

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

**Holyhead High School
Alderley Terrace
Holyhead
LL65 1NP**

School Number: 660/4026

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by

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- * work-based learning;
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Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi 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 Uwchradd Caergybi took place between 03/04/06 and 06/04/06. An independent team of inspectors, led by Garth Higginbotham undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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 special schools, pupil referral units and any new or amalgamated schools receive a full inspection.

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

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the school

1. Holyhead High School is a community school maintained by Isle of Anglesey Unitary Authority (UA). It is a comprehensive school, attended by boys and girls aged from 11 to 18. There are 853 pupils on roll, including 102 in the sixth-form. The roll has fallen by 247 since the previous inspection and has dropped by more than 60 in each of the last two years.
2. The school is situated close to the centre of the town of Holyhead. Pupils come from the town and the surrounding areas. The school's catchment area includes four wards to which the National Assembly for Wales has granted *Communities First* status because of their high levels of economic and social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is 22.7 percent, rather higher than the figure of 17 percent for the whole of the UA. However, about 28 percent of pupils are in families where there is no wage-earner.
3. Around 95 percent of pupils speak English at home. Four percent of pupils speak Welsh as a first language and another eight percent are able to speak Welsh fluently. Only about one percent of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages. Three pupils are awaiting support teaching in English as an additional language (EAL).
4. The abilities of pupils entering Year 7, as measured by standardised tests, cover the full range, but there are very few highly able pupils and many whose verbal, non-verbal and numerical skills are weak. There are 26 pupils who have a statement of special educational need (SEN) and a further 223 receive special learning support. In total, just over 29 percent of pupils have some SEN, compared with about 20 percent across Wales.
5. The structure of the management team has changed since the last inspection; there has been a reduction in the number of management posts. The Leadership Team comprises the headteacher, a deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher. There are eight curriculum leaders (one of whom is the assistant headteacher), a Pupil Development Leader (PDL) for each of key stages 3 and 4, a social inclusion coordinator and a head of sixth-form who is also head of careers.
6. The school was last inspected in the Spring term 2000.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's mission statement declares that 'it works in partnership with the community for the success of your child.' It commits the school to prepare pupils for their adult life by providing the best for them in terms of:

- values;
- teaching experiences and academic success;
- a safe and happy environment; and
- a range of sporting, artistic and cultural activities,

and in helping pupils to play an active role in their bilingual community.

8. The school's main priorities for development over the coming year include:

- an improvement in pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- a new active learning course for Years 7 and 8;
- curriculum developments to promote pupils' inclusion and reduce their disaffection;
- the improvement of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills;
- development of improved assessment procedures that effectively promote pupils' attainment;
- provision of high quality training for all members of staff; and
- an improvement in the provision for pupils with SEN.

Summary

Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	4
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?	3
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?	3

9. The grades in the above table agree with the grades in the school's self-assessment for key questions 2, 4, 5 and 6. In each of key questions 1, 3 and 7, the grades are one grade lower than managers awarded.

Standards

Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection Area	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Sixth-form
Mathematics	3	4	2
Welsh second language	3	3	2
Design technology	3	3	n/a
History	3	3	2
Music	3	3	3
Religious education	4	4	n/a

10. The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that pupils and students achieved in lessons in the six subjects we inspected.

67 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	5	13	68	13	0
Key stage 4	0	18	73	9	0
Combined KS 3 & 4	3	15	70	12	0
Sixth-form	0	86	14	0	0
Whole school	3	22	62	10	0

Key stages 3 and 4

11. These figures for pupils' achievement are well below national targets. The figures suggest that standards have gone down in the last six years.
12. We found that:
- pupils do better than some of the targets that the UA sets, but miss many others by a long way, particularly in key stage 4;
 - on average, pupils attain below the average attainment of pupils in Wales; and
 - on most measures, pupils perform, on average, less well than pupils in over half of all similar schools throughout Wales.
13. In 2004, the percentage of pupils who gained the expected levels in English, mathematics and science in key stage 3 was 44 percent, compared to 58 percent for Wales and in key stage 4 it was 26 percent, compared to 37 percent for Wales. The results in key stage 3 are lower than in over three quarters of similar schools and in key stage 4 are lower than in a half of similar schools.
14. Pupils' communication skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Pupils' numerical skills are generally adequate. Their skills in using information and communications technology (ICT) develop well.

15. The development of pupils' bilingual skills varies widely. Generally, pupils are not confident to speak Welsh in different situations because they have few opportunities to use the language.
16. Some pupils have good attendance. Nevertheless, overall, pupils are absent from school on far too many occasions. Absence undermines the progress of a significant minority of pupils and is a major factor holding down their attainment.
17. In about three quarters of lessons, pupils settle quickly and take part with interest in the work of the class. In other lessons, a number of pupils talk to each other while the teacher is speaking or shout out comments and answers.
18. Generally, pupils' personal, social and learning skills develop well.
19. Pupils with SEN make generally good progress.

The sixth-form

20. Across all subjects last year, in the AS level examinations in Year 12, students achieved higher grades, on average, than students throughout Wales in four subjects but achieved lower grades, on average, than other students in 11 subjects. The percentage of awards at grades A or B was significantly higher than that for all Wales in two subjects and significantly lower in 11 subjects.
21. In A2 examinations in Year 13, students achieved higher grades, on average, than students throughout Wales in five subjects but achieved lower grades, on average, than other students in seven subjects. The percentage of awards at grades A or B was significantly higher than that for all Wales in five subjects and significantly lower in another five subjects.
22. In both AS and A2 examinations, the proportion of awards at grades A to E was 100 percent in the great majority of subjects.
23. Students read well, understand ideas and are growing in confidence as their skills of critical analysis develop. Students' writing is also improving. Students' numerical skills are generally good and they apply them well. They are reasonably competent in using ICT.
24. Students generally apply themselves diligently to their work. They listen attentively and generally gain a good understanding. However, many students are reluctant to speak in class and this limits their progress.
25. Students have a good understanding of how well they are attaining.

The quality of education and training

26. The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons we inspected.

105 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	9	23	62	4	2
Key stage 4	8	30	51	11	0
Combined KS 3 & 4	9	25	58	7	1
Sixth-form	13	67	20	0	0
Whole school	10	31	52	6	1

27. These figures for the quality of teaching are well below national targets. There are some outstanding features of the teaching in 10 percent of lessons. Overall, however, the quality of teaching is slightly lower than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
28. There are shortcomings in many lessons, some of which are important.
29. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures have many good features. However, the rigour with which managers apply these assessment procedures varies between departments.
30. The curriculum meets legal requirements and provides equality of access for all pupils. It is generally broad and balanced in each key stage. Pupils study Welsh throughout key stages 3 and 4. Few subjects securely embed Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig into their schemes of work.
31. The provision to promote learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has good features that outweigh shortcomings.
32. Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools and colleges do much to enrich pupils' learning experiences. However, links with parents are not strong enough.
33. The programmes for personal, health and social education, work related education and careers education and guidance have many good features and comply with Welsh Assembly guidelines. The school does much to make pupils aware of issues relating to sustainable development and global citizenship. There is also good provision to promote entrepreneurial and other business skills.
34. There is good quality of care, support and guidance for pupils. The two teachers appointed to the new post of Pupil Development Leader manage a number of worthwhile systems very effectively. There are sound child-protection procedures of which all members of staff are fully aware.
35. Pupils with SEN learn mainly in small classes. Teachers take care to plan work that takes account of their needs and allows them to make good progress. There are projects designed to maintain the enthusiasm of the most able pupils, but lesson plans rarely include specific mention of activities for gifted and talented pupils.

The sixth-form

36. The quality of the teaching in the sixth-form is good. It is ahead of national target figures. The figures show a small improvement since the previous inspection.
37. The assessment, recording and reporting of students' work has good features and no important shortcomings.
38. Access to the sixth-form is open to all pupils. Students have opportunities to gain qualifications at AS and A2 levels and in some vocational courses. Distance learning programmes and partnerships broaden students' choice of AS and A2 courses.
39. The school has a close partnership with *Careers Wales*.

Leadership and management

40. The three members of the Leadership Team have a strong sense of purpose and a sharp focus on quality and standards.
41. The School Improvement Plan focuses appropriately on local and national priorities. Senior managers have a clear view of the main challenges that face the school and have, for many years, directed the school's resources to address these matters.
42. Senior managers provide clear guidance and good support for departmental teams and individual teachers. While the great majority of middle managers share the vision of senior managers, there is much inconsistency in the rigour with which departments and individuals implement whole-school strategies. Overall, middle managers have not been effective enough. Members of the office staff carry important responsibilities and play a major role in the school's management.
43. Governors have a useful range of expertise and ably fulfil their roles. For the most part, they play a supportive, rather than a leading role in monitoring and strategic planning and generally do not have first-hand knowledge of departmental issues.
44. The school's self-evaluation report thoroughly addresses the seven key questions of the inspection framework. In four of the key questions, our findings confirm the grades that managers awarded, but in key questions 1, 3 and 7, the balance of good features and shortcomings that we found led us to award a grade that was, in each case, one lower than the grade that managers awarded.
45. The self-evaluation report reflects a process that is starting to take root in the school. However, self-evaluation is not firmly at the heart of school improvement in every department. Despite several successful outcomes of self-evaluation, the process has not been effective enough in identifying and addressing many of the shortcomings in teaching and assessment that we describe in this report. Managers and teachers have not taken appropriately

rigorous action to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards.

