

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

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

**Cardigan County Secondary School  
Park Place  
Cardigan  
Ceredigion  
SA43 1AD**

**School Number: 6674044**

**Date of Inspection: 22 September 2008**

**by**

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Cardigan County Secondary School 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 Cardigan County Secondary School took place between 22/09/08 and 24/09/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by William Gwyn Thomas undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **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. Cardigan School is an 11-18 mixed, naturally bilingual school maintained by Ceredigion Unitary Authority (UA) There are currently 703 pupils on roll with 133 in the sixth form, compared with 802 at the time of the last inspection in October 2002 when there were 157 students in the sixth form.
2. Pupils come into Year (Y) 7, having received their primary education in the Welsh and English sector. Those that come from the English-medium sector have variable and sometimes low reading ages. Socio-economic indicators highlight that the catchment area of the school is significantly deprived.
3. Pupils of all abilities attend the school. There are 40 pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 249 have been identified as needing some support. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum (NC). No pupils are "looked after" by the local authority. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is 14.2%.
4. About 78% of the pupils come from homes where the predominant language spoken is English, and 21% come from Welsh-speaking homes. Only 43% of pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard within the school. Two pupils receive support teaching in English as an additional language.
5. The headteacher was appointed to the post in September 2007. The senior management team (SMT) includes the headteacher, deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers, and the finance officer.
6. Vocationally-based courses at KS4 and in the sixth form are being developed internally and in partnership with other providers in the area. This is a three county project.

### The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's motto is: "Egni a Lwydd". Its mission is to prepare a broad, balanced and relevant education for all its pupils. The school aims to enable pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to achieve their full potential within the bilingual nature of its locality. The school sets out its twelve aims and objectives clearly for all to understand.
8. The school has prepared a three-year development plan. A detailed development plan for 2007/2010 identifies areas for development which encompass standards, teaching and assessment, bilingualism, the curriculum, pastoral care and guidance, management, transition arrangements and the learning environment, including resource management. Six specific areas have been identified for attention during this period. They include:
  - raising academic standards at the end of key stage (KS) 4;
  - developing the 14-19 Learning Pathways' curriculum;
  - reviewing pastoral arrangements to support improvement in behaviour;

- improving efficiency in managing resources;
  - developing strategies for assessment for learning; and
  - developing and strengthening transition arrangements at KS2/KS3.
9. The school also sets numerical targets for success at the end of KS3 and KS4 that, in 2009:
- 74.8% of pupils should reach at least level 5, in teachers' assessments in all core subjects combined, at the end of KS3; and
  - in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations, 63.1% of pupils should gain at least five GCSE grades A\*-C; 97.3% gain at least five GCSE grades A\*-G, and 100% gain at least one GCSE grade at A\*-G.

## Summary

10. Cardigan School has shortcomings in important areas, in leadership and management.
11. Currently, senior and middle management do not monitor with sufficient rigour and there are inconsistencies in the quality of management. There are ineffective arrangements for ensuring improvements. There are also several important key issues for action which have not been addressed since the 2002 inspection.
12. "In accordance with the Education Act 2005, I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) agrees, that this school is in need of significant improvement in the above areas".
13. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007. Both he and his SMT have identified the areas for moving forward in the school development plan (SDP). There are initial signs of improvement. The curriculum is expanding due to increased collaboration.

### Table of grades awarded

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

14. These grades match those of the school's self-evaluation report in key questions 1, 2 and 3. They are lower than those which the school awarded itself, in its self-evaluation report, in key questions 4, 5, 6 and 7.

## Standards

15. Results in KS3 have been variable for a number of years and do not compare well with those of similar schools. In KS4, only those pupils achieving at least five A\*-C grades at GCSE examinations compare well with pupils in similar schools. In the sixth form, the percentage of students achieving an A-C and A-E grade in two or more Advanced (A) levels is below local authority and national averages.

STANDARDS IN KEY SKILLS	KS3 GRADES		KS4 GRADES		SIXTH FORM GRADES	
	WELSH	ENGLISH	WELSH	ENGLISH	WELSH	ENGLISH
Speaking	2	2	2	2	2	2
Listening	2	3	2	2	2	2
Reading	3	3	3	2	2	2
Writing	3	3	3	3	2	2
Numeracy	3	3	2	2	2	2
ICT	2	2	2	2	2	2
Creative & Problem Solving	3	3	3	3	3	3
Improving Own Learning	3	3	3	3	3	3
Working With Others	3	3	3	3	2	2

16. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills have improved and are good throughout the school. There has also been an improvement in numeracy skills in KS4. Standards of key skills in the sixth form are generally good. Standards in all other key skills have good features which outweigh shortcomings.
17. Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their ability. Those pupils with learning difficulties in receipt of support but have no statement of SEN, do not achieve their full potential.
18. Pupils' behaviour in KS3 is influenced by the negative attitudes of a minority of boys and girls. They disrupt the education of others within their teaching groups and are disrespectful. Behaviour in KS4 is better and good in the sixth form. The majority of pupils respect their teachers and they behave well when not in formal lessons. Attendance levels have improved but remain slightly below the attendance levels of similar schools in Wales. Most pupils are punctual to lessons.
19. A minority of pupils find it difficult to concentrate fully in class. This limits group work. The majority of pupils are developing skills to appreciate the values of others. Most participate in school productions including eisteddfodau. All pupils are aware of what is expected of them.

## The quality of education

20. Overall, in teaching, good features outweigh shortcomings. The subject knowledge of teaching staff is good. Where teaching is good, there is pace and challenge. However, at times, the relationships between teachers and pupils vary between being good to poor. In nearly half the lessons, tasks are set which are not challenging. Appropriate questioning techniques are not used and expectations are not high. Key skills are only now being developed within the classroom.

21. The quality of teaching in all the lessons visited by the inspectors is lower than the national average as reported in Estyn's annual report. The grades are shown in the grid below:

<b>Number of lessons: 43</b>	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>Whole-school</b>	9%	49%	37%	5%	0%
<b>All-Wales 2006/07</b>	19%	57%	21%	3%	0%

22. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching both within and between subjects.
23. The quality of marking is inconsistent throughout the school. There is insufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve and the school has no effective consistent system for tracking pupils' progress. Target-setting processes are not robust. The work to identify and deal with underachievement is developing.
24. The school's curriculum satisfies legal requirements for pupils of statutory school age. It is accessible to all and provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to achieve accreditation. It offers a range of subject options to its pupils in KS4. The subject options for the sixth form are extended through collaboration. There are curricular links which help pupils with transition from primary schools to secondary education.
25. Good extra-curricular activities, which enrich pupils' personal development, are provided by the school. Many pupils also benefit from the wide range of cultural activities available. Pupils' cultural developments are improving but their spiritual development is only adequately developed within the school. They make good progress with their social and moral developments.
26. Partnerships with other organisations are developing. There are good links with parents. Businesses provide work-experience opportunities and outside speakers enhance the spiritual development of sixth-form students. The Careers service contributes effectively to the options' process.
27. Pupils' bilingual skills are not used sufficiently. Pupils are unable to converse easily and have difficulty moving confidently from one language to the other.
28. The school contributes effectively to the well-being of its pupils. The canteen provides a daily menu of healthy foods; physical activities are well supported. All vending machines have been removed.
29. The quality of care and support to pupils by key stage co-ordinators is generally good. There is effective liaison with external agencies.
30. In most instances pastoral support by tutors is good. There are a few instances where little support is provided and pupils do not receive enough individual attention to monitor their progress. The quality of support is inconsistently monitored. The school is improving its stance on unpleasant behaviour.
31. The quality of support provision for SEN pupils is good. Teachers diagnose pupils' needs carefully and implement a range of effective support strategies. The needs of pupils slightly outside this category are not met, especially in KS4.
32. Overall, the school's provision for equal opportunities is inconsistent. The school council is an effective body within the school.
33. Child protection procedures are well embedded in the school.

