

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

A report on the quality of education in

**Coedcae School
Trostre Road
Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
SA15 1LJ**

School number: 6694050

Date of inspection: 27 April 2009

by

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Coedcae 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 Coedcae School took place between 27/04/09 and 30/04/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Edward Aneurin Peter Harris 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.

Estyn's reports follow its guidance for the writing and editing of reports, which is available on the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.uk). The table below explains the terms that Estyn uses to indicate quantities. The table is for guidance only.

Nearly all	with very few exceptions
Most	90% or more
Many	70% or more
A majority	over 60%
Half/around half	close to 50%
A minority	below 40%
Few	below 20%
Very few	less than 10%

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 **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

Contents	Page
Context	1
Summary	2
Recommendations	6
Standards	7
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	7
The quality of education and training	9
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	9
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	11
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	13
Leadership and management	15
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	15
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	16
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	18
Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	20
English	20
Science	21
History	22
Geography	24
Physical education	25
Religious education (including religious studies)	26
School's response to the inspection	28
Appendices	29
1 Basic information about the school	29
2 School data and indicators	29
3 National Curriculum assessments results	30
4 Evidence base of the inspection	34
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	35

Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Coedcae School is an English-medium, mixed 11-16 secondary school situated in Trostre Road, Llanelli in the county of Carmarthenshire. There are 1054 pupils on roll compared with 1033 at the time of the previous inspection in December 2003. Pupils are drawn from the neighbourhood around the school as well as from further afield.
- 2 Twenty-five percent of pupils qualify for free school meals, a figure well above local and national averages. The vast majority of pupils comes from English-speaking homes. Three pupils come from homes where Welsh is the first language.
- 3 There is a full range of ability represented at the school. Over twenty per cent of pupils are identified on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and almost 4% of pupils have a statement of SEN.
- 4 There have been changes to the composition of the senior leadership team (SLT) since the time that the school was last inspected. The deputy headteacher and two out of the four assistant headteachers, though appointed to the school prior to the last inspection, took up their present posts since that time. The headteacher took up his appointment in September 2008.

The school's priorities and targets

- 5 The current development plan (SDP) contains a clear statement of the school's aims. They are to encourage pupils to:
 - contribute fully to the school and local community;
 - obtain relevant qualifications;
 - enjoy school life;
 - develop the skills of independent learning;
 - care and respect themselves and others;
 - aspire to achieve their full potential; and
 - exhibit trust, honesty and tolerance.
- 6 The school's self-evaluation report is based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework.
- 7 Numerical targets are set, that in 2010:
 - between 55% and 60% of pupils should reach at least level 5 in all three subjects combined in national curriculum (NC) assessments at the end of key stage (KS) 3; and
 - between 47% and 52% of pupils should achieve at least five grades A*-C, and between 85% and 87% at least five grades A*-G in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination or its equivalent.

Summary

- 8 Coedcae School is a good school that continues to improve. It is a community school in all respects.
- 9 Since 2003 there have been improvements in the following areas:
- standards;
 - the quality of teaching;
 - the support and guidance for pupils; and
 - the use of resources.
- 10 The following table shows the grades awarded in the seven key questions:

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?	2
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?	1

- 11 The grades awarded by inspectors match those of the school in its self-evaluation report, apart from key question 7, where the team awarded one grade higher than that awarded by the school because of the excellent ways in which the school manages its resources.

Standards achieved

- 12 Standards in the school have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 13 The team inspected the standards that pupils achieve in six subjects. The following table shows the grades awarded at KS3 and KS4:

Subject	KS3	KS4
English	2	2
Science	2	2
History	2	2
Geography	2	2
Physical education	2	2
Religious education	2	1

- 14 These grades represent the maintenance of overall standards in science, history and geography and an improvement in standards in English, physical education and religious education, particularly at KS4.

- 15 The following table shows the percentages of grades awarded at each stage in the six subjects inspected:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	8%	78%	14%	0%	0%
KS4	15%	70%	15%	0%	0%
Whole school	11%	74%	15%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 89 lessons					

- 16 These percentages compare very favourably with the averages for all inspections in Wales 2007-2008, both for standards which have good features and for those which are outstanding.
- 17 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures indicate that overall standards have continued to improve since that time.
- 18 Almost all pupils achieve standards that are in line with expectations based on their prior learning and their abilities. Many pupils exceed them. Most pupils make good progress in many subjects. Pupils with SEN make very good progress and achieve good standards.
- 19 At KS3, in two out of the last three years, the proportion of pupils who achieved level 5 and above in each of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, was above the average for schools of a similar intake.
- 20 At KS4, passes at GCSE or its equivalent have been above the average when compared to those of similar schools.
- 21 At both key stages, though pass rates are below local and national averages, pupils make good progress when compared to targets based on prior attainment.
- 22 On the whole, at KS3 and at KS4, girls outperform boys.
- 23 Pupils acquire new knowledge and skills as they progress through the key stages. While pupils develop a comprehensive level of skills in communication, number and information and communication technology (ICT), there are shortcomings in the writing skills of a minority of pupils.
- 24 While bilingual skills are successfully developed through lessons in Welsh second language, pupils make limited use of them throughout the school.
- 25 On the whole, learners have a beneficial understanding of how well they make progress and what they have to do to improve their work. However, with a minority, this understanding is not secure.
- 26 Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They get on well with one another and are polite and friendly to visitors. Pupils understand the high expectations staff have of them. This makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make in lessons.
- 27 Pupils make very good progress in their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ways in which they feel free to express and explore their views openly and honestly are exceptional.
- 28 In spite of appropriate action taken by the school, levels of attendance remain below school, UA and national targets.

The quality of education and training

- 29 Teaching at the school has good features and no important shortcomings.

- 30 The following grades were awarded for teaching in the 89 lessons observed in the six subjects and 28 other lessons:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
19%	64%	17%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 117 lessons				

- 31 These percentages compare very favourably with the averages for all inspections in Wales 2007-2008, both for lessons which have good features and for those which are outstanding.
- 32 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that the quality of teaching has continued to improve since that time.
- 33 Almost one lesson in five was observed to have teaching where the way in which teachers created a purposeful atmosphere was highly effective. However, there were inconsistencies within and between departments in the way teachers assess pupils' progress.
- 34 The school meets statutory requirements for assessment. In a small minority of cases there is inconsistency in marking and feedback to pupils on the quality of their work.
- 35 Outside of lessons in Welsh second language, teachers' plans to provide opportunities for pupils to use and develop their bilingual skills are insufficient
- 36 At KS3 and KS4, the curriculum has good breadth and successfully meets the needs of pupils. While it is coherent, the opportunities for pupils to develop and use their basic and key skills are less well developed.
- 37 Good opportunities are provided to develop learning pathways in partnership with the local 14-19 cluster.
- 38 The support and guidance of pupils are outstanding. Among them are the ways in which the school:
- secures the support of specialist agencies;
 - links with parents and carers;
 - supports pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress; and
 - treats disabled learners equally.
- 39 The standard of care in the school is well above expectation. Pupils feel valued and their voice is heard effectively. The guidance and advice they receive on their academic and vocational choices are impartial and of good quality.
- 40 Links with partner primary schools are extensive. They help pupils settle in and make an effective contribution to the continuity of their learning.
- 41 The provision for personal and social education (PSE) is outstanding. It is well co-ordinated and makes effective use of outside providers.
- 42 The school takes consistent steps to safeguard pupils' welfare. Though the improvement in levels of attendance has been insufficient, the monitoring arrangements are nevertheless thorough. Child protection procedures reflect the best practice.
- 43 The strategies in place to identify pupils with SEN are of a very high standard and the provision to meet their needs is carefully monitored and reviewed.

