughout the school is not thorough enough, in order to plan for improvement, and there are shortcomings in important areas. The school's self-evaluation methods are not sufficiently embedded in direct evidence of learners' work, observing lessons and analysing data. There is not a sufficient link between this process and planning at a strategic level. The majority of departmental plans are not linked sufficiently strongly to the school development plan. This creates a lack of co-ordination and strategic planning at every level of management. The outcomes and targets identified in the school development plan are not sufficiently detailed or inclusive. Although the administrative arrangements for performance management are generally good, there is not enough peer or manager observation in the classroom or celebration of good practice in order to improve teaching and learning.
- 138 Although the school consults with parents, employers, governors and learners, there are not sufficiently regular and procedural arrangements in place to discover parents' opinions and those of others who take an interest in the interests of the school. There is not a strong emphasis on full consultative processes at every level in the school to ensure that the staff take ownership of evaluation arrangements and their findings.
- 139 The school has made satisfactory progress on the key issues from the previous inspection.

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

### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

140 This grade is lower than the grade 2 in the school's self-evaluation report. The inspection team judges this aspect to be grade 3 because good features outweigh the shortcomings.

#### The provision and use made of staff, learning materials and accommodation

141 The teachers have suitable qualifications and relevant experience for their work in the school. The school has an active team of support staff who are very supportive to the work of the school. The vast majority of teachers and classroom assistants are fluent Welsh speakers and this promotes bilingualism throughout the school. There are relevant in-service training arrangements to develop staff.

142 The school budget is managed effectively, although the amount carried forward from the previous financial year is comparatively high. Departments have sufficient resources, in general, although there is a shortage of Welsh language resources in the science department and of Welsh language novels in the library.

143 The school has invested wisely in computer equipment and software and:

- the number of computers is very good with one computer for every 3.5 pupils, which is a comparatively low ratio;
- every teacher has a laptop computer to promote their work;
- effective use is made of interactive white boards; and
- the school has invested significantly in in-service training in information and computer technology.

144 The building is attractive and light and, generally, is in good condition. Pupils' work is displayed in every part of the building in order to acknowledge pupils' work and success publicly, as well as to adorn the school. The school's reception area has been remodelled, as a result of comments made in the previous report. However the building does not retain heat effectively, and parts of the building are cold in the winter.

145 The school playing-field is large and on the whole it is in good condition. During break times, some areas of the large site are not under the direct regular supervision by teachers.

146 The perimeters of the hockey and football pitches overlap each other. This was raised during the previous inspection and continues to be the case, although the school schedules hockey and football during different periods.

147 Subject classes in a number of departments are located close together in order to share resources. There are suitable rooms for pupils with special needs.

- 148 Some of the laboratories are too small, even for small classes, and they do not have suitable services. Not all the science classes have enough opportunities to undertake experimental research work.

### **The effectiveness of resources in ensuring value for money**

- 149 There is an annual review of the school's financial needs. As part of this process, consideration is given to the financial requirements of the curriculum, staffing, learning and teaching resources, and the position within the requirements' framework of the school development plan. A regular audit of the school's accounts is undertaken. The governing body discusses the budget and is aware of relevant matters but, as yet, they do not discuss and appraise the cost-efficiency of any request for curricular provision. The day-to-day management of the budget is effective. The school has appropriate arrangements for allocating finances to departments which are based on a specific formula, and departments can apply for additional finance as necessary.
- 150 Appropriate opportunities are provided for teachers and ancillary staff to develop their performance by attending in-service training. Newly qualified teachers receive support to develop their professional skills. The majority make satisfactory progress, but there are a few examples of comparatively slow professional development. Staff who are new to the school are given appropriate assistance as necessary during their first year.
- 151 In the sixth form, the school works jointly with partners to introduce some subjects in order to improve the cost-effectiveness of the provision. In spite of this, a number of small classes are not cost-effective, but no other provider in the area offers a comparable, wide academic curriculum.
- 152 Given the judgements on curricular and pastoral provision, pupils' standards of achievement and attainment and the quality of teaching, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### Welsh

