

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Ysgol Uwchradd Tregaron
Heol Llambed
Tregaron
Ceredigion
SY25 6HG**

School Number: 6674046

Date of Inspection: 08/05/07

by

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Ysgol Uwchradd Tregaron 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 Tregaron took place between 08/05/07 and 11/05/07. An independent team of inspectors, led by Dr. Neil Trevor Jones undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **short** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Ysgol Uwchradd Tregaron is a naturally bilingual comprehensive community school for pupils and students aged 11-18. It is maintained by Carmarthenshire Local Education Authority. A total of 368 pupils currently attend the school, including 73 students in the sixth form (Y12 and Y13), which is slightly higher than during the previous inspection (355). The number of pupils in every year group ranges from 52 to 64. The school notes that the pupils represent the full ability range. The number of teachers, including the headteacher is 29.3 (full-time equivalent). There are 25 full-time and eight part-time teachers.
2. The school serves the small town of Tregaron and the surrounding rural area. There are eight primary schools in the catchment area, which is mainly a post-agricultural area and includes an Objective 1 area and a Communities First area. Approximately 11% of the pupils are registered as entitled to free school meals, which is similar to the average figure for the County but lower than the national percentage (17%). Fifty seven per cent (57%) of sixth form students receive a maintenance grant. All pupils and students belong to the white ethnic group. No pupils receive support to learn English as an additional language.
3. Twelve pupils (about 4% of Y7-11 pupils) have a statement of special educational needs (SEN), which is quite similar to the national percentage (3.4%). In addition, 80 pupils (about 27% of Y7-11 pupils) are on school action or school action plus stages of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. One pupil has a National Curriculum disapplication. There are 12 pupils in Local Authority care.
4. Thirty nine per cent [39%] of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language and 61% from homes in which English is the main language. All primary schools in the catchment area are Category 'A' schools (schools where Welsh is the main medium of children's work in key stage 1). Approximately 3% of the pupils are newcomers to the area and have no Welsh at all. Approximately 78% of the pupils follow a Welsh First Language course.
5. The current head was appointed to the school in April, 2003. The school was last inspected in November, 2001.
6. The school had a 'short' inspection in May, 2007.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's main priorities, as noted in its current school development plan for 2006 – 09 are:
- standards of teaching and learning;
 - tackling underachievement;
 - monitoring and self-evaluation;
 - buildings and facilities;
 - Year 12/13, and
 - promoting the use of information and communication technology amongst pupils and staff.
8. The school's quantitative targets for 2007 are as follows:

Key stage 3 indicators	% level 5 or above in the school
Welsh	71
English	76
Mathematics	78
Science	78
Core Subject Indicator	66
Difference in boys and girls' performance	0

Key stage 4 indicators	% gaining qualification
% registered for at least 1 GCSE	100
5 GCSE subjects at grades A* - C	67
5 GCSE subjects at grades A* - G	94
Core Subject Indicator	52
% leaving without any qualifications	0
Difference in boys and girls' performance	15
% unauthorised absences	1.6

Summary

9. Ysgol Uwchradd Tregaron is a good school with a number of outstanding features; it is deeply rooted in its area and community. The school is very successful in offering a very wide range of formal and extra-curricular experiences. The special quality of the care within the school allows pupils and students to learn in a homely and supportive atmosphere.

A) Table of the grades awarded

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

10. Although the inspection team agrees with the majority of the school's judgements in its self-evaluation report, the team has awarded a lower grade for three key questions, namely key questions 2, 6 and 7.

B) Standards

11. As the school received a short inspection, no individual subjects were inspected and therefore no opinion is expressed on standards of achievement in individual subjects.

The quality of external test and examination results

12. There has been a general improvement in key stage 3 test and assessment results since the previous inspection and during the past three years. Between 2004 and 2006, the percentage of pupils achieving the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) has risen from being slightly under 50% to being over 70%, thus placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools across Wales.
13. In key stage 4, there has been an overall improvement in the performance of pupils in the school in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. There has been an increase of over 20% in the percentage gaining 5 or more A*-C grades over the past three years. This places the school in the highest quartile of similar schools across Wales. However, the percentage of pupils gaining the CSI at the end of key stage 4 has been in the lowest quartile in two out of the past three years, mainly due to the poor performance of some pupils in mathematics and science.

14. Students' performance in the Advanced Level examinations has been consistently good over the past three years, with students' average points score and the percentage gaining grades A-C being higher than the average of the county and Wales in each of the past three years.

Standards in the key skills

15. Pupils and students achieve good standards in their key skills. Pupils' literacy skills are good in Welsh and good with outstanding features in English. Students achieve very good standards of literacy in both languages. Pupils' and students' numeracy skills and bilingual proficiency are good; however pupils' skills in information and communication technology are still developing.

Learners' progress in learning

16. Pupils' and students' progress in learning is good. They display positive attitudes towards learning and responsible attitudes towards their work.
17. Pupils and students with additional learning needs make very good progress.
18. However, pupils and students are not fully aware of their strengths and weaknesses in every subject, and what they need to do to improve.

Standards in the personal, social and learning skills

19. Pupils' and students' attitude towards learning is positive and mature, and their behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school.
20. They collaborate very well with each other and show respect, care and concern for others.
21. Pupils and students have a strong commitment to their community and they make an outstanding contribution to community activities.
22. The level of attendance has improved during the past year, but pupils' attendance percentage over the past three terms (90.3%) is still lower than the target (93%) set by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) for secondary schools, and is lower than the targets set by the school itself and by the county.

C) The quality of education and training

23. The quality of teaching is good and no important shortcomings.
24. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the lessons observed throughout the school.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole school (50 lessons)	22 %	58 %	20 %	0 %	0 %

25. The percentage of lessons awarded grade 1 or 2, namely 80%, surpasses the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report for 2005 to 2006. Nationally, the quality of teaching is good (grade 1 and 2) in 69% of lessons, and 17% of the teaching is grade 1.
26. The outstanding features of the teaching include:
- very careful planning and presentation to inspire and motivate pupils and students across a wide variety of activities;
 - very good opportunities for pupils and students to develop a range of key skills;
 - carefully planned opportunities for pupils to work successfully as individuals, in pairs and in groups, and
 - effective use of perceptive questioning to extend pupils' responses.
27. Amongst the good features of the teaching are:
- clear lesson objectives which are shared, used, and reinforced at the end;
 - appropriate pace and timing of activities;
 - good questioning techniques to confirm previous knowledge and to aid learning, and
 - firm subject knowledge.
28. In a few lessons, there was insufficient challenge in the activities and closed questioning resulted in a lack of opportunities for pupils and students to develop independent learning skills. In addition, there was a lack of purposeful planning to develop pupils' and students' bilingual skills.
29. The school's assessment system has good features and no important shortcomings.
30. The school satisfies the statutory requirements for assessing the National Curriculum at key stage 3, and the regulations of the examination boards at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school complies with the assessment requirements of pupils and students with additional learning needs.
31. Pupils' and students' work is marked consistently, however in some cases the marking does not provide feedback that is specific enough for pupils and students on how to improve their work.
32. There are clear procedures and structures in place to report to parents and guardians on pupils' and students' progress.