34. The school does not meet its statutory requirements for the Disability Equality Scheme. It does not have a three-year development plan.

### **Leadership and management**

35. The SMT does not ensure that policies given to staff are carried out effectively. Members of staff do not implement whole-school strategies consistently. Insufficient attention has been given to dealing with issues which arose from the previous inspection.
36. The quality of management is variable. Monitoring by SMT and those with management responsibilities is inconsistent and inadequate to ensure that standards are raised. The work and expectations of senior and middle managers are not clearly defined. The quality of planning for improvement and data evaluation lacks consistency. It varies from being good to poor.
37. There is some good practice evident in middle management. This is not currently shared with other members of staff with managerial responsibilities.
38. The governing body's role as critical friend is not sufficiently challenging. The monitoring of standards and procedures is not sufficiently rigorous. The school prospectus does not include all regulatory information.
39. The school has an adequate number of qualified staff to meet curricular and administrative needs. However, there are four departments without leaders. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are not used to best advantage in the classroom.
40. The quality of the accommodation is very varied. Overall, there are enough rooms to meet the school's needs. Inadequacies exist in the physical education areas where the changing rooms are too small. Sixth-form accommodation is not conducive to study or social interaction. Generally, a number of features require upgrading.
41. The provision of ICT resources has improved. However, there are, overall, inadequate resources available to meet the needs of teaching staff and pupils.
42. The school does not meet the needs of the range of pupils.
43. Due to the quality of external tests and examination results, standards in class, the quality of teaching and the inconsistencies in management, the school provides only adequate value for money.
44. All members of staff have not been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).
45. The provision of sixth-form education is not cost effective as there are many teaching groups which are too small.

## Recommendations

In order to achieve its objectives, the school should focus on the following priorities:

- \*R1. Raise standards of achievement and implement and monitor a strategy to deliver key skills throughout the school.
- R2. Employ effective strategies to improve the behaviour and attitudes of pupils, particularly in KS3.
- R3. Review annually all staff job descriptions to ensure that staff have agreed responsibilities for which they are accountable.
- R4. Improve the effectiveness of senior and middle managers by:
  - refining the roles of the SMT;
  - formalising and standardising the monitoring processes of the senior and middle management teams to raise standards and address the shortcomings in the quality of teaching;
  - creating and developing a middle management structure to contribute to the strategic direction of the school, strengthening the monitoring and accountability roles of managers within the school; and
  - improving communication between and amongst management teams and monitoring the effectiveness to ensure consistency of delivery and impact.
- \*R5. Improve the quality of whole-school and departmental development planning and strengthen the process to ensure coherence and consistency between the planning and monitoring process.
- R6. Promote the development of bilingual skills across the curriculum.
- \*R7. Develop and standardise assessment and target-setting structures and improve the quality of advice given to pupils and students across the school to ensure that they are fully aware of what is required to improve their own performance.
- R8. Enhance the monitoring role of governors and ensure that all regulations regarding the school prospectus and statutory requirements are met including the Disability Equality Scheme and its three-year action plan.
- R9. Ensure that all members of staff are CRB checked.
- \*R10. Instigate effective procedures to monitor the use of school resources to ensure value for money.

\* ***The SDP addresses several of 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 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

46. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

#### KS3 and KS4

##### Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

47. Overall results in teachers' assessments at KS3 and external examination results in KS4 have good features which outweigh shortcomings.
48. Results in teachers' assessments at the end of KS3 have varied considerably over the last four years. Overall, attainment in 2008 was below the average for similar schools where between 10% and 15% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. With the exception of Welsh first language, the school was placed in the bottom 50% of similar schools.
49. Teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science were below local authority and the national average in 2008. The percentage of pupils achieving at least level 5 in teacher assessments at the end of KS3 is in the bottom 25% of similar schools in the three core subjects combined (CSI).
50. The school does not compare favourably with similar schools when comparing value added from KS2-KS3. Teachers' assessments in 2007 at KS3 (matched to prior attainment at KS2) highlighted that the value added for English and science placed the school in the bottom 25% of similar schools.
51. Girls outperformed boys in all the core subjects and the CSI in the end of KS3 assessments in 2005 and 2006. In 2008, boys outperformed girls.
52. At KS4 in the GCSE examinations between 2005 and 2007, the percentage of pupils achieving at least five GCSE grades at A\*-C has improved continuously. When compared with similar schools in Wales in 2007, the percentage of pupils achieving at least five grades A\*-C is in the top 25% of schools with similar free school meal entitlement. However, the percentage of pupils achieving at least five grades A\*-G and the CSI category is in the bottom 50%.
53. The percentage of pupils that achieved the level 2 threshold (at least five GCSE grades at A\*-C, including mathematics, Welsh first language or English) in 2007, was 42%. This figure was below LEA and national averages.
54. The most able pupils do not achieve their full potential. They do not gain the A\*/A grades at GCSE. At least 25% of candidates entered for the GCSE examination in 2007, underachieved in three of their examination subjects.
55. Pupils' progress from KS3-KS4, matched to prior attainment, has declined when comparing 2006 with 2007. In 2006 and 2007, the value added for pupils achieving at least five A\*-C and five A\*-G grades at GCSE was in the bottom 50%. In 2007, the CSI and the average points' score per pupil were also in the bottom 50%. On average, pupils were making less progress than their peers across Wales.
56. At KS4 in the GCSE examinations in 2007, girls outperformed boys in all indicators. However, the difference had been reduced significantly compared with 2006.