**Key stage 3 – Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 4 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Sixth form – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key stage 3 and key stage 4**

#### **Good features**

- In both key stages, pupils' attitudes to their work are positive and the majority of pupils listen purposefully and are ready to respond orally to questions from teachers and each other in appropriate language.
- In key stage 3, pupils work together successfully in pairs and in groups in a variety of situations, taking advantage of opportunities to develop their learning skills. By key stage 4, some pupils show an increasing awareness of linguistic registers and the best succeed in maintaining a standpoint and responding considerately and confidently to different standpoints, by respecting each other's views.
- Reading standards, in terms of pupils' ability to read fluently aloud, vary in both key stages. The best pupils use an appropriate register and tone and give expression to the meaning.
- In key stage 3, a number of pupils can respond well to various reading texts, both literary and non-literary, orally and in writing. Pupils' ability to appreciate texts develops well throughout the key stage.
- By key stage 4, some pupils show intelligent personal responses in their critical work and standards are good when there is appropriate detail, based on a good understanding of the topics studied, quoting correct evidence and terminology.
- In key stage 3, pupils' written standards are extensive and varied. A good number of pupils across the range of abilities succeed in writing in a range of linguistic forms, and the good practice of planning effectively contributes towards raising standards throughout the key stage.
- In key stage 4, when writing in essay style, some pupils can reason and express a standpoint effectively. In Year 11, the writing of the best pupils is mature and there is varied and concise use of language to create effects.
- SEN pupils contribute well across the skills range according to their ability.

- In key stage 3, a number of pupils take advantage of regular opportunities to make effective use of modern technology, including the interactive white board and language games. This encourages them to think independently and to work with others effectively.

### **Shortcomings**

- In both key stages, the written work of cohorts of pupils across the range of abilities is characterised by limited vocabulary and basic syntax. The ability of these pupils to correct errors themselves and to review content and sequence has not been developed sufficiently to raise standards of writing.
- In key stage 4, the oral contributions of some pupils to group and class discussions are few. They frequently settle for short and superficial contributions and do not extend their responses sufficiently to convey ideas in any detail. Others have a tendency to turn to English during group work.
- In key stage 4, in general, some pupils of average and below average ability are less committed to their work. Their work is too leisurely and because of this, they complete too little work in the specified time. As a result, the output is disorderly, less developed and incomplete.

### **The sixth form**

#### **Good features**

- Students' oral contributions in Year 12 are good. When contributing to class discussions and working in groups, their motivation is sound. A good number of students can exchange ideas easily when discussing film and drama topics. In Year 13, students make appropriate comments with purposeful examples and discuss scenes in their context.
- Throughout Year 12, students develop their critical skills when discussing various topics. They analyse the works of 20<sup>th</sup> century poets well by providing appropriate evidence to support their opinion. In Year 13, some succeed in analysing Middle and Old Welsh texts effectively and confidently.
- Students have a good awareness of the requirements of various language registers and they succeed in modifying their style to respond to the requirements of different tasks. Year 12 produce good extended work with a substantial amount of creative originality. When scripting they show a good understanding of the requirements of the medium in all of its aspects. On the whole, Year 13's factual and discursive work is characterised by an easy style.

#### **Shortcomings**

- In Year 13, students' ability to read widely for pleasure and background reading for the topics studied have not been fully developed. As a result, their ability to cross-reference concisely and intelligently by comparing literary topics and enriching their responses is very limited.

- When analysing various literary topics in Year 13, some students' ability to structure a literary argument and to present it in a co-ordinated manner by interweaving meaningful quotations into the structure of their work is not yet fully developed. In these cases, analysis is scarce, there is a lack of detail and purposeful depth and more erroneous expression.