- 44 The school makes very good provision for equal opportunities, both in terms of the courses it offers and in its extra-curricular provision.
- 45 The school is effective in supporting learners from all backgrounds, promoting equality and good relations and respecting diversity. The way in which the school has adapted its accommodation to cater for the needs of disabled learners is exemplary.

Leadership and management

- 46 Leadership and management have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 47 The leadership provided by the former, and present headteacher, has given the school a good sense of direction. The headteacher and his senior team communicate clear expectations based on the core values of the school. These values are known and shared by all members of the school community and are reflected in their work.
- 48 The school has drawn up a suitable range of policies which reflect these aims. In the majority of cases, these policies are implemented effectively. The school operates well on a day-to-day basis and is a stable environment for learning.
- 49 The school benefits from a culture of open communication. The present headteacher has taken effective steps to consult with all parties in an attempt to re-formulate school policy in the light of emerging priorities and in the interests of sustaining and continuing further school improvement. The school has a clear vision for its future.
- 50 Governors play an effective role in the life of the school. They take enthusiastic account of unitary authority (UA) and national priorities and meet all regulatory and legal requirements. They receive regular reports from leaders and managers, are aware of the main challenges facing the school, and its priorities in addressing them.
- 51 There are relevant links between members of the leadership team and curriculum areas. Teams and departments are well managed and led and the arrangements for setting whole-school targets are appropriate.
- 52 The arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's performance are suitable. Leaders and managers gain first-hand knowledge of standards of provision and are well informed. However, there are inconsistencies in the ways in which this information is used to evaluate practice and plan for sustained improvement.
- 53 The ways in which the school manages its resources have several exceptional features. Among them are the ways in which the school:
 - deploys its support staff;
 - invests in ICT;
 - secures external funding to sustain development; and
 - provides value for money.
- 54 All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Performance management arrangements for staff are in line with national requirements. The quality of training of both teaching and support staff is good. The deployment of learning support assistants is particularly effective.
- 55 The access pupils have to learning resources, and the way in which resources are used and reviewed, are good.

- 56 The lack of a school hall and the condition of specialist accommodation for design and technology are shortcomings.
- 57 The quality of display in classrooms and around the school is good and makes for a stimulating learning environment.
- 58 The way in which the school seeks to resource the priorities of its development plan are well above expectations. It is particularly effective in the ways in which it supplements its delegated budget by external funding.
- 59 The school monitors its budget very well and secures very good value for money.
- 60 There are good features and no important shortcomings in the ways in which the school has addressed the key issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.
- 61 Good progress has been made in the following areas:
- raising standards in general , and of physical education at KS4 in particular;
 - improving behaviour;
 - improving standards of teaching;
 - identifying pupils with SEN; and
 - meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and religious education at KS4.
- 62 Shortcomings remain in the co-ordination of key skills and, despite the school's best efforts, levels of absenteeism remain too high. The school meets effectively the needs of all pupils.

Recommendations

In order to build on current achievement, the school should focus on the following priorities.

- R1 Continue to raise standards at both key stages.
- R2 Raise standards of key skills, particularly writing skills.
- R3 Improve attendance.
- R4 Ensure greater consistency in marking, feedback, and identifying targets for improvement.
- R5 Continue to develop plans to promote effective basic, key and bilingual skills across the curriculum.
- R6 Refine the roles of leaders and managers in setting challenging targets, monitoring and evaluating classroom practice in all subjects, and in promoting improvement strategies.

Aspects of all these recommendations are addressed in the current SDP.

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

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

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

64 Pupils' achievement at the end of both key stages is consistently good.

65 The following table shows the standards achieved at KS3 and KS4 in the six subjects inspected.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	8%	78%	14%	0%	0%
KS4	15%	70%	15%	0%	0%
Whole school	11%	74%	15%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 89 lessons					

66 These figures exceed the average for inspections of secondary schools conducted in Wales in 2007-2008 for lessons where standards were judged to be grade 1 or grade 2. Overall, they denote a significant improvement in standards since the time the school was last inspected. Eighty-five per cent of lessons were judged to have good and very good features compared with 75% at that time.

67 Results at KS3 fall below national averages. However, when compared to schools of a similar intake, passes at level 5 and above in each of the three core subjects are above average. In 2007, passes in each of English, mathematics and science were in the top 25%, though in 2008, passes in English and mathematics were below average.

68 In 2008, at KS4, 51% of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A*-C compared to 61% locally and 56% nationally.

69 Eighty-seven per cent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A*-G compared to 89% locally and 86% nationally.

70 In 2007 and 2008, in comparison to similar schools, passes in the GCSE examination were above average. The proportion of pupils gaining a pass at grade C or above in each of the three core subjects was in the top 25%.

71 When compared with their prior attainment, the progress made by pupils at KS4 is above average.

72 Pupils with SEN make very good progress and achieve good standards. On the whole, at both KS3 and KS4, girls outperform boys.

73 Pupils' listening skills are good. They listen well to one another and to their teachers. Speaking is very good. Pupils willingly respond to questions and make very good contributions to discussions. They use technical vocabulary appropriately and make competent presentations.

74 Reading skills are good at both key stages. Pupils read aloud with accuracy and fluency. The most able read with good levels of expression.

75 Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' writing skills. While, for the most part, pupils are able to use a variety of forms of expression and write for a

variety of audiences, a small minority experiences difficulty in organising their work well and improving their extended writing through re-drafting.

- 76 Pupils' numeracy skills have good features and no important shortcomings. They present data in numerical format across a good range of subjects.
- 77 Pupils make worthwhile use of their ICT skills across both key stages and in the majority of subjects. Many pupils use word-processing, desk-top publishing and the internet to good effect.
- 78 Pupils have lively personal and social skills. They work very well together in creative and problem-solving opportunities. The way in which they work with others, in pairs and in small groups, is good.
- 79 Good features outweigh shortcomings in their knowledge of how to improve the standards of their work.
- 80 While all pupils at KS4 follow courses leading to recognised qualifications in Welsh second language, there are shortcomings in the ways in which pupils develop bilingual skills outside Welsh lessons.