## **Their progress in learning**

57. All key skills have at least standards where good features outweigh shortcomings. Currently, there is not a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' key skills.
58. Pupils' ICT standards are good throughout both key stages. This is an improvement from the standards achieved in this skill at the time of the last inspection.
59. Standards of numeracy and listening skills are good in KS4 as pupils apply their skills more regularly in different contexts. They listen attentively to their teachers. Pupils show good recall of previous work and use subject-specific terminology appropriately.
60. Standards in pupils' speaking skills in Welsh first and second language lessons and English lessons are good. Pupils are able to speak relatively confidently and provide answers that demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their work.
61. Reading skills are better through the medium of English in KS4. Pupils are able to read aloud with greater confidence and fluency.
62. There are examples where pupils work well in pairs or groups. However, this practice is inconsistent.
63. Opportunities for developing problem-solving, creative and improving one's own learning skills are limited. Pupils do not undertake self-assessment exercises when they receive their school reports.
64. In both key stages, the quality of work pupils present is variable. The quality and quantity of extended writing are limited. Able pupils write extensively.
65. Pupils do not use number confidently and appropriately in a range of subjects in KS3.
66. Pupils' listening skills are variable in KS3.
67. All pupils follow either the full Welsh first or second language course. Pupils' bilingual skills are not developed fully.
68. Pupils do not often use Welsh as a means of communication to teachers or fellow pupils in other formal lessons. They are unable to transfer their skills from one language to the other with sufficient confidence or ease.
69. In KS3 and KS4, pupils of low ability do not achieve their full potential. Staff expectations are lower and these pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
70. In KS3, pupils who possess limited bilingual skills underachieve. Their levels of achievement are restricted by their inability to concentrate in class.
71. Good progress is made by pupils with SEN in relation to their ability.
72. Overall, the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in a number of classes across the curriculum.
73. Pupils' progress in lessons is only adequate.
74. The process of assessing how well pupils have achieved is variable. Not all pupils are aware of what they have to do to improve. There are inconsistencies in

the quality of written feedback advising pupils of how they need to improve. It is insufficiently focused. This occurs within and across departments.

75. In the majority of classes and subjects, pupils are not engaged in independent learning. As a result, they do not make good progress.

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

76. Standards of pupils' behaviour in KS3 and KS4 have good features which outweigh shortcomings. In KS3, there is an element of disruptive behaviour where a minority of boys and girls are disrespectful to staff and visitors. This behaviour was evident both within the classroom and around the school. This does not contribute positively to pupils' learning.
77. Behaviour is better in KS4 where pupils show greater respect and behave more responsibly towards one another, to members of staff and to visitors.
78. The school is a caring and, whenever possible, an inclusive community from where only 34 pupils have been temporarily excluded. During the last academic year, one pupil was permanently excluded.
79. The attendance level for 2006-2007 was 90.18%. However, this is below the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG's) target of 93% and slightly below the attendance rates of similar schools in Wales taking into account their free school meal entitlement. Pupils' punctuality to lessons is good. Attendance figures are affected by families taking holidays during the school term. During this period, 150 pupils were taken out of school.
80. Pupils make good progress in their personal, social, moral, and wider development. Pupils who take part in the extra-curricular activities in sport, clubs, visits and performances, develop their personal, social and wider skills.
81. Pupils' spiritual development is only adequate. Although the contributions of assemblies are mostly positive, the tutorial periods are not as effective contributors to this aspect of their development. Pupils do not reflect confidently or sufficiently on spiritual matters. Pupils' cultural developments have been improved by the re-introduction of the school eisteddfod.
82. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of equal opportunities issues. There are good links with the community and local businesses. Partnerships with the school are being developed and strengthened. Careers guidance and work-related education are strong features of the school. Through these activities, pupils are prepared well for participation in the workplace and community.

### **Sixth form**

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

83. Students study from within a range of Advanced Supplementary (AS), Advanced Level (A or A2) and vocational courses. In 2007, 85% of students achieved at least A-E passes at A level in two or more subjects.
84. The proportion of students gaining at least two grades A-C and A-E at A level 2005-2007 was below that of the last inspection. The A-C and A-E pass rates in 2007 were below LEA and national averages.
85. In 2007, nearly a quarter of subjects studied at A level, indicated that, on average, candidates performed worse than their GCSE grades would predict.

86. The average A level points' scores per student during 2005-2007 was below the previous inspection's figures. They were below local and national averages for these three years.
87. Girls outperformed boys during 2006 and 2007 at grades A-C and A-E at A level examinations. In 2007, the difference between the average wider points' score (AWPS) of boys and girls was significant.
88. The wider choice of vocational and academic courses in the sixth form assisted in raising the retention rate for pupils progressing from KS4 to the sixth form in September 2008, to 61%. These courses enable students to have continuity and progression from KS4, even though some courses are on different campuses.

### **Their progress in learning**

89. Students achieve standards where good features outweigh shortcomings in all key skills. Standards in the majority of skills are good.
90. Good levels of communication in both Welsh and English are evident in class discussion. Where Welsh is used as the main form of communication, it is strong. Students' bilingual skills in and around the school are not a strong feature as most students prefer to communicate through the medium of English.
91. Many students use subject-specific terminology in discussions with one another and with their teachers. Group work is effective in most subject areas and this is a strength of the sixth form. These qualities assist students to develop their problem-solving skills.
92. Most students are able to apply their number and ICT skills well in a variety of subjects and contexts. They use these skills to best advantage when undertaking course or project work.
93. Some students achieve accreditation in the core key skills of numeracy, communication and ICT. This is a developing aspect within the sixth form.
94. Students do not have a clear understanding of their levels of achievement and what they have to do to improve in many subjects. Their work is marked but targets for improvement are given inconsistently. There is an inconsistency in the quality of the written feedback which is superficial at times.

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

95. Students have developed good personal, social skills and learning skills. Their attitude to learning is good as they are determined to make the most of all opportunities available to them. They accept responsibility more easily and have a strong social conscience.
96. They acquire greater awareness of issues relating to moral, spiritual and cultural development through contact with a wide range of outside speakers.
97. They are very good role models for younger pupils and to one another. Their leadership skills are good. This has enabled them to strengthen the relationships between senior and junior pupils. They gain in maturity during their period of study in the sixth form and have a valuable experience.
98. Students are able to express views openly and honestly. They listen carefully to the view of others, appreciating, but not necessarily agreeing with what has been said.

99. The ability to work well with one another has yet to contribute to the development of their problem-solving skills. Nearly all have adopted and developed skills which have prepared them well for higher education. Many organise their work without supervision. This is evident, particularly in Y13.
100. Attendance is closely monitored and students are developing good working habits. This is in spite of the limited facilities available to them. They make good use of the ICT suite.
101. Students gain much from their sixth-form experiences, in their academic, personal, social moral and wider development.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

102. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

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

103. The following table shows the grades awarded to the quality of teaching in the lessons observed throughout the school:

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>Whole-school (43 lessons)</b>	9%	49%	37%	5%	0%
<b>National percentage grades 2006-07</b>	19%	57%	21%	3%	0%

104. The percentage of lessons awarded a grade 1 or 2, namely 58%, is significantly lower than the national picture in 2006-2007 where 76% of lessons were judged to be grades 1 and 2.
105. Good features outweigh shortcomings in 37% of lessons and in 5%, there are shortcomings in important areas. The school does not attain the 'Vision into Action' secondary target for 2010, for the quality of teaching to be grade 2 or better in 80% of classes.