## **Mathematics**

**Key stage 3 – Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

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

**Sixth form – Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 3**

**Good features:**

- Pupils deal effectively with all aspects of numeracy including fractions, decimal points and percentages according to their ability as expected. Pupils have a good understanding of numeracy patterns and they are able to use their understanding of numeracy to measure perimeters and surface areas.
- Pupils are able to name the types of angles and they are able to use a protractor effectively to measure angles.
- The results of key stage 3 examinations are generally good and reflect the standards seen in the classroom.
- Pupils deal with algebra systems easily at levels which are suited to their ability and they are able to solve equations and reset formulae.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of probability as expected according to their ability.
- Pupils have a knowledge of shapes and they are able to calculate surface area.
- The most able pupils are able to calculate the surface area of a circle and other measurements linked to the shape and they have a good understanding of shapes.

**Shortcomings**

- At times, pupils do not make the best use of their time in lessons and their graph work is sometimes not accurate enough.

## **Key stage 4**

### **Good features**

- Pupils, especially the more able ones, show a good understanding of the subject.
- Pupils of average ability recall work well and remember the facts about probability correctly, which helps to raise their standards.
- More able pupils use formulae effectively to solve quadratic equations and this helps them to solve more difficult problems. Sensible use is made of calculators.
- Less able pupils have a good knowledge of surface area and they use numeracy rules correctly to get the answers.
- Pupils of lower ability do good work in numeracy and they know their tables well. In general, pupils are able to explain correctly the work they have undertaken.

### **Shortcomings**

- A few pupils have difficulty in concentrating throughout the lesson.

## **The sixth form**

### **Good features**

- In statistics, students understand and use complex concepts correctly and effectively.
- They understand their work well and they use their mathematical skills correctly and confidently.
- Students' problem-solving work is generally good. They use the binomial operation process and the standard form correctly.
- In the main, students are making good progress.
- They can adapt their understanding to other contexts and they are very willing to offer explanations for their ideas in class.

### **Shortcomings**

- At times, students do not remember how to integrate with sufficient confidence.

<b>Science</b>
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**Key stage 3 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Key stage 4 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

**Sixth form – Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 3**

**Good features:**

- Pupils recall aspects of biology, chemistry and physics confidently and they are able to describe them effectively.
- In the majority of classes, they use science vocabulary to a high standard in Welsh and in English.
- Pupils work safely and sensibly during practical work and they follow instructions in order to observe and measure correctly.
- They communicate well orally and the standard of science diagrams and graph work is good.
- The majority have a good record of work in their books and some pupils complete extended written reports to a high standard.
- Pupils are aware of the links between science and society and some industrial and medical applications.

**Shortcomings:**

- Pupils do not use a range of sources adequately to find out information.
- Pupils' skills to foresee, plan and design fair tests and record and analyse data have not been sufficiently developed.
- Pupils' practical skills and independent organisational skills are limited. They do not choose, use and put equipment away.
- Pupils do not use ICT systematically to collect and process data and they do not learn how to evaluate their results.

## **Key stage 4**

### **Good features:**

- The more able pupils can recall previous work well and they show a clear understanding of complex scientific concepts.
- The majority of able pupils are able to adapt their knowledge and understanding from one context to another, and they can explain fully the meaning and the reasons for a range of scientific phenomena.
- They use scientific terminology in Welsh and in English correctly and to a high standard.
- A number of pupils complete the requirements of the GCSE practical course work to a high standard.
- They follow instructions carefully, make detailed observations and use equipment appropriately and safely in order to make accurate measurements.
- The standard of oral communication is good throughout; pupils express themselves confidently and accurately. Some pupils write extensively, and describe and explain to a high standard.
- The most able pupils can calculate confidently and their numeracy is of a high standard.
- Pupils have a good understanding and, in some cases, a very good understanding of the place of science in society. They are aware of moral dilemmas, the practical applications of science and the relationship between science, industry and environmental issues.