D) The extent to which the education fulfils the needs of the range of pupils

33. There are a number of outstanding features in the school's curriculum, including:
- the breadth of provision in key stage 3, which is enriched by the inclusion of drama and information and communication technology lessons for all;

- the flexibility of the key stage 4 curriculum, which allows every pupil to choose freely and provides suitable programmes through GCSE, Entry Level and National Vocational Qualifications [NVQ] for pupils of different abilities and aptitudes, and
 - the breadth of the provision in the sixth form. The school offers a very wide range of Advanced Level courses, along with vocational courses, which are well subscribed to.
34. The outstanding links which have been established with feeder primary schools ensure continuity and progression in the curriculum across key stages 2 and 3.
35. Although all subjects across the curriculum make a contribution to the development of key skills, there is no coherent planning process in place to deliver and monitor the provision.
36. The curriculum is enhanced by offering a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These activities contribute significantly to pupils' and students' personal development and are an outstanding feature of the school's provision.
37. There are outstanding features in the manner in which the school promotes pupils' and students' moral, social and cultural development. The school is a happy and caring community which nurtures moral and social values naturally. However, planning for promoting pupils' and students' spiritual development is less evident.
38. The school's partnerships with parents, schools and other institutions significantly reinforce pupils' and students' experiences.
39. There are a number of good features in the manner in which the school's curriculum responds to the demands of employers and the wider community.
40. The good features include:
- purposeful links with industry and employers, in order to develop the pupils' understanding of the world of work, and
 - vocational courses, which are enriched by very close collaboration with local businesses to offer relevant and practical experiences.

E) The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils and students

41. The care, guidance and support pupils and students receive are good with outstanding features.
42. The school has a close and caring community ethos in which pupils feel safe and happy; the relationship between them and each other and with the teachers is very good. The standard of care for the well-being of pupils is outstanding.

43. An outstanding pastoral link has been established with primary schools, which ensures an effortless and smooth transition for pupils to the secondary school.
44. The quality of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs has good and some outstanding features. The provision is in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice. These pupils make very good progress, with a large number of them going on to gain post-16 qualifications at the school and in further and higher education colleges.
45. Equal opportunity is demonstrated in every activity, with opportunity for each pupil to partake in all aspects of the life and work of the school.
46. The school has very effective policies and procedures to deal with oppressive behaviour, including bullying. An ethos has been established in which differentiation and harassment are not tolerated. The outstanding behaviour of the pupils is evidence of the culmination of these arrangements.
47. The school has taken positive action to ensure that disabled pupils do not suffer from less favourable treatment and responds sensitively and supportively to the needs of pupils with disabilities.

F) Leadership and management

48. The school's leadership and strategic management are good with no important shortcomings.
49. The headteacher has a clear vision which sets a clear and definite direction for the work of the school. The Senior Management Team (SMT) shares this vision and collaborates very well.
50. The leadership provided by the head and the SMT has established a civilised community with firm values, which places emphasis on high standards and providing a wide range of experiences for pupils and students all within a homely and caring environment. The managers and staff have an outstanding knowledge of the pupils and students.
51. The quality of middle management and leadership is inconsistent. Departmental self-evaluation processes do not always focus sufficiently on pupils' standards of achievement, and the link between the findings of the evaluations and the departmental development plans are vague.
52. Following discussions with the headteacher, challenging quantitative targets are set for departments but insufficient attention is paid to pupils' previous performance. Nevertheless, the process effectively identifies pupils and students who are underachieving.
53. The school has established a strong self-evaluative ethos which identifies and shares good practice and matters that need to be developed. The school has robust structures and arrangements that use various and appropriate methods to collect evidence.

54. The school's planning for improvement processes are good and pay due regard to information arising from the school's self-evaluation processes.
55. The governing body is supportive and enthusiastic and undertakes its duties effectively. The body collaborates well with the SMT to set a clear strategic direction for the school.
56. The governing body ensures that the school meets course requirements and other statutory requirements.

G) Effective and efficient use of school resources and value for money

57. The school is well staffed and has a sufficient number of teachers to deliver the agreed curriculum.
58. There are sufficient books and other learning resources in the vast majority of subjects.
59. The buildings are safe and appropriate for the number of staff and pupils on the register. Disabled access is good; an appropriate accessibility plan has been produced for further improvements.
60. The school budget is monitored carefully from day to day, with appropriate financial reports provided for the governors at least once a term.
61. In the current financial year, the governing body decided, after consultation with the Unitary Authority (UA), to adopt a budget with a planned deficit of £107,000. Along with the related business plan, this will secure the current curricular provision until the revised funding formula of the UA is implemented. However, the Audit Commission does not consider this to be good financial practice.
62. The school has effective procedures to identify and cater for the professional development needs of every member of staff, including support staff.
63. Given the situation in its entirety, in terms of the good attainment standards of pupils' and students', the good quality of teaching, the outstanding curricular provision and the outstanding quality of the support and guidance provided for pupils, the school provides good value for money.

H) How well has the school responded to the issues noted in the previous inspection?

64. The school has responded well to the key issues noted in the previous inspection report.

Recommendations

The school needs to:

- R1: *increase the percentage of pupils achieving the CSI in key stage 4 external examinations;
- R2: *continue to develop pupils' bilingual skills, their application of number skills and their information and communication technology skills, through purposeful and co-ordinated planning across the curriculum;
- R3: *ensure that pupils and students, in every subject, have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their work, and what they need to do to improve;
- R4: *ensure that the departmental self-evaluation processes place more emphasis on standards of achievement, and are based on first-hand evidence and that there is a stronger link between the findings of the self-evaluation process and the departmental development plans, and
- R5: continue to work with UA officers, in order to implement the business plan adopted by the governing body, and establish a school budget which follows the recommendations of the Audit Commission within the agreed timetable.

*The School Development Plan for 2006-09 includes actions to deal with these recommendations.

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

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings.

65. The findings of the inspection team coincide with the grade awarded in the school's self-evaluation.

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning aims

Quality of external test and examination results

Key stage 3

66. There has been a general improvement in key stage 3 test and assessment results since the previous inspection and during the past three years.
67. In 2004, test results placed the school in the highest quartile for science but in the lowest quartile for English, mathematics, Welsh and the CSI, in comparison with similar schools across Wales, in terms of the levels of free school meals.
68. Pupils' results in 2005 placed the school in the highest quartile for mathematics and science, above the median for Welsh and the CSI, and below the median for English.
69. In 2006, assessment results placed the CSI in the highest quartile of similar schools, while mathematics and Welsh were above the median, and science and English below the median.
70. The percentage of pupils achieving the CSI was higher than the average of Wales in 2005 and 2006.
71. The Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) value-added statistics for 2005-06 indicate considerable value-added by the school to the CSI in this key stage.