#### KS3 and KS4

106. The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in all lessons observed at the school in KS3 and KS4:

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>KS3</b>	0%	37%	53%	10%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	12%	59%	29%	0%	0%
<b>KS3 and KS4 combined</b>	5.5%	47%	42%	5.5%	0%

107. There are higher percentages of grade 3 lessons in KS3. The quality of teaching is uneven across and within the subjects in this key stage.
108. Teachers know the pupils well as individuals and offer guidance and support effectively. In some instances, the working relationship between the pupils and the teachers is good and this promotes pupils' motivation. At times, relationships in the classroom do not create an appropriate working environment due to the behaviour of a cohort of difficult pupils who disrupt and disturb other pupils.

109. Across all lessons, the outstanding and good features include:

- sound subject knowledge and understanding;
- clear lesson objectives, which are shared, used and reviewed at the end;
- effective and detailed planning for lessons;
- use of a variety of teaching and learning techniques that encourage pupils to become fully involved and make progress;
- good questioning techniques that extend pupils' answers;
- appropriate pace to activities;
- respect for pupils as individuals, whatever their gender, race or ability; and
- effective feedback and support that promote pupils' motivation.

110. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) are taught well in the SEN department. The provision to meet the needs of pupils other than SEN across the departments in mainstream is varied. There is insufficient purposeful planning for meeting the needs of the more able and talented pupils.

111. The shortcomings seen in almost half the lessons include:

- a limited range of teaching methods and up-to-date resources to ensure pupils' active participation;
- lessons too teacher-centred with pupils receiving information passively;
- a lack of careful planning and appropriate pace;
- limited use of ICT to enrich teaching and learning;
- use of closed questioning that limits the thinking process;
- tasks that do not stretch pupils with the appropriate level of challenge;
- lack of opportunities for pupils to practice and improve their key skills; and
- insufficient variety in respect of tasks to maintain pupils' motivation.

112. Many teachers give of their time to offer additional support to pupils. This reinforces pupils' learning.

113. There is insufficient planning to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop and use their bilingual skills in subjects across the curriculum.

### **How rigorous is assessment and how is it used to plan and improve learning**

114. The quality of assessment, recording and presenting reports shows good features that outweigh shortcomings. The procedures meet the statutory requirements with regard to assessment and reporting on NC subjects and conform to the requirements of the examination boards in KS4 and the sixth form. The school conforms to the assessment requirements for pupils and students who have ALN.

115. Procedures for standardising the quality of pupils' work in some departments in KS3 are developing effectively. The good practice between the school and its partner primary schools to discuss standards of work in KS2 and KS3 is a means of promoting better understanding with regards to standards. In some departments, there is good use of departmental portfolios to standardise departmental assessment.

116. The school has a new clear assessment policy that offers effective guidance to implement the assessment procedure. Every department has not succeeded in responding fully to the requirements of the policy with regard to implementing and promoting good practice, including assessment for learning. As a result, there are inconsistent standards and assessment methods in some departments. Link members of the SMT are not sufficiently rigorous when monitoring the assessment procedures in the departments for which they are responsible.
117. The school has a satisfactory assessment procedure that assesses attainment across the school each term. Since the last inspection, the school has established a new computerised assessment system with the aim of collating a wide range of information and to implement target-setting and monitoring processes. However, currently, there is a lack of data and use of performance indicators at whole-school and departmental level in order to predict pupils' attainment in each subject and for each pupil by the end of a key stage.
118. Expectations with regard to targets set by departments in order to raise standards are varied. The strategies for monitoring progress in order to recognise and respond to underachievement are also varied.
119. The procedure of monitoring progress against target grades has not been fully embedded and developed at whole-school level. The school does not check targets of individual departments rigorously enough. There are some good practices with regard to targeting groups of pupils who are underachieving and offering effective additional support through interviews, collaboration with parents and mentoring. The school does not have any structured mentoring programme where pupils can discuss their achievement and progress.
120. Pupils' work is marked regularly. In the best examples, there are constructive comments and appropriate targets. In a significant number of cases, there is a lack of consistency in the quality of comments within and across departments and the assessment does not always offer pupils sufficient feedback on how to improve their work.
121. The quality of guidance and the opportunities pupils receive for self-assessment and peer-assessment in order to improve pupils' understanding of their work vary from subject to subject. In some subjects, there is good practice where expectations are clear and assessment criteria are shared with the pupils. Currently, these practices have not been sufficiently developed across departments and used regularly as a tool for raising standards.
122. Annual and interim reports to parents provide adequate information on the academic and personal development of their child. There is a clear picture of pupils' progress in each subject, based on the attainment level or grade. There is a lack of consistency in the quality of the comments and even though a target for improvement is given on each report, in a number of cases, the quality and rigour of these targets are varied as they do not include sufficient subject-specific detail. Parents can contribute to reports by responding in writing and annual parents' evenings are held. Pupils do not contribute to their final reports by offering comments on their work and targets.

## Sixth form

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

123. The quality of teaching is good and there are no important shortcomings in the sixth form. The following table shows the grades awarded to the quality of teaching in the seven lessons observed in the sixth form:

Quality of teaching	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	29%	57%	14%	0%	0%

124. Many of the outstanding and good features in the teaching in the sixth form are similar to those seen in lessons in KS3 and KS4. Additional features of the outstanding teaching are the good opportunities students receive to develop a range of key skills. In these lessons, expectations with regard to standards of work are high and motivate and challenge the students. Good features of the teaching almost always include a constructive working relationship between the teachers and students and effective use of the interactive whiteboard.
125. Where a grade 3 had been awarded, there were many of the good features referred to but there was a lack of appropriate pace with limited opportunities for independent research by students.
126. Teachers meet students' linguistic needs adequately. Through activities such as work experience, visiting speakers and specific activities, the school provides opportunities to prepare students for the bilingual world-of-work. However, there is insufficient planning to ensure opportunities for students to develop and use their bilingual skills in lessons.
127. Assessments for learning strategies have not been fully implemented across departments in order to promote and raise students' standards of work.

### How rigorous is assessment and how is it used to plan and improve learning

128. Although there are good examples of marking students' work, with the best marking offering constructive feedback on how to improve, there are inconsistencies across the departments in respect of the quality of written feedback given. Marking in some subjects is superficial and less analytical.
129. Some teachers monitor students' progress effectively and these students receive opportunities to discuss their personal targets for improvement.
130. The school does not have a detailed database to track students' progress against their estimated grades and their potential grades. Data that the head of year holds to ensure that subject targets are correctly based and to have a correct overview of students' achievement in order to recognise and respond to underachievement are limited.
131. The quality of the information parents receive on students' progress is adequate. Annual and interim reports that include predicted grades, information regarding effort, punctuality, attendance and the standard of their work are distributed to students. The quality of the subject comments is varied. Very often, they are not sufficiently judgemental and the targets and recommendations on how to ensure improvement are varied.