### **Shortcomings:**

- Many pupils from the average and less able groups are unsure when recalling previous work appropriately.
- Not many pupils from the average and less able groups make progress at the appropriate pace, they do not have complete records of work and they are underachieving.
- The majority of pupils do not make full use of ICT skills, especially when using data.
- The majority of pupils do not develop their research and problem-solving skills fully in a practical context.

## **The sixth form**

### **Good features:**

- Students recall and understand previous work well and use the appropriate scientific terminology to describe and explain key concepts fully.
- In their practical work, the vast majority of students understand and interpret their results well and their practical skills when measuring and observing have been developed well. They record their conclusions well in text, diagram and graph form.
- The standard of work with microscopes and biological drawing work is high.
- In practical work, the vast majority of students show a good understanding of the work and they work confidently, safely and systematically.
- When students know the chemical structure of a substance, they are able to predict its characteristics. They can analyse and solve the characteristics of its structure.
- Students have a good grasp of physical ideas and they are able to use them in practical situations and to solve simple problems or to predict how objects will behave under different conditions.

### **Shortcomings:**

- A few pupils are over-dependent on guidance from the teacher;
- A small minority of students do not fully understand the concepts that are introduced; and
- a small number of students are unwilling to present their ideas orally.

<b>Information Technology</b>
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**Key stage 3 and 4 – Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

**Sixth form – Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

### **Key stage 3**

#### **Good features**

- Pupils cope well with the computer and understand a number of its functions. They use the mouse confidently and show proficiency in their treatment of menus and icons and when loading software, saving, retrieving and printing their work correctly.

- They have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of their tasks and they are able to explain and discuss their work by using the appropriate technical vocabulary. They are effective in their use of word processing applications and desktop publishing.
- They make good use of information gained from a number of sources, including the internet, and show good skills when handling and modelling data.
- Pupils show a good awareness of social, economic, ethical and moral considerations when using information and communication technology.
- Less able pupils make good progress and attain good standards.

#### **Key stage 4**

- Pupils have a good understanding of the hypothetical concepts of their tasks and they are able to explain and discuss by using suitable technical vocabulary.
- They communicate information well and they are effective in their use of word processing applications and desktop publishing.
- Good use is made of information gained from a variety of sources, including the internet.
- The majority can identify realistic problems, collect a wide range of data, validate it and appraise their solutions to a high standard.
- The majority show a good understanding of computer systems, component parts and peripherals, including the range of input devices for human proactivity and data collection.
- A number of pupils demonstrate a good standard in their course work. They all produce interesting and challenging project work which reflects research work, problem-solving and perseverance.

#### **Shortcomings:**

- A minority of pupils in key stage 4 have not developed enough understanding to use the most complex facilities which are available in some software.

#### **The sixth form**

##### **Good features**

- Students show a high level of competence in computer skills in their course work and in every lesson. They are able to build and use complex systems which simulate realistic applications within society.
- The majority choose and adapt suitable techniques to solve problems and discuss subject concepts with understanding and confidence. They talk

confidently and use correct technical language about the work, and show a thorough knowledge of the specific qualities of the various applications.

- Students show a strong understanding and knowledge of the theory which relates to computer systems and they are willing to explain and to discuss a variety of topics. They develop and produce project work skilfully and imaginatively.

<b>Modern Foreign Languages (French)</b>
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**Key stage 3 – Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

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

**Sixth form – Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

**Good features**

153 In both key stages, pupils:

- listen attentively to speech and concentrate well when reading;
- understand the main points of what they hear or read; and
- make a good effort to understand language that is sometimes challenging, although they do not always succeed in understanding everything.

154 In key stage 3, pupils:

- are all willing to offer oral answers;
- answer various simple personal questions enthusiastically, for example, about their family or the area;
- produce short written descriptions with help from textbooks or worksheets; and
- begin writing or speaking in different tenses.