46. The school has implemented performance management procedures but there is some variation in the effectiveness with which these operate.
47. There are enough members of the staff for the school to run efficiently. Teachers and members of the support staff attend a suitable range of in-school and external training courses.
48. The quality and quantity of learning resources in the subjects we inspected are adequate. The refurbished library is a good resource for teaching and learning. Pupils generally have good access to computers.
49. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. The main shortcomings are the overall drab nature of the site and the poor interior decoration of some rooms.
50. The headteacher, the financial manager and the governors provide competent financial management. However, in the light of shortcomings noted in this report, particularly in the standards that pupils achieve and in the quality of teaching, the school provides inadequate value for money.

Progress since the last inspection

51. The school has made good progress in relation to five key issues in the previous inspection. Pupils are achieving better standards in ICT. The library is now an effective resource for teaching and learning. The provision of personal and social education is of far better quality. There is a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. There are religious education lessons for all sixth-form students, but they do not attend the lesson regularly. There is a new design and technology building.
52. However, pupils' standards of achievement in several core and non-core foundation subjects of the National Curriculum have not risen sufficiently. Key issues 1 and 3 therefore remain as key issue in this report and as matters for the school to address.

Recommendations

- R1 Teachers and managers should work to improve the quality of teaching to match the best in the school, so that, in every lesson, pupils:
- work conscientiously in a calm, friendly and lively atmosphere;
 - work effectively with others and gain confidence to learn independently;
 - achieve challenging learning objectives; and, wherever appropriate
 - use and extend their language skills and other skills that relate to the subject they are studying.

- R2 As a result of this better teaching, teachers and managers should ensure that pupils and students achieve higher standards.
- R3 Managers should create systems that will make sure that teachers give pupils and students a better understanding of how well they are achieving and of what they need to do to improve.
- R4 Senior and middle managers should improve the rigour of their self-evaluation and monitoring.
- R5 Managers should find ways to make sure that, every day, pupils and students meet a tutor who can get to know them well and to whom they feel able to turn for help and advice.
- R6 In partnership with officers of Anglesey Unitary Authority and other agencies, managers should find ways to form a strong partnership with parents and to get pupils to go to school every day.

While the number of subjects we inspected was fewer than those on which the previous inspection team reported, and included only one of the core subjects, the indications are that, in several subjects, standards have either not improved very much or have declined. The following key issues from the previous inspection report therefore remain as issues for the school to address:

Key issue 1: to raise standards of achievement in subjects where they are identified as unsatisfactory; and

Key issue 3: to improve standards of achievement in English, mathematics and science.

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. The school will circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

53. The grade we awarded is one grade lower than the grade 3 that managers awarded in their self-evaluation report. Managers did not give enough weight to how pupils' attainment compares with that of pupils in other schools, to the quality of pupils' achievement in class or to the impact of poor attendance.

Key stages 3 and 4

54. The following table shows the grades we awarded for the standards that pupils achieved in lessons in the six subjects we inspected.

60 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	5	13	68	13	0
Key stage 4	0	18	73	9	0
Combined KS 3 & 4	3	15	70	12	0

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

55. Targets for the whole of Wales are that, by 2007, standards should be grade 3 or better in at least 98 percent of lessons and grade 2 or better in at least 65 percent of lessons. Overall, in the six subjects we inspected, pupils' achievement is well below these national targets.

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

56. We evaluated pupils' performance in public examinations and national tests by comparing their attainment with:
- the UA's predictions of their attainment based on what they have attained earlier in their education;
 - the attainment of all pupils in Wales; and
 - the attainment of pupils in similar schools throughout Wales.
57. We found that:
- pupils do better than some of the UA targets, but miss many others by a long way, particularly in key stage 4;
 - on average, pupils attain below the average attainment of pupils in Wales; and
 - on most measures, pupils perform, on average, less well than pupils in over half of all similar schools throughout Wales.

58. The UA analyses pupils' achievements throughout their academic careers and, on this basis, predicts how well they are likely to do in their next tests or examinations.

59. In relation to these predictions, the good features are that, in tests and examinations in 2005, from year groups of around 160 pupils:

- about 20 more pupils than predicted gained level 5 in key stage 3 tests in mathematics and science; and
- about six more than predicted attained level 5 or better in all three core subjects (English or Welsh, mathematics and science),

and that, in 2004:

- about 30 pupils more than predicted gained level 5 in the three core subjects, with the girls doing very well and coming close to the average for girls throughout Wales.

60. The shortcomings are that, in key stage 3:

- about 10 fewer pupils than predicted attained level 5 in English;

and that, compared with predictions for key stage 4:

- about 15 fewer pupils gained five GCSE awards at grades A* to C;
- about 20 fewer gained five GCSE awards at grades A* to G;
- about 20 fewer gained grade C or better in English;
- about 5 fewer gained grade C or better in mathematics; and
- about 7 fewer gained grade C or better in science.

61. Each year, pupils in Year 7 sit Cognitive Abilities tests. These show that pupils' verbal, non-verbal and quantitative abilities:

- are below national averages;
- are particularly low in verbal reasoning; and, for several years
- have been lower for each new group of pupils in Year 7 than they were for the year before.

62. It is therefore likely that pupils' attainments will be lower than the Wales' averages.

63. This is indeed the case. If we look at the core subject indicator¹, we find that:

- in 2004, the key stage 3 indicator was 44 percent, compared to 58 percent for Wales;

¹ The core subject indicator in key stage 3 is the percentage of pupils who gain level 5 or better in the core subjects of English or Welsh, mathematics and science, and in key stage 4 is the percentage of pupils who gain at least grade C in each of these three subjects in GCSE examinations.

- in 2005, that indicator fell back to 38 percent (with no figure available for Wales);
 - in 2004, the key stage 4 indicator was 26 percent, compared to 37 percent for Wales; and
 - in 2005, this indicator rose, but only to 28 percent.
64. In key stage 4, the percentage of pupils who gained five GCSE awards at grade C or better was 35 percent, compared to 51 percent for Wales. While the figure for Wales has been rising over the years, the figure for Holyhead has fallen. In 2000, it was 46 percent.
65. We also looked at the average grade that pupils achieved in each subject at GCSE and entry level.
66. The good features for 2005 are that:
- there were six GCSE subjects in which pupils gained a higher average grade than did pupils throughout Wales; and
 - in two of these subjects, the difference was more than one grade.
67. The shortcomings are that:
- there were 18 GCSE subjects and five entry-level subjects in which pupils gained a lower average grade than did pupils throughout Wales; and
 - in eight of these GCSE subjects and three of these entry-level subjects, the difference was more than one grade.
68. Girls attain higher standards than boys in almost every subject. In GCSE mathematics and science, the difference between the percentages of boys and girls who attain grade C or better is just over 10 percentage points, compared with about 2 percentage points for all pupils in Wales. In English, the difference of 16 percentage points is in line with the national difference, (but both boys' and girls' attainment is lower than that for pupils throughout Wales by about 17 percentage points). In key stage 3, boys and girls achieve very similarly in mathematics and science, but boys' attainment is 29 percentage points lower than that of girls in English.
69. When we compare pupils' attainment with that of pupils in similar schools throughout Wales (i.e. schools where between 20 percent and 30 percent of pupils are entitled to free school meals) we find that, in most respects, Holyhead High School does better than a quarter of other schools but less well than half of them. Generally, these comparisons show that Holyhead High School did not do as well in relation to these similar schools in 2005 as it did in 2004.
70. Aspects which are better than this general picture include:
- pupils' attainment in mathematics in both key stages 3 and 4, including the high percentages of pupils in key stage 3 who gained levels 6 and 7;
 - the percentage of pupils who gained at least one GCSE award at grade G or above; and

- in 2005, the percentage of pupils in key stage 4 who attained a GCSE award in science at grade C or above.
71. The weakest aspects of pupils' performance have been:
- in English, at both key stages 3 and 4; and, consequently
 - in the core subject indicators for both key stage 3 and key stage 4.
72. Overall, the figures do not present a picture of gradual improvement over the years.
73. Pupils' communication skills have good features that outweigh shortcomings.
74. Generally, pupils listen quite well to their teachers and to each other and are able to follow the development of ideas. In over a half of lessons, pupils:
- take an active part in class discussions;
 - talk together well in small groups to get a job done or to reason out ideas;
 - put forward points of view with a growing confidence;
 - respond to questions in a way that shows a good knowledge and understanding of their work; and
 - use technical terms correctly.
75. In other lessons, however, pupils lack confidence to venture an opinion or flesh out an idea orally, and they often respond using only single words or short phrases. In a few classes, pupils shout out comments and answers rather thoughtlessly.
76. Most pupils read well in relation to their general level of attainment. They read aloud accurately and fluently and some do so with good expression. They can scan texts for information and use computers for research. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 use the school library regularly to read for pleasure. There is, however, a minority of pupils in these earlier years who are not able to read as well as they should. They do not read fluently and sometimes fail to understand the full meaning that the writer is trying to convey. Standardised tests show that the school's strategies are helping pupils to read better and many older pupils are able to read, understand and interpret texts quite well. Pupils with SEN make good progress in reading.
77. The quality of pupils' writing varies a lot from class to class. Generally, pupils present their work well and their spelling and punctuation are quite good. They understand that there are different modes of writing and that they must adapt their style to suit their audience and the purpose of the piece of work. They plan and draft their work well. In several subjects, there are classes where pupils write a worthwhile amount, set out ideas clearly and marshal evidence to support a point of view. Often within the same subjects, however, there are other classes where pupils write far too little and do not use writing to advance their understanding or develop their reasoning skills. A small number of pupils write carelessly, do little in the time available and have incomplete work from times when they have been absent.

