

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Cyfarthfa High School
Cae Mari Dwn
Queen's Road
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 0LS**

School Number: 6754013

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by

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Cyfarthfa High 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 Cyfarthfa High School took place between 12/01/09 and 15/01/09. 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:

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a short inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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Context

The nature of the provider

1. Cyfarthfa High School is an 11-18 mixed, community school maintained by Merthyr Tydfil Unitary Authority (UA) and located in the town of Merthyr Tydfil. It is a split-site school with Years (Y) 7 and 8 occupying the lower school site in Cyfarthfa Castle and the remainder occupying modern buildings a few miles away. There are currently 1446 pupils on roll with 266 students in the sixth form. During the last inspection in February 2003, there were 1404 pupils in the school, including 225 students in the sixth form.
2. Merthyr Tydfil is the UA with the greatest levels of social deprivation in Wales. The school receives a significant proportion of pupils with high degrees of multiple deprivation.
3. Pupils represent the full range of ability. There are four pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) and a further 288 have been identified as needing some support. Three pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum (NC). Four pupils are "looked after" by the local authority and one pupil is dual registered. There are 21.4% of pupils on the school's SEN register, well above the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals over a three-year average is 18.6%.
4. About 99% of pupils come from homes where the predominant language spoken is English. Less than 1% of pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard within the school. No pupil receives support teaching in English as an additional language.
5. The headteacher was appointed in January 1996. The composition of the senior leadership team (SLT) includes the headteacher, three deputy headteachers, and five assistant headteachers.
6. Vocationally-based courses at Key Stage (KS) 4 and the sixth form continue to be developed internally and in partnership with other providers in the area.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's mission statement is "the finest education today for the people of tomorrow". Implicit in this statement is the school's desire to:
 - raise achievement levels;
 - enhance the ethos of the school; and
 - promote the virtues of truth, rigour, hard work, high expectations and equity.
8. The school's mission is to prepare a broad, balanced and relevant education for all its pupils and students and to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. The school sets out its seven aims clearly in its school prospectus.
9. The school has prepared a two-year development plan with an action plan linked to it. The detailed development plan for 2008/10 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. The

development plan specifies areas to be developed using Estyn's seven key questions.

10. The school also sets numerical targets for success at the end of KS 3 and KS4 that, in 2009:
 - 62% 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, 54% of pupils should gain at least five GCSE grades A*-C; 90% gain at least five GCSE grades A*-G; and 39% gain an A*-C grade in all core subjects combined, at the end of KS4.

Summary

11. Cyfarthfa High School continues to maintain its high standards. It remains a very good school with many outstanding features including the leadership and management of the school. The school has responded outstandingly to the key issues noted in the 2003 inspection report. The inspection team agrees with four of the judgements made by the school in its self-evaluation report but has awarded three key questions a lower grade.

Table of grades awarded

Key questions	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 the learners and the wider community?	1
4. How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5. How effective are leadership and strategic management?	1
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

Standards

12. Results in tests, statutory assessments and examinations are good. Key stage 3 attainment has been relatively consistent. Pupils' attainment in KS4, including attainment in the core subjects, has fluctuated annually, but is moving in an upward trend. The school has been placed mainly in the top 50% of similar schools in Wales and in numerous cases in the top 25%. Sixth-form results are good and compare favourably with those of similar schools.
13. In KS4, pupils achieving at least five A*-C grades and the core subject indicator (CSI) in GCSE examinations compare well with pupils in similar schools. In 2008, the school was placed in the top 25% of schools for three indicators and in the top 50% for seven others. In the sixth form, the percentage of students achieving an A-C grade in two or more Advanced (A) level subjects is well above local authority but below national averages for the last two years, by 1% on each occasion.

STANDARDS IN KEY SKILLS	KS3 GRADES ENGLISH	KS4 GRADES ENGLISH	SIXTH FORM GRADES ENGLISH
Speaking	2	2	2
Listening	1	1	1
Reading	2	2	2
Writing	2	2	1
Numeracy	2	2	2
ICT	1	1	1
Creative & Problem Solving	2	2	2
Improving Own Learning	2	2	1
Working With Others	2	2	1

14. Throughout the school, information and communication technology (ICT) skills and listening skills are outstanding, as are the majority of key skills in the sixth form.
15. Standards in all key skills, including the wider key skills are mainly good in KS3 and KS4. All Y9 pupils achieved a Level 1 accreditation in three key skills. This is outstanding. Standards of pupils' and students' bilingual skills have good features outweighing shortcomings. Pupils do not transfer their linguistic skills from one language to the other with ease.
16. Most pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) show very good improvement.
17. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. A high priority is given within the school to respect for one another. Pupils are courteous both within and outside the classroom. The school is a civilised community where pupils and students have very positive attitudes towards their work. They appreciate and take advantage of all the opportunities with which they are presented. Pupils and students strive to achieve their very best and are proud to be members of the school. Standards in pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social developments are outstanding. Attendance levels have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are above the attendance levels of similar schools in Wales. Nearly all pupils are punctual to lessons.

The quality of education and training

18. Teaching is good or better in nearly 80% of lessons observed. The quality of relationships between teachers and pupils is outstanding. Pupils and students listen very attentively and members of staff have clear expectations.
19. There is good pace and challenge in lessons and a wide range of resources are used well. Teachers have a very good grasp of their subject knowledge and key skills are used appropriately in lessons.
20. The quality of teaching in all the lessons observed by the inspectors is better than the national average for grades 1 and 2 combined as reported in Estyn's annual report. The grades are shown in the grid below:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
75 lessons observed	15%	64%	21%	0%	0%
All-Wales 07/08	17%	58%	22%	3%	0%

21. The quality of marking is mostly good throughout the school. In many subject areas, there is detailed subject-specific guidance to pupils on how to improve. The school has a very good system for tracking pupils' progress and identifying underachievement. Pupils are thoroughly involved in the self-assessment

process, particularly in KS4 and the sixth form. Most pupils are aware of their targets and how to improve.

22. The school's curricular provision is outstanding. It satisfies legal requirements for pupils of statutory school age. It offers a wide range of 24 subjects, including vocational courses, to its pupils in KS4. Sixth-form students also have a wide range of options available, including several through collaboration. The curriculum is accessible to all and provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to achieve accreditation. The development of entrepreneurial skills in KS4 and the sixth form is outstanding.
23. There are outstanding curricular links which help pupils with transition from primary to secondary education. They extend from Y5 in the primary partner schools to Y8 in Cyfarthfa High School.
24. The outstanding range of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' personal developments. Many pupils also benefit from the extensive range of cultural activities available.
25. Partnerships with parents and other organisations are outstanding. Businesses provide work-experience opportunities and outside speakers contribute to the personal and social development of pupils in KS4 and students in the sixth form. The careers service contributes effectively to the options process in Y9 and Y11.
26. The school contributes successfully to the well-being of its pupils. The canteen provides a daily menu of healthy foods. Physical activities are well supported. The school makes an outstanding contribution to sustainability issues.
27. The quality of care and support to all pupils by members of staff and support services is outstanding. There is effective liaison with external agencies.
28. Pastoral support by heads of year and form tutors is outstanding. Pupils receive individual attention to monitor their progress. The quality of this support is also monitored.
29. Support of good quality is provided for pupils with ALN but there is little support for these pupils in mainstream classes. Teachers diagnose pupils' needs and implement effective support strategies to improve pupils' literacy skills. Tracking of these pupils' progress is very good but tasks to meet pupils' different needs are insufficiently developed.
30. Overall, the school's provision for equal opportunities is highly developed and effective. The way in which the school provides a secure and supportive environment to address any oppressive behaviour is outstanding. No discrimination or unpleasant behaviour is tolerated. Child protection procedures are well embedded and are outstanding.
31. The contribution of the school council to the life of the school is good. It has a voice and its views are taken into consideration.