155 Pupils of lower ability attain good standards, considering their potential.

156 In key stage 4, pupils:

- extend their understanding of French grammar;
- answer oral questions well when they have already practised the answers; and
- by modifying other examples, can write elementary descriptions and letters, by using different tenses.

157 The most able pupils:

- understand the main points in comparatively complex written texts; and
- begin using spoken language flexibly and, by redrafting their work thoroughly and carefully, produce good quality written work.

### **Shortcomings**

158 In both key stages, pupils, in particular the most able, do not develop sufficient skills to produce a wide range of written or spoken language. They do not:

- fully absorb and analyse the language that they are reading or hearing, although they understand the main points and they are able to do the activities offered;
- sufficiently develop the ability to recycle language in order to speak or write more fluently, or adapt questions to form answers; nor are they able as a result; and
- speak or write sufficiently extendedly or imaginatively.

### **The sixth form:**

159 The results in recent years have been generally good.

### **Good features**

160 Students:

- understand satisfactorily spoken and written language that is sometimes difficult;
- speak simple language confidently;
- write satisfactorily, and the standard of writing has improved during the year;
- understand a good percentage of complex language at a normal pace on tape or video, and are able to speak sensibly about it;
- are able to respond well to written work;
- re-use and adapt spoken or written language skilfully to produce their own language; and
- consequently, speak and write well.

### **Shortcomings**

161 Year 12 make some elementary errors when writing, and their understanding of grammar is again too limited. Not all of them are confident when discussing course texts and the range of their expression is narrow.

## **Business Studies**

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

**Sixth form – Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings**

**Key stage 4**

**Good features**

- A good number of business studies pupils have succeeded in gaining GCSE grades A\*-C during the past two years.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the concepts of the subject, for example, the work on costs, the break-even point in relation to total costs and total expenditure. Pupils show a good understanding of the difference between fixed costs and variable costs and how to calculate the average price of products.
- Pupils can differentiate between set-up costs and running costs and can answer questions well by using relevant business terminology, including terms such as internal finance and external finance.
- They use good examples of variable costs in business studies and link them to local examples, where appropriate, and explain complex terms accurately.
- In general, the majority develop class work and project work to a high standard, with effective use of information technology. On the whole, pupils are able to produce a list of costs associated with a business, and to share and present that information effectively in their computer files. A good standard of written work is presented. Pupils' level of understanding of business concepts has increased significantly.

162 Pupils of lower ability are able to:

- answer questions on the profit and loss account correctly; and
- work confidently and independently on financial project work.

**Shortcomings**

- Only a minority of pupils are able to identify the break-even point and to continue with the task of calculating variable costs.
- The computer skills of a significant minority of pupils have not been fully developed.

**The sixth form**

**Good features**

- The results of advanced supplementary and A level courses have been consistently good for the past three years. The majority of pupils have made good progress in their work.
- The most able students in Year 13 understand challenging concepts well and a good percentage of the course work of Year 13 students is of a high standard.
- The majority of students have a good understanding of a range of business studies terms. Year 12 students show a good knowledge of the course and of concepts such as stock control and stock analysis in diagram form to a satisfactory standard.
- Pupils use their knowledge of business effectively and are able to offer appropriate reasons why a department is an effective buying organisation or not.

### **Shortcomings**

- A minority of pupils are unsure of business terminology and others are reluctant to contribute to classroom discussions.
- The standard of course work and the file work of some students is careless at times.