78. Pupils' numerical skills are generally adequate. Some of the best work takes place in design and technology, where pupils weigh and measure accurately and think carefully about the amounts of materials or ingredients they need for a task. Many pupils, however, lack confidence in their ability to handle numerical ideas and cannot apply the concepts they have learned in new contexts or to everyday situations. A school project is getting under way to promote consistency in the teaching of mathematical ideas across all departments.
79. Pupils' skills in using ICT develop well during the key stage 3 course. However, pupils do not consistently apply or extend their skills in the other subjects they study. In the subjects we inspected, some of the best work takes place in both key stages in design and technology, and in Welsh in key stage 3. In mathematics, history and music, and in Welsh in key stage 4, pupils use ICT but not as extensively or as effectively as they might. In religious education, there is little purposeful use of ICT. Outside lesson time, pupils have good access to computers but, on the whole, teachers do not provide stimulating reasons for pupils to find information from the Internet, refine their own work or present it in an attractive way. Pupils with SEN make little use of ICT to help overcome their difficulties and allow them to learn more effectively.
80. Pupils' bilingual skills do not develop well, as they have few opportunities to speak Welsh in different situations, in or out of lessons. Overall, however, the good features outweigh the shortcomings. Pupils understand spoken Welsh well and can read texts of an appropriate level of difficulty. A few pupils speak very well, using a wide vocabulary and a variety of constructions. Many others can hold a conversation in Welsh, but, generally, pupils lack confidence to try to communicate and to learn through their mistakes. A few pupils write well in Welsh, but too many basic errors often mar pupils' expressive writing.

Pupils' progress in learning

81. While some pupils have good attendance, the overall picture is that pupils are absent from school on far too many occasions. This undermines their progress and is a major factor holding down their attainment. The attendance rate last year was 84 percent. High numbers of pupils are absent without good cause or go on family holidays during term-time. Managers feel that pupils take time off for minor medical conditions. They feel they do not have the support of some parents in making sure their children are in school whenever possible. In Years 7 and 8, only 84 percent of pupils were present in the lessons we inspected. In other year groups, attendance rates were lower than this. In Years 9 and 11, where pupils were preparing for key stage 3 tests or GCSE examinations, the average attendance was only 77 percent.
82. In about three quarters of lessons, pupils settle quickly and take part with interest in the work of the class. In other lessons, a number of pupils do not concentrate. They talk to each other while the teacher is speaking or shout out comments and answers. In these lessons, where teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour effectively, the learning experience is not as enjoyable as it should be and all the pupils make less progress than they should.

83. In the lessons where pupils behave well, they generally make quite good progress in knowledge, understanding and skills. However, pupils' progress in the skills of language and communication tends to be too slow because, in many lessons, there is not enough challenge or support for them to practise these skills.
84. Pupils with SEN generally make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils also make good progress, but there is little to spur on these pupils to achieve exceptionally well.
85. While a few teachers give pupils a clear idea of the level at which they are working in relation to examination grades or the levels of the National Curriculum, most pupils do not know clearly enough how well they are doing or how their work would need to improve to reach the next level. Pupils evaluate their work thoughtfully in design and technology. In physical education, they often work in pairs, watching and evaluating each others' performance.

The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills

86. There are good features in the development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills that outweigh shortcomings. On the whole, pupils:
 - have a positive attitude towards their school and towards their work;
 - show respect for teachers, fellow pupils and visitors;
 - are friendly, courteous and helpful and behave well;
 - concentrate to the best of their ability, listen attentively and take part willingly in tasks and activities;
 - work together well in pairs and small groups;
 - have respect for a diversity of lifestyles, beliefs and other cultures;
 - understand the importance of equality of opportunity in society;
 - have a good understanding of the demands of the workplace and the responsibilities of living in a local community;
 - respect their environment; and
 - make good progress in personal, social and moral development.
87. These attitudes and skills stem from:
 - the friendly atmosphere in the school and the respect that teachers show for pupils;
 - interesting school assemblies;
 - lessons in personal and social education and in other subjects, including food technology and Welsh;
 - presentations by members of the school's *Amnesty International* group;
 - work experience and community work; and
 - pupils engaging in charitable work and taking on roles of responsibility as school councillors, librarians or as guides on Open Evenings.

88. However, there are shortcomings in pupils' progress in developing personal, social and learning skills because a sizeable minority of pupils:
- do not attend school regularly;
 - do not always complete written work;
 - often fail to catch up on work they missed while they were absent;
 - do not always complete coursework assignments on time;
 - in a few lessons, show immature attitudes and talk to each other when they should be listening and working;
 - lack confidence to work independently; and
 - do not know how to learn effectively.
89. When teachers present a task as a problem for pupils to solve, pupils generally rise to the challenge. They consider problems carefully and often show perseverance, flair and imagination in reaching a solution.

The sixth-form

90. The following table shows the grades inspectors awarded for the standards that students achieved in lessons in the four subjects we inspected at this level.

7 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Sixth-form	0	86	14	0	0

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

91. Across all subjects last year, in the AS level examinations in Year 12, students achieved higher grades, on average, than students throughout Wales in four subjects (in one case, by almost 2 grades) but achieved lower grades, on average, than other students in 11 subjects (in four cases, by more than 1 grade). The percentage of awards at grades A or B was significantly higher than that for all Wales in two subjects and significantly lower in 11 subjects.
92. In A2 examinations in Year 13, students achieved higher grades, on average, than students throughout Wales in five subjects (in one case, by more than one grade) but achieved lower grades, on average, than other students in seven subjects (in three cases, by more than 1 grade). The percentage of awards at grades A or B was significantly higher than that for all Wales in five subjects and significantly lower in another five subjects.
93. In both AS and A2 examinations, the proportion of awards at grades A to E was 100 percent in the great majority of subjects.
94. Students read well. They respond well to a wide range of challenging texts. They understand ideas well and are growing in confidence as their skills of critical analysis are developing. Students' writing is also improving as they learn from their redrafting of work and from the helpful written comments of their teachers. Students generally structure their work soundly and organise it well. They can develop sound written arguments and include relevant quotations. They adapt vocabulary, style and form to fit the purpose of their writing.

95. Students' numerical skills are generally good and they apply them well.
96. Students are reasonably competent in using ICT and they apply their skills quite well. In several subjects, including the four we inspected at this level, students use ICT to support their studies. Overall, however, ICT is not having a big impact on the standards that students achieve.

Students' progress in learning

97. For the most part, students apply themselves diligently to their work. They listen attentively and generally gain a good understanding of topics under discussion. Many students are reluctant to speak in class and this limits their progress. They generally answer questions correctly but do not take enough advantage of oral work to develop their ideas and deepen their understanding. On the other hand, there are a few subjects, particularly history and applied business studies, where students speak with confidence, putting forward complex arguments or negotiating group action. These students make good progress.
98. Students have a good understanding of how well they are attaining. They know the grades they are aiming for and teachers' oral and written comments clearly identify the good and weaker features of their work and set them targets for improvement. On the whole, students respond well to this encouragement and are gaining the skills of independent learning that they will need in further and higher education.

The development of students' personal, social and learning skills

99. The development of students' personal, social and learning skills is good with no important shortcomings because students:
 - show positive attitudes to learning;
 - engage willingly in lessons;
 - behave well and are considerate, respectful and supportive of one another;
 - collaborate well in small groups and pairs;
 - undertake research and show a growing confidence to work independently;
 - contribute to the life of the school by effectively engaging in charitable projects, duties, the School Council and by supporting younger pupils; and
 - respond well to advice on how to improve their work.
100. The main shortcoming is that a few students do not attend school regularly. Their absence is impeding their progress in learning and the standards they are achieving.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

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

102. The following table shows the grades we awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in all the lessons we inspected in key stages 3 and 4.

90 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
Key stage 3	9	23	62	4	2
Key stage 4	8	30	51	11	0
Combined KS 3 & 4	9	25	58	7	1

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

103. Targets for the whole of Wales are that, by 2007, the quality of teaching should be grade 3 or better in at least 98 percent of lessons and grade 2 or better in at least 65 percent of lessons. Overall, the quality of teaching is well below these national targets.

104. Since the previous inspection, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of lessons that are good with outstanding features (grade 1), but also an increase in the percentage that have important shortcomings (grade 4). The percentage of lessons inspectors judged to be grade 2 has gone down a lot.

105. The good and occasionally outstanding features are that teachers:

- communicate a thorough knowledge and understanding of their subject;
- move lessons forward at a lively pace and provide a challenge for pupils at every step;
- make pupils constantly aware of the high standards they should be aiming for;
- ask questions that challenge pupils to think and probe their understanding;
- create frequent opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and other skills;
- have positive working relationships with pupils and create an ethos of learning;
- set out clear learning objectives at the start of lessons, and review pupils' recall and understanding at the end;

- thoroughly plan and structure the lessons using a variety of activities and resources;
 - encourage all pupils to participate, so that everyone has an equal opportunity to learn;
 - find opportunities to make pupils aware of a range of life skills, diverse cultures and beliefs; and
 - adapt lessons well for pupils with SEN so that they can take a full part in the lesson and make good progress.
106. There are shortcomings in many lessons, some of which are important. These include:
- a slow pace, low expectations of what pupils can achieve and tasks that do not challenge pupils' abilities;
 - a failure to plan a lesson that caters for all the different pupils in the class;
 - a lack of rigorous questioning that probes and advances pupils' understanding;
 - a failure to tell pupils the learning objectives they are working towards or the quality of work that the teacher expects;
 - work that is too tightly prescribed, so that pupils have little opportunity to show initiative or acquire habits of independent learning; and
 - missed opportunities for pupils to develop their bilingual skills.