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

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

132. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

**The extent to which learning experiences meet learners' needs and interest**

133. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils. It is accessible to all and provides pupils with suitable opportunities to gain qualifications.
134. In the core subjects, the work builds systematically on previous knowledge due to the curricular links with the partner primary schools.
135. The school strives to ensure that pupils follow their first choice of subject options in KS4. It consults with pupils every year before planning the option choices.
136. The school is beginning to develop individual learning pathways and widening choice and flexibility at KS4. The curriculum currently offers pupils a range of subjects from which to construct their individual learning pathways. The school is working towards ensuring that there are sufficient subject options available in the subject domains specified by WAG.
137. The school is making good progress towards developing the 14-19 Learning Pathways' subject entitlement target in KS4. Currently, the school, in collaboration with other county and cross-county establishments at 14-19, is working towards the Ceredigion schools' targeted number of subjects being available to pupils in KS4 by 2009.
138. Welsh-medium provision in KS4 is limited. Pupils who have studied subjects through the medium of Welsh in KS3 are unable to continue the study of some of these subjects through this medium in KS4.
139. The school is developing a broader range of academic and vocational subjects for its KS4 and sixth-form students. This is being achieved through its membership of the Camu 6 Learning Network which involves schools and Coleg Ceredigion.
140. The approach to developing key skills across the curriculum has recently been developed. It has not yet been embedded fully by teachers into their lessons. Students have the opportunity to accredit their key skills in the sixth form.
141. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities. There are many sporting opportunities, clubs and special events. These contribute to pupils' social and cultural development. In several vocational subjects the school provides the opportunity for pupils to extend their learning outside the normal school day.
142. A carefully-planned personal and social education (PSE) programme contributes to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Both morning assemblies and religious education lessons contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The requirements of the PSE Framework are met fully. A large majority of pupils are responsible and valuable members of the school community.

143. The school provides a daily act of collective worship for all pupils and fulfils its legal responsibility. Nevertheless, the quality of provision during tutorial periods is too variable. Some of these sessions do not make a sufficiently valuable contribution to developing pupils' spiritual development.
144. The school has good links with parents, partner primary schools and other partners in the community. Strong links with the local college help provide vocational provision and support for disaffected pupils. These links are developing further through the school's participation in the local 14-19 network. There are good partnerships with initial teacher training (ITT) establishments.
145. The school meets all the necessary legal and course requirements.

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

146. The school provides effective work-related education. Careers lessons are good and there is a strong partnership with Careers Wales. Work experience, both in Y10 and Y12 is well planned and managed. Pupils are well prepared beforehand and follow-up activities allow them to reflect on what they have learned.
147. The needs of local employers are met by a range of vocational subjects provided at KS4 and in the sixth form. The local business community supports the school with work-experience placements. They also participate in activities such as "Dynamo" and "Young Enterprise" which helps to develop pupils' entrepreneurial skills. Several activities organised by the local Rotary Club help to develop pupils' social skills.
148. The school promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils. In particular there is good provision for disaffected pupils and those who are withdrawn from the mainstream. However, the provision of bilingual courses is limited. Strategies for nurturing the talented and gifted are in the developmental stage.
149. The school is responding appropriately to national priorities. For example, there are good links with partner primary schools to aid progression to the secondary school. However, more progress is required to develop individual learning pathways and elements of the learning core, in particular, the importance of key skills.
150. The provision of education for sustainable development and global citizenship is improving. The way in which the school works in a sustainable way is currently focused on paper re-cycling and devices to switch off un-needed lights.
151. The requirements of Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig have not been addressed in a minority of subjects.

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

##### **Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

152. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because good features outweigh shortcomings.

153. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to have in place a Disability Equality Scheme that includes the steps it intends to take to promote disability equality. There is no three-year action plan.

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

154. The school has good links with its partner primary schools and works well with them to ensure that pupils are prepared effectively for secondary school. The overall quality of the care, the guidance and the support given to pupils and students has good features which outweigh shortcomings.

155. Pupils are well cared for, by those with pastoral responsibilities. Appropriate support programmes are in place to ensure their specific needs are met sensitively. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of care given by some of the form-tutors.

156. Established and effective links exist with a wide range of support agencies and services. These are used well to the benefit of pupils.

157. This is a caring school. The pastoral team, which includes the three-pupil support workers, is caring and approachable.

158. The school council has been established in accordance with the requirements of the regulations. Through detailed discussion with all its members, inspectors judged that it is proving to be a thoughtful, active and effective body within the school.

159. The partnership with parents and carers is positive. This ensures effective dialogue. Due account is taken of parents' views and positive feedback has been received, for example, on transition arrangements.

160. Pupils and parents in Y9 are given good information and individual guidance about the various options, which equips pupils to make informed choices. Good advice and guidance are offered to Y11 pupils through the sixth-form induction programme. Sixth-form students are offered an induction programme involving study skills, key skills and career advice. The programme involves a team building activity at an outdoor-pursuit centre.

161. The range of transition arrangements is strong.

162. The PSE programme has recently been reviewed by the newly-appointed PSHE co-ordinator. The programme is based on national guidelines and work is at a developmental stage. However, the programmes are not balanced in the coverage of key areas and lack strategic overview. The delivery of the programme through tutorials is variable in quality.

163. Pupils benefit from a good range of careers advice and work-related activities. This is well organised through the structured PSE programme and the effective support from Careers Wales.

164. The school aspires to reach attendance levels of 92%. The introduction of more structured monitoring arrangements of absences has improved attendance levels.

165. There is a good range of policies and guidelines to ensure the general safety, health and well-being of pupils whilst attending school.

166. The school has well-documented child protection procedures and robust arrangements are in place. The designated person is the headteacher with his deputy being available in his absence. The child protection co-ordinator is also the looked after children (LAC) officer and a key pastoral assistant at the school. There is an effective referral and record-keeping system in place. All members of staff have received appropriate training and guidance.

167. However, there are some shortcomings. These refer specifically to the:

- inconsistency in the effective use of available tutorial time;
- non-adherence, by many members of the teaching staff, to the school's behaviour management strategies; and
- ineffective monitoring of pupils' behaviour in KS3 and KS4.

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

168. The provision for pupils with SEN is good.

169. The identification and assessment of pupils with SEN/ALN are thorough and result from good liaison between the SEN co-ordinator (SENCo) and the partner primary schools.

170. The school's SEN register and all other records are very well organised and kept fully up-to-date. These details are used successfully to monitor the progress of the majority of pupils on the register and to provide appropriate support.

171. The school complies with the recommendations of the Code of Practice (Wales). Statements and reviews are up-to-date. The provision in statements is being implemented. There are currently 41.9% of the school's pupils on the SEN register with just over 4% of pupils having statements of SEN.

172. Early intervention strategies in literacy and numeracy are well targeted. Pupils are withdrawn for multi-sensory literacy programmes and pupils make very good progress.