Leadership and management

32. The headteacher and his SLT provide outstanding leadership and strategic direction within the school. Members of staff and leaders work in harmony for the benefit of the pupils.
33. Overall, policies and whole-school strategies are implemented effectively by members of staff.

34. Monitoring by the SLT and those with management responsibilities is undertaken to ensure that standards are raised and good practice identified. Good practice is shared with all members of staff. There are clear lines of accountability and departments are monitored on a formal basis. Some departments are also involved in informal monitoring.
35. The work and expectations of senior and middle managers are clearly defined. The quality of planning for improvement is good. However, there are inconsistencies in some of the development plans.
36. The governing body undertakes its role as critical friend in an effective manner. The monitoring of standards and procedures is good. Governors evaluate the performance of senior and middle managers regularly in a critical but supportive manner.
37. The school has an appropriate number of well-qualified staff to meet curricular and administrative needs. The management and deployment of teaching and administrative staff, including resources for work-force remodelling, have been used to very good effect. All members of staff receive very good support. Staff development has a very high priority within the school and is an outstanding feature.
38. Substantial investment in school buildings has resulted in significant improvements to accommodation on both sites. Facilities for ICT and for the disabled are outstanding. Library provision is good but the provision of sports pitches is inadequate.
39. Due to the outstanding quality of leadership, financial management, support for pupils, curricular breadth, including the wide range of extra-curricular activities, exemplary behaviour, good quality teaching and levels of attainment, the school provides very good value for money.
40. The comprehensive educational opportunities provided by the school ensure that its provision meets the needs of the full range of pupils and students within.
41. The provision of sixth-form education is cost-effective.

Recommendations

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

- *R1. Continue to raise the attainment levels of pupils in the core subjects in KS3 and KS4 to improve the core subject indicator in each key stage.
- *R2. Address the shortcomings that were identified in a few of the lessons observed.
- R3. Increase the level of support for pupils with ALN in mainstream classes.
- R4. Increase the opportunities to promote learners' bilingual skills throughout the school.
- *R5. Work with the local authority to provide adequate playing fields on both school sites.
- * *The school development plan (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 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

42. The school awarded itself a grade 1 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees because there are issues in relation to:
- results compared with benchmarking figures over a three-year period in KS3 and KS4;
 - the way in which the school compares with similar schools in Wales in terms of value added from KS3-KS4; and
 - the consistency in the performance trends of the core subjects and how they contribute to the CSI over a three-year period.

KS3 and KS4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

43. Overall results in teacher assessments at KS3 and external examination results in KS4 demonstrate that standards have good features and no important shortcomings.
44. Results in teacher assessments at the end of KS3 have been relatively consistent over the last three years. The school's free school meals' indicator is 18% for 2008 but is 18.6% over a three-year period. When compared with similar schools in Wales over the three-year period 2006-2008, the core subjects and the CSI indicators were in the top 50% and frequently in the top 25%. Results at the end of KS3 have been above local and national figures for the last three years.
45. Overall, the school compares favourably in most indicators with similar schools when comparing value added from KS2-KS3. Teacher assessments in 2006 and 2007 at KS3 (matched to prior attainment at KS2) highlighted that the value added placed the school in the top 50% of similar schools in Wales for nearly all the core subjects and the CSI. Only English was placed in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales. The 2008 value added figures are unavailable.
46. Girls outperformed boys in English and the CSI. Boys outperformed girls in mathematics and science in the end of KS3 assessments in 2007 and 2008.
47. At KS4 in the GCSE examinations in 2008, 54% of pupils achieved at least five GCSE grades at A*-C, significantly above local but below national averages. Over a four-year period since 2005, pupils' achievement in relation to this indicator has fluctuated annually. However, there is an upward trend.
48. Forty-five per cent of pupils achieved the level 2 threshold (at least five GCSE grades at A*-C including mathematics, Welsh first language or English), well above local but 1% below national averages.
49. When compared with similar schools in Wales in 2008, the percentage of pupils achieving at least five GCSE grades at A*-C is in the top 50% of schools with similar free school meal entitlement.

50. Over the three-year period 2006-2008, the core subjects' results have nearly always been placed in the top 50% of similar schools in Wales. They have not been placed in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales. These results have fluctuated annually. The 2008 results compared with those of 2007 indicate that the KS4 results have improved, especially in the core subjects and the CSI.
51. The most able pupils achieve their potential. Nearly 16% of pupils gained the A*/A grades in the GCSE examinations in 2008.
52. Pupils' progress from KS3-KS4, matched to prior attainment in 2007, highlighted that the value added for pupils achieving at least five A*-C and five A*-G grades and the CSI were in the bottom 50% of similar schools. Pupils' progress from KS2-KS4 matched to prior attainment placed these two indicators in the bottom 50% of similar schools in Wales. The school had performed below what was expected. The value-added figures for 2008 are unavailable.
53. At KS4 in the GCSE examinations in 2008, the gap between the girls' and boys' performance had been reduced in some of the indicators.

Their progress in learning

54. All pupils in Y9 achieved a Level 1 qualification in the three core skills in 2008. For this year-group, it is an outstanding achievement.
55. Pupils' standards in their listening skills and in the key skill of ICT are outstanding in both key stages. This is because most pupils listen attentively and use their ICT skill in a range of different contexts. The whole-school approach to the application of the ICT skill in all areas of the curriculum significantly raised standards in ICT.
56. All other key skills have standards which are at least good with no important shortcomings. Overall, standards are good with no important shortcomings in KS3 and KS4.
57. Pupils have good communication skills in KS3 and KS4. They use extended speech confidently. Reading skills are good overall. Support is given to those with reading difficulties throughout both key stages.
58. In both key stages, the quality of pupils' work is good. The quality and quantity of extended writing good relative to pupils' ability. Some inaccurate spelling is evident in many instances. Able pupils write accurately and extensively.
59. Creative and problem-solving skills are good.
60. Pupils' skills in applying number in a range of subjects across the curriculum are good in KS3 and KS4.
61. Pupils' bilingual skills are not developed fully. The Welsh language is not very evident in and around the school. Nearly all pupils use English as a means of communication to teachers and fellow pupils. They are not able to transfer their skills from one language to the other with confidence and ease.
62. Pupils with ALN make very good progress in relation to their ability. In KS3 and KS4, many pupils of low ability achieve their potential. The process of extending and setting challenging tasks for able and talented pupils is developing.
63. The key skill of improving one's own learning has standards which are good. Pupils are aware of what they have to do to improve. Self-assessment and peer-

assessment processes have developed well. The quality of written feedback advising pupils of how they need to improve is very good in many departments, but there is some inconsistency. Where the inconsistencies exist, the advice is insufficiently focused and there is insufficient detailed subject-specific target-setting. Detailed spoken advice is given to all pupils.