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

107. The procedures and practices for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements have good features that outweigh shortcomings because heads of department and teachers:
- are familiar with the school's database of information from primary schools, key stage 2 test results, cognitive test marks, effort grades, and target National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades for each pupil;
 - use the database effectively to identify pupils with special educational needs;
 - test pupils each term and award grades for effort and attainment;
 - use the information to inform parents of pupils' progress;
 - track pupils' progress and identify pupils who are not achieving as well as they could;
 - meet examination board and National Curriculum assessment requirements;
 - keep records of pupils' attendance and of their attainment in classwork and homework;
 - review pupils' progress and complete annual subject reports for parents and carers;
 - gain an overview of pupils' work in order to monitor pupils' progress and the work of teachers in the department; and
 - are becoming more perceptive in analysing the results of external examinations.
108. However, the rigour with which managers apply these assessment procedures varies between departments. There is some good practice in design and technology, history and Welsh, but, overall, heads of department and teachers do not do enough to:

- explain to pupils, in simple words, the objectives for each part of the course and what they will need to show they know, understand and can do in tests and examinations;
 - tell pupils what they need to do to improve, so that their work matches these objectives;
 - set out, for pupils in key stage 3, simple descriptions of work at the different National Curriculum levels, so that pupils know what they need to do to reach the next level;
 - talk clearly to pupils in class about the standard of their work and how it could be better;
 - involve pupils in self-assessment, so that they understand their own strengths and areas where they need to improve;
 - use data effectively to track pupils' progress and identify those who are not achieving as much as they could;
 - use annual reports to inform parents of the aspects of the subject that pupils need to master;
 - make sure that all teachers in a department mark pupils' work in a consistent way; and
 - use what they learn from assessments to help them plan more effective lessons and, if necessary, modify schemes of work.
109. PDLs for key stages 3 and 4, use the database to track individual pupils' progress in each subject. Periodically, they scrutinise pupils' books, identify pupils who are not achieving well enough and tell their parents. They work closely with heads of department, the Education Welfare Officer and various agencies to help pupils deal with problems they may be facing and to improve their attainment. They closely monitor pupils in Year 11 who they feel are achieving less than they should. Learning coaches², university students and the PDLs also mentor the pupils. Form tutors write an overview of pupils' annual reports and discuss their progress with them each term, but there is not enough daily contact between tutors and pupils for this support to be really effective.
110. Senior managers have prepared an appropriate whole-school policy and an outline mark scheme to guide departmental practice. The common mark scheme does not do enough to inform pupils about the levels at which they are working, about the levels they should be achieving or about what they need to do to improve. Senior managers use their link with departments to monitor their practice. They discuss examination results with heads of department, review progress and agree challenging targets for pupils' attainment in the year ahead. Senior managers accurately identify effective departmental assessment strategies and use them as a basis for whole-school development and for in-service training courses.

² A learning coach is an employed person, not connected to the school, who gets to know pupils, talks to them about his or her own life and work and motivates them to do well in their school work, to have high ambitions and to play a full role in society.

The sixth-form

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

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

15 lessons	% Grade 1	% Grade 2	% Grade 3	% Grade 4	% Grade 5
The sixth-form	13	67	20	0	0

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

112. The quality of the teaching in the sixth-form is good. It is ahead of national target figures, as it is in almost all sixth-forms. The figures show a small improvement on the previous inspection.

113. The good and outstanding features described above for key stages 3 and 4 are also present in most sixth-form lessons. In addition, in some lessons, teachers:

- effectively encourage students to develop as independent learners;
- explore in depth students' understanding of some complex concepts and principles; and
- offer effective support and helpful criticism to individual students and show them where they needed to make progress.

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

114. The assessment, recording and reporting of students' work has good features and no important shortcomings because teachers:

- tell each student the grades they are working towards in their AS or A2 examinations in each subject;
- set regular examinations for students;
- check students' progress twice each term by comparing their current work against the grades they are aware they should achieve;
- negotiate targets for improvement with students in a process of student self-assessment;
- mentor those students who are not attaining their target grades;
- provide progress reports that include information on students' performance and attendance and their success in meeting deadlines;
- share this information with the head of the sixth-form, who monitors students' progress across all subjects and mentors those who are not performing as well as they might; and
- write annual reports that identify aspects of the subject on which students need to work and include targets for improvement.

115. The main shortcoming in assessment is that class tutors do not meet their students every day and are not involved enough in regularly monitoring their progress.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

116. The grade we awarded is one grade lower than the grade 2 that managers awarded in their self-evaluation. Our grading reflects shortcomings in a number of aspects of this key question.

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

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

118. The curriculum allows pupils of all abilities equality of access. In key stage 4, pupils can gain qualifications at GCSE, Entry Level and in vocational courses. Access to the sixth-form is open to all pupils. Students have opportunities to gain qualifications at AS and A2 levels and in some vocational courses.

119. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced in each key stage. The main good features are that:

- pupils in key stage 3 follow a good quality information technology course for one period a week;
- the great majority of pupils in key stage 4 study Welsh as a full GCSE course;
- there are a number of optional vocational courses for pupils in key stage 4 and for sixth-form students;
- in key stage 4, there is an appropriate range of alternative courses for pupils at risk of exclusion; and
- distance learning programmes and a partnership with the Technology Centre at Llangefni broaden students' choice of AS and A2 courses in the sixth-form.

120. The curriculum time for music and for design and technology in key stage 3 is rather low and there is no drama course.

121. There are some good features in the development of basic and key skills, namely that:

- the school has gained the Basic Skills Quality award;
- teaching strategies include a focus on literacy;
- there has been an audit of when and how departments deal with aspects of numeracy; and
- all schemes of work identify opportunities for pupils to practise key skills.

122. There are some shortcomings, namely that:

- the development of information technology is not effectively coordinated across all subjects in key stage 3;
- the findings of the numeracy survey have not led to a coordinated strategy to

- improve pupils' standards of numeracy; and
 - there is no structured programme for the development of key skills in the sixth form.
123. The range of extra-curricular activities for all years has good features that outweigh shortcomings. There is a good range of sporting activities, an annual drama production and a small number of clubs that meet fairly regularly. A number of visits abroad have enriched pupils' learning experiences and their personal and social development. However, the limited number of musical activities and the narrow range of clubs are shortcomings.
124. The school's provision to promote learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has good features that outweigh shortcomings.
125. The good features are that:
- teachers generally respect pupils and have good relationships with them;
 - Year Committees and the School Council give pupils and students the opportunity to express opinions, voice concerns and influence the life of the school;
 - assemblies give pupils opportunities to develop an understanding of beliefs and values;
 - many students in the sixth form provide valuable support for pupils in all years through the Peer Support initiative, and
 - many lessons and activities make pupils and students aware of the cultures of Wales and other places across the world.
126. However, there are some shortcomings, including:
- the lack of a daily tutor period that restricts pupils' social interaction and limits their opportunities to discuss academic and pastoral issues affecting them;
 - weak planning to present the spiritual aspect of several subjects;
 - a failure to make sure that sixth-form students attend the religious education lessons in the curriculum; and
 - the infrequent opportunities in several subjects for some pupils to participate in group-work.
127. The school's links with the community and with other institutions have good features that outweigh shortcomings. Clear paperwork and the active involvement of teachers and pupils make sure that everyone involved is well aware of what the school provides, what it needs and expects from its partners, and what its aspirations are. The good features include:
- the involvement of teachers and pupils in community development and regeneration through bodies such as *Anglesey Youth* and *The Holyhead Forward Board*;
 - the well-organised arrangements that help pupils to make the transition from primary school to secondary school;

- community support for the provision of vocational subjects, work-related education and some extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport; and
 - arrangements with other education providers to broaden the curriculum.
128. However, links with some parents are not effective and this makes it difficult to enlist their support to encourage their children to attend school regularly, to behave well and to show a full commitment to their work.
129. The school has links with a teacher training institution but has not taken part in training any student teachers this year.
130. The curriculum meets legal requirements. The programmes for personal, health and social education, work related education and careers education and guidance meet Welsh Assembly guidelines. Managers plan the individual programmes well to make sure they deal with all the topics that the guidelines set out and afford pupils progress in their learning. However, there has been no audit of the programmes to make sure that they do not overlap with topics that pupils study in other subjects.

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

131. The school provides good quality work-related education. The main aspect is a work-experience placement for all pupils in Year 10 and students in Year 12 that links to their career aspirations. There is a useful supporting programme that includes:
- events such as careers conferences;
 - talks by people involved in a variety of professions; and
 - visits to conferences and places of work.
132. The good features in the provision are:
- a worthwhile allocation of two weeks and the good organisation of the work placement in Year 10;
 - the close partnership with *Careers Wales*, whose advisers provide up-to-date information and guidance;
 - the assistance of the local community in contributing to vocational education, and in providing speakers on a range of topics; and
 - the range of assignments in the language subjects that draw on pupils' work-experience.
133. However, the lack of a timetable allocation for work-related education and careers education and guidance for sixth-form students undermines their effectiveness.
134. Pupils study Welsh throughout key stages 3 and 4. In all year-groups, pupils work in sets according to their fluency in Welsh. These arrangements make sure that there is an appropriate challenge for every pupil. First language pupils and advanced learners work together in the same class. Results in the full GCSE

Welsh course have improved year on year. The Welsh department helps pupils develop bilingual skills by taking part in *Urdd* activities and public speaking competitions and through its links with *Menter Môn*.