Their progress in learning

- 81 The improvement in standards since the previous inspection is evidence of good progress in pupils' learning. Pupils respond very well to the good teaching that they receive. When they are encouraged to take active parts in lessons, they are productive, make good use of their time, and are prepared well to move on to the next stage of learning.
- 82 For the most part pupils are clear about what is expected of them in terms of their work and behaviour. They are aware of their teachers' expectations of them and respond positively when teachers plan a wide variety of tasks which are carefully matched to their learning needs.
- 83 Pupils with SEN make very good progress. They respond well to in-class support. They make very good progress over both key stages and respond well to challenge and the encouragement to work hard. They are aware of the key skills and exercise them at a level appropriate to their ability.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

- 84 The development of pupils' personal, social and learning skills is consistently good. Their behaviour is exemplary.
- 85 The way in which staff act as highly effective role models helps pupils progress well in their personal, social and moral development. Relationships with pupils and with teachers are very good. Many pupils take part in sport and in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils make very good progress in their spiritual and cultural development.
- 86 The overall attendance rate for the three terms prior to the inspection was just over 89%. In spite of appropriate action taken by the school, levels of attendance remain below school, UA and national targets.
- 87 Pupils show good levels of sensitivity to equal opportunities. They have a very good understanding of diversity within society, appropriate to their age. They understand the needs of people with disabilities.
- 88 Pupils are extremely well prepared for the world of work.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

90 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 89 lessons observed in the six subjects and 28 lessons in other subjects at KS3 and KS4.

	Grade 1	Grade 3	Grade 2	Grade	Grade 5
6 subjects	19%	60%	21%	0%	0%
Other subjects	18%	79%	3%	0%	0%
Total	19%	64%	17%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 117 lessons					

91 The quality of teaching and assessment is above the average for Wales as reported by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI). Eighty-three per cent of lessons were graded 1 and 2 compared to 75% in all inspections in Wales in 2007-2008. The number of lessons with outstanding features exceeded the number identified in the same report by 2%.

92 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, the percentage of lessons with outstanding features is very similar to that of 2003. However, the percentage of lessons graded 1 and 2 has increased by 5%. In this inspection, no lessons were graded the equivalent to grade 4; in the last inspection there were 3%.

93 Although there was a higher percentage of lessons with outstanding features at KS4, there was a consistent picture of grades 1 and 2 overall at both key stages.

94 In those lessons where there is consistently good teaching, teachers plan lessons thoroughly with a wide range of activities which sustains pupils' motivation at all levels of ability. Most teachers provide clear learning objectives at the start of lessons and use a variety of starter activities to engage pupils immediately in their learning. In the lessons where outstanding features were identified, teachers:

- establish very good working relationships with their pupils that create a positive learning environment;
- ask searching questions to probe learners' understanding;
- use short, sharp and challenging tasks that are delivered at a suitable pace; and
- encourage pupils to think critically about what they are learning.

95 In about two-thirds of the other lessons observed the above features were present, but to a lesser extent.

96 Most teachers make good use of up-to-date subject knowledge and expertise to plan a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences that capture pupils' interest. Many teachers attend a range of courses and share developments in the delivery of the curriculum and teaching strategies.

- 97 Many teachers expect and set high standards for pupils in terms of effort, behaviour and attitude to learning. This enables the vast majority of pupils to engage effectively in their learning. Teachers manage behaviour well.
- 98 Most teachers use group work effectively to promote pupils' learning. In these lessons pupils work together productively, share their views on different topics and issues and enjoy learning.
- 99 In the best lessons, teachers make very good use of appropriate resources to stimulate and challenge pupils. These include very detailed worksheets and booklets and use ICT effectively to introduce new topics, illustrate concepts and check understanding.
- 100 The school creates a supportive atmosphere and offers learning experiences where each pupil is respected as an individual, regardless of gender, race or disability. Although some initiatives have been developed to provide more able and talented pupils with extended and more challenging work, this is not well developed across all subjects.
- 101 In the few lessons where there are shortcomings teachers:
- use a narrow range of teaching strategies and some activities lack challenge;
 - allow the pace of the lesson to slow so that the amount completed is modest; and
 - spend too much time in introducing the topic which limits the opportunities for pupils to develop a range of skills.
- 102 The school's promotion of bilingualism has good features which outweigh shortcomings. In a small majority of lessons registers are taken in Welsh and there are a few examples of brief discussions in tutorial groups and lessons, and prayers said in assemblies. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their bilingual skills regularly in lessons.
- 103 Qualitative targets based on previous performance are set for all pupils in Year (Y) 8 and Y10 and communicated to the UA. Although subject-specific targets are used effectively to monitor progress in some subjects, there is no whole-school focus to identify targets in all subjects. An effective mentoring programme involving form tutors and the progress manager is operational in Y11; this process is yet to be extended to other years.

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

- 104 In a small minority of cases there is inconsistency in assessment practice, across and within subjects. Whilst pupils' work is marked regularly in the majority of subjects, in others it is superficial and lacks sufficient rigour. Where written feedback is good, teachers identify clear targets for improvement. In a significant minority of subjects, comments tend to focus on presentation and effort rather than how the standard of work could be improved.
- 105 The school meets the statutory requirements for assessment and reporting and satisfies examination board requirements.
- 106 While self-assessment and peer-assessment are used as effective tools to improve the standard of pupils' work in English, history, geography and physical education, they are not consistently used across the curriculum.
- 107 Teacher assessments at KS3, following detailed internal standardisation, are effective across the subjects that have submitted portfolios for moderation. All

subjects with the exception of physical education will submit their assessments for moderation in this academic year.

- 108 One interim and a full report are issued to parents each year. A further interim report evaluates pupils' progress in the middle term of the academic year. Although both reports indicate attainment in subjects, effort and standards of behaviour, they fail in a majority of subjects to provide sufficient subject-specific detail. They are also insufficiently diagnostic in identifying ways for pupils to improve their performance.

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

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

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

- 110 There are many good features in the way in which learning experiences meet learners' needs and interests.
- 111 The school provides courses in all NC subjects as well as options to develop pupils' interests further. Courses lead to appropriate levels of qualification, including qualifications in key skills.
- 112 At KS4, the school offers a wide range of courses from which learners can choose their individual learning pathways. All learners follow the full GCSE course in Welsh. Vocational subjects are offered as part of the Learning Pathways 14-19 options menu, in partnership with the local cluster. The number of subjects available already meets the Welsh Assembly government (WAG) target. A few learners at KS4 follow a modified curriculum which combines study in school with attendance at college, an independent provider. Provision for these learners is of a high standard.
- 113 The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the learners' needs. Five vocational subjects are available and more will be introduced as funds allow. Almost all learners are able to follow their first choice of subject.
- 114 There is very effective provision for enrichment through extra-curricular activities. There is a very wide range of opportunities available to learners which extend the school day. These activities are inclusive to all the learners in the school and the pupils have a voice in their provision. Staff are trained as necessary, both learners and providers evaluate their experiences and responses are monitored closely. These activities have considerable impact upon learners' standards of achievement and personal and social development.
- 115 All statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. Provision for the daily act of collective worship is outstanding. PowerPoint presentations, to which a local minister of religion contributes, provide staff with a very sound framework for the delivery of spiritual aspects. Teachers use these and other resources to provide clear guidance on moral, social and cultural development during the morning registration period and during PSE lessons. Learners find these experiences to be beneficial.