64. In the majority of classes and subjects, pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good progress towards their targets.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

65. Nearly all pupils' behaviour in KS3 and KS4 is good with outstanding features. The pupils behave in an exemplary manner where courtesy and respect prevail. They understand the high expectations which the school has of them, both in terms of work and in terms of their behaviour and attitudes. These aspects make positive contributions to pupils' learning.
66. The school is an orderly and caring community from which ninety pupils have been temporarily excluded. It does not tolerate behaviour which has an adverse effect on pupils' education. During the last academic year, no pupil was permanently excluded.
67. The attendance level for 2007-2008 is 92.6%. This is above the all-Wales figure of 90.9% for 2008 and above the attendance rate of similar schools in Wales taking into account their free school meal entitlement for 2007-2008. It is also above the local authority attendance rate. Pupils' punctuality to lessons is good.
68. Most pupils make outstanding progress in their personal, social, moral and wider development. Values at the heart of the school are evident in practice. Pupils gain much in their moral development from the good quality assemblies and the outstanding relationships which exist within the school. The religious education periods and the integrated personal and social education (PSE) programmes contribute significantly to moral and spiritual development. Standards in the spiritual development of pupils are very good.
69. Pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities provided in sport, clubs, visits, including international excursions, and performances. The Welsh dimension is encouraged effectively throughout the curriculum. The arts and music are all promoted and opportunities are taken up by many pupils of differing abilities to participate in school productions.
70. Pupils demonstrate good awareness of equal opportunities issues. Their knowledge and involvement in national priorities, such as sustainable development, are outstanding. Pupils' preparation for effective participation in the workplace and community is outstanding.

Sixth form

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

71. Overall, attainment in the sixth form is generally good. Students achieve standards which are good in relation to their ability. Over the last three years, the percentage of students achieving A-C grades in two or more A level examinations was above the local authority average during the three year period and above the national average for two out of the three years.

72. In 2006 and 2007, the percentage of students achieving A-E grades in two or more A level examinations was above the local and national average. In 2008 the Level 3 threshold was below the local and national average. This relates to the very wide range of courses available to students at Cyfarthfa High School which do not contribute to Level 3 indicators but which are linked to needs of pupils.
73. In 2008, four subjects studied at A level indicated that on average, candidates performed worse than their GCSE grades would predict by the equivalent of half a grade. In half the subjects studied, nearly a third of the students did not reach their potential. Two-thirds of students, however, performed at or above predicted levels.
74. The average A level points' scores per student during 2006 and 2007 were above local but below national averages for these two years. In 2008 the average wider points' score (AWPS) reflected a similar position. The variation between the schools and all-Wales scores was very limited.
75. Boys outperformed girls in 2007 and 2008 in the AWPS. Overall, the school's AWPS was above national averages in 2007 but below in 2008.
76. Retention rates to the sixth form are rising. More pupils are returning to the sixth form to continue their studies in the wider range of vocational and academic subjects being offered.

Their progress in learning

77. Students achieve standards which are at least good with no important shortcomings in their reading, numeracy and creative skills. Their speaking skills are good. Most students use subject-specific terminology in discussions with one another and with their teachers.
78. Standards in the other key skills are good with outstanding features.
79. Students listen attentively in lessons. Group work is very effective in all subject areas. These qualities assist students to maintain their good problem-solving skills.
80. They use their ICT skill to best advantage when undertaking course or project work. Effective research of the internet enhances the standards of students' work. Students' ICT skills have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now outstanding.
81. Many students achieve accreditation in their key skills either at levels 2 or 3 during their period of study in the sixth form. Students take responsibility for their own learning and this is consistent within the sixth form.
82. Students' bilingual skills in and around the school are not a strong feature as students communicate consistently mainly through the medium of English.
83. A more mature attitude to work prepares all students well for progression to university or the world of work. In September 2007 69% of the Y13 students entered higher education. This is a good feature.
84. They use their non-contact time wisely to ensure they achieve their challenging targets.

85. All students have a clear understanding of their levels of achievement and what they have to do to improve in most subjects. Their work is marked and targets for improvement are given consistently.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

86. Students have developed outstanding personal and social skills and good learning skills. Their attitude to learning is good. They are determined to make the most of all opportunities available to them. Their concentration levels are high and students are thoroughly engaged with the tasks in hand.
87. They accept responsibility easily and have a strong social conscience.
88. They acquire greater awareness of issues relating to spiritual, cultural and moral development through contact with a wide range of outside speakers. The wide variety of opportunities for spiritual development results in outstanding standards.
89. Students are very good role models for younger pupils and for one another. Their leadership skills are very good. This has enabled them to strengthen the relationships between senior and junior pupils.
90. Students demonstrate very responsible behaviour and respect towards one another and towards all members of the school community. They gain in maturity during their period of study in the sixth form and have a valuable experience.
91. 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.
92. Students have developed very good working habits. They work independently and successfully without supervision.
93. Students gain much from their sixth-form experiences, in their academic, personal, social moral and wider development. They are prepared exceptionally well for effective participation in the workplace and the community.

The quality of education and training

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

Grade 2 : Good features and no important shortcomings

94. The school awarded itself a grade 1 in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team disagrees because there are insufficient outstanding features.

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

95. The following grades were awarded for the quality of teaching in the 75 lessons observed at all key stages:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
15%	64%	21%	0%	0%

96. The overall grades for teaching and assessment are good. There were outstanding features in the quality of the teaching in 15% of the lessons observed across all key stages. Teaching had good features and no important shortcomings in a further 64% of lessons. Good features outweighed shortcomings in 21% of lessons. No lessons had important shortcomings.
97. In this inspection the percentage of lessons graded 1 (15%) falls below the national average of 17%. The 79% of lessons judged to be good or very good is higher than the figure for inspections in Wales in 2007-2008 where 75% of lessons were judged to be either grade 1 or 2 but below the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) target of 80% by 2010.