135. School assemblies are bilingual, but pupils have little opportunity to speak Welsh outside the classroom. Notices and displays do not consistently use both Welsh and English. Few subjects securely embed Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig into their schemes of work. There has been no audit of how departments address aspects of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig.
136. There are several good features in promoting pupils' awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship. These include:
 - the way in which schemes of work for English, geography, history, science and curriculum enrichment address these matters;
 - the work of the environmental club in planting trees and bulbs in the school grounds;
 - links with a school in Ghana and the work of the *Amnesty International* group; and
 - the work of the School Council in promoting healthier menus in the school canteen.
137. There are some shortcomings, including:
 - the lack of a school policy for sustainable development and global citizenship; and
 - the lack of any recycling projects.
138. There are strong partnerships with *Careers Wales* and with the community. These links, supplemented by governors' knowledge of local businesses and industry, give the school a close and up-to-date knowledge of employers' needs.
139. There is good provision to promote entrepreneurial and other business skills. The good features are that:
 - pupils and students of all ages attend talks by entrepreneurs who have links with the school through the *Dynamo Project*; and
 - students in Year 12 regularly run companies in the *Young Enterprise* scheme, and similar business ventures are offered to pupils of all abilities in key stages 3 and 4, when opportunities arise.
140. The school is generally successful in ensuring that pupils and students acquire the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to progress to the next stage of education or to enter the world of work. Aspects of the curriculum, work-related education, and the development of entrepreneurial skills ensure that learning experiences reflect national priorities.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

The quality of care, support and guidance for learners

142. Good features in the quality of care, support and guidance include:

- the effective use of data by PDLs that allows them to identify pupils who are not achieving as much as they should;
- the close co-operation between the PDLs, the Social Inclusion Leader and agencies outside the school that makes it possible to refer pupils with learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties quickly to the appropriate agency;
- a wide-ranging careers education programme in key stages 3 and 4, close cooperation with the *Careers Wales* adviser and the Dynamo project;
- the Peer Support initiative for pupils who feel vulnerable and isolated;
- support for pupils with emotional problems that an outreach worker from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children offers each week;
- the work of the local health team in helping pupils to manage their anger;
- the weekly lessons in personal and social education;
- the fitness checks and improvement programmes that the physical education department run;
- sound child protection procedures, including a designated senior officer, of which all members of staff are fully aware;
- the efficient management and effective work of Learning Support Assistants; and
- cooperation with former students who are now at Bangor University who are working with an 'Aim Higher' group of pupils in Years 7 and 8 and with about 60 pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 in the Talent Opportunities Programme, initiatives that encourage pupils to aim for grades that will enable them to qualify for a university bursary.

143. Shortcomings include:

- the lack of timetabled tutor time;
- a feeling among some pupils that there is pressure from their classmates not to speak in class or to try to achieve well;
- smoking inside the school by a small number of pupils; and
- the low rates of some pupils' attendance at school.

144. The school has recently appointed an attendance officer. She works closely with the PDLs and the Education Welfare Officer and has quickly gained a good understanding of how she can be most effective.

145. There are good strategies to prevent pupils who behave poorly from disrupting the work of other pupils. Teachers can send them to work by themselves in a quiet room. The headteacher excludes pupils only as a last resort. Nevertheless, over the past year, the number of pupils excluded has been very high. The school has therefore opened an 'internal exclusion' room where pupils can work individually, supervised by a member of staff. This is a good system. It:

- saves a lot of time that the formalities of an exclusion from school demand;
- reduces disruption of the pupils' work and progress;
- discourages pupils from behaving badly just to get out of school;
- keeps pupils under the supervision of a trained ancillary worker; and
- avoids the stigma of exclusion.

146. However, teachers sometimes fail to give pupils work to do while they are out of class.

147. We told senior managers about a small number of health and safety issues.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

148. The school has an effective system to identify pupils with a range of learning needs. All these pupils take part fully in the life of the school.

149. Good features of the provision include:

- the identification of pupils with learning difficulties and the provision for their needs, in line with the Code of Practice;
- thorough annual reviews that involve everyone with an interest in the case;
- the thorough testing of pupils to identify their needs;
- effective individual or small-group support for pupils with a statement of special educational needs and for those on 'school action plus';
- the work of specialist peripatetic teachers who follow programmes tailored to pupils' needs during lesson time for National Curriculum subjects that the school has disappplied for these pupils;
- the effective work of Learning Support Assistants who work with individual pupils in the classroom;
- the corrective reading programme;
- the testing of pupils each term to monitor their progress and adapt the support they receive;
- the mainly small-group teaching of pupils with special educational needs that allows teachers to match the work to their abilities;
- the close cooperation between the school and agencies, including the Substance Misuse Support Service and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service;
- the work of the educational psychologist through regular meetings with pupils and their parents to diagnose pupils' needs and plan support strategies; and
- good support from the special needs section of *Careers Wales*.

150. The school also has several initiatives to reduce the likelihood of pupils becoming disaffected. These include an *Antur Wledig Egniol* group for pupils in Years 8 and 9, to encourage pupils to improve their key skills and self confidence, to work well in a team and to cope with negative emotions.

151. There are some shortcomings in the provision, including:

- a lack of concerted provision to address the needs of pupils whose scores in Cognitive Ability Tests are just above the figure that suggests they have special needs;
- a lack of general support for the literacy skills of pupils who do not take part in any special projects; and
- inadequate provision for pupils for whom the school has disappplied parts of the National Curriculum, as a result of the long-term absence of a peripatetic teacher.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

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

- the availability of all curriculum provision for all pupils and the good quality careers advice for all pupils;
- the provision of good opportunities in history for pupils to study examples of inequality, racism and prejudice in Europe and across the world, and the effective ways teachers use this study to promote good race relations and reinforce pupils' understanding and respect for different cultures, religions and social groups;
- the inclusion of a world dimension to the music course;
- the work of the *Amnesty International* group;
- single-gender groups in English in key stage 4 designed to reduce the difference in attainment between boys and girls;
- weightlifting clubs for both boys and girls;
- pupils do not have any serious concerns about bullying and are confident that teachers will deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

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

154. The three members of the Leadership Team have a strong sense of purpose and a sharp focus on quality and standards. They have high expectations of themselves, of all members of staff and of pupils. They work unstintingly to improve the quality of the school's provision and the standards that pupils achieve. They strive to make sure that all pupils have equal access to all that the school offers and that every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed.

155. The School Improvement Plan focuses appropriately on local and national priorities including:

- raising standards of achievement for all pupils, including those with SEN;
- improving pupils' attendance;
- adapting the curriculum to encourage more effective learning and further promote pupils' inclusion;
- improving pupils' key skills of literacy and numeracy; and
- training the staff in line with the school's three major priorities.

156. Senior managers have a clear view of the main challenges that face the school and have, for many years, directed the school's resources to address these matters. Their three major priorities continue to be:

- the quality of teaching and learning;
- standards of pupils' literacy; and
- the management of pupils' behaviour.

157. Senior managers have used many strategies to address these issues, including:

- forming working groups of interested teachers to research the issues and devise improvement strategies;
- taking part in national projects such as in working for and gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark;
- holding whole-school in-service training days led by experts in these fields;
- delegating members of staff to attend training courses and to report back to all other teachers;
- requiring every member of staff to incorporate certain strategies into their teaching;

- adapting the curriculum to incorporate lessons designed to help pupils master effective learning techniques;
 - enlisting the support of LEA advisers and external consultants;
 - tailoring the monitoring of lessons to focus on these issues;
 - creating a 'framework for intervention' to help teachers manage pupils' behaviour;
 - making video recordings, with an explanatory commentary, of lessons that demonstrate particularly good practice in addressing some of these issues, so that other teachers may see them and consider how they might adapt their own teaching; and
 - appointing an attendance officer.
158. Senior managers work closely with departmental teams and individual teachers to encourage and help them to direct their work in line with these three priorities. They have also shown themselves willing to take firm action in the case of teachers whose work, over time, has not been effective in helping the school achieve success in these three areas.
159. While the great majority of middle managers share the vision of senior managers, there is much inconsistency in the rigour with which departments and individuals implement whole-school strategies. The management of at least one department has many outstanding features while that of another has many important shortcomings. Overall, middle managers have not been effective enough. As a result:
- the overall quality of teaching and of learning is too low;
 - there are too many lessons that do not interest pupils sufficiently and in which their behaviour undermines what they can achieve; and
 - despite the fact that almost every lesson includes reference to literacy skills, there are few lessons in which teachers seize every opportunity for pupils to practise their skills or where they consistently challenge pupils to achieve the highest standards in all aspects of literacy.
160. Managers have implemented staff appraisal procedures for all members of staff. These have been effective in identifying areas for development, and teachers and other members of staff have been able to attend courses or take other steps to help them improve their skills. However, the headteacher feels that not all managers conduct appraisal with enough rigour and that, in consequence, the progress the school has made in relation to its three major priorities has been slower than it should have been.
161. Despite these shortcomings, the school's management has several good features.
162. Senior managers have done a great deal to prepare for workforce remodelling and to implement the new Teaching and Learning Responsibilities. The revised staffing structure brings an even stronger focus to the quality of teaching and learning and to raising standards. Managers have explained the changes very well, so that teachers understand the principles that have guided their decisions.

163. The two Pupil Development Leaders are enthusiastic about their new roles and are carrying them out effectively. They are well supported by a team of heads of year. While much of the time of these two leaders is taken up by pastoral issues, their work has a strong focus on the standards that pupils achieve. In helping pupils to manage their personal lives and cope with their difficulties, their aim is to get pupils to a position where they can work effectively. They cope well with a large number of difficult and complex situations, but also make time to work proactively, using assessment data to check on pupils' progress and taking steps to challenge and help those whose standards of work are slipping.
164. A particularly strong feature of the school's management is the work of the members of the office staff. They work with commitment and enthusiasm, carrying out many tasks that other managers and teachers used to perform. They are major players contributing to the smooth running of the school. They have implemented several strategies to improve their own efficiency and have made a number of substantial financial savings. They work flexibly and have the skills to cover for each other when the need arises.