Key stage 4

72. In the GCSE examinations, there has been an improvement in the school's performance in three out of the four key indicators over the past three years, placing the school in the highest quartile of similar schools in two indicators and above the median in another indicator in 2006.
73. In 2004, in comparison with schools with similar levels of free school meals, the school was in the lowest quartile in terms of the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A* - C, and below the median for the percentage gaining 5 A* - G and the average score.

74. In 2005, the school was above the median for two of these indicators, and in the highest quartile for pupils' average score.
75. In 2006, the pupils' performance placed the school in the highest quartile for the percentages gaining five GCSE grades A* - C and 5 A* - G, and above the median for the average score.
76. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the CSI placed the school in the lowest quartile of similar schools in 2004 and 2006, and above the median in 2005.
77. The CSI was lower than the county score in every year in the past three years. In 2004 and 2006, the CSI was lower than the average for schools in Wales.
78. In 2006, the percentage of pupils gaining 5 A* - C and 5 A* - G grades was higher than the county and Wales, with the average score being higher than Wales and similar to the county score.
79. The percentage of pupils gaining grade 'C' GCSE or better in mathematics was lower than the county and Wales in every year in the past three years. The percentage gaining grade 'C' in science was lower than the county average in the past three years, but higher than the average for Wales in 2005.
80. In 2004 and 2005, the girls' performance was considerably better than the boys in every one of the main indicators. In 2006, the gap between the performance of the sexes was much smaller.
81. The WAG's value-added statistics for 2006 indicate that the school is in the highest quartile of similar schools for value-added to the percentage of pupils gaining 5 A* - C grades and 5 A* - G grades, and the average points score during their time at the school. However, the school is in the lowest quartile of similar schools for the CSI.

Standards in the key skills

82. Standards in the key skills are good.
83. Speaking standards are good in Welsh and are good with outstanding features in English. At their best, pupils can speak eloquently, provide detailed descriptions, express opinion, reason and respond sensitively and maturely to complex ideas.
84. Listening standards are very good. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and their peers and consequently they respond intelligently.
85. Reading standards are good in Welsh and are good with outstanding features in English. Pupils read confidently, expressing meaning and feeling, and are able to locate and use relevant information from sources of evidence.

86. Writing standards are good in Welsh and English. Pupils write to meet a range of purposes and make purposeful use of technical and subject vocabulary.
87. Pupils' numeracy standards are good. Across many of the curriculum subjects, pupils use number rules effectively, draw and interpret graphs well and standards of mental calculation are good.
88. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology show good features outweighing shortcomings. Pupils use information and communication technology effectively to convey information, however their data handling and modelling skills are still developing.
89. Pupils' bilingual proficiency is good. At their best, they can transfer from one language to the other easily, both orally and in writing.

Pupils' progress in learning

90. Pupils make good progress in their learning as they secure and reinforce knowledge, understanding and new skills in their lessons. The progress made in a significant number of lessons during key stage 3 is outstanding.
91. The pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make very good progress and reach standards that are appropriate to their ability.
92. Pupils aren't completely clear of their strengths and weaknesses in every subject and consequently they aren't always aware of what is necessary to improve the standard of their work.

Standards in the personal, social and learning skills

93. Pupils' attitude towards learning is positive and mature. They show interest in their work and contribute enthusiastically to the lessons.
94. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. The pupils are naturally courteous and friendly; the school is a civilised and disciplined community.
95. Pupils' attendance percentage over the last three terms is 90.3% on average, which is lower than the current WAG target, namely 93% and lower than the targets set by the school itself and by the county.
96. The attendance of key stage 3 pupils has reached the WAG target during the last two terms, but the school's methods of monitoring and promoting attendance has not had a sufficient impact, to date, on the attendance of some pupils in key stage 4.
97. Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and to lessons during the day.

98. Pupils' problem solving skills are good; they negotiate and share tasks when undertaking practical work. In order to develop their talents, the pupils get involved enthusiastically in the extra-curricular activities provided.
99. Pupils make very good progress in their personal, social and moral development. They collaborate amiably with each other and demonstrate respect, care and concern for others. They are becoming responsible young people who display honesty and fairness.
100. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of issues relating to equal opportunities and they are sensitive to a variety of beliefs and traditions within society.
101. The pupils have a very strong commitment to their area and community and their involvement in community activities is an outstanding feature. The pupils are also becoming very well aware of the world of work. This is valuable preparation for their future involvement in the workplace and in the community.

Sixth form

Quality of external examination results

102. Students' performance in the Advanced Level examinations has been consistently good over the past three years.
103. Students' average points score was higher than the county and Wales in 2004, 2005 and 2006.
104. In addition, the percentage of the students gaining grades A-C in the Advanced Level examination was considerably higher than the county and Wales in every year in the past three years.

Standards in the key skills

105. Students' standards in the key skills are good.
106. Students' literacy skills in Welsh and English are good with outstanding features. Students' oral language standards are good in Welsh, and good with outstanding features in English. Students listen attentively and intelligently to their teachers and to each other. Reading standards are very good and writing standards are good.
107. Students' numeracy standards are good. Students are confident in handling number and apply their number skills well to relevant subjects across the curriculum.
108. Students' information and communication technology skills are good and they apply their skills to enhance and raise the standard of their work.

109. Students' bilingual proficiency is good; they can switch effectively from one language to the other.

Students' progress in learning

110. The progress students make in their learning is good.
111. Students display positive attitudes towards learning and responsible attitudes towards their work.
112. They aren't always fully aware of their strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to improve and raise the standard of their work.
113. Students make good progress in the courses they follow, and are consequently in a strong position to move to the next learning stage, be it in work or higher education.

Standards in the personal, social and learning skills

114. Students' standards in the personal, social and learning skills are good.
115. Students display positive attitudes towards learning, concentrate well and persevere tirelessly with their work.
116. The students are young, mature and confident adults who relate well and amiably with each other and with adults. Their behaviour is a tribute to the school and they always respond positively to the high expectations of their teachers.
117. Students' attendance in registration periods is consistently lower than 90%. Their attendance in lessons, however, is consistently higher than this percentage.
118. Students collaborate very well, help each other and show sensitive appreciation of the opinions of others. They are willing to accept responsibility for their actions and very willing to contribute to activities, for the benefit of the school community.
119. Overall, students are very-well prepared for their future roles and they have positive values in relation to equal opportunity and diversity within the school, their local community and nationally.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings.