KS3 and KS4

98. The grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the 60 lessons observed in KS3 and KS4 were:

60 lessons observed	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	14%	67%	19%	0%	0%
KS4	17%	67%	16%	0%	0%

99. Good and outstanding features were observed in the quality of teaching in a very wide range of subjects in both key stages.
100. An outstanding feature of the teaching is the relationship between members of teaching staff and pupils. This builds pupils' confidence and makes a significant contribution to their learning. The manner, in which teachers exercise their authority, develops respect. It also helps to develop healthy attitudes towards learning.
101. The outstanding features of the teaching include:
- very clear learning objectives;
 - brisk pace and challenge; and
 - questioning techniques to highlight knowledge and understanding.
102. In other lessons, the above features are often present, but to a lesser degree.
103. Teachers have a strong grasp of their subject knowledge and use this well to explain work to pupils. They employ a good range of resources, including interactive whiteboards, which serves to enhance the quality of teaching and learning experiences. Teachers emphasise the high expectations they have of their pupils.
104. Lessons are carefully planned to include a wide range of teaching strategies which take into account different learning styles and sustain pupils' motivation. They are well structured, provide appropriate challenge and proceed at an appropriate pace.
105. The school has conducted homework audits to ensure quality. Homework is used to good effect in consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge and understanding.
106. There is strong evidence of planning for and the inclusion of key skills in lessons. With the exception of lessons in Welsh second language, there are only a few opportunities for pupils to develop their bilingual communication skills.

107. In a few lessons the shortcomings observed include:

- overly-long expositions by teachers;
- incomplete plenary sessions; and
- lack of appropriate work to meet all pupils' needs.

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

108. The school has established a practical policy for assessment and has a very good system for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress against targets. This system offers good guidance to departments and teachers.

109. Academic and pastoral members of staff have a vital role in monitoring pupils within the school. The assessment co-ordinator and his team have an over-view of whole-school assessment data. Pupils who perform above and below expectation are clearly identified.

110. There are examples of some outstanding practice in assessment that include:

- meticulous assessment of pupils' work with clear subject-specific targets and strategies for improvement;
- highly-effective verbal guidance and interventions from teachers; and
- clear criteria-referenced peer and self-assessment through which pupils produce accurate and precise targets for improvement.

111. All pupils are involved in self-assessment procedures in all subjects. Where this is most effective, pupils have reached the stage of collaborating with the teacher to agree appropriate targets for improvement. This fosters a growing sense of ownership of their own learning, increases pupils' motivation and has a direct impact on standards of achievement.

112. The majority of marking of pupils' work across the school is good. Most pupils are aware of their own targets and understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils of all abilities are happy to share and discuss these targets. A small minority of pupils are not aware of their targets. Similar numbers are not aware of how to achieve their targets.

113. Annual reports to parents are mostly good. Their particular strength is the way in which assessments of pupils' progress are clearly set out.

114. The school meets the statutory requirements for assessment and reporting and satisfies examination board requirements.

115. Standardisation and moderation arrangements to strengthen teacher assessments at KS3 are effective. All core subjects and most of the foundation subjects have been validated following their involvement in the pilot scheme.

116. The shortcomings identified are mainly in KS3. These include an inconsistency in the quality of:

- assessment of pupils' work across the school; and
- targets for improvement set by subject teachers in annual reports.

Sixth Form

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

117. The following grades were awarded for the quality of teaching in the 15 lessons observed in the sixth form:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
13%	54%	33%	0%	0%

118. The small number of lessons observed makes comparisons with previous inspections and national averages unreliable.
119. Many of the outstanding and good features identified at KS3 and KS4 are also present in the sixth form. In addition, clear cross-curricular links are made and students are allowed some choice of task thereby assuming greater responsibility for their own learning.
120. In the best lessons, teachers skilfully pose questions that challenge students to extend their knowledge and understanding of the work being covered. In addition, these lessons provide opportunities for students to learn independently and in collaboration with others. They are less successful in promoting bilingualism. There is little use made of incidental Welsh.
121. All students are involved in their own learning. Members of staff provide individual support as and when required. They give unstintingly of their time outside of lessons.
122. The following shortcomings are evident in a few lessons:
- too great an input by teachers;
 - insufficient planning to meet the needs of all pupils; and
 - lack of challenge.

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

123. In the day-to-day marking of students' work there are examples of very good practice where subject teachers identify strengths and provide clear guidance on how improvements may be made. Effective feedback encourages students to think for themselves and facilitates greater independence in their learning.
124. The majority of students are aware of lesson objectives, success criteria and the requirements of examination boards.
125. Monitoring is effective with under-performance being identified and addressed. Many departments have effective methods of periodic assessments which are carefully marked, often in line with examination requirements.
126. Reports for sixth-form students are mostly of good quality. They provide helpful analysis of progress and useful strategies for improvement.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

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

128. The outstanding features are the:

- planning, organisation and implementation of the 14-19 Learning Pathways' agenda;
- development of the Y5-Y8 curriculum with its primary partner schools;
- effective provision for the development and provision of basic and key skills;
- extensive range of extra-curricular activities to promote the full development of all pupils;
- working partnerships established with parents, business, community and other interested parties;
- promotion of pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, and social development;
- development of strategies to promote Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) programmes;
- adoption of strategies to develop pupils'/students' entrepreneurial skills;
- work-related programme in conjunction with Careers Wales and the business community; and
- policies, strategies and procedures for ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.

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

129. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides progression through the key stages. The range of academic and vocational courses which it provides to pupils of all abilities follows the five domains of the Learning Pathways agenda.

130. The curriculum is enhanced both in KS4 and the sixth form by close collaborative arrangements with neighbouring schools and establishments. It builds systematically from KS2 to KS5 with rigorous transition programmes in place for the transfer of pupils between key stages.

131. It provides pupils/students with the opportunities to achieve accreditation and meets course and legal requirements, including the daily act of collective worship.

132. The school's outstanding learning coaches' scheme fully guides and supports pupils/students in the decision-making process of identifying the most appropriate learning pathway. This exercise is enhanced by the valued expertise of the school's full-time Careers Wales' officer.

133. The school has planned the content and delivery of its basic and key skills' programme carefully. The skills are given appropriate emphasis in all departmental schemes of work (SoW) at each key stage. The appointment of four co-ordinators at a senior level has provided the necessary high profile for positive whole-school development. All members of staff have received training

in the teaching of key skills and in providing appropriate learning experiences. All departments are involved in a mapping and tracking system with pupils building portfolios of evidence from Y7-Y13.

134. Outstanding links have been established with its primary partner schools. A full programme of planned activities to ensure the smooth transition of pupils into Y7 works effectively. As a result of planned cluster working arrangements an Y5-Y8 curriculum has been mapped involving every department within the school. The programme of work has been built into every departmental SoW. This scheme is a particular strength of the school and of its primary partners.
135. An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities enriches and broadens pupils' learning experiences. Pupils are provided with opportunities to participate in:
 - a range of sporting and musical activities planned on a regular basis during and after-school hours;
 - school visits encompassing a wide variety of experiences and a whole range of other off-site extension activities linked to curricular areas;
 - international visits and foreign exchanges; and
 - charity work.
136. Pupils' personal development is successfully promoted by the school's curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an outstanding feature of the school. It is a planned feature of the school's cross-curricular work and is delivered appropriately through a successful and comprehensive PSE programme and departmental SoW. Pupils show respect for each other and mix well socially within a caring environment. The relationship between staff and pupils is an outstanding feature of the school.
137. The school has established a number of outstanding partnerships. These embrace:
 - close working relationships with parents;
 - effective teaching and learning developments;
 - curricular and partnership links;
 - community links; and
 - strong relationship with Careers Wales and other outside agencies.
138. The community has very good opportunities to use the school's facilities through the Community-Focused groups. This has led to the promotion of a wide range of successful community-based projects, a community health programme and out of hours' classes on a variety of subjects. A designated room has been made available in the upper school for the co-ordination of community-focused administration and programmes. This emphasizes the school's determination to embrace the local community in its projection of the lifelong learning opportunities.
139. The school is fully committed to providing professional training opportunities for student teachers. It has developed strong links with the University of Wales

Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) and Swansea University to train, monitor and support student teachers in a range of subjects.