The extent to which governors meet their responsibilities

165. Governors have a useful range of expertise and are familiar with local issues that affect the school. They ably fulfil their roles in school management. There is an appropriate range of sub-committees to deal with specific areas of responsibility and these and the whole body meet regularly. They keep detailed minutes of their discussions and the decisions they take.
166. The headteacher and other managers give governors detailed information about pupils' attainment, current developments and plans for the future. Governors receive and discuss the school development plan and question the headteacher about the strategies it sets out. They make sure that the school can afford to implement its plans within its budget. The governors played a similar role in the writing of the school's self-evaluation report, receiving the report, discussing it at length and questioning the headteacher about several matters. For the most part, governors play a supportive, rather than a leading role in monitoring and strategic planning and generally do not have first-hand knowledge of departmental issues or of how well departments implement development plans.
167. Governors accurately and usefully inform parents of their activities through their Annual Report. They meet regulatory and legal requirements with respect to the school prospectus, school policies, record keeping and curriculum provision.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

168. The grade we awarded agrees with the grade that managers awarded in their self-evaluation report.
169. The school's self-evaluation report thoroughly addresses the seven key questions of the inspection framework. It cites a large amount of work that managers and teachers have undertaken in relation to each aspect of the school's work and ends each section with a summary of the school's strengths and a list of aspects that managers intend to develop. It is a report that shows that senior managers know their school very well. However, there is no obvious way in which any balance of strengths and shortcomings leads managers to award the grades they have given for each question. In four of the key questions, our findings confirm the grades that managers awarded, but in key questions 1, 3 and 7, the balance of good features and shortcomings that we found led us to award a grade that was, in each case, one lower than the grade that managers awarded.
170. The report reflects a process that is starting to take root in the school but is not firmly at the heart of school improvement. Senior managers have done much to promote a climate of self-evaluation. They have established a timetable for self-evaluation and structures for middle managers to implement. They support managers in implementing these strategies.
171. There is some outstandingly good self-evaluation in the physical education department, where the head of department has set out a timetable for the department to evaluate one aspect of its provision each month and to return to this matter some time later to evaluate how much things have improved. The geography department has also conducted some very good self-evaluation exercises. This good practice is in sharp contrast to work in the religious education department, where self-evaluation has lacked rigour, has involved little or no observation of lessons and has provided little information or support for two non-specialist teachers who teach one lesson a week in the department. Where the evaluation has identified shortcomings, there is no description of strategies to bring about improvement.
172. Overall, the good features of self-evaluation outweigh its shortcomings:
- senior managers rigorously monitor their own work and evaluate examination results;
 - senior managers thoroughly monitor the success of strategies in the School Improvement Plan;
 - senior managers regularly monitor and evaluate lessons;
 - one or two departments have thorough self-evaluation procedures;
 - nearly all heads of departments thoroughly review pupils' examination results, inspect lessons of every teacher in the department and scrutinise pupils'

written work to gain an overview of its quality and of how teachers mark and comment upon it;

- in several departments, all teachers evaluate their own work and, in departmental meetings, reach an accurate assessment of the department's performance in relation to the seven key questions; and
- senior managers take careful note of the deliberations of the School Council and respond positively to them whenever they can.

173. The office staff team also critically evaluates its own work. The team members identify many things they believe they do well, several areas where they feel they could work more effectively, and strategies to bring about the improvements they want.

174. These self-evaluation processes have led to a number of significant improvements. These include:

- updated job-descriptions in the light of the Leadership Team's evaluation of the effectiveness of middle managers;
- changes to departmental schemes of work and procedures in the light of comments by external evaluators;
- revised teaching strategies in the light of analyses of examination results and the outcomes of lesson monitoring; and
- curriculum changes in the light of a review of the effectiveness of curriculum provision for different groups of pupils.

175. In addition, a number of teachers are enthusiastically committed to improve their own work and that of their departments. They are self-critical of every lesson they teach and every managerial task that they perform and they constantly seek to work more effectively.

176. Senior managers have directed money to supporting improvements designed to correct the shortcomings revealed by self-evaluation. For example, they have purchased the resources needed to support curriculum changes, sent teachers on training courses and financed revision courses during school holidays.

177. Despite these successful outcomes of self-evaluation, the process has not been effective enough in identifying and addressing many of the shortcomings in teaching and assessment that we describe in this report. As a result, managers and teachers have not taken appropriately rigorous and concerted action to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise the standards that pupils are achieving.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

178. The grade we awarded is one grade lower than the grade 2 that managers awarded in their self-evaluation report. The findings of the inspection team did not match a number of the judgements made by the school. In particular, the school achieves inadequate value for money. This is an important shortcoming.

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

179. The good features of **staffing** outweigh the shortcomings.

180. Overall the number of members of staff is enough for the school to run efficiently. Many teachers have qualified fairly recently, with over 40 percent of them, including two newly-qualified teachers, having ten or fewer years experience. The good features are that:

- almost all teachers are appropriately qualified in the subjects that they teach;
- administrative staff make sure that the office, reception and reprographics areas run efficiently;
- the site supervisor and his two assistants keep the school clean and tidy and undertake some minor maintenance;
- technicians provide good support in information technology and in the workshops;
- two cover teachers supervise lessons of teachers who are absent for a short time;
- the attendance assistant is starting to have a positive influence on the number of pupils who attend school;
- the work of the supervisor of disaffected pupils has helped to improve the attendance of these pupils;
- fifteen Learning Support Assistants work effectively with pupils with learning and behavioural problems; and
- the librarian runs the library efficiently and makes sure it provides an effective service for pupils.

181. Some of the teachers in the history and religious education departments are not specialists in these subjects. However, they teach them well.

182. The quality and quantity of **learning resources** for key stages 3 and 4 in the six subjects we inspected are adequate. Good features outweigh the shortcomings. The good features include:

- an adequate supply of text books and equipment;
- a range of useful subject materials that teachers have produced;
- a good quantity of ICT equipment throughout the school, that supports pupils' work in ICT lessons and is available for use by other subjects;

- facilities in the design and technology department for electronic control and computer aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM); and
 - good quality keyboards and ICT equipment that are well used in the music department.
183. Museums, art galleries, theatres, field trips and speakers who visit the school constitute a further valuable resource that enriches pupils' experiences.
184. Since the last inspection, the school has refurbished the library. It has just fewer than 10,000 books (giving quite a good ratio of almost 12 books per pupil) and pupils in key stages 3 and 4 use it well. It is open each day before school and until 4.00 p.m. after school, with a half-hour extension one evening each week. Fiction and reference books are up-to-date. A room off the library has 27 networked computers. Many departments use these resources effectively and the librarian provides 'project boxes', gathering together all the resources on a particular topic so that pupils can get to work quickly. Pupils use the library to research topics and gain some skill in working independently.
185. Pupils generally have good access to computers, but subject departments face some difficulty in organising computer work because other classes are using the computers for their information technology lessons.
186. In the sixth-form, students have:
- enough text books and equipment; and
 - access to the library's computer room for their research and independent study.
187. The shortcomings in resources include:
- a shortage of computer projectors to enhance teaching; and
 - a number of old and unreliable computers in some ICT rooms.
188. The **accommodation** has good features that outweigh shortcomings. It is adequate for the numbers of pupils on roll. It meets the academic needs of the curriculum and has the following good features:
- the foyer and hall provide a welcoming and attractive space;
 - almost all rooms are of adequate size for the number of pupils in each class;
 - most subjects have rooms that are close to one another;
 - the newly-refurbished library with ICT room attached is a valuable learning resource;
 - the newly-refurbished design and technology block is of good quality, but some rooms become too hot in sunny weather;
 - there are good quality physical education facilities at the Millbank centre;
 - a majority of classrooms have displays of pupils' work and other subject material that enhance the learning environment;
 - the school grounds and buildings are clean, and generally free from litter.

189. Students may use the library for research and independent study and they can also work independently in small rooms in subject areas.
190. The main shortcomings in the accommodation are the overall drab nature of the site and the poor interior decoration of some rooms. Other shortcomings include:
- poor quality displays in a minority of classrooms that fail to provide a stimulating working environment;
 - unattractive corridors and stairwells;
 - low standards of general maintenance; and
 - a sixth-form block that is in such poor condition that it can be used only for sixth-form assemblies.
191. The school has a service level agreement with the UA for school maintenance. This agreement is not working effectively.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

192. On the whole, the deployment, management and development of staff are effective and include the following good features:
- deployment of members of staff makes effective use of their time, expertise and experience;
 - the training and professional development of members of staff is well coordinated and reflects the priorities of the school development plan, issues raised by performance management, and the needs of departments and individuals;
 - staff members who attend courses evaluate them and share what they learn so that their department and the whole school benefit from the course; and
 - professional development programmes and support for newly qualified teachers are thorough and effective.
193. The school is in the last stages of completing the implementation of its strategy for the workload agreement. It has made provision in the time-table for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA).
194. The headteacher and Leadership Team have completed the restructuring plans required for the new teaching and learning responsibilities.
195. The financial management of the school is competent. The headteacher, the finance, systems and buildings manager, the Leadership Team and the governing body's sub-committee for finance have responsibility for the budget.
196. The good features are that:
- the finance sub-committee meets regularly and receives detailed up-to-date reports from the headteacher;
 - the demands of the curriculum and the priorities of the School Improvement Plan guide financial decisions;

- managers are diligent in seeking grants and sponsorship;
- the distribution of capitation to subject areas is transparent and effective and curriculum leaders have the opportunity to bid for extra money for specific projects;
- leaders of curriculum areas receive monthly statements of their spending and current balances; and
- managers have addressed the minor recommendations in the last auditors' report.