173. Very committed LSAs have developed a wider curriculum and ensured progression from Y10 into the sixth form. The department offers very good provision through the accredited Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) scheme.

174. Coleg Ceredigion provides appropriate part-time courses for target pupils as part of the wider curriculum in KS4.

175. Pupils with SEN/ALN enter a caring and efficient learning support department. Pupils make good progress. They are well behaved and display positive attitudes to work.

176. Many parents are involved in the annual reviews of statements of SEN.

177. Good use of social and language skills develop pupils' self-esteem.

178. The work of the department is very effectively supported by a committed team of LSAs. All staff in the department work very well as a team.

179. Links with outside agencies and support workers are good and effective use is made of their additional support and guidance.

180. Pupils identified as being gifted and talented are made known to all heads of year to monitor progress. The SEN department recognises the need for additional staff training in the use of assessment tools to improve systems for identifying pupils who are gifted and talented.

181. The school is developing a range of strategies to deal with individual pupils or small groups of pupils whose behaviour has a detrimental effect on their progress and that of their peers. The behaviour of a minority of pupils, especially in Y9, is a cause for concern.

182. There are shortcomings and they relate to:

- underdeveloped systems to monitor and evaluate support in main-stream;
- inadequate use by main-stream teachers of LSAs to boost pupils' learning; and
- ineffective strategies to support pupils whose behaviour is a threat to their own and others' progress.

183. The school does not therefore meet the needs of all its pupils.

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

184. The quality of provision throughout the school has good features which outweigh shortcomings.

185. The school is well informed and sensitive to individual pupils' backgrounds, and takes these into account when planning for them. Teachers work closely with Social Services to ensure that the needs of looked-after children are met well with relevant education and social plans. Pupils who were on the schools LAC register and left last year, achieved well in external examinations and three obtained college entry.

186. Both genders have equal access to the curriculum. The school takes a pro-active and effective approach to gender issues.

187. Through its PSE programme, assemblies and some subject areas, pupils and students develop their understanding of equal opportunities and how to appreciate the diversity of races and cultures. There is good integration of small numbers of pupils from ethnic minority groups. However, the promotion of racial awareness is beginning to be developed.

188. Pupils with disabilities have full access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Pupils and students of all abilities are encouraged to consider a range of courses at KS4. These include vocational and work-based learning and part-time courses delivered by a further education college. The range of bilingual courses is limited.

189. The school has made reasonable adjustments to ensure that pupils with disabilities are not disadvantaged. However, pupils or adults with physical disabilities are unable to access the upper floor of the engineering block.

190. Incidents of bullying are not tolerated and the school deals quickly with any concerns. All relevant policies with respect to behaviour, bullying and discrimination are in place. There is a buddy system for pupils in Y7 and a peer monitoring scheme involving Y10 pupils and sixth-form students who are trained in counselling techniques.

191. However, not all members of staff are effective in complying with or administering the behavioural policy consistently.

192. The school's Disability Equality scheme does not comply with statutory requirements. There is no three-year action plan. This is a significant shortcoming.

## **Leadership and management**

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

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

193. The school awarded itself a grade 3 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because there are some good features, but shortcomings in important areas. These shortcomings relate to:

- the ineffective monitoring of the impact of communication between the SMT and staff to ensure compliance with policies;
- insufficient progress in strengthening the monitoring procedures of senior management to ensure consistency in teaching and learning experiences;
- inconsistencies and shortcomings at middle management level; and
- inappropriate target-setting procedures.

194. This grade is one grade below the grades awarded for key question 1 and key question 7 due to the features noted above, especially the ineffective monitoring procedures of senior and middle management.

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

195. There are some good features evident, in a few departments, of leadership and management at middle management levels. In these departments, there is a clearer focus on teaching and learning, exemplified by a few members of staff with outstanding teaching qualities. This best practice is not shared amongst all staff within the school.

196. There are good features in the development of work-related education, healthy eating and lifestyles, entrepreneurial skills and sustainability. Vocational pathways are established in KS4. Effective collaborative partnerships involving establishments from three counties are only now beginning to be embedded in the sixth form.

197. However, there are several shortcomings in important areas.

198. The aims and expectations of the school are not being implemented consistently throughout the school by staff and managers.

199. They have been agreed collectively and made clear to all members of staff, pupils and visitors. However, their impact is not being monitored by senior or middle managers. The extent of these shortcomings has not been addressed by the SMT.

200. The new headteacher, who was appointed to this post in September 2007, has identified the strategies required to move the school forward. They are evident

in the SDP for 2007-2010 onwards. Many of these strategies and policies have yet to be introduced or implemented effectively. Currently, they are having a very limited effect on practice.

201. The headteacher is supported by an experienced deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and a finance officer. The degree of accountability and expectations associated with their managerial roles have not been fully understood nor developed.
202. This degree of accountability has not been set out clearly in the individual job descriptions of managers and staff. These job descriptions have not been reviewed, agreed, updated, or signed by staff.
203. Generic job descriptions exist for staff, but members of staff with management responsibilities are unsure of their accountability and what exactly is expected of them. Members of staff with threshold allowances are unaware of the expectations and contractual obligations associated with these payments.
204. There is sufficient time within the SMT for members to undertake their roles effectively. They do not use this time appropriately to manage their responsibilities or the school, strategically.
205. The links between senior managers and the departments they line manage, have not been developed and vary in their effectiveness. Each member of the SMT, including the headteacher, is linked to a department or a cluster of departments.
206. There are significant inconsistencies regarding the formality and regularity of the monitoring procedures by both senior and middle managers.
207. The SMT links with departments are ineffective as members do not monitor, assure quality or review the work of individual subject departments.
208. The line management of key stage and pastoral teams varies from being very good to satisfactory.
209. Standards which pupils achieve in subjects across the curriculum are variable. There is insufficient progress in pupils' attainment throughout the school. This progress is not monitored consistently on a whole-school basis.
210. Inconsistencies exist at middle management level. The situation is made worse by the existence of four subject areas without permanent leaders. In three departments, there is no leadership as no person has responsibility for the department. In another, there is an acting head of department.
211. The school is unable to appoint staff with leadership responsibilities to these subject areas due to falling roles and budgetary pressures. The existing mixture of departments and faculties is inappropriate.
212. There is no consistency in driving forward collaboratively the agenda for school improvement due to the variable quality of middle managers.
213. Middle managers are not sufficiently involved in critical debate with one another or with the SMT to determine priorities and formulate strategies to move the school forward. Cross-fertilisation of ideas on a formal basis does not occur.