120. In its self-evaluation report, the school awarded itself a grade 1 for this key question. The findings of the inspection team differ. The team has awarded a grade 2 for this key question as there is no purposeful planning in the lessons for pupils to develop and use their bilingual skills, and assessment practices are inconsistent.

How well does the teaching meet learners' needs and the curricular or course requirements?

121. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the lessons observed throughout the school.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole school (50 lessons)	22 %	58 %	20 %	0 %	0 %

122. The percentage of lessons awarded grade 1 or 2, namely 80%, surpasses the national picture reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her annual report for 2005 to 2006. Nationally, the quality of teaching is good (grade 1 and 2) in 69% of lessons, and 17% of the teaching is grade 1.

Key stage 3 and key stage 4

123. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of the teaching and assessment in every lesson observed in key stages 3 and 4.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Key stage 3	24 %	48 %	28 %	0 %	0 %
Key stage 4	18 %	65 %	17 %	0 %	0 %
Key stages 3 and 4 (38 lessons)	21 %	57 %	22 %	0 %	0 %

124. The features of the lessons where the teaching is outstanding include:
- very careful planning and presentation to inspire and motivate pupils across a wide variety of activities;
 - work is very well related to the interests and experiences of pupils;
 - wide opportunities are provided to develop pupils' thinking and learning skills;
 - appropriate opportunities are planned for pupils to work successfully as individuals, in pairs and in groups, and
 - effective use of perceptive questioning to extend pupils' responses.

125. Across all lessons, there are many good features, including:
- effective planning and thorough preparation for lessons;
 - clear lesson objectives which are shared, used, and in the vast majority of instances, reinforced at the end;
 - careful presentations that build well on previous work;
 - use of a good range of activities and resources, including some use of the interactive white board, which keeps pupils engaged;
 - appropriate pace and timing of activities;
 - very good use of humour;
 - good questioning techniques to confirm previous knowledge and to aid learning, and
 - firm subject knowledge.
126. In a few lessons, some of the following shortcomings exist:
- a lack of variety and sufficient challenge in the activities;
 - narrow questioning which limits the pupils' opportunities to develop their work in depth, or to develop their independent learning skills;
 - a lack of effective use of group work at times, and
 - a lack of purposeful planning to develop pupils' bilingual skills.
127. A very good working relationship exists between the pupils and their teachers. The teachers know the pupils well as individuals and provide guidance, support and praise, which develop positive attitudes towards learning. The school creates a caring environment and provides learning experiences in which all pupils are treated as individuals regardless of their gender, race or disability, as well as sensitive and effective support.
128. A good number of teachers give generously of their time, both during the lunch hour and after school, to provide extra support in work sessions that reinforce pupils' learning.
129. Pupils with ALN are well-taught and are included fully in classroom activities. The learning assistants provide effective support for individuals and groups of pupils.
130. Differentiated provision for pupils of varying abilities is inconsistent across the departments although there are good individual examples with lower ability pupils. Despite good practices in some subjects, purposeful planning to meet the needs of the most able and talented pupils is lacking.
131. Pupils use both languages fluently, however, there is no deliberate planning to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and use their bilingual skills in subjects across the curriculum.

The sixth form

132. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the lessons observed in the sixth form.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Whole school (12 lessons)	25 %	67 %	8 %	0 %	0%

133. The features of the lessons where the teaching is outstanding include:
- very high expectations, where students are encouraged to become independent learners;
 - teachers who have very thorough and up-to-date subject knowledge;
 - very effective support and thorough preparation for external examinations;
 - lessons that offer very good opportunities for students to develop a range of key skills;
 - a very constructive and respectful working relationship, and
 - teachers who motivate and get the best from students.
134. The good features of the teaching include:
- clear objectives and success criteria shared at the beginning of lessons, used with students and recapped at the end;
 - practical tasks that have been organised effectively;
 - good pace and timing of activities;
 - clear explanations;
 - firm working relationship, and
 - effective and constructive support for individuals; contributions by students are praised and encouraged.
135. The shortcomings seen in a small number of lessons include:
- lessons that are too teacher-centred, with students consequently receiving information passively;
 - teachers tending to feed answers before discussing students' responses and
 - a lack of perceptive questioning to encourage students to think and provide extended responses.

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

136. The school's assessment system shows good features and no important shortcomings.
137. Since the previous inspection, the school has established a computer assessment system. At present, its use for setting subject targets and responding to underachievement varies across departments.
138. The school's assessment policy has been updated appropriately to include an appendix which refers to the use of the new computer system.
139. The school satisfies the statutory requirements for the assessment of the National Curriculum at key stage 3 and the regulations of the examination boards at key stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school conforms to the assessment requirements of pupils and students with ALN.

140. Assessment practices are inconsistent across and within subjects, especially when teachers provide written feedback for pupils and students, and when using assessment to promote learning. Pupils' and students' work is marked consistently; however in a number of instances the marking doesn't provide feedback that is specific enough for pupils and students to know how to improve their work. The quality of feedback given in some individual departments is good or very good. In the best examples, the work is corrected and improvements and comments are offered that result in the individual making good progress.
141. Pupils and students understand the process and purpose of assessment. Although there are good examples of pupils and students assessing their own work, this good practice has not penetrated every department in the school.
142. There are clear procedures and structures in place to inform parents and guardians of pupils' and students' progress. This information is provided twice annually through a written report. One full report and at least one interim report are provided, together with an opportunity to discuss in a parents' evening.
143. The reports are computer-based and track the curricular and pastoral progress of pupils and students. Good use is made of whole school guidelines to produce personalised and readable reports. However, the quality of the subject comments is inconsistent. Teachers' comments don't always give pupils and students specific targets in order to improve their work.
144. Each pupil and student may contribute to the reports by offering comments on their work. Although there is no space on the reports themselves for parents and guardians to respond, they are invited to discuss any aspect of the content, at any time.

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

Grade 1: good with outstanding features

145. The findings of the inspection team correspond to the school's self-evaluation.

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

The curriculum:

- meets pupils' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory school age in the Education Acts of 1996 and 2005;
 - meets legal requirements;
 - provides equal opportunity and access for all pupils and students;
 - ensures suitable qualifications, and
 - provides personal and social education, work-related education and careers education and guidance, in accordance with the guidelines of the WAG.
146. There are a number of outstanding features in the manner in which the school meets learners' needs and interests. These include the:
- breadth of the key stage 3 curriculum, which is enriched by the inclusion of drama lessons for all. Pupils in this key stage also have a fortnightly lesson in information and communication technology;
 - flexibility of the key stage 4 curriculum, which allows every pupil to choose freely and provides suitable programmes through GCSE, Entry Level and NVQ for learners of different abilities and aptitudes, and
 - breadth of the provision in the sixth form. The school offers a very wide range of Advanced Level courses as well as some vocational courses which are well subscribed to.
147. Each subject within the key stages has an appropriate time allocation and although there are clashes in some students' timetables in the sixth form, they have the maturity to complete their work and seek advice from their teachers.
148. The establishment of excellent links with feeder primary schools ensures continuity and progression in the curriculum across key stages 2 and 3. Lessons for Y6 pupils are timetabled fortnightly in the secondary school for Welsh, English, science, mathematics, physical education and French. Teachers from both the primary and secondary sectors are involved in joint planning, team teaching and monitoring and evaluating the provision. This practice is an outstanding feature of the curriculum.