197. The school uses its resources and finances competently. However, in the light of shortcomings noted in this report, particularly in the standards that pupils achieve and in the quality of teaching, the school provides inadequate value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Mathematics

Key stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
Key stage 4: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas
Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key stages 3 and 4

198. Many pupils across the age and ability ranges answer questions orally with clarity, understanding and accuracy.
199. Pupils have a sound knowledge of number, vulgar fractions, decimal fractions and percentages and the relationship between them.
200. Pupils have spatial awareness, understand the concept of the area of plane figures and use appropriate units.
201. Most pupils use calculators appropriately.
202. Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Key stage 3

203. Pupils' learn well in some classes and are quite good at mental calculations because of the lively and varied short activities at the start of lessons.
204. Most pupils in Year 7 understand and can apply their knowledge of aspects of shape and space to everyday life situations.
205. Pupils in Year 8 can recognise different types of angles. They can draw and measure angles using a protractor. They are learning to recognise and compare units of length in both the metric and imperial systems.
206. Pupils in Year 9 can set up and solve linear equations.
207. Lower-achieving pupils in Year 9 understand the concept of reflections in lines and can complete diagrams symmetrically.

Key stage 4

208. The more highly-achieving pupils in Year 10 can use the formulae to calculate angles and the lengths of sides of triangles.
209. The more highly-achieving pupils in Year 11 can draw graphs of simple mathematical functions and can use the graphs to solve equations that relate to these functions.

210. A majority of pupils in Year 11 can use a calculator to process data and find the few simple numbers that characterise a much larger set of numbers. They can interpret this information for situations in everyday life.

Post 16

211. Students in Year 12 are making good progress in understanding the basic concepts of pure mathematics and mechanics.

212. Students in Year 13 have a good understanding of a range of concepts in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. They can apply this knowledge to solve associated questions.

Shortcomings

Key stages 3 and 4

213. The highest-achieving pupils in many classes are achieving much less than they could.

214. A small minority of pupils do not always complete their work or present it neatly and logically. They do not always appreciate that a mathematical equation is a sentence with a grammar just like any language, and therefore they sometimes use mathematical signs and symbols in ways that do not make sense.

215. A small number of pupils do not correct work that is wrong and so do not learn from their errors.

Key stage 4

216. A minority of pupils lack confidence in their mathematical abilities and are too dependent on their teachers to tell them the next step in a calculation.

217. The poor behaviour of a small number of pupils in a few classes slows the lessons and holds down the achievement of all pupils in these classes.

218. A small minority of pupils have little motivation and are content to achieve very little.

Post 16

219. At the start of the course, a number of students in Year 12 had difficulty in applying some algebraic techniques and this slowed their progress.

Welsh second language

Key stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key stage 3

220. Pupils' understanding of the language is good. In the majority of lessons, they listen carefully to their teacher and peers.

221. Pupils extract information well from text and film. The highest-achieving pupils record the information accurately and promptly.
222. Pupils read quite well. When they read for pleasure, they keep a record of what they have read and express opinions on the content.
223. Pupils enjoy oral work in pairs. They support each other well to produce interesting dialogue. They use a range of sentence patterns and introduce idioms effectively. They perform dialogues expressively.
224. Pupils write for a range of purposes in different formats. They have a reasonably good command of spelling and grammar.
225. Pupils with SEN make good progress in all language skills.
226. Pupils use ICT competently to produce PowerPoint presentations and work for display. They use Welsh websites well in comprehension exercises.

Key stage 4

227. All pupils follow the full Welsh GCSE course. Examination results have improved consistently. A good number of pupils achieve A* and A grades.
228. The highest achievers write in a range of extended formats, showing a sound grasp of grammar and tenses. They use figures of speech effectively.
229. Pupils listen carefully to challenging passages recorded on tape and successfully extract information from them.
230. In one-to-one discussions, the highest-achieving pupils can conduct a natural conversation on a range of topics. Less-confident speakers are more reluctant to initiate conversation but are able to move the conversation forward purposefully.
231. Pupils read a range of texts and select accurate information to use in their written work.

Post 16

232. Results in both the AS and A level examinations are consistently good.
233. Students on the AS course in Year 12 are making good progress.
234. The most confident speakers express their views with fluency and a certain degree of flair.
235. Written work of the highest-achieving students is accurate and has a good structure. Students express their opinions well.

- 236. Year 13 students speak fluently in impromptu conversations on a wide range of subjects. When discussing set works, they explore characters and themes well. They make perceptive comments on social and moral issues and can justify their viewpoints.
- 237. Students make purposeful notes that they use well to improve the quality of their writing.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3

- 238. In whole-class activities, pupils do not reproduce the oral fluency they display when they work in pairs. The majority are reluctant to speak in front of other pupils. In most classes, pupils rarely volunteer answers even though, when the teacher asks pupils to respond, their answers are nearly always accurate.
- 239. Hesitant readers do not break words down to pronounce them correctly.
- 240. When pupils are learning rules of grammar, they do not always apply them in the written work that follows.
- 241. Pupils do not use ICT enough to redraft their work, using wordprocessing functions that would improve the correctness of their writing and aid their understanding of the language.

Key stage 4

- 242. Pupils are reluctant to speak in front of their classmates.
- 243. In about a half of classes, pupils make too little progress from key stage 3; they do not speak or write at sufficient length.
- 244. In these classes, pupils do not concentrate enough on their work. They hinder their own progress and that of others.
- 245. Frequent absence impedes the progress of a few pupils.
- 246. As in key stage 3, pupils do not use ICT effectively to advance their learning and improve their standards.

Post 16

- 247. Students are often too dependent on their teachers to correct basic errors of grammar in their written work.
- 248. In written work, some students use words out of context.
- 249. Students do not use ICT enough to redraft their work.

Design technology

Key stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

Key stage 3

250. Pupils develop their ideas into working solutions from design briefs given to them by their teachers. They use the Internet effectively to expand their ideas in research work.
251. Pupils plan well for making, and have a good understanding of making processes in a wide range of materials. Overall, their making skills are good. They have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of the materials and components that they use in their project work.
252. Pupils have a good understanding of electronic and mechanical control principles. They apply this understanding well in their project work.
253. Pupils use ICT well for designing, computer-assisted design and making (CAD/CAM) and in the control of microprocessors.
254. Pupils have a sound understanding of basic structures and how triangulation is used to increase strength.
255. Lower-achieving pupils and those with SEN make good progress.

Key stage 4

256. Pupils understand the function of a design process and apply it in their project work.
257. Pupils often develop their research well, particularly when they use the Internet. They model their ideas well, often using CAD/CAM.
258. Pupils' making skills are consistently good and sometimes outstanding. There are innovative features in several pieces of their work.
259. Pupils who are motivated and work with determination have a good knowledge and understanding of materials and processes.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3

260. Pupils do not fully understand the design process and therefore do not consistently apply it in their work.
261. Pupils vary widely in their ability to apply a design specification in their projects. Their own specifications are often simplistic.

262. Pupils' skills in making quick developmental design drawings are underdeveloped.
263. The highest-ability pupils are not achieving as much as they could in most 'design and make' modules.

Key stage 4

264. Pupils' skills in making quick developmental design drawings are underdeveloped.
265. The thoroughness with which pupils use a design specification varies greatly. Specifications are often too basic and pupils do not identify a hierarchy of importance.
266. Pupils' presentation skills vary widely and are generally too low. This is particularly true for boys.
267. The design folio work of a substantial minority of pupils is disorganised and lacks both content and quality.

History

- Key stage 3: Grade 3:** Good features outweigh shortcomings
Key stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Good features

Key stage 3

268. Pupils have secure levels of background knowledge and they recall their previous learning successfully. Most pupils have a sound understanding of chronology and are confident in applying their knowledge and understanding to sources of evidence in order to address historical problems. They use subject vocabulary accurately and in the correct context.
269. All pupils make sound progress in developing investigative techniques to tackle historical problems. The more highly-achieving pupils and most of average achievement can competently identify, compare and contrast differing interpretations of historical developments, and explain the causes of changes that occur over time.
270. By the end of the key stage, most pupils are confident in testing sources of evidence for bias, reliability and usefulness. They make good progress in extracting relevant information from the sources, and they evaluate the sources effectively to develop well-balanced oral and written arguments that explain change. The more highly-achieving pupils and most of average achievement are increasingly confident in demonstrating how different interpretations of history emerge and change. Lower-achieving pupils make appropriate progress when they are well challenged with approaches and tasks that match their needs.

271. A focus upon the development of pupils' literacy skills has improved the quality of their extended writing.

Key stage 4

272. Most pupils successfully build upon the historical and key skills they acquired in key stage 3. They demonstrate a growing maturity in the depth of their responses. Most pupils provide convincing explanations for the motivation and attitudes of people in the past by asking more complex questions of the sources of evidence. Pupils appropriately complete notes, essays and source evaluations and most of them produce well-organised and well-presented written work. They successfully develop their research skills and many develop independent learning skills. Pupils make effective use of the local and national environment to extend their knowledge and understanding of the historical and cultural development of Wales.

Post 16

273. Students in Year 12 have good levels of knowledge and understanding of some historical debates. For example, they show a good ability to trace the early roots of anti-Semitism in Europe. They make good progress in dealing with the complex primary and secondary sources of evidence. Students make good efforts to meet the rigorous demands of the examination. They identify interesting and relevant questions to ask of the sources and most are clear about the operation of bias and propaganda. Students are increasingly confident in identifying the differences in interpretation found in the writing of historians. They use their analytical skills effectively to evaluate and explain these differing interpretations.
274. Students demonstrate a good ability to construct balanced and opposing arguments in their oral and written work. They have good skills in selecting and organising material in order to respond to challenging problems. Students can weigh a wide range of factors in order to arrive at a balanced and well-considered judgement.