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

140. The work-related programme is an outstanding feature delivered with support from Careers Wales. The partnership with local industry and business ensures that all Y10 pupils and Y12 students undertake appropriate work placements which meet their individual needs. All pupils are trained in the use of the Careers Wales-on-line web-site.
141. The school's extensive knowledge of its pupils, accompanied by its determination to meet the needs of each individual, is outstanding. It is very successful in its formal curricular organisation and provision of extra-curricular activities in providing equality of access and opportunity for all learners. The key skills' programme is contributing significantly in providing pupils with the tools to develop their self-esteem and confidence positively.
142. The school has formulated a clear strategy for the development of its sustainable development programme with a sound outline action plan with specific targets. It participates in the Eco-Schools' project. It has achieved the silver award and is now moving towards the 'Green Flag' status. In addition to the action plan, outstanding features are evident in the environmental work with the primary partner schools as part of the KS2-KS3 transition arrangements and the Eco-days being organised for Y7 and Y9.
143. Global citizenship is developed successfully by working closely with schools in Zanzibar and Papua New Guinea. This aspect of the school's programme contributes significantly to the pupils'/students' understanding and knowledge of the world's varied cultures. Healthy-eating initiatives are given prominence through a number of highly-effective initiatives.
144. Pupils' bilingual competence is encouraged by a number of activities such as visits to the Llangrannog Urdd camp, occasional use of Welsh in assemblies, annual eisteddfod and concerts and bilingual signage around the school. "Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig" is appropriately planned in departmental schemes of work. However, opportunities for promoting pupils'/students' bilingual skills are limited. The bilingual policy statement and development plan have not been strongly promoted in practice.
145. Pupils' problem-solving and decision-making skills are successfully encouraged through the school's entrepreneurial programme. Strong and purposeful links with the Education Business Partnership ensure pupils receive an outstanding introduction to the world-of-business enterprise. The school has won a number of regional and national competitions organised in conjunction with Young Enterprise Schemes and the Sony Business Award. All pupils have the opportunity of gaining Compact Awards. Year 9 and Y10 pupils are fully involved in the very successful Dynamo project.
146. The broad range of learning opportunities and experiences, extensive extra-curricular programme, strong work-related activities and pupils'/students' involvement in the community ensure that pupils and students receive outstanding experiences to lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

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

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

148. There are many outstanding features in the way in which the school cares for, guides and supports its pupils. These include:

- exceptionally high standards of pastoral care and guidance to all pupils by all members of staff and support services;
- the school's highly proactive approach to its partnerships with parents, carers and outside agencies;
- child protection procedures which ensure thorough training of all staff and enhanced training of key pastoral staff; and
- highly-effective transition arrangements, particularly those which enable pupils to settle in quickly to Y7.

149. Members of staff know the pupils well. They all accept responsibility for and take pride in ensuring a highly-effective caring and supportive atmosphere throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are outstanding.

150. The school adopts an open-door policy and encourages parents and carers to visit at any time to share any concerns they may have. The homework journals serve as an effective link between parents and carers and the school. They provide valuable information on the way in which their children progress and regular information on homework given.

151. The well-established school council provides a very effective way of listening to the 'pupil voice'. The council has been consulted on a range of issues, which have impacted on the quality of provision in the school. Attendance by student observers at governing body meetings and the presentation of SDPs to the school council ensure that pupils are well informed about current issues and development priorities.

152. The school works in close partnership with its primary partner schools. These links are outstanding. Pastoral links are strong and the transition plan is firmly embedded. The school organises an impressively wide range of link projects and activities to enhance the Y5-Y8 curriculum and to ensure that primary pupils feel secure and confident about the transfer to secondary school.

153. The school provides a good induction programme for pupils in Y8 to prepare them for the move to the upper school. Transition programmes in preparation for the sixth form are equally effective.

154. Form tutors provide very effective support and guidance, together with heads of year and deputy heads of year. They ensure that pupils are aware of their targets and regularly monitor their progress. The school is successfully developing the role of the learning coach, both in the lower and in the upper school. This is a very good feature.

155. The school's PSE programme is very responsive to the needs of the pupils in the context of their community, with a particular emphasis on healthy lifestyles.

The school involves an impressive range of external agencies and specialist services in the PSE programme. On-site drop-in centres run by external specialist services provide additional, very effective confidential support and guidance. The PSE programme is a very good feature of the school's work.

156. The school has made considerable progress in improving levels of attendance. There is rigorous follow-up of all absence, including first-day absence telephone calls. Pastoral staff work in close partnership with the school's education welfare officer and intensive work is undertaken in cases causing concern.
157. Pupils who have been excluded from school are supported well on their re-introduction to education.
158. Appropriate and high quality advice and curricular guidance are given to pupils in Y9 and in preparation for the sixth form. A team of key members of staff, with appropriate expertise, together with a very good range of specialist support services, supports every pupil to make a decision on an appropriate 14-19 Learning Pathways. This is a very good feature.
159. Pupils receive good quality guidance and advice regarding their career pathways. There are also good links with the local education business partnership and pupils gain much from a range of entrepreneurial projects and experiences. Form tutors support the pupils well in building up their progress files.
160. The exceptionally high quality of pastoral care in the school ensures that every effort is made to promote the well-being of all the pupils by safe-guarding their welfare and promoting their development. The school's child protection procedures are outstanding. There are three designated senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection. Every member of staff receives training on child protection procedures. Key pastoral staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) receive additional training in order further to increase their understanding of issues regarding the protection of young children and to ensure that their skills and expertise are kept up to date. The school always ensures that there is a school representative at every child protection meeting.

The quality of provision for additional needs

161. The school works very closely and effectively with the partner primary schools and with external agencies to diagnose and plan appropriate support for pupils with ALN and physical disabilities. Pupils show very good improvement as a result of support received.
162. The school ensures that pupils' needs are effectively diagnosed. The regular review of pupils' progress is a good feature. Record keeping is very good.
163. The range of provision for additional needs includes:
 - a discrete learning support group in each Y7-Y11;
 - small group withdrawal for literacy and numeracy support;
 - small group withdrawal for mathematics, reading comprehension and spelling through the Success Maker programme;
 - one-to-one reading support from learning support assistants (LSAs) and sixth-form students in morning registration time; and
 - effective use of specialist support services.