149. There are many very good features in the way in which the school develops pupils' basic skills. Effective support is provided to those pupils who require it through literacy and numeracy support groups, 'Reading Recovery', small group withdrawal and the Y9 Project Success group.
150. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark.
151. The provision for the development of key skills has good features which outweigh shortcomings. Good features include an opportunity for some key stage 4 pupils to :
- obtain a recognised CLAIT qualification in information and communication technology, and
 - follow the learner-centred, modular ASDAN programme which has a focus on the development of Key Skills.
152. Although all subjects across the curriculum make a contribution to the development of key skills, there is insufficient planning for and monitoring of their delivery. This is particularly true for numeracy, information technology and the wider key skills.
153. There is no opportunity for sixth-form students to gain accreditation in key skills.
154. The curriculum is enhanced by offering a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These contribute significantly to pupils' and students' personal development and are an outstanding feature of the school's provision. The programme includes:
- cultural experiences through a variety of competitions and performances. The school supports eisteddfodau and local and national festivals and these contribute to the development of pupils' and students' knowledge and understanding of the cultural and linguistic characteristics of Wales;
 - a wide range of sports clubs and teams;
 - a wide provision of other clubs and activities to promote pupils' learning outside normal school hours, and
 - local and foreign visits which allow pupils and students to widen their horizons and gain an understanding of other people's lives.
155. There are outstanding features in the way in which the school promotes pupils and students' moral, social and cultural development. The school is a happy and caring community which nurtures the pupils' moral and social values naturally. A comprehensive personal and social education [PSE] programme is planned to promote and ensure that pupils and students:
- show respect for each other, staff and visitors to the school;

- are able to distinguish right from wrong;
 - accept responsibility and show self-discipline, and
 - demonstrate care and concern for others within the school, in the local community and further afield. The school organises a number of fund-raising activities for charities.
156. Planning for spiritual development is less evident across the curriculum. Although the school complies with the requirements for collective worship, school assemblies do not sufficiently promote pupils' and students' spiritual development.
157. The school's partnerships with parents, schools and other institutions reinforce pupils' and students' learning experiences considerably, and include the following outstanding features:
- very robust curricular and pastoral transition links with the feeder primary schools;
 - numerous and very beneficial links with the local community and employers, and
 - very effective links with schools, colleges and other institutions, which significantly extend the learning opportunities provided for pupils.

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

158. There are a number of good features in the manner in which the school curriculum responds to the needs of employers and the wider community.
159. The good features include:
- purposeful links with industry and employers, in order to develop pupils' understanding of the world of work;
 - Y10 and Y12 work experience periods which are arranged and monitored carefully;
 - vocational courses, which are enriched by very close collaboration with local businesses to provide relevant and practical experiences, and
 - frequent visits to the school by speakers from the world of business.
160. The *Curriculum Cymreig* [Welsh Curriculum] is incorporated effectively into the work plans of all subjects. Both curricular and extra-curricular activities support the development of pupils' and students' understanding and appreciation of the Welsh dimension.
161. The school takes positive action to ensure equal opportunity for every pupil and to prevent any stereotyping. All pupils have equal access to every aspect of the formal and informal curriculum. The school very successfully integrates a substantial number of pupils (12) who are in local authority care.

162. Pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship is still developing. Topics and units across a number of subjects contribute to promoting pupils' understanding of these issues. However, there is no whole school strategy, as yet, to promote these developments. Nevertheless, the school supports sustainability by recycling paper and adopting energy saving measures.
163. The school takes good account of the needs of local employers. Some of the vocational courses provided reflect the school's positive response to the demand from local businesses.
164. The experiences provided for pupils and students to develop their enterprise skills are good. Opportunities are arranged for pupils and students to plan and run small businesses, which give them valuable experiences of entrepreneurship.
165. Overall, the school has planned a curriculum that takes good account of WAG priorities. It provides a wide range of experiences; some of them are outstanding and lay a firm foundation for lifelong learning.

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

Grade 1: good with outstanding features

166. The findings of the inspection team correspond to the school's self-evaluation.

The quality of care, guidance and support for learners.

167. The quality of care and guidance provided for pupils is good with outstanding features.

168. The outstanding features include:

- The establishment of a close and caring community ethos, in which pupils feel safe and happy; the relationship between them and with their teachers is very good;
- the school's very effective approach to planning and managing its care and support arrangements. The comprehensive and relevant policies that have been prepared are implemented and provide clear guidelines. The standard of care for the well-being of pupils is outstanding;
- very close links and co-operation with external agencies, including the county's health, welfare and education departments, as well as the police;
- a close and constructive link with parents and carers through parents' evenings and reports on pupils' work. The effective use of pupils' Contact Books results in further communication between parents and classroom teachers. The SMT monitors this link every half term. Information is also shared through the school's comprehensive handbook and regular circulars;
- a very effective pastoral team that consists of heads of key stages and form tutors who know their pupils very well. They mentor and monitor their academic progress as well as provide outstanding care and pastoral support;
- very good information and support for pupils regarding all the opportunities that are open to them and impartial advice when choosing their subjects and courses.

169. An outstanding pastoral link exists with the feeder primary schools which ensures an effortless and smooth transition for pupils to the secondary school. The school's transition arrangements are outstanding. Pupils are given a taster of school life by having the opportunity to attend the secondary school for one day every fortnight during Year 6. The experiences provided for them are very beneficial, in pastoral and curricular terms and ensure appropriate continuity from the primary to the secondary school. A variety of lessons and extra-curricular activities are provided under the guidance of teachers from the secondary school and the primary schools. This provision is extended by providing further linguistic support for pupils attending the Language Centre which is located at the school. This also helps them transfer successfully to the life and work of the secondary school. Year 5 pupils in the primary schools are also given the opportunity to attend the school during the summer term.