214. There is no collegiate approach to strategic decision-making. There is no sense of shared ownership and thus no commitment to ensure the success of these strategies.
215. The school's target-setting processes are insufficiently developed and inconsistent, particularly in KS3 and KS4. Pupils are unaware of their targets and in many cases are not sufficiently clear on how to improve. Currently, there is little accountability for ensuring that children reach their full potential.
216. Departments set targets for the end of each key stage. They are neither realistic nor challenging. Many members of staff do not understand data.
217. Target-setting processes for departmental improvement are inadequate. There are no rigorous or challenging targets for improving standards or the quality of teaching and learning. Self-evaluation reports present an unrealistic position. Ineffective monitoring does not facilitate detailed planning for improvement. Currently, there is not a sufficiently robust, self-critical culture amongst middle managers.
218. The school ensures the professional development of teaching, administrative and technical staff accordingly. It does not monitor the impact of this training. Training of staff with managerial responsibilities, including senior managers, is underdeveloped. Middle managers are afforded opportunities to shadow senior managers on a rotational basis.
219. The programmes for the induction of newly-qualified teachers (NQTs), and those on ITT are well organised and managed.
220. The school has a system of performance management for teaching staff with each person being given three agreed targets. The process is undertaken in accordance with performance management requirements. However, the absence of specific job descriptions seriously undermines this process.
221. The school does not have a similar performance management system for support staff.

#### **How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities**

222. The effectiveness of the current governing body has been influenced by the recent numerous changes in personnel.
223. The degree of challenge by the governing body is insufficient. The role of the whole governing body as a critical friend is not yet sufficiently challenging.
224. The sub-committees of the governing body do not meet as separate bodies on a regular termly basis. Discussions are held within full governing body meetings.
225. Middle managers do not report progress in their respective areas of responsibilities to the governing body.
226. Governors have recently been allocated to departments, but these links are yet to be developed. Departmental monitoring and attendance at departmental meetings are not aspects of current practice.
227. The governor with responsibility for SEN has developed strong links with this department. The good practice is being shared with all other governors.
228. Governors' involvement in the strategic management of the school is insufficiently developed.

229. All statutory requirements are not met. The school does not have a Disability Equality Scheme with a related three-year action plan.

230. The school's prospectus does not comply fully with requirements.

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

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

231. The school awarded itself a grade 3 in its self-evaluation report. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because there are some good features, but shortcomings in important areas. The shortcomings relate to:

- the lack of an effective monitoring system for evaluating and raising standards;
- inadequate data provision for departments;
- poor data evaluation by several departments;
- variation in the quality of departmental self-evaluation plans; and
- unsatisfactory progress in the key issues for action since the last inspection.

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

232. The school's self-assessment document is detailed, outlining the perceived strengths and areas for development. It demonstrates that members of staff are aware that self-evaluation is a continuous process of refinement and improvement. Several areas for improvement are noted in the SDP. The grades awarded by the school differ from those awarded by the inspection team in four of the seven key questions.

233. Members of the SMT have partial understanding of their areas of responsibility. The nature and quality of links between members of the SMT and their departments are inconsistent. There are no shared values regarding the role of the link member. No system exists whereby members of SMT regularly attend departmental meetings to ensure unity and clarity of vision, clear lines of communication, and dissemination of good practice.

234. The SMT has no first-hand evidence on which to base its judgements and identify trends. The lack of an effective monitoring system hampers strategic planning.

235. There is no system within the school's self-evaluation arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. There is no rigorous or supportive departmental monitoring cycle which includes classroom observations on a regular annual basis. With the exception of the performance management cycle, very few observations have been undertaken by middle managers or other members of the SMT.

236. The outcomes of the school's self-assessment document are only partially reflected in the priorities set out in the SDP.

237. The school takes account of the views of parents through the commissioning of an in-depth survey of parental and pupil perceptions. However, no action plan

has followed the dissemination of the survey's findings. The school council and sixth-form council are effective in bringing matters to the attention of SMT.

238. The standard of departmental self-assessment reports is variable. Departments have received a template and guidance notes for completing a departmental self-assessment based on the seven key questions. A very few departments, notably science, produce a thorough evaluation of pupils' attainment, with strategies for improvement. The majority of departments, however, present departmental self-assessments which lack qualitative evaluation.
239. There are significant issues related to the ways in which data are used to identify underachievement and monitor pupil progress. Departments do not have access to or have knowledge of Welsh Examination Database (WED) data to assist in the process of recognising and dealing with underachievement.
240. Effective use is not made of value-added or base-line data to review and evaluate the performance of pupils and students. Senior and middle managers, heads of year, form tutors and teaching staff do not monitor pupils' academic progress rigorously or consistently. Consequently, it is difficult for departments to reach sound judgements regarding standards attained by their pupils and students.
241. The impact of the effectiveness of training for the use of data is not monitored. Consequently, managers are not fully aware of the quality of the target-setting processes or the staff who are in need of further positive support.
242. Heads of year, support staff and ancillary staff are not involved in the self-evaluation process.

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

243. The contents of the SDP include national and local priorities as well as issues prioritised within the school. The plan also includes training requirements. These are good features.
244. The SDP for 2007-2010 does not pay sufficient attention to the success criteria by which the school is able to measure how successful the implementation of its action plan has been.
245. The majority of departments do not use their analysis of examination data as tools to plan improvements to raise standards. Science, mathematics and English demonstrate good practice. They recognise areas for improvement from the analysis of their examination data. They note the action to be taken and the expected outcomes. This good practice has not been shared with all departments.
246. The quality of departmental development plans is inconsistent. Many departments do not link departmental priorities with school priorities. Many do not cost their plans effectively and no time scales are included. Departmental plans have not prioritised issues sufficiently. They lack rigour.
247. Opportunities for pastoral support teams and ancillary staff to plan for improvement do not exist.
248. The financial costings of the priorities of the SDP are too general. The school operates with a deficit budget. It is unable to provide adequate resources for all its priorities.

249. Progress on the key issues for action following the 2002 inspection has been unsatisfactory. However, some progress has been made to:

- increase the attendance rate of pupils of statutory school age from 88% to just over 90.18% in 2007 and in monitoring the attendance of pupils;
- build upon the good work identified within the SEN department; and
- address the absence of a daily act of collective worship and the provision of religious education for Y12 and Y13.

250. However, there are several significant issues from the previous inspection which have not been resolved. They include:

- unimproved pupils' standards of achievement;
- ineffective monitoring to deal with underachievement;
- poor behaviour of a number of pupils, particularly in KS3;
- performance indicators, and value-added information not being used at departmental levels;
- a continued ineffective target-setting system; and
- an absence of effective monitoring procedures by the SMT to ensure consistency in the teaching and learning experiences offered to pupils.

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

#### **Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings**

251. The school awarded itself a grade 2 in its self-evaluation report.

252. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower because there are good features outweighing shortcomings. These shortcomings relate to:

- inadequate provision of sixth-form accommodation;
- uneconomic deployment of the LSAs;
- spending in excess of its planned budget allocation; and
- an absence of a structure to regularly review the use of resources.

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

253. There are sufficient members of the teaching staff to allow pupils full and effective access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Most of the teaching staff hold a degree qualification and are suitably deployed to deliver their specialist skills and knowledge. Some members of the teaching staff are assisted by a team of LSAs and appropriate technicians.