- 116 Liaison with primary schools is good. There is a close association and the induction programme and transition links are effective. A number of curricular projects support curricular transition for pupils from KS2 to KS3. There are very close links with the two main 16+ providers, whereby learners and parents meet students and lecturers in a range of capacities in order to ensure effective induction and appropriate subject choice.
- 117 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The programme for PSE follows national guidelines.
- 118 There are strong and close links with parents, who are very supportive of the school. There is an able and active Parent-Teacher Association. There are good links with the local community, including employers, through a range of initiatives which foster positive relationships.
- 119 Links with the local teacher training institution are strong. Two trainees are taken on every year and the quality of their care and induction is high.
- 120 The school curriculum complies with current statutory and regulatory requirements. The arrangements for religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Curriculum time for physical education has improved since the last inspection, but because of a rota system, not all learners have full choice of activity.
- 121 The school has provision for the delivery of basic skills to identified learners at KS3. It has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the last nine years. Provision for the delivery, monitoring and accreditation of all the key skills across KS3 and KS4, however, lacks coherence. This is a significant shortcoming.

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

- 122 Provision for work-related education is good. It follows the national framework. There are very close and positive links with Careers Wales and learners are well prepared for the world of work. The school has good contacts and relationships with local employers who provide good opportunities for work experience.
- 123 The school promotes equality of access and opportunity to all and tackles social disadvantage very well. As well as in-house provision, the impact of youth workers, the alternative curricula and out-of school hours provision are significant and a major strength.
- 124 The promotion of sustainable development and global citizenship in the school is very good and learners are very well informed on these issues. The school has been awarded the Eco-Schools' award at silver level and it is developing the way in which it acts in a sustainable way.
- 125 The school's arrangements for developing entrepreneurial skills are good. There is a programme of activities from Y7 to Y11 which emphasises decision-making and problem-solving skills. Learners participate in a number of enterprise initiatives, including the Dynamo project.
- 126 Within the PSE programme, through good transition arrangements and in developing its curriculum to suit the needs and aspirations of its learners, the school is taking good account of WAG priorities. The extra-curricular programme contributes to learners becoming more responsible for their learning and to being enterprising and adaptable.

127 The provision for Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is good. While there is a policy for promoting bilingualism which all interested parties support, the extent to which learners develop their competence is limited and lacks progression. This is a shortcoming.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

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

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

129 The day-to-day care and support that pupils receive are outstanding. A well-established, robust pastoral system supports pupils' personal, social and academic development.

130 Pupils' emotional and social well-being is given extremely high priority, and, when required, the school is very quick to seek additional help and guidance from a wide range of external agencies. The close relationships and positive ethos of mutual respect evident within the school community, and the highly effective partnerships with outside agencies are very significant strengths.

131 The school actively encourages and works towards a dialogue with parents and carers not only through an 'open-door' policy, but also transition arrangements and work with partners. This helps ensure that parents and carers are well informed of the work of the school.

132 Through the school council, pupils have a very strong voice in the decision-making process. The council has contributed very effectively to developments in the school by making productive use of school surveys, forging good links with the governing body, working very closely with the headteacher and by having its own budget.

133 Pupils and parents receive good information about the choices and options available to them. Support procedures and advice for KS4 options, careers advice and transfer at 16+ are very good. Comprehensive and informative information, individual interviews, open evenings and career education activities enable pupils to make well-informed choices.

134 Transfer procedures are very carefully planned and managed. Effective partnerships with partner primary schools have enabled pupils to settle quickly and smoothly to their new learning environment. Induction courses for pupils moving from KS4 to post-16 are effective.

135 The school's PSE programme is very carefully planned and soundly based on the statutory framework. It is very effectively co-ordinated and meets learners' needs. Effective arrangements are in place to audit the impact of the programme across curricular areas. The programme makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' learning skills, self-esteem and confidence.

136 Pupils' behaviour, attendance, punctuality and performance are monitored carefully. The school's policy and procedures to promote good behaviour are highly effective for the vast majority of its pupils. The school has very good systems and strategies in place for monitoring attendance and punctuality. However, they have yet to result in any measurable improvement in reducing absenteeism. Pupils' academic progress is well monitored but the setting and

monitoring of their individual targets lacks consistency in their application across the school.

- 137 The school works closely with Careers Wales and its advisor to provide guidance of good quality to all pupils. Pupils' have good access to ICT facilities to research career interests and progression. At KS4, all pupils receive work experience which enhances their understanding of the world of work.
- 138 The school has well-documented procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. The school's PSE programme contains several health and safety topics and promotes healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. The school nurse provides first-class routine and emergency medical support for staff and pupils on a daily basis in a well-equipped medical centre.
- 139 The school has a clear policy and specific guidelines for child protection. Procedures and provision for child protection are exemplary. The arrangements ensure that pupils, especially the most vulnerable, are discreetly and sensitively monitored and supported. Staff receive regular training in this area.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

- 140 Early identification, excellent use of a wide variety of outside agencies and very flexible support ensures that pupils with SEN make very good progress.
- 141 Highly effective partnerships with partner primary schools allow for early, sensitive and careful diagnosis of pupils' individual needs.
- 142 Pupils who have statements of SEN are supported well by individual education plans. Their short-term targets are reviewed regularly and give all teachers valuable information about the specific nature of each child's difficulties. Statements of SEN are reviewed very effectively and the school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Arrangements to support pupils with statements of SEN are consistently good.
- 143 The support of pupils with a range of moderate to severe learning needs is outstanding. Learning support is delivered by two teams who work with subject departments closely and share a common philosophy. There is appropriate accommodation for visually-impaired pupils and for the delivery of basic skills to pupils receiving behaviour support.
- 144 Pupils with SEN achieve well and receive accredited qualifications. Increasingly few pupils leave school with no qualification. They are encouraged to take part in a variety of school activities including sporting events and out-of-hours activities. This makes a valuable contribution to their self-esteem.
- 145 The school deals very effectively with pupils whose behaviour and attitudes are likely to impair their progress and the progress of others. The work of the behaviour support centre is outstandingly good. Pupils who attend the centre have appropriate individual behavioural plans. Their targets are realistic and serve as a good incentive for them. The centre has been highly successful in reducing levels of exclusion

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

- 146 The school has an extremely clear policy to promote equal opportunity, diversity and racial equality. When interviewed, pupils reported that everyone in the school is given equal opportunities to succeed.