164. The inclusion co-ordinator provides teachers with a wide range of information on pupils' additional needs and how to address those needs in their lesson planning. The learning support section of the school improvement group (SIG) also contributes to the raising of awareness of issues, ideas and developments. A team of LSAs works effectively to ensure that pupils make good progress.
165. The range of provision for additional needs does not include LSA support in mainstream classes. Some pupils therefore lack the extra support that they need in addition to that of the class teacher.
166. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are not sufficiently focused on each pupil's individual needs and targets for improvement. As a result they tend to be very general and not as helpful as they should be to the teacher.
167. The school deals very effectively with pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress. There are clearly understood strategies for behaviour management and for supporting and monitoring pupils whose behaviour may cause concern.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

168. An outstanding feature of the school is its effectiveness in providing a secure and supportive environment in which any oppressive and bullying behaviour is addressed.
169. The school makes explicit its belief that equality of opportunity is at the heart of its overall ethos. It successfully promotes the progress of all its pupils, regardless of their background. Both staff and pupils are supportive of each other. There are generally high expectations of all pupils. The school is developing a range of strategies to meet the needs of its more able and talented pupils.
170. The needs of looked-after children are highlighted and regularly reviewed. Those pupils are well supported by the pastoral teams and by the inclusion co-ordinator and the SENCo in lower school. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language and ethnic minority pupils is carefully monitored.
171. The school promotes gender equality and aims to challenge any stereotypes in pupils' choices and expectations. Pupils can see a model of equality in the roles of head girl and head boy. Girls and boys are equally represented on the school council.
172. The school works very effectively to promote good race relations in everything it does. A race equality policy is in place and a very detailed log is kept of any incidents.
173. The school's outstanding effectiveness in addressing any oppressive or bullying behaviour is a combination of its formal and informal teaching, through PSE, assemblies, form-tutor periods and extra-curricular activities and the culture of care and support developed within the pastoral system. Pupils feel confident that any issues will be dealt with effectively.
174. The school makes every effort to ensure that disabled pupils are treated equally including physical adaptations to the building. Disabled pupils are increasingly applying to come to the school; their parents are confident in the knowledge that their children will be well supported and given every opportunity to succeed.

Comprehensive policies on the disability equality scheme and action plan are in place and are reviewed and updated appropriately. This is a very good feature.

175. Pupils develop a good understanding of diversity and equal opportunities through a range of curriculum experiences, particularly in religious education, assemblies, themed projects and events.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

176. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade. The outstanding features are the:

- dynamic leadership of the headteacher and his SLT;
- promotion of equality for all; and
- importance given to the continuous professional development (CPD) of teaching and support staff.

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

177. The school has maintained its high profile within the local authority through the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. He works harmoniously with his senior leaders and governing body. He leads with vision, giving clear strategic direction and is very influential in promoting school values by example. He and his SLT are dynamic and have moved the school forward. They have taken the staff and school community with them.
178. He is highly respected by his staff, pupils, governors and the wider community. He has developed the school's strengths by introducing new initiatives and structures to assist the future development of the school.
179. The headteacher is ably supported by his SLT. As a team, they provide outstanding leadership. They maintain high standards by their regular presence around the school. They are also strongly supported by middle managers.
180. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity for all. This is an outstanding feature. Everyone in the school is treated with respect and has a contribution which is valued. There are high levels of empowerment and trust which enhance the feeling of ownership and belonging. There is a broad and appropriate curriculum for all pupils and students and all achieve accreditation in external examinations. No pupils are disadvantaged because of their linguistic or cultural background.
181. The school places a very high priority on the professional development of all staff within the school community. This is an outstanding feature. The school ensures that CPD in almost all cases is in accordance with individual and the school's needs. The outcomes of the CPD are shared within the respective department and, where appropriate, on a whole-school basis to raise standards.
182. The school's "curriculum tours" have proven to be very beneficial in maintaining and raising standards. Members of staff share good teaching practice with one another. Where good practice is identified, members of staff deliver a formal

lesson with teachers taking the role of pupils. All members of staff, experienced and new, gain substantially from this practice.

183. The impact of the SIG and the school's policy of shadowing staff with particular managerial responsibilities, have contributed greatly to successful succession management and staff development. These are outstanding features.
184. The school has a firmly-established system of performance management which applies to all members of teaching, technical and administrative staff. Targets are set for each individual teacher's professional development and a target for whole-school development.
185. The school has successfully developed several national priorities. These are outstanding features, particularly the development of the healthy schools' initiative and social inclusion, enterprise activities and sustainable development. The school is a leading partner in the authority's 14-19 Learning Pathways' network. It collaborates effectively with other establishments. The school has successfully driven the skills' agenda forward.
186. The aims and expectations of the school are made clear to all staff, pupils and visitors. The way in which the school functions ensures that these aims and objectives are nearly all effectively operational in the life of the school.
187. Each member of the SLT is linked to a group of departments and these management links are well established. Monitoring is undertaken in a supportive manner. Members of staff within some departments monitor one another's teaching both formally and informally to raise standards and the quality of teaching.
188. Highly-effective levels of communication exist between members of staff and the SLT. Management and pastoral meetings are held on a regular basis to ensure clarity of purpose.
189. Middle managers understand their roles clearly and most undertake these roles to very good effect. There are clear lines of accountability from all with middle management responsibility to their line managers and ultimately to the headteacher. Middle managers of high quality are committed to raising standards by monitoring work and pupils' progress on a regular basis.
190. The school's methods of setting quantitative targets are good but there are some inconsistencies. Targets set within some departmental, pastoral and the school development plans are not sufficiently rigorous or challenging.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

191. The governing body makes an influential contribution to the leadership of the school.
192. It includes able and experienced members who have supported the school over a number of years, and members recently appointed. Their individual professional expertise is used effectively. The two representatives from the school council participate actively in the workings of the governing body.
193. The governors work closely with senior, middle management and other staff. These are key factors in ensuring that this is a well organised and happy school.

194. All members have a clear understanding of the school's main priorities through the effective working of the sub-committee structure. The governing body has high expectations of the school.
195. The chair of governors and chairs of the sub-committees are in regular discussion with the headteacher. They ensure that these committees work productively for the benefit of the school.
196. The governors clearly understand their roles and act as critical friends in an effective manner. They are well informed on all aspects of school performance and receive regular reports from school managers.
197. The quality of their strategic management and involvement in the evaluation processes is a good feature. Discussions are detailed and challenging. Governors also act as sounding-boards to the headteacher. They strive to ensure all pupils have access to as many opportunities as are possible.
198. All governors are linked to departments and aspects of the school's work. These links are well established. They attend the departmental annual evaluations and report the findings to the full governing body.
199. The school prospectus and other documents contain all the required information.
200. All regulatory and legal requirements are met.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

201. The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report. This is because there are inconsistencies in the school's self-evaluation documentation.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

202. An outstanding feature is the school's practice of seeking out and taking account of the views of pupils, staff and other interested parties. The school takes account of the views of parents and pupils through the use of annual surveys of parental and pupil perceptions of the school. The main recommendations are incorporated in the SDP. The school council brings matters to the attention of the SLT and the school has noted its wish to develop this aspect of listening to the voice of pupils.
203. The good features include the:
 - annual production of a comprehensive self-evaluation handbook;
 - participation of all staff in an embedded annual, thorough, self-evaluation process based on Estyn's key questions;
 - evaluation of data from a variety of sources by leaders and managers; and
 - direct link of the self-evaluation process at all managerial levels to school and departmental developmental plans.
204. The findings of the inspection team agree with those of the school in four of the seven key questions. The team awarded a grade 2 for key questions 1, 2 and 6.