170. The good features of the provision include:

- an appropriate programme of PSE lessons which is delivered regularly to every class by their form tutors and which complies with the statutory requirements. These lessons are further enriched by contributions from external providers, such as the health visitor and the police, who discuss current and relevant issues;
- an effective 'buddies' system which means that younger pupils in the school are supported by some of the older pupils;
- the School Council, with representation from every class, which meets regularly to discuss relevant issues under the guidance of the school's head boy and head girl;
- effective procedures to monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality, with appropriate use made of the Education Authority's Welfare Officer. The use of a computer system for tracking and analysing attendance, along with the pastoral role of the progress leaders, is beginning to have a positive impact on the attendance of some pupils;
- close and effective collaboration between the school and Careers Wales. The school provides comprehensive careers education and guidance and these arrangements help pupils to make informed choices;
- clear procedures to ensure the health and well-being of pupils and students, including encouraging pupils to adopt healthy practices, which cover physical activity and fitness, eating and drinking healthily, and
- effective arrangements for child protection; the school has a Child Protection policy which complies with the statutory requirements. All members of staff have received appropriate training and are aware of the actions to take, if the need arose.

The quality of the provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN)

171. The quality of the provision for pupils and students with ALN has good and some outstanding features.
172. The school implements a clear and comprehensive SEN policy which meets the statutory requirements in the Code of Practice of Wales. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) prepares a detailed report on the policy on an annual basis for the Governing Body.
173. There are 12 pupils on a statement and about a third of pupils in the school are on the SEN register, which is slightly higher than the national average.

174. The SENCO provides very firm and effective guidance for the school. The co-ordinator provides very good support and training for all staff, and works across the subjects in order to promote effective teaching strategies and ensure that those pupils requiring additional support are supported by learning assistants. The co-ordinator co-operates effectively with parents, the support services, the educational psychologist and external agencies to ensure appropriate support for pupils. The SEN/ALN Co-ordinator leads a team of effective support teachers and learning assistants who are very well trained and qualified to meet the demands of their duties.
175. The school makes outstanding use of standardised and commercial tests to identify pupils who could be underachieving, and in order to plan and provide appropriate support for them. The regular and thorough monitoring and review of the progress of pupils with SEN is an outstanding feature, as this ensures effective planning and targeted support that is appropriate and cost-effective.
176. Pupils make very good progress in KS3 and KS4, with a large number of them going on to gain post-16 qualifications at the school and in further and higher education colleges.
177. The vast majority of pupils with SEN are taught appropriately within the mainstream provision. When necessary, additional support is arranged by withdrawing individuals or small groups, or by providing in-class support to meet the specific needs of individual pupils.
178. One pupil has a National Curriculum disapplication, for whom the school makes suitable arrangements.
179. The annual arrangements for reviewing statements, individual education plans of pupils on School Action and School Action Plus stages, the progress portfolios provided and the monitoring evidence on pupils' progress, are good.
180. In addition to the outstanding features noted above, the quality of the provision for additional learning needs has many good features, including:
- appropriate information provided for mainstream teachers in order to help their planning;
 - a wide range of sessions to improve literacy and numeracy skills which are conducted by teachers and learning assistants, and which are well-resourced;
 - individual and group work programmes which have been carefully structured to ensure progress in reading, spelling and numeracy;
 - paired reading provision for KS3 pupils with sixth form students;
 - regular and thorough monitoring and review of the progress of SEN pupils to ensure their inclusion and access to the curriculum, and
 - flexible use of the curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils, including support for pupils who have specific needs with their revision skills in KS4, as well as support for them to gain ASDAN additional qualifications.

181. The school's governing body has a designated member with responsibility for SEN issues. She meets regularly with the SEN staff in order to discuss this aspect of the provision.
182. The school has good arrangements to support pupils with behavioural difficulties, including anger management sessions and one-to-one support when appropriate.
183. Three pupils were permanently excluded during the year prior to the inspection, and the school followed the appropriate courses of action in those instances. Appropriate work is arranged for pupils who have been issued fixed exclusions, and reintegration meetings are held which include arrangements for implementing a Pastoral Support Programme to help and support these pupils. A good working relationship exists with a wide range of external agencies, including DEWIS, Careers Wales and the school nurse service.
184. The school has 12 pupils who are in care, 10 of whom are from other UA. The links with these UA are carefully and effectively co-ordinated by the deputy head.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

185. The quality of the provision for equal opportunities is good.
186. Equal opportunity is provided for all in every activity, with opportunities for each pupil to partake in all aspects of the life and work of the school.
187. There are appropriate arrangements and policies in place to promote gender equality and to challenge stereotyping. The school maximises every opportunity to promote these principles in pupils' choices and in its extra-curricular activities.
188. The school has an appropriate policy for promoting racial equality and pupils' and students' understanding of social diversity is developed through the PSE programme, and in other relevant subjects.
189. The school has very effective policies and procedures for dealing with oppressive behaviour, including bullying. The school has established an ethos in which differentiation and harassment are not tolerated. The pupils' outstanding behaviour is evidence of the culmination of these arrangements.
190. The school has taken positive action to ensure that pupils with physical disability are not treated less favourably. The school responds sensitively and supportively to the needs of pupils with disabilities. A suitability assessment of the building for disabled people has been carried out and an Accessibility Plan and Disabled Equality Scheme have been formulated.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings.

191. The findings of the inspection team correspond to the grade awarded in the school's self-evaluation.

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

192. The head has a clear vision which sets a clear and definite direction for the work of the school. His leadership is open and inspires the respect of governors, parents, staff and pupils.

193. The SMT shares the vision of the head and collaborates very effectively to realise the agreed objectives and targets. Their individual strengths complement each other very well.

194. The leadership provided by the head and the SMT has led to the establishment of a civilised community which has firm values, places an emphasis on high standards, and provides a wide range of experiences for pupils and students in a homely and caring climate. The knowledge which managers and staff have of the pupils and students and their needs is an outstanding feature.

195. An appropriate school development plan (SDP) has been formed to meet the requirements of the school and to respond to local and national priorities. The vast majority of the departmental development plans support and promote the priorities of the SDP.

196. The school has clear policies and procedures that are based on the needs of pupils and students.

197. Leadership has ensured that all pupils have equal opportunity and that every group in the school has equal access to each course and activity. No pupil is disadvantaged on the grounds of linguistic or cultural background.

198. The school has responded very well to national and local priorities. Use is made of distance learning methods to enhance the curricular provision for Y12 and Y13 students. There are outstanding links with the feeder primary schools.

199. The school has established strong and numerous links with other institutions, including schools, further education colleges, higher education colleges and local employers.

200. Following a discussion with the head, quantitative and challenging targets are set for departments. However, this process does not pay enough attention to pupils' previous performance. Targets are discussed and updated regularly and the process effectively identifies pupils and students who are underachieving.
201. Overall, middle managers are effective in their roles. However, the standard of middle managers' leadership isn't consistently good. Thorough self-evaluation processes and detailed strategic planning are not consistent in every subject.
202. There are effective procedures to identify the developmental needs of staff.
203. The Performance Management provision for all staff starts with an interview with the headteacher and opportunities for teachers to self-evaluate their work. As a follow-up to this provision and the departmental development plans, the school identifies the developmental needs of teachers and organises appropriate training and follow-up. Following courses, staff often share information and good practice with each other.
204. One member of staff has completed a course that leads to the National Professional Qualification for Heads.
205. By restructuring the ancillary and administrative workforce, the school has met the requirements of the national workload agreement for teachers, and has also successfully provided opportunities for professional development for staff.