- 147 School data are used constructively to make an analysis of the performance of boys and girls. They have guided school initiatives aimed at addressing gender issues, for example, a residential course for underachieving girls which included input from former pupils acting as positive role models. The PSE programme appropriately includes modules which address the issue with the purpose of breaking down traditional stereotypes.
- 148 The issue of race is appropriately addressed in the school's anti-bullying and equal opportunity policies. A senior member of the pastoral team has the responsibility to monitor and record any race-related incidents. In religious education, pupils discuss the issue of race and cultural diversity through modules included in their KS4 scheme of work. In geography there is a good focus on Lesotho through an exchange link involving a member of staff. In art there is a good focus on multi-culturalism as pupils learn about Aboriginal art.
- 149 The school recognises and celebrates its own multi-cultural diversity. Pupils whose first language is not English are encouraged to celebrate their language, customs and beliefs at every opportunity. All pupils are encouraged to appreciate and respect their own and other cultures.
- 150 The school has a Disability Equality Scheme and a clear access strategy. Any disabled person can easily gain access to any room in the school through using ramps and lifts. Bearing in mind the age and condition of the school buildings, this is an outstanding feature.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

- 152 There are many good features in leadership and management at the school. The school has a strong, shared, community ethos which promotes equality of opportunity for staff and pupils. A clear sense of purpose and direction, given by the former headteacher, has had a positive impact on levels of performance.
- 153 The present headteacher communicates a clear vision for the future of the school which continues to focus effectively on school improvement. His aims and values are shared by all members of the school community and are reflected in their work. The school benefits from a culture of open communication. The present headteacher has taken effective steps to consult with all parties in an attempt to re-formulate school policy in the light of emerging priorities and in the interests of sustaining and continuing further school improvement.
- 154 Staff share high expectations of themselves and pupils. Increasingly, there are shared norms about learning, behaviour and relationships.
- 155 At a senior level, the effectiveness of the leadership team in setting the strategic direction for the school, and in implementing, monitoring and evaluating school policy is good.

- 156 Senior leaders and managers have relevant links with departmental teams. They monitor their work and support their professional development needs. While they gain first-hand knowledge of standards and provision, there are inconsistencies in the ways in which this information is used to evaluate practice and to plan and set targets for sustained improvement.
- 157 For the most part, heads of department and pupil progress managers have clear roles and responsibilities which they carry out well. There is a strong focus on raising standards and there is a positive culture of affirming good practice and outcomes. Communication is good and members of staff feel valued and supported.
- 158 Good account is taken of UA and national priorities. Working relationships with local providers at primary, secondary and further education levels are very good. The school works well to promote healthy lifestyles and is developing an understanding of the importance of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.
- 159 Performance management arrangements for teaching and non-teaching staff help to identify and share good practice. The school's self-evaluation report contained an accurate appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses and reflected the views of all stakeholders.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

- 160 Governors work well with the school and have an active role. The contribution of the governing body to the strategic direction of the school is good. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and work efficiently through a range of appropriate committees.
- 161 Governors receive regular reports from leaders and managers. They act as effective critical friends of the school. They monitor the quality of provision and standards achieved by pupils.
- 162 Governors fulfil their regulatory and legal requirements.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

- 164 The findings of the inspection team agree with the school in six of the seven key questions. The team awarded one grade higher for key question 7, because of the outstanding way in which the school manages its resources
- 165 Leaders and managers are well informed about the areas for which they are responsible. The self-evaluation report is based securely on first-hand evidence, including a wide range of relevant data and the contributions of stakeholders. It is refined into succinct and easily accessible summary documents which identify clearly, under the headings of each of Estyn's key questions, the school's major strengths and areas for development.

- 166 Thorough analysis of examination and data on pupils' progress are the starting points for the systematic annual self-evaluation cycle. A member of the SLT takes responsibility for each key question and the headteacher reviews the outcomes of individual subject reviews with heads of department. Reports are shared regularly with the governing body through its relevant committees.
- 167 Each member of the SLT is appropriately linked with a department. They take part in lesson observation and sample pupils' exercise books. However, there are inconsistencies in the ways in which this information is used to evaluate practice and plan for sustained improvement.
- 168 Heads of department observe members of their departments teaching at least one lesson annually. These are effective ways to identify and share good practice.
- 169 The school pays extensive attention to the views of all stakeholders. The school council has developed a strong voice, which is valued by pupils and staff alike. Through effective committee structures and a collaborative approach, all staff, teaching and non-teaching, make their views well known. As well as welcoming the informal input of the community at any time, and canvassing views formally by questionnaire, the new headteacher organised a conference to consult with a wide range of interested parties in sustaining and continuing school improvement.
- 170 There is a good link in the self-evaluation process between departmental and school self-evaluation. There is inconsistency in the style and quality of subject documentation and in the ways in which information is used to set targets for future development.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 171 Good progress has been made in the following areas:
- raising standards in general, and of physical education at KS4 in particular;
 - improving behaviour;
 - improving standards of teaching;
 - identifying pupils with SEN; and
 - meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and religious education at KS4.
- 172 Shortcomings remain in the co-ordination of key skills and, despite the school's best efforts, levels of absenteeism remain too high.
- 173 The school improvement plan presents succinct aims, expanded into manageable objectives and includes realistic and measurable success criteria and costings. A member of the SLT has oversight of each strand. This is an effective way of planning for improvement.
- 174 The management and allocation of resources to achieve the closest match between the school's priorities and all available funding are very good.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

175 The inspection team awarded this question one grade higher than the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report because of the outstanding way in which it manages its resources.

176 The outstanding features include:

- the contribution of non-teaching and specialist support staff;
- the learning resources including ICT investment and provision,
- the effective and efficient use of all resources;
- the deployment and development of staff; and
- the effective management of the school budget including obtaining external funding to enhance provision.

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

177 The school has sufficient teachers to deliver the curriculum. They are appropriately qualified with a high quality of subject expertise and only a small number teach outside their own subject. Some staff have been assisted in obtaining specialist qualifications.

178 The school successfully implemented workforce remodelling and the introduction of teaching and learning responsibilities. All this has enabled teachers to focus on planning and teaching. Effective use is made of cover supervisors.

179 Outstanding use is made of all learning support staff who make a notable contribution to learning including the three units covering dyslexia and behaviour support, learning coaches and disability. Other non-teaching technical and administrative staff support the school effectively and are valued members of the team.

180 Pupils have access to good resources across the school with the provision for ICT being outstanding. The arrangements made to maintain and enhance this investment are very effective particularly e-learning. The learning resource centre is efficiently managed and it is well supported by pupils who use it at lunchtime and after school.

181 An outstanding feature is the way in which the school has been able to gather additional external funding to supplement its budget for improving resources.

182 Despite ageing buildings extending back to the 1930s with some of the areas unfit for purpose the school makes good use of the campus to provide an effective learning environment which is also well used by the community. In addition the school is full with a 92% room utilisation rate which is very high.

183 There have been a range of improvements as a result of new or refurbished accommodation including a community block, fitness suite, gymnasium, toilets and the very good provision for disabled pupils.

184 Although the school has made effective use of investment to improve various other teaching areas such as art and food technology there remain shortcomings. A number of classrooms and laboratories are undersized,

facilities in design technology are poor, the school lacks an adequate hall and there are particularly narrow corridors and stairways.

185 Despite these shortcomings there are very good displays of pupils' work and activities across the school. Very good security arrangements are in place including closed-circuit television cameras and fencing.

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

186 Careful planning by governors and SLT ensures a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers and a substantial number of support assistants to deliver the school curriculum.

187 Teachers have adequate planning, preparation and assessment time and it is well used. Staff absence is monitored and return-to-work interviews are carried out. Criminal Record Bureau checks are carried out.