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

The new Head will give the report his professional consideration and influence on matters that are a priority for the school and its community in order to move forward and respond to the challenge of raising standards in the future.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Pentrefelin Amlwch Anglesey
Post code	LL68 9TH
Telephone number	01407 830287
Headteacher	Mr O.Gwyn Davies
Date of appointment	September 1994
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority	Mr Jac Jones
Reporting Inspector	Mr Gareth Wyn Jones
Dates of inspection	24-04-06 to 28-04-06

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y 7	Y 8	Y 9	Y 10	Y 11	Y 12	Y 13	Total
Number of pupils	136	147	171	151	157	65	51	878

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	55	3	56.3

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher ratio (fte) (excluding special classes)	15.67
Pupil: adult ratio (fte) in special classes	No special classes
Average teaching group size	20.3
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	76

Percentage attendance for the three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Term 1	93.6	92.7	89.4	87.3	88.6	94.5	92.5	91.2
Term 2	90.8	88.9	86.7	84.5	93.9	94.3	95.6	90.7
Term 3	90	87.6	86.7	81.4	83	91.7	89	87.1

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	17.2
Number of pupils excluded during the 12 months prior to the inspection	53 temporary 5 permanent

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum assessment results end of Key Stage 3

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2005 (national figures for 2004)																
Total number of pupils in Y9: = 152																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP	
English	Teacher Assessment	School		1	1			1	13	24	32	20	9			
		National		1	1			2	8	21	34	24	9			
	Test	School			6					14	24	28	19	8		
		National		4	2					8	20	33	23	10		
Welsh	Teacher Assessment	School						1	5	28	24	18	9			
		National							6	20	34	29	10			
	Test	School		5						1	39	33	14	8		
		National		2	1					5	19	35	28	10		
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School							7	16	27	36	14			
		National		1	1			1	7	19	26	32	14			
	Test	School		6						4	19	27	32	12		
		National		5	2					5	17	20	36	15		
Science	Teacher Assessment	School		1						4	26	26	32	11		
		National		1	1					6	20	33	27	12		
	Test	School		2						4	20	34	31	9		
		National		4	1					5	17	33	28	13		

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) (all figures 2005)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	54%	In the school	51.3%
In Wales	58%	In Wales	57%

### 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 2005	160
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	44

<b>The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:</b>	School	UA	Wales
were entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent qualification	94	90	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	56	53	52
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	93	88	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	44	42	38
were entered for at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	99	98	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	81	79	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	97	95	93
did not attain any GCSE grade or the vocational qualification equivalent	3	5	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	0	0	0
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0	0	0

<b>For pupils aged 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2005	117
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent qualifications in 2005	37
Number of pupils who sat fewer than 2 GCE A level examinations or equivalent qualifications in 2005	14

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	70	68	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	100	93	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	20	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ level 2	0	0	0
Number of pupils who achieved GNVQ Advanced or NVQ level 3	0	0	0

UA – Unitary Authority

## Appendix 4

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

Twelve inspectors and one nominee spent a total of 43 days in the school.

The inspectors visited:

- a total of 102 lessons in the six subjects which were inspected;
- 22 lessons in other subjects; and
- samples of tutorial and registration sessions and services.

Members of the inspection team held meetings with:

- the headteacher and other members of the senior management team, and other staff with leadership and management responsibilities;
- the governing body prior to the inspection; and
- groups representing pupils of each year group and the school council.

The inspectors also considered evidence of:

- samples of pupils' written work in every subject, representing every age and level of ability;
- school documents; and
- questionnaires returned by parents and their comments in the pre-inspection meeting with parents (in which 14 parents were present).

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Gareth Wyn Jones HMI	Reporting inspector and key question 1
Manon Wyn Sion	Key question 2 and Welsh first language
Delyth Roberts	Key question 3 and Science
W. Gwyn Thomas	Key question 3 and Business Studies
Billy Williams	Key question 4 and Mathematics
Emrys Price Jones	Key question 5 and Mathematics
Colin Rees	Key question 6 and Welsh first language
Peredur Francis	Key question 7 and Mathematics
William Owen	Lay inspector
Neil Trefor Jones	Science
Steffan James HMI	Modern Languages (French)
Keith Hopkins	Information Technology
Vaughan Williams	Nominee