Shortcomings

Key stages 3 and 4

275. A significant minority of pupils often do not complete their written tasks. The written work of a minority of pupils lacks adequate depth and detail to enable them to develop and explain the points they seek to make. Some pupils present their written work carelessly and their spelling and use of language are weak. A significant number of pupils lack the confidence to provide extended and fluent oral responses to questions. A significant minority of pupils find it difficult to address the demands of source evaluation, and their understanding of differing historical interpretations is underdeveloped.

Post 16

276. There are no important shortcomings.

Music

Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
Key Stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings
Post 16: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Good features

Key stage 3

277. Pupils sing with a pleasing tone, clear diction and secure intonation. They perform melodies and individual parts on classroom instruments and keyboards with a good degree of accuracy.
278. In some recorded group compositions, pupils combine sounds and textures imaginatively. Improvisations, based on the 12-bar Blues structure and on the backing track for a film, are sometimes melodically well-shaped and rhythmically interesting.
279. Pupils are aware of musical elements and can identify instruments and basic features in recorded extracts. A few make perceptive comments about what they hear.

Key stage 4

280. Most pupils make suitable progress in vocal and instrumental performing. A few perform with a good sense of style.
281. Many compositions show good understanding of melody writing, basic chords and minimalist techniques. A few, enhanced by effective use of ICT, display interesting treatment of ideas, and have a sense of style and structure.
282. Most pupils understand technical terms and can identify technical and expressive features well in extracts of music from different styles and periods.

Post 16

283. The three students in Year 13 perform with confidence and a good sense of style.
284. A few compositions reflect the personal interests of the students and display an imaginative treatment of ideas. Students have a good sense of style and structure and have used ICT effectively to enhance their compositions.
285. Students have a basic knowledge and understanding of the main features of twentieth-century musical styles. Their aural skills are sound, overall.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3

286. Most pupils are less experienced and secure when playing with others in group performance as they are when they play solo. A few compositions, including improvisations, are limited in musical interest.

287. Many pupils, when appraising, make brief or superficial comments about what they hear.

Key stage 4

288. A few pupils lack confidence when performing and are not always secure in group performance. Some compositions have good ideas but show limited development.

289. The appraising skills of a few average-achieving pupils are uneven; they are good in certain tasks but insecure in others.

Post 16

290. Students have done too little to develop some of their compositions and they make too little progress without the support of their teacher.

291. Despite suitable guidance, students' knowledge and understanding of twentieth-century musical styles lack depth and detail.

Religious education

Key stage 3: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Key stage 4: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Good features

Key stage 3

292. Many pupils can recognise basic aspects of worship and the main features of holy books and celebrations of Christianity and the major world religions.

293. More highly-achieving pupils can accurately describe religious practices such as pilgrimage to Mecca.

294. Pupils are beginning to have an understanding of how religious beliefs influence people's behaviour.

Key stage 4

295. Pupils are developing, within the Curriculum Enrichment programme, knowledge and understanding of current issues and problems confronting individuals and society and most can relate basic religious teaching to these issues, such as whether war can be just.

296. Pupils are becoming aware of how rules and laws found in religion influence people's actions.

297. In discussions, the higher-achieving pupils offer some mature responses and are generally willing to think seriously about ideas.

Shortcomings

Key stage 3

298. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the religions they have studied are not always sufficiently secure or deep, relative to their age and skills.
299. In their written work, many pupils show a limited ability to compare religious beliefs.
300. Pupils are not developing as independent learners and are not making enough progress in expanding their range of skills to explore and evaluate the topics they study.
301. The poor attendance of some pupils and their failure to complete pieces of work seriously hinder their progress.

Key stage 4

302. Pupils do not fully explore the questions that flow from human experience and religious beliefs and do not express their personal reflections on these matters. Only rarely do they offer a critical evaluation of the different ways people respond to issues, especially in their written work.
303. Lower-achieving pupils find difficulty in offering extended comments on religious issues either orally or in writing.
304. Pupils do not have the underpinning knowledge and understanding at the start of key stage 4 to explore issues in depth and from a wide range of religious perspectives.

School's response to the inspection

We welcome this inspection report. We are pleased that the inspectors recognised the school's good sixth-form teaching and good care, support and guidance for pupils. It is pleasing that both SEN and gifted and talented pupils make good progress.

We are disappointed with the judgement that the school provides inadequate value for money despite competent financial management and that with 41% of lessons graded 1 and 2 we still do not reach the national target.

Nevertheless, in order to match the best teaching in the school, all teachers and managers will work on improving the quality of teaching and thereby ensure that pupils achieve higher standards.

Some of the recommendations refer to long-standing problems, such as poor pupil attendance. In the past few years we have employed additional staff to focus on this and offer same-day absence reporting, but we now also intend to work with the Unitary Authority on a primary and secondary attendance project. While we have already tried to form links with parents through open evenings, parents' evenings, letters home and a termly magazine, we will now again try to form a parent/teacher association and are considering using e-mail to contact parents. We shall also be reconsidering the format of our parents' evening and pupil reports.

The school intends to vigorously pursue the helpful recommendations of this Inspection Report and thereby enable Holyhead High School pupils to play their full part in the dynamic future of the town.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi
School type	Secondary
Age-range of pupils	11 to 18
Address of school	Alderley Terrace, Holyhead, Anglesey
Postcode	LL65 1NP
Telephone number	01407 762219

Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Chantrell
Date of appointment	1 September 1993
Chair of governors/ Appropriate authority	Mr Trefor Lloyd Hughes
Reporting inspector	Dr Garth Higginbotham
Dates of inspection	3 April - 6 April 2006

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	127	142	167	166	149	58	44	853

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	55	0	55

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.5 : 1
Average teaching group size – key stage 3 and 4	22.0
– sixth-form	8.9
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	72.6 %

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole School
Summer 2005	86	83	78	83	81	90	96	83
Spring 2005	89	85	85	85	78	91	93	85
Autumn 2004	95	93	90	87	78	90	92	89

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	21
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	189

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results: 2005															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 170															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.4	32.4	37.0	14.8	5.3	0.0	0.0
		National*	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.4	1.7	8.1	21.3	33.6	23.5	9.4	0.2	0.0
	Test	School	0.0	8.8	0.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	13.5	31.2	30.5	11.8	4.1	n/a	n/a
		National*	0.5	3.5	2.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	7.5	20.4	32.6	22.7	10.1	n/a	n/a
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.2	29.4	40.9	18.2	2.9	0.0	0.0
		National*	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.9	6.8	18.9	25.7	31.6	13.7	0.3	0.0
	Test	School	0.0	7.1	0.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.5	21.2	33.5	25.9	5.9	n/a	n/a
		National*	0.3	5.1	1.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.1	17.2	19.9	36.0	15.0	n/a	n/a
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.5	21.1	7.6	51.1	5.3	0.0	0.0
		National*	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.4	6.0	20.1	32.8	27.1	11.6	0.1	0.0
	Test	School	0.0	4.7	0.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.0	22.4	40.6	19.4	2.9	n/a	n/a
		National*	0.3	0.4	0.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.7	16.6	32.5	28.2	13.0	n/a	n/a

- D Pupils excepted under statutory arrangements from part of the National Curriculum
A Pupils who have failed to register a level because of absence
F Pupils who have failed to register a level for reasons other than absence
W Pupils who are working towards level 1
EP Exceptional Performance, where pupils at Key Stage 3 perform above level 8
* National figures refer to 2004

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by Teacher Assessment		by Test	
In the school	60.7	In the school	58.2
In Wales	54.4	In Wales	53.5

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	177
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	31

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2005:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	80	90	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	35	53	52
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	76	88	85
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	28	42	38
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	95	98	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	69	79	76
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	91	95	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	9	5	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	1	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	0		
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	0		

For pupils aged 16, 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2005	104
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2005	42
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2005	9

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	55	70	69
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	90	96	95
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	17	21	21
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	0		
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	0		

UA Unitary Authority

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Fourteen inspectors (including the school's nominee) spent the equivalent of 47 days in the school.

We inspected 105 lessons, including 67 in the six subjects we inspected.

We attended assemblies, (where teachers take the register).

We held about 44 discussions with the headteacher, members of the Leadership Team, members of staff with whole-school responsibilities, heads of department, and members of the support staff.

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

We scrutinised the written work of a small cross-section of pupils and students from every year group. We also inspected pupils' work during lesson observations.

We held formal discussions with groups of pupils and students from every year group and also with some groups of pupils with specific interests. We also spoke to pupils informally.

Before the inspection, the registered inspector and a colleague met the staff.

Three parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector before the inspection. We received 16 replies to our questionnaire. A few parents also wrote to the registered inspector.

Seven organisations that work with the school wrote to the registered inspector to explain their work.

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

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Garth Higginbotham Registered Inspector	Key Questions 1, 5 & 6
Michael Snow Lay Inspector	Contributions to Key Questions 1, 3, 4 & 5
Glyn Davies	Core Team, Key Questions 2 & 3 ; Sixth-form coordinator
Alan Edwards	Core Team, Key Question 7 ; Contributions to Key Question 1; Mathematics
Lynette Bithell	Core Team; Contributions to Key Questions 1, 2, 3 & 7; English literacy;
Mary Crandon	Core Team; Contributions to Key Questions 1 & 7; Welsh second language
Rachel Carr	Key Question 4
Selwyn Gale	Contributions to Key Question 1; Design and technology
Margaret Herbert	Design and technology
Nerys Cossey	Religious education
Alan Wyn Jones	Music
Ann Newman	History
David Jones	Lessons across the curriculum
Gerald Hewitson	School Nominee

Contractor: Atlantes Educational Services
Technology House
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Acknowledgement

We wish to express our sincere thanks to the headteacher, governors, staff and pupils of Holyhead High School for their cooperation with us at all stages of the inspection.