188 Departmental reviews have a significant input into identifying resource priorities. The management of resources is closely linked to the school's priorities for development and it is an outstanding feature. Funds are allocated to effectively implement school priorities and initiatives as they are identified from self-evaluation processes, such as provision for the more able and talented, ICT developments, the behavioural units and learning coaches' programme. The bursar provides accurate financial input into the funding of strategic plans.

189 The school manages its budget effectively and efficiently and the school bursar makes a significant contribution to ensure this happens. Financial planning is detailed and thorough and spending is efficiently monitored.

190 Capitation is well planned and expenditure carefully considered to meet school and departmental needs. A notable feature of the school's funding of resources is the way in which it works with various external agencies and the Parent-Teacher Association to develop further learning opportunities such as the Llanelli 14-19 cluster, use of transition funding to carry out early intervention and support for pupils with various learning needs.

191 Performance management arrangements for teachers are in line with statutory requirements. All non-teaching staff have appraisal interviews with their line managers.

192 The school provides a wide range of opportunities to support the professional development of staff. Arrangements effectively link priorities based on individual and departmental needs. The ways in which student-teachers, newly-qualified teachers, teachers in their early professional development and non-teaching staff are supported, are outstanding.

193 The school provides very good value for money. This is evidenced by the improving standards achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching, the outstanding support from non-teaching staff, the use and deployment of resources and the quality of care, support and guidance provided for pupils.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

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

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

194 Though examination results at GCSE, in the last two years, have been below national averages for passes at grades A*-C, these results represent good achievement for these pupils.

KS3

Good features

195 Most pupils of all abilities make good progress across the key stage and their assessments at the end of KS3 show a significant improvement since the last inspection. There is an upward trend in boys' achievement.

196 In small group discussions and drama activities most pupils co-operate well, and develop imaginative ideas.

197 Most pupils read well and their independent reading is improving. Many develop independent reading through using the library, supported by the school's graded award schemes. In reading poetry, fiction and persuasive texts, most pupils of all abilities understand the ways these texts are structured and can justify their opinions. Many recognise aspects of style and can use these in their own writing. The pupils who have reading support make good progress.

198 Most pupils of all abilities, boys as well as girls, write fluently and confidently. Many write at length and in detail, learning from their reading. This represents good progress since the last inspection. Pupils of lower ability make good progress with spelling, basic punctuation and independent personal writing.

199 Pupils with SEN achieve very good standards in relation to their ability.

Shortcomings

200 Some pupils of all abilities do not adequately check and improve the basic accuracy of their writing.

KS4

Good features

201 Most pupils achieve well in relation to their ability, and work with enthusiasm and commitment.

202 They discuss well in small groups, sharing ideas and encouraging one another to be thorough in their thinking.

203 They read poetry, fiction and the texts of speeches independently and understand key aspects of style. Most can use critical terms appropriately. Many appreciate ambiguity and the need to speculate and to interpret the texts they read. They know their set texts well and can give well-chosen examples to support their opinions.

204 More able pupils can generalise and discuss themes across a range of poems, independently making sound comments and comparisons using appropriate critical terms.

205 Their writing is generally well organised and well expressed. Most pupils can structure their writing independently, write at length and identify ways to improve their writing. In this, there has been good progress since the last inspection.

Shortcomings

206 Some pupils do not extend their ideas in writing as effectively as they do in talk.

207 Spelling, punctuation and paragraphing are variable in both the draft and finished writing of some pupils of average to lower ability.

Science

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

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

208 Examination results at GCSE in the last two years have been above national but below local averages for passes at grades A*-C. In 2006 these results placed the school in the bottom quarter of similar schools but in 2008 the performance of the department placed the school in the top quarter of similar schools. This improvement is very significant and the results represent very good achievement for these pupils.

KS3

Good features

209 Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of the NC in science that is appropriate for their ability. For example they understand about chemical and physical changes, the nature of forces and can use simple keys to identify unknown groups of organisms.

210 More able pupils have good recall of their previous learning and can use their understanding to explain unfamiliar situations. Many can explain the relationships between volume, pressure and temperature in gases and can give detailed descriptions of how the arrangement of particles in solids changes as they melt. Pupils with SEN have a good understanding of the particulate nature of matter.

211 All pupils carry out practical work well. They handle apparatus well and are aware of safety precautions. They make good observations and record their results accurately, often in tables.

212 Many pupils can plan experiments and understand the need to control variables. All understand the concept of the fair test.

213 The more able can interpret the implications of their experimental results and draw conclusions. A minority understands the differences between dependent and independent variables and some also understand the difference between the accuracy and reliability of measurements.

214 Nearly all pupils have good graphical skills and can present their understanding of science using text, charts, graphs and diagrams. They use scientific terms correctly both orally and in writing.

215 Many pupils are developing an understanding of how science affects daily life, for example in the cases of acid rain and global warming.

Shortcomings

- 216 A small minority of pupils cannot recall details of previous work. This reduces their ability to use and apply their scientific knowledge.
- 217 A number of pupils cannot link experimental observation to theory. Some cannot draw reasoned conclusions from their experimental results.

KS4

Good features

- 218 Pupils make good progress during their science lessons.
- 219 Pupils have a good understanding of the topics needed for their GCSE courses. For example many have a good understanding of the electromagnetic spectrum, the solar system and the life cycle of stars. They know how to maintain good health and can communicate this information to others.
- 220 Many higher-ability pupils can manipulate and use physical formulae and others can balance chemical equations.
- 221 Pupils communicate their understanding of science effectively using text, posters, graphs, diagrams and charts. They use scientific terms correctly both orally and in writing.
- 222 Pupils carry out practical work carefully and with due attention to safety. They make and record systematic observations. Many can draw reasoned conclusions from their results.
- 223 Pupils are developing the ability to relate science to everyday life. For example many lower-ability pupils can not only calculate, but also understand the implications of the Body Mass Index. They also know how to prevent fires. More able pupils understand about the benefits and dangers of radiation and others have a balanced view about the use of human stem cells.

Shortcomings

- 224 As at KS3, a small minority of pupils cannot recall details of previous work. This reduces their ability to use and apply their scientific knowledge. A few have problems understanding more complex scientific ideas.
- 225 In few classes a minority of pupils has an insecure understanding of the lesson content.

History

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

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

- 226 Though examination results at GCSE, in the last two years, have been below national averages for passes at grades A*-C, these results represent good achievement for these pupils.

KS3

Good features

- 227 Throughout Y7, the majority of pupils develops the ability to write extended causal narratives, for example on the causes of William's victory at Hastings.

- 228 Many pupils develop a good understanding of the nature and status of historical sources, so that by Y8 they can make complex inferences from portraits of Elizabeth I.
- 229 They show particularly good understanding of the use of empathy in letters to Mary Tudor, begging for clemency for condemned relatives.
- 230 Outstanding progress is made by the least able pupils in Y8, who, in work on pirates, are able to use evidence from the Internet and elsewhere to test the stereotypical view offered by movies such as 'Pirates of the Caribbean'.
- 231 The good work on empathy is extended in Y9 where pupils write letters home from the trenches, which, as a result of very detailed research, give a real sense of 'being there'.
- 232 Similar progress in Y9 can be found in extended written work testing interpretations of the military conduct of the First World War and balanced accounts of the impact of the Industrial Revolution on South Wales.
- 233 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Shortcomings

- 234 A small minority of pupils experiences difficulty in interpreting historical sources and in writing at length.