It was felt that there were insufficient examples of outstanding features to warrant a grade 1 in these three key questions.

205. The school's self-evaluation document is detailed and comprehensive, noting the strengths and areas for development. It is based on first-hand evidence of staff, parents, pupils, data and governors and deals with the key questions in Estyn's Common Inspection Framework.
206. Links between senior leaders and departments are good. Each department has a link member within the SLT. These link members of the SLT take an active role in the departmental review process where, along with the head of department and the local authority subject advisor, examination results are analysed. Link members attend departmental meetings on a rotational basis and annually monitor the teaching within the departments to which they are linked. They also provide occasional support for their departments on an informal basis. The role of the link members of SLT as a critical friend and coach to their link departments is good, but is continuing to develop.
207. Monitoring of departments by SLT is an integral element of the self-evaluation process. Members of the SLT observe all members of their link departments teaching once a year. They sample pupils' books and provide written feedback to each department. However, the standard of comments on the sample of lesson observation forms examined and the grades awarded for lessons observed are inconsistent.
208. The standard of departmental and pastoral self-evaluation reports is not always consistent. Departments and pastoral teams follow templates and guidelines provided by the SLT for completing the self-evaluations based almost exclusively on key questions 1 and 2 of the Estyn Framework. Heads of department observe members of their departments teaching one lesson annually, outside the demands of performance management. In large departments the second in the department will also observe members of staff. In the best examples, such as in science, history, religious education and ICT, departments produce thorough self-evaluations containing incisive judgements leading to priorities and strategies for improvement. These are then incorporated into the departmental development plans (DDPs). However, some examples lack the rigour expected in passing judgement and prioritising areas for improvement.
209. The evaluation of the wealth of data provided by the school to departments is thorough and it is well analysed by the majority of departments. Heads of departments prepare a thorough analysis of examination data, for the review meeting. The data analysis includes comparisons between performance of boys and girls, and between the school and schools nationally. Trends over time are also identified. Most departments reach sound judgements regarding standards attained by their pupils and students and recognize areas for improvement. A very few departments do not focus sufficiently on priorities for improvement.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

210. An outstanding feature is the very good progress made on the main recommendations of the previous inspection report. These include the:
 - quality of assessment within the school;
 - quality of ICT across the curriculum;

- transformation of the upper school library into an effective learning resource;
- significantly improved attendance rate; and
- full compliance with a daily act of collective worship.

211. The good features include the:

- incorporation of the priorities gleaned from the self-evaluation documents in the SDP; and
- inclusion of national priorities.

212. The SDP is a valuable document which sets out the developments which the school intends to implement over a two-year cycle. The self-evaluation handbook also contains priorities for development. The SDP however, does not provide detailed costings for its priorities, and some of the success criteria lack precision.

213. The quality of DDPs is generally good. In the best examples, such as science, history and religious education, departments embody the priorities for improvement noted in their self-evaluation plans. They set realistic, measurable, costed targets and action plans, with well-constructed success criteria. In other DDPs some action plans are too generalised; in other DDPs the success criteria are not specific enough and many plans are not costed.

214. Support and ancillary members of staff are given opportunities to plan for improvement and set out targets with appropriate time-scales. This is a good feature.

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

Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

215. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade. The outstanding features include the:

- investment in and the use made of ICT;
- use made of foreign travel to extend pupils' learning;
- significant improvements made to the accommodation, including facilities for the disabled;
- careful, prudent and skilful budget management to achieve value for money; and
- range of CPD activities across the school.

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

216. Members of teaching staff are well-qualified. There is a good balance of experience between experienced staff and those newer to the profession.

217. Non-teaching members of staff are valued and make a significant contribution to the learning. Sixteen LSAs are co-ordinated by the SENCo and provide substantial support for learners. However, few are used in mainstream classes with pupils requiring additional support.

218. Investment in and aspects of the use of ICT are outstanding. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection. There are nine very well-used

computer suites. Many classrooms have a good range of ICT equipment. In 2007, 80% of pupils left school in Y11 with an ICT qualification, whilst in 2008, 90% of Y10 pupils had already achieved a Level 1 qualification. Information and communication technology is very well managed by an assistant headteacher. The school is one of a very few in Wales that has achieved a "Bringing Education Creativity to All Award". School plans highlight the need for additional computers in the libraries and in classrooms.

219. Classrooms, laboratories and workshops are well equipped and the annual system of awarding funding to departments meets learners' needs.
220. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding with a comprehensive range of activities available on both sites.
221. Library provision is good. Both libraries are well run with easy access for pupils and a good range of activities. Pupils' borrowing of fiction at KS3 is well supported by the English department. Good features include the amount of capitation available, a development plan and the fact that in lower school most departments have built into their SoW an extended research project. In the upper school, sixth-form students make very effective use of the library for private study. However, most departments make little use of the facility in the upper school.
222. Accommodation is good in the upper school. An outstanding feature is the significant investment made by the school and local authority since the time of the last inspection. This includes the provision of a sports hall, an astro turf pitch, and an additional block for religious education, ICT and a science laboratory. However, two new sports pitches are not yet available and all matches continue to be played as away fixtures.
223. Facilities for the disabled are outstanding. There is access to all storeys on both sites. Emergency evacuation procedures are in place.
224. Provision of sports pitches on the lower school site is inadequate. Availability and safe usage cannot always be guaranteed. Both the local authority and the school have spent heavily on the lower school buildings, but much remains to be done. Skilful timetabling and a proactive maintenance programme support the very best use of the available resources and maintain the happy learning atmosphere that is present. Both caretakers make a significant contribution to the improvement of the buildings.
225. Procedures for the health and safety of those using the site are in place and are followed. Criminal Records Bureau checks are in place for all staff.

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

226. The management of the budget and of staffing costs is highly efficient. This is an outstanding feature. Very good use is made of staffing through careful and thoughtful timetabling in this split-site school. Staff absence is carefully monitored and relevant action taken, to ensure that pupils' learning is not affected.
227. Two further outstanding features include the:
 - contingency fund which has been built up to ensure that the school can operate efficiently; and
 - management of investments to bring additional monies into the school.