How well governors and other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

206. The governing body is supportive and enthusiastic and undertakes its duties effectively. The members have vast experience of the world of education and beyond and their expertise is used to contribute to and to enhance the work of the school.
207. The governing body co-operates well with the SMT to set a clear strategic direction for the school. It is involved in formulating and discussing policies and the governors are well-informed about the quality of the education in the school. Members of the governing body are well aware of the work of some departments; however, this is not the case in every subject.
208. Governors ensure that the school fulfils course requirements and other statutory requirements, but have not ensured that the school follows the guidelines of the Audit Commission when adopting the school's current budget.

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

Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

209. In its self-evaluation report, the school awarded itself a grade 1 for this key question. The findings of the inspection team differ. The team is of the opinion that there is inconsistency in the standard of the departmental self-evaluation processes and that the monitoring systems don't focus enough on evaluating pupils' standards of achievement.

How effectively is the school's performance monitored and evaluated?

210. The strong self-evaluative ethos established has enabled the school to identify and share good practice and to identify issues that need to be developed.

211. The school's self-evaluation report accurately and honestly highlights the strengths of the school, along with the areas for future development. It also makes effective use of the criteria associated with the seven key questions in the Common Inspection Framework, and lists relevant sources of evidence to support opinions. The findings of the inspection team support a large number of the school's opinions. The grades awarded by the inspection team correspond to those of the school in four out of the seven key questions, but are lower for three of the questions, namely key questions 2, 6 and 7.

212. The school's self-evaluation policy and guidelines provide clear guidance for staff and departments on implementation.

213. The school has firm monitoring structures and arrangements. Leaders and managers use various methods for collecting evidence including data analysis, examining pupils' work and lesson observations. This has resulted in the development of a reflective approach and professional communication between staff, which has led to improvements in a number of areas.

214. The findings of the inspection team on the standards of teaching in the school correspond to the outcomes of the school's evaluations which are based upon lesson observations by the SMT.

215. The school makes increasing use of a computer system to track pupils' progress and to identify and respond to underachievement. However, the monitoring system does not focus enough on evaluating pupils' standards of achievement.

216. There is inconsistency in the quality and detail of the departmental self-evaluations. In the best instances, thorough data analysis, the examination of pupils' work and lesson observations lead to identifying specific aspects for improvement. However, overall, the self-evaluation reports are descriptive rather than analytical in nature.

217. The arrangements for seeking out the opinions of pupils, staff and other interested parties are developing well. The school makes increasing use of questionnaires to collect the opinions of pupils, staff and parents regarding aspects of the work of the school. The school attempts to ensure that the information collected through questionnaires is as valid and reliable as possible, and acts early on the basis of the findings. Pupils' comments and opinions, which are presented through the school council, are given fair consideration. Although there is no formal consultation procedure, the opinions of representatives from the local community and employers are given full consideration when planning the school's development.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

218. The school's procedures for planning improvement are good and pay fair attention to the information gained from the school's self-evaluation processes. The SMT makes good use of this information to determine improvement priorities which are then discussed in detail in staff and governor meetings.
219. The SDP identifies detailed implementation strategies and sets clear and challenging targets. The SDP and the departmental development plans, are implemented over a three year period. However, the annual evaluations of the implementation of the development plans do not have a sufficient impact on the long-term plans.
220. There is no obvious link between the findings of departmental self-evaluation processes and the departmental development plans.
221. The school ensures that the main priorities identified in the SDP are supported by sufficient resources.
222. The school has made good progress in tackling the key issues of the previous inspection. Firm action has been taken to identify the pupils who are underachieving and a very good range of strategies have been employed which have had a positive impact on their academic performance. The school has, and is continuing to develop its assessment procedures in order to ensure consistency within and across departments. The school has responded fully to the health and safety matters highlighted during the last inspection. Sufficient time is now allocated for statutory religious education in KS4 and in the sixth form.

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

Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

223. This grade is lower than the grade the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team judged that the school had not given sufficient consideration to the recommendation of the Audit Commission in determining the school's current budget.

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

224. The school is well staffed and has a sufficient number of teachers to teach the agreed curriculum. There is a good balance between experienced and younger teachers. The vast majority of teachers have a relevant honours degree, with a third of the teachers having gained a further higher or professional qualification. Although about a third of the teachers teach more than one subject, this does not have an adverse effect on pupils' standards of achievement, as suitable support and training is provided for teaching a second or third subject. The support for Newly Qualified Teachers is appropriate. They appreciate the support they are given by managers and the opportunities they have to attend suitable courses and training.

225. The technicians and administrative staff undertake their duties competently and effectively. There is a sufficient number of learning assistants who have qualified to an appropriate level of expertise in SEN, and on the whole good use is made of support and ancillary staff. The caretaker, the cook, and the arrangements for maintaining the grounds under the financial management of the school, contribute effectively to the neat appearance and security of the school, as well as to the good standard of catering.

226. The arrangements to ensure appropriate time for planning, preparation and assessment time for teachers are working well. The flexible manner in which teachers implement the system helps the school to run smoothly. A suitable plan has been implemented for remodelling the workforce and detailed and relevant job descriptions have been prepared.

227. There are sufficient books and other learning resources in the vast majority of subjects. The quality of many of the resources is good. Departments benefit from an annual contribution from the Parents' Association to extend the range of resources and equipment by making applications to the Association. The school has invested, and is continuing to invest, in information and communication technology equipment. The computer: pupil ratio is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, there are still old computers in some departments. The number of interactive white boards and projectors in the school is relatively low (6) and this limits the teaching and learning experiences in some subjects.

228. The subject displays in the classrooms and the corridors are of good and often very good quality. The toilets and changing rooms are in a good condition on the whole.
229. Overall, the rooms are an appropriate size for the teaching groups.
230. The library, which is also a community resource, is available for the school every morning. Although it has limited space, it provides a pleasant working environment for pupils and students who make use of it. The library is not used to its full potential to promote the development of pupils' research skills.
231. The buildings and accommodation are safe and suitable for the number of staff and pupils on the register, and disabled access is good. An appropriate accessibility plan has been prepared for further improvements. The condition of the school buildings and campus is generally good. The school has responded enthusiastically to the issues noted in the previous inspection regarding the buildings and facilities for pupils, and continues to implement a thorough and ambitious programme of improvements to the buildings. The improvements that have already been made have improved the standard of the school environment and ethos considerably since the last inspection.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

232. Good features outweigh shortcomings in the manner in which the school manages its resources in order to ensure value for money.
233. The school ensures that it has sufficient staffing levels for teaching the curriculum. The staffing levels, along with the relative high contact ratio, (84.9%), means that the size of teaching groups across the school is small, with classroom sizes being 14.8 on average, in comparison with 18.8 in the county, and 20.7 nationally (2004-05 figures).
234. There are appropriate arrangements for protected time for teachers for planning, preparation and assessment.
235. The school has sufficient resources to support the teaching and learning in most subjects. Suitable use is also made of the building.
236. The school makes effective use of the teachers and the support staff, by making good use of their time and experience.
237. The head and bursar are responsible for the school budget. The school budget is monitored carefully from day to day, with appropriate financial reports provided for the governors at least once a term.
238. The governing body has responded appropriately to the UA's recent audit report (November 2005).