KS4

Good features

- 235 Pupils in Y10 can construct a two-sided argument based on whether or not Germany was right to agree the Armistice of 1918. In doing so, they understand that certain pieces of information can be used to support both sides of the argument, depending on how they are interpreted.
- 236 The same pupils can make valid links and connections over time when comparing methods of crime and punishment in the 18th century with those in the present day.
- 237 The lowest-attaining pupils in Y11 make very good progress when interpreting and prioritising reasons for the dropping of the first atomic bomb in 1945.
- 238 Higher-attaining pupils in Y11 produce very well structured pieces of coursework on the Merthyr Rising and Rebecca Riots, building an argument on critical use of source material.
- 239 Pupils in Y11 show a clear and impressive ability to improve their own performance through an appreciation of assessment criteria and the use of published mark schemes.

Shortcomings

- 240 A small minority of pupils in Y11 experiences difficulty in interrogating source material.

Geography

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

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

241 Though examination results at GCSE for the past three years have been below local and all-Wales averages, these results are in line with pupils' ability in the majority of cases.

KS3

Good features

242 Most pupils respond well to the opportunities provided by the modified key stage curriculum to develop and apply their geographical skills in a variety of topics. They accurately construct, use and interpret a range of maps, graphs and statistical data. The majority of pupils demonstrate good research and enquiry skills when undertaking investigations into infiltration rates on varied surfaces in the school grounds, and when considering economic development and conservation in Indonesia. They display good standards of ICT within these studies.

243 Pupils make good progress in developing a sense of place. The majority is able to describe and explain the main features of their local urban environment and suggest well-considered improvements. They make valid comparisons with other areas and places further afield.

244 Most pupils use geographical terms and vocabulary appropriately in their work. The description of processes and the annotation of maps, diagrams and photographs are good and progressively developed within a balanced programme of topics, including river flooding, the impact of human migration, and deforestation.

245 Pupils' understanding of the patterns of physical and human features is good. The consideration of aspects of tropical rain forests, population growth and natural hazards enables pupils to identify and provide explanations for the distribution of geographical phenomena.

246 The majority of pupils has a good knowledge of human impact on small-scale and global environments and communities. They demonstrate good understanding of issues relating to sustainability and interdependence in their work on climate change, extreme environments and uneven economic growth. They are able to explain the importance of individual and collective responsibility when suggesting possible solutions.

247 Pupils with SEN benefit from the well matched provision. They develop good standards in geographical skills, knowledge and understanding and make particular good progress.

Shortcomings

248 A small minority of pupils has an insecure knowledge and understanding of distribution patterns.

249 A small minority of pupils have difficulty in writing at length.

KS4

Good features

- 250 Many pupils produce coursework of a good standard. The majority successfully acquires and applies enquiry skills and techniques of data gathering, presentation and analysis in their coursework. Pupils use ICT very effectively to collate and interpret a range of primary and secondary information.
- 251 Pupils understand the main functions and features of their locality, how it is linked to other places, and the consequences of change on its physical, human and social landscape.
- 252 Most pupils are able to describe and understand how peoples' values, attitudes and opinions vary on a number of issues, such as flood control management in Carmarthen, and urban regeneration in the local area.
- 253 The majority of pupils display a good level of knowledge and understanding of the selected case studies. They accurately identify and explain geographical patterns, processes and interrelationships relating to the economic development of the north slope of Alaska, and the impact of multi-national companies.
- 254 Pupils understanding of key geographical concepts is good. Most pupils are able to infer cause and effect when investigating the impact of out-of-town shopping developments on city centre retail provision, and in providing evidence-based solutions to over exploitation of Atlantic fishing grounds.

Shortcomings

- 255 As at KS3, a small minority of pupils have difficulty in writing at length.

Physical education

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

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

- 256 GCSE results are significantly above the UA and Wales averages for the higher grades. For many pupils, this represents considerable progress in their performance and learning.

KS3

Good features

- 257 Boys and girls of all abilities, including those with SEN, make good progress. They work effectively alone and with others and many show good skills and knowledge in observing and evaluating their own and others' performances.
- 258 Most pupils demonstrate good understanding of the need to prepare their bodies for activity and can lead others in a range of appropriate warm-up stretches and mobility exercises.
- 259 In athletics, many pupils show sound technique and are developing clear understanding of bio-mechanical principles to improve the power in their work on sprinting, high jump and shot putt.
- 260 In cricket and rounders the majority of pupils throws and catches with some accuracy. The more able understand the principles of the games and vary pace, power and direction to outwit opponents effectively.

261 In tennis, some lower-ability pupils show good anticipation and movement and are confident in using both forehand and backhand strokes to sustain a rally.

Shortcomings

262 A minority of pupils make limited progress in athletics.

263 When talking about what they know, many pupils lack appropriate, subject-specific vocabulary.

KS4

Good features

264 Within the restricted core programme, pupils participate enthusiastically in fitness, aerobics and football. Most can devise appropriate and sometimes inventive or creative responses to tasks. Many show good understanding of techniques and safety and take on coaching and leadership roles with confidence and knowledge.

265 Pupils use ICT effectively to develop, improve and present their work. They can identify models in their work on sports structure and research information appropriately. They follow diagrams accurately and help one another to understand the double circulatory system using the correct terminology.

266 GCSE pupils apply theoretical concepts to practical situations with knowledge and understanding. The majority writes clearly and uses relevant subject-specific vocabulary.

Shortcomings

267 There are no significant shortcomings.

Religious education (including religious studies)

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

268 Examination results in religious studies over the last three years have been well above national averages for passes at grades A*-C. They have been well above national averages over the last two years for passes at grades A*/A. These results represent outstanding achievement when compared with those of pupils of similar ability.

KS3

Good features

269 Most pupils across the ability range have secure knowledge of the units of work studied, reflecting the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus.

270 Most pupils work well together in pairs and groups, responding positively to the variety of experiences provided for them.

271 Many pupils have a good religious vocabulary that they use accurately and with understanding in written and oral work.

272 The majority of pupils in Y7 has good knowledge and understanding of creation stories.

273 There are many good examples of independent research work in Y8, particularly in relation to both Jesus' life and the Ten Commandments.

274 Many pupils in Y8 have a good understanding of kosher laws and how they affect the daily lives of Jewish people.

275 By studying the lives of people such as Mahatma Gandhi and Nicky Cruz, most pupils in Y9 understand the way religious beliefs can influence the lifestyles of believers.

276 Many pupils in Y9 have very good knowledge and understanding of the moral and religious issues raised by topics such as abortion and euthanasia.

277 Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Shortcomings

278 The written work of a small minority of pupils lacks detail.

KS4

Outstanding features

279 Pupils' ability to evaluate and reflect is very well developed. Most pupils express their views intelligently and often at length. They can support their arguments with very good evidence.

280 Their ability to use mind-maps as a means of making progress is extremely well developed. This applies across the ability range, particularly in relation to Shabbat.