228. Pupils' and students' option choices have been extended at 14-19 by arranging off-site provision and by co-operating with other schools and Merthyr College.
229. The large sixth form is self-financing and gives very good value for money. The sixth form adds to the ethos of the school and provides opportunities for sixth-form students to support pupils at KS3 and KS4.
230. The level at which CPD operates is a further outstanding feature. It is extremely well managed. The SIG of about 30 members of staff, makes a significant contribution to the school's action-research and in-service programmes. Of particular note is the large number of young teachers participating. Some teachers provide in-service training beyond their own school.
231. Provision for newly-qualified teachers (NQTs) and those in their early years of teaching is very good as is the provision made for initial teacher training (ITT) and graduate teacher programme (GTP) students. Non-teaching members of staff are included in training, which covers the full range of opportunities including Master's degree level. All members of staff undertake performance management. The school has held Investors in People status since 2000.
232. The workload agreement has been fully implemented and the introduction of teaching and learning responsibility posts has been sensitively managed. The school has spent heavily on the new structure, focusing on raising standards and meeting pupils' pastoral needs. The school has made effective use of its planning, preparation and assessment time.
233. In practice, the use of the budget is linked to the delivery of the school and departmental development plans, though these do not always include costings. Some plans are not sharply focused. The budget is regularly reviewed and appropriate action is taken. At least two people in the school office have been trained to cover each administrative post, to ensure that the school operates efficiently when members of staff are absent.
234. Governors are extremely knowledgeable and well informed about budget matters. There is virtually full attendance at finance meetings at which many questions are asked and issues explored. Governors are very supportive and proud of the school, but act as critical friends to the headteacher and SMT.
235. The school gives very good value for money.

School's response to the inspection

The pupils, staff and governors at Cyfarthfa High School welcome this report. We are particularly proud that our school has been confirmed as “remaining a very good school with many outstanding features” and that our curriculum and external links, pastoral and guidance systems, leadership and management and use of available resources were deemed outstanding. All other provision within the school was seen as having many very positive elements with no significant shortcomings identified at all.

We are particularly proud of the comments made about the outstanding ethos and behaviour within the school and the fact that it provides outstanding value within the community. Community, partnership, transition and business links also received the highest commendations. This is particularly pleasing as the school has invested much time to these essential activities from which our pupils derive so many benefits.

We are very proud that we continue to prove that students from Merthyr Tydfil can compete with those anywhere across the United Kingdom and that Cyfarthfa High School is a standard bearer of the highest standards in education. Pupils of every age and ability are given “the finest education today for the people of tomorrow”. We are very proud of all our students.

Cyfarthfa High School wishes to thank the inspection team and the Registered Inspector for their work at the school and for highlighting our very many outstanding qualities. The identified recommendations will be given our fullest attention as were the key issues identified for the previous inspection which we are told within this inspection report were achieved in an outstanding manner.

Cyfarthfa High School is now ready to move to an even higher level of excellence.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Cyfarthfa High School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11 - 18
Address of school	Cae Mari Dwn Queen's Road Merthyr Tydfil
Postcode	CF47 0LS
Telephone number	01685 721725

Headteacher	Mr Alan Pritchard
Date of appointment	1 January 1996
Chair of governors	Mr Gareth Morgan
Reporting inspector	Mr W Gwyn Thomas
Dates of inspection	12–16 January 2009

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	224	234	231	246	245	156	110	1446

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	81	7	84.7

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	7:1
Average teaching group size	24
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	77%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school (7 – 11 yrs)
Term 1	94	92	92	92	92	94	92	92
Term 2	93	93	91	90	97	92	97	93
Term 3	92	92	91	91	91	92	88	91

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	18.6
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	90 temporary

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results

End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008																
Total number of pupils in Y9: 246																
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	0	0	2	6	15	41	26	10	0	0	
		National	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	21	37	24	11	0	0	
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	1	0	0	3	10	22	34	21	7	0	0	
		National	1	0	1	1	1	4	13	24	32	18	4	0	-	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	14	34	26	15	0	0	
		National	0	0	0	1	0	1	7	18	29	28	15	1	0	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	17	39	24	13	0	0	
		National	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	19	36	27	11	0	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	61%	In Wales	60%

Summary of Secondary School Performance

Pupils aged 15

Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 253

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	90	55	45	45	382
LEA Area 2007/08	100	82	46	34	33	320
Wales 2007/08	98	87	58	46	44	356
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	15	362
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	38	342

Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 132

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	100	89	54	45	45	366
LEA Area 2007/08	98	78	40	29	29	297
Wales 2007/08	98	84	53	42	41	334
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	15	347
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	34	322

Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 121

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	92	56	45	45	400
LEA Area 2007/08	100	87	52	39	37	345
Wales 2007/08	99	90	63	50	48	379
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	15	379
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	42	364

(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

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	3.2	0	5.3	0	0.8	0
LEA Area 2007/08	4.5	1.1	6.7	1.6	2.2	1.6
Wales 2007/08	2.6	1.5	3.4	1.9	1.7	1.2
School 06/07/08	2	..	3.5	..	0.3	..
School 05/06/07	1.2	..	2.3	..	0	..

Pupils aged 17

Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 102

Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 42

Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 60

	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold		Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold		Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	
	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	88	614	90	617	87	613
LEA Area 2007/08	91	532	92	522	90	540
Wales 2007/08	94	631	93	596	95	659
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	..	..
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	..	..

(3) For details on qualifications, point scores and contribution to thresholds, please see guidance at [SSSP guidance](#).

(4) Entry Level Qualification

(5) As defined under the National Performance Indicator EDU/002.

.. Data not available

SECONDARY EXAMINATION DATA, 2006 - 2008

Free School Meals, 2006 - 2008	2006	2007	2008
% of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	19.0	18.7	18.0
Free School Meal band	15%<FSM<=20%	15%<FSM<=20%	15%<FSM<=20%
<hr/>			
Key Stage 4, 2006 - 2008	2006	2007	2008
% achieving the Level 1 threshold	..	86.9	90.1
Benchmark Quartile	..	3	1
% achieving the Level 2 threshold	..	55.2	55
Benchmark Quartile	..	2	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE at grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Maths	..	..	44.7
Benchmark Quartile	..	..	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold in the core subjects	..	..	45.5
Benchmark Quartile	..	..	1
Average wider points score	335.6	368.4	382.2
Benchmark Quartile	2	1	1

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 37 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:

- 75 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;

(3) For details on qualifications, point scores and contribution to thresholds, please see guidance at [SSSP guidance](#).

(4) Entry Level Qualification

(5) As defined under the National Performance Indicator EDU/002.

.. Data not available

- representatives of the school council; and
- business and other school partners.

The team also considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 219 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
William Gwyn Thomas Registered Inspector	Context, summary, recommendations, appendix. KQ1 and KQ5
Gwynoro Jones Lay Inspector	Contributing to all key questions.
Tony Sparks	KQ2
Huw Llewelyn	KQ3
Irene Mackie	KQ4
Bethan Whittal	KQ6
Angus Dunphy	KQ7
Peredur Francis	Support KQ5
Gwyn Jones	Support KQ1 and KQ5
Martyn S Williams	Support and KQ5
Andrew Herdman	Support and KQ5
Karen Holland	Peer Assessor
Carolyn Meade	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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