254. The effectiveness of the LSAs is dissipated by the lack of professional communication between the assistants and a number of the teaching staff. Learning support assistants, for the most part, are not partners in the preparation of lessons for the pupils for whom they have a responsibility.

255. Staff stability has been a positive feature of the school in the last three years. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and those new to the profession.
256. The workforce remodelling exercise was successfully negotiated and agreed in 2006. It was not implemented until September 2008. All members of the teaching staff are allocated appropriate planning, preparation and assessment time. It is too early to measure its impact.
257. Four departments operate without an appointed head of department. This arrangement is inappropriate in terms of subject leadership, progression and the raising and maintenance of standards.
258. The provision for ICT meets the demands of a comprehensive, whole-school information technology scheme and the requirements of individual subject departments to deliver aspects of their curricular programmes. Interactive whiteboards which provide teachers with the opportunity to give their teaching greater variety have been installed in the majority of classrooms.
259. However, the range of textbooks and other teaching resources available across the school is inadequate to fully meet the needs of teachers and pupils. The library is not deployed effectively to support and develop pupils' and students' independent learning skills across the curriculum.
260. The accommodation is sufficient for the number of pupils on roll. The provision for physical education is very good. The school has taken advantage of the enhanced opportunities available at the adjacent leisure centre to widen pupils' experiences in physical education. The quality of the environment and the availability of appropriate resources for pupils with ALN are good. These pupils are provided with opportunities to develop positive attitudes towards their learning programmes.
261. There are many shortcomings in the accommodation. The school is in need of general refurbishment, especially the corridors and non-teaching areas. The physical education changing rooms are too small to accommodate the pupil numbers in some classes.
262. Sixth-form accommodation for private study and social interaction is inadequate. It is not conducive to the positive development of student independent learning skills. It does not convey a constructive image in terms of sixth-form status and responsibility.

### **How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money**

263. The day-to-day management of the budget is controlled effectively by the finance officer who reports regularly to the headteacher.
264. The most recent audit report (2002) indicates that the school's financial management and systems are satisfactory.
265. There are shortcomings in the school's financial planning. In the 2007/2008 financial year, the school failed to contain its expenditure within the planned budget allocation resulting in a 2008/2009 deficit budget. The operation of the school's meal service at a considerable loss in revenue is not acceptable

- practice. The departmental capitation allowance is low in relation to the overall budget. Its allocation to departments lacks transparency.
266. Structures are not in place to review budget spends in a formal manner. The absence of a governing body finance sub-committee to oversee and review all income and expenditure to ensure the appropriate and efficient use of resources within the school is a shortcoming.
267. The school professional development programme for all teaching and support staff is managed effectively. School priorities, as identified in the SDP, underpin training needs alongside individual staff development requirements. At present priorities are directed towards teacher “middle management” training and higher level teaching assistants (HLTA) training for learning support staff. Appropriate funding is earmarked to secure national and local courses for the professional development of teaching and support staff.
268. However, the monitoring of the impact of training courses on classroom practice is not undertaken with sufficient rigour.
269. A comprehensive training and support programme exists for ITT in conjunction with University College Aberystwyth and for NQT’s.
270. All staff members at the school have not been CRB checked. Only teaching, support and volunteer members of staff, appointed to the school within the last three years, have been checked.
271. The value for money delivered by the school is only adequate due to the:
- standards achieved by pupils across the school;
  - deficiencies in budgetary planning; and
  - lack of a structure for the regular review of the deployment and use of resources to determine the cost-effectiveness of decisions made to inform future planning.
272. The current sixth-form curriculum model, with its significant number of classes of five pupils or fewer, is not cost-effective.

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

We accept the report presented by Mr Gwyn Thomas. We receive it in good faith and have already begun to act upon the recommendations listed by Mr Thomas and his team.



## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Cardigan County Secondary
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Park Place Cardigan Ceredigion
Postcode	SA43 1AD
Telephone number	01239 612670
Headteacher	Mr Garry Brame
Date of appointment	1 September 2007
Chair of governors	Mr N Newland
Reporting inspector	Mr W Gwyn Thomas
Dates of inspection	Monday 22 September – Thursday 25 September 2008

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	95	107	120	114	134	78	55	703

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	45	7	49.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	14.2
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average teaching group size	14.2
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	73.4

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	94.3	92.2	92.7	89.7	90.0	86.0	77.4	89.8
Term 2	91.8	90.9	92.1	88.1	89.2	82.9	63.5	87.4
Term 3	92.0	90.8	93.1	88.3	67.3	72.9	47.3	81.1

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	14.2
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	34 Temporary 1 Permanent

## Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008															
Total number of pupils in Y9:120															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School			0.8				13.3	32.5	28.3	18.3	6.7		
		National	0.2		0.6	0.5	0.4	1.4	6.8	21.4	35.7	24.1	8.5	0.2	
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School							2.0	28.6	30.6	28.6	10.2		
		National			0.4	0.2	0.1	0.4	6.3	20.0	37.0	26.2	8.8	0.5	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School							9.2	30.8	15.8	34.2	10.0		
		National	0.2		0.6	0.4	0.3	1.1	7.8	19.7	27.6	27.1	14.4	0.8	
Science	Teacher assessment	School							3.3	23.3	22.5	30.0	20.8		
		National	0.2		0.7	0.3	0.2	0.8	6.5	20.9	34.7	25.7	10.0	0.1	

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment			
In the school	46.7%		In Wales
			56.7%

### 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 2007	124
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	44

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2007:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	90	89	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	69	65	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	90	88	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	39	46	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	98	99	97
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	90	85	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	95	95	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	5	5	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	3	3	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	1	-	-
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	13	-	-

<b>For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2007	53
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2007	36
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2007	17

	<b>School</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>Wales</b>
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	58	70	67
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	85	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	16	21	20
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	-	-

## **Appendix 4**

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

Inspectors spent a total of 30 days in the school and were joined by the school's deputy headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection. During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 43 lessons;
- registrations and assemblies; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

- staff, parents and governors before the inspection;
- senior managers, middle managers, teachers, support assistants and administrative staff;
- groups of pupils representing each year group;
- representatives of the school council: and
- business and other school partners.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 35 replies to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- samples of pupils' reports; and,
- a range of pupils' work.

After the inspection, inspectors held meetings with departments, senior managers and governors.

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
William Gwyn Thomas Rgl	Key Questions 1 and 5 Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendix
Gwynoro Jones Lay Inspector	Contributing to all other key questions
Manon Wyn Sion	Key Question 2
David Hughes	Key Question 3
David B Morgan	Key Question 4
Bethan Whittal	Key Question 6
Huw Llewelyn	Key Question 7
Gwyn Jones	Contributing to all key questions
Anna Williams	Nominee

### *Acknowledgement*

*The inspection team would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff and pupils for their co-operation and courtesy throughout the inspection.*

#### **Contractor**

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