281 Throughout the key stage, pupils' empathy skills are excellent.

282 Most pupils have an outstanding understanding of examination technique, including how to make good use of time.

Good features

283 Most pupils are willing to engage in debate. They can identify factors that could be taken into account when making moral decisions.

284 The majority of pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the Christianity and Judaism aspects of the GCSE course.

285 Very positive relationships exist in lessons. Almost all pupils listen respectfully to the teacher and to each other.

286 Almost all pupils understand the meaning of stewardship and mankind's responsibility for the care of the environment.

287 Most pupils have good recall of the parable of the Good Samaritan and can apply its teaching to a Christian's duty to help those in need.

288 Most pupils have a good knowledge of the work of the main charitable organisations in Wales.

Shortcomings

289 There are no significant shortcomings.

School's response to the inspection

The staff, pupils and governors of Coedcae School welcome Estyn's report findings, following a rigorous inspection which enabled the school to showcase its excellent work. We are pleased the inspection team found Coedcae to be "a good school that continues to improve" and delighted that many aspects of the schools' work were deemed to be outstanding, in particular the quality of care, support and guidance and the effectiveness of the use of resources.

The report recognises the very good achievement and progress made by Coedcae pupils and highlights their exemplary conduct and positive attitude to learning.

The report makes clear that a significant factor in the upward trend in pupil performance is excellent teaching. We are pleased that the quality of teaching at Coedcae is well above national averages and that 85% of lessons observed were judged to be outstanding or good.

We are pleased to be described as "a community school in all respects". The school prides itself on its collaborative work and is delighted that the exceptional contribution to raising standards made by both a wide range of community partners and parents has been recognised.

The school is firmly committed to further improvement and is pleased that the inspection team recognised the clarity of the school's future vision. It is reassuring that the judgements of the inspection team mirror those made by the school in its self-evaluation report. The recommendations made in the report are issues that the school had already identified and has plans to address in its current development plan.

The school wishes to thank the team for the professional manner in which the inspection was carried out and the fairness of the judgements made. The school embraces the recommendations made and will use them as a springboard to further improvement.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Coedcae School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-16
Address of school	Trostre Road Llanelli Carmarthenshire
Postcode	SA15 1LJ
Telephone number	01554 750574
Headteacher	Mr P A Spencer
Date of appointment	September 1 st 2008
Chair of governors	Mr N Evans
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Harris
Dates of inspection	April 27 th – 30 th 2009

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	217	221	220	225	171	NA	NA	1054

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	59	8	65

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	21
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	77%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	94%	89.5%	87%	85%	88%	NA	NA	89%
Term 2	92%	88%	89%	85%	88%	NA	NA	89%
Term 3	92.5%	90%	89%	87%	95%	NA	NA	90.5%

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	25%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	117 temporary 3 permanent

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008															
Total number of pupils in Y9:225															
Percentage of pupils at each level															
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	1.3	0	0.9	6.6	31.3	26	21.6	7.9	1.3	0
		National	0.1	0	0.6	0.5	0.4	1.5	6.1	21.3	37.1	24.2	7.9	0.3	0
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2.2	13.2	24.2	25.6	22	9.7	0	0
		National	0.1	0	0.5	0.5	0.4	1.3	6.7	18.1	28.9	27.5	14.8	1.3	0
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	19.4	28.6	33	11.5	0	0
		National	0.1	0	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.7	5.1	19	35.6	27.2	10.8	0.1	0

- 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	50.2%
In Wales	60%

Coedcae School

SSSP

Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

LEA/School No. 669/4050

Pupils aged 15

Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 205

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	100	87	51	35	35	323
LEA Area 2007/08	98	89	62	50	48	380
Wales 2007/08	98	87	58	46	44	356
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	12	319
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	35	308

Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 122

Percentage of boys aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	98	84	43	30	30	300
LEA Area 2007/08	98	87	56	44	44	352
Wales 2007/08	98	84	53	42	41	334
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	11	289
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	31	277

Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 83

Percentage of girls aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	100	93	61	42	42	358
LEA Area 2007/08	98	92	69	56	54	410
Wales 2007/08	99	90	63	50	48	379
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	13	356
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	39	342

- (1) For details on qualifications, point scores and contribution to thresholds, please see guidance at [SSSP guidance](#).
 (2) For information about which syllabuses are included in each subject area see Notes for Guidance. For the provisional SSSP this will be the traditional GCSE definition. In the final SSSP, this definition will include a wider range of qualifications.
 .. Data not available

Coedcae School

SSSP

Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

LEA/School No. 669/4050

Pupils aged 15

	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who :		Percentage of boys aged 15 who :		Percentage of girls aged 15 who :	
	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)
School 2007/08	1	1	0	0.8	2.4	1.2
LEA Area 2007/08	0.7	1.4	0.8	1.9	0.6	0.8
Wales 2007/08	2.6	1.5	3.4	1.9	1.7	1.2
School 06/07/08	2	..	1.8	..	2.2	..
School 05/06/07	3.4	..	4.1	..	2.5	..

Pupils aged 17

	Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 0		Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 0		Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 0	
	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
School 2007/08	0	0	0	0	0	0
LEA Area 2007/08	96	682	95	627	97	726
Wales 2007/08	94	631	93	596	95	659
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	..	..
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	..	..

- (1) For details on qualifications, point scores and contribution to thresholds, please see guidance at [SSSP guidance](#).
 (2) Entry Level Qualification
 (3) As defined under the National Performance Indicator EDU/002.
 .. Data not available

SECONDARY SSSP EXAMINATION DATA, 2006 - 2008

Coedcae School

669 4050

Free School Meals, 2006 - 2008	2006	2007	2008
% of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	19.6	21.9	22.6
Free School Meal band	15%<FSM<=20%	20%<FSM<=30%	20%<FSM<=30%

Key Stage 4, 2006 - 2008	2006	2007	2008
% achieving the Level 1 threshold	..	82.8	87.3
Benchmark Quartile	..	3	1
% achieving the Level 2 threshold	..	51.2	50.7
Benchmark Quartile	..	1	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE at grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Maths	35.1
Benchmark Quartile	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold in the core subjects	35.1
Benchmark Quartile	2
Average wider points score	312.9	320.8	323.4
Benchmark Quartile	3	2	2

For 2004 onwards, the FSM percentage was based on pupils of compulsory school age only

.. the data item is not available

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 42 days in the school and were joined by a member of the school's senior leadership team as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 117 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;
- 123 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 senior managers and governors.

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Peter Harris	Registered Inspector Context, Summary, Recommendations, Appendices Key Question 1, Key Question 5
Glyn Davies	Key Question 2 Science
Delyth Williams	Key Question 3 Science
Dai B Morgan	Key Question 4
Martyn S Williams	Key Question 6
Gwynoro Jones	Lay inspector Key Question 7
Elizabeth Hinkley	English
David Hughes	Science (lead)
Alan Kelly	History
Andrew Herdman	Geography
Debra Makin	Physical education
Martyn L Williams	Religious education
Keith Hopkins	Team member
Robert Davies	Nominee
Keith Maher	Peer Assessor

Acknowledgement

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

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