239. The school's main priority is to ensure suitable staffing levels for delivering broad experiences for its pupils and students, and to continue to do so in relatively small classes. In the current financial year, the governing body decided, in consultation with the UA, to adopt a budget with a planned deficit of £107,000. This will, along with the related business plan, secure the current curricular provision until the revised funding formula of the UA is fully implemented. However, this is not considered to be good financial practice by the Audit Commission.
240. The school has effective procedures to identify and cater for the professional development needs of every member of staff, including support staff.
241. Given the situation in its entirety, in terms of the good and very good standards of pupils' and students' attainment, the good quality of the teaching, the outstanding curricular provision and the outstanding quality of the support and guidance for pupils, the school provides good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

The school is very proud of the main finding of this report, namely that “Ysgol Uwchradd Tregaron is a good school with a number of outstanding features.....” We also take pride in the fact that we are successful in offering a very wide range of formal and extra-curricular experiences for pupils. We also note that the “special quality of the care within the school” is an outstanding feature.

Through the report and the inspection process, the positive attitudes of pupils and students towards their learning, and especially the outstanding standards of their behaviour were praised. Recognition was had of the manner in which they collaborate with each other, their commitment to their community and their “outstanding contribution to community activities”.

The School Development Plan sets the school’s priorities for development and we are glad that the inspectors found a strong self-evaluative ethos in the school.

We also note that progress has been made in pupils’ and students’ results and that they often achieve higher than pupils and students in similar schools. We are also proud that the inspectors acknowledge that the school provides equal opportunity in every activity, with opportunities for each pupil to partake in all aspects of the life and work of the school.

We are proud that an ‘outstanding’ pastoral link exists between the school and the primary schools.

We are delighted with the good standard of the teaching, with 80% of lessons being good or very good, which is a tribute to the hard work of the staff. It is gratifying to read the comments regarding the outstanding features of the teaching and the curriculum, as well as the outstanding standard of the provision for pupils in a close, civilised and caring community in which pupils feel safe and happy. This speaks volumes about the ethos and atmosphere of the school.

In concluding the report, the good progress made since the last inspection is noted. Also noted is the fact that 4 out of the 5 issues identified for development by the inspectors have already been noted in the school development plan.

As a school, we would like to acknowledge the professionalism and commitment of school staff, the guidance of the Governing Body and the support of the local community in their invaluable contribution towards the success of our pupils and students.

We also wish to thank the Inspection Team for their professionalism and courtesy during the inspection.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Ysgol Uwchradd Tregaron
School type	Naturally bilingual, comprehensive, community
Age-range of pupils	11-18 years
Address of school	Heol Llambed, Tregaron, Ceredigion
Postcode	SY25 6HG
Telephone number	01974 298231

Head	Mr. Gwenallt Llwyd Ifan
Date of appointment	April 2003
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority	Mr Huw Evans
Reporting inspector	Dr. Neil Trevor Jones
Dates of inspection	08-11 May 2007

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	54	64	61	52	64	38	35	368

Total number of teachers

	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	25	8	29.3

Staffing information

Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	12.6 :1
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	14.8
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	84.9%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	89.1	87.2	91.9	87.8	77.5	84.5	52.4	84.9
Term 2	94.1	92.7	90.8	91.1	88.1	88.3	79.5	89.8
Term 3	93.4	93.1	92.5	89.9	89.9	88.8	77.6	90.1

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	11%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to the inspection	6 temporary 3 permanent 0 ethnic minority pupils

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum KS3 Assessment Results 2006 (2005 national figures)															
Total number of pupils in Y9 : 49															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School		2.0					10.2	16.3	44.9	20.4	6.1		
		National		1.0				2.0	8.0	21.0	35.0	24.0	8.0		
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School		2.0	4.7				2.2	17.8	31.1	40.0	2.2		
		National		1.0				1.0	4.0	19.0	35.0	30.0	10.0		
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School		2.0					2.0	16.3	24.5	36.7	18.4		
		National		1.0				1.0	6.0	18.0	24.0	32.0	15.0		
Science	Teacher assessment	School		2.0					2.0	22.4	26.5	30.6	16.3		
		National		1.0					6.0	19.0	33.0	27.0	12.0		

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language)			
by teacher assessment			
In the school	71.4	In Wales	56.0

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ			
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2006			53
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil			48
Percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2006:	School	UA	Wales
were entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	96	90	88
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	70	63	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	94	89	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	32	47	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	99	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	89	84	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	98	96	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	2	4	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	-	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	-	-	-

For pupils aged 17 and 18, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 in January 2006	
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or	18
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent	8

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	89	68	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	94	95	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more	23	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or	-	-	-
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or	-	-	-

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Prior to the inspection, the inspectors had meetings with the:

- SMT;
- school staff;
- governing body, and
- parents.

The team read:

- responses to the questionnaires sent to all parents, along with accompanying letters, and
- a vast number of school documents.

During the inspection, the inspectors observed:

- every teacher teaching, observing 50 lessons in all;
- samples of pupils' work;
- files, policies and departmental schemes of work; and
- additional documents from the school.

Also, interviews were conducted with:

- every member of the SMT;
- subject leaders and learning co-ordinators;
- other teaching staff;
- administrative and ancillary staff;
- groups representing pupils from each year group.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team Member	Responsibilities and contribution to the Key Questions
Dr. Neil Trevor Jones Registered Inspector	Summary, recommendations Responsible for key question 1 Contribution to key question 7
Gwilym Davies Lay Inspector	Contribution to key questions 1, 3, 4 and 7
Gwilym Williams Team Inspector	Responsible for key question 5
Beryl Portlock Team Inspector	Responsible for key question 2
Margaret Robertson Team Inspector	Responsible for key question 3
Delyth Molyneux Team Inspector	Contribution to key questions 4 and 7
Susan Edwards Team Inspector	Responsible for key question 6
Gloria Davies Team Inspector	Contribution to key question 4

The school's nominee was Ms. Eirwen James, deputy head of the school.
There was no peer assessor.

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Acknowledgement

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