

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

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

**Penglais Comprehensive School  
Waunfawr  
Aberystwyth  
SY23 3AW**

**School Number: 6674047**

**Date of Inspection: 25 February 2008**

**by**

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Penglais Comprehensive 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 Penglais Comprehensive School took place between 25/02/08 and 28/02/08. 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.

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **short** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## Context

### The nature of the provider

1. Penglais School is an English medium, mixed 11-19 comprehensive school in Ceredigion County Council. There are 1365 pupils on roll, of whom 316 are in the sixth form. In 2002, when the school was last inspected, there were 1237 pupils on roll, 196 of whom were in the sixth form. While the total number of pupils in Years seven to 11 remains approximately the same, the number of sixth form students, as a proportion of the total number of pupils and students, has increased significantly in recent years.
2. The school occupies a large site located near to the university campus in Aberystwyth. The school serves the town of Aberystwyth as well as the surrounding rural communities. The linguistic background of learners is mixed. While over 400 pupils study Welsh as a first language, over 90% of pupils and students come from homes where English is the first language.
3. Twelve point two per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals, slightly above the average for the unitary authority (UA). While this statistic indicates an area of comparative social advantage it also includes a wide range of economic prosperity and social need. Pupils on entry to the school reflect a comprehensive intake. A relatively high number of pupils enter the school with additional learning needs.
4. The headteacher has been in post since September 1992. All members of the senior leadership team (SLT), except one, were appointed to their present posts since 2002.

### The school's priorities and targets

5. The school has committed itself to provide each pupil with:
  - a secure, orderly and happy environment;
  - a high quality education; and
  - an effective preparation for later life.
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 2008:
  - 71% of pupils should reach at least level 5 in all three subjects combined in national curriculum (NC) assessments at the end of KS 3; and
  - 63% of pupils should achieve at least 5 grades A\*-C, and 97% at least five grades A\*-G in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination.

## Summary

8. Penglais is a very good school which has many outstanding features. Some of its particular strengths are the way:
- the headteacher and governing body sets the school's strategic direction;
  - students achieve success in the sixth form;
  - pupils and students develop socially and as individuals;
  - teachers plan and deliver their lessons;
  - teaching and non-teaching staff support and guide all learners, including those with additional learning needs;
  - the school monitors and evaluates its own performance; and
  - the school provides value for money.

### Table of grades awarded

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

9. The grades for key questions 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. The inspection team awarded Grade 2 for key questions 2 and 5. Although outstanding features were identified in both of these key questions, there were inconsistencies within and between departments in the way teachers assess progress.

### Standards achieved

10. At KS3, in the NC teachers' assessments in 2007, results were slightly below averages for similar schools, though slightly above national averages. Achievement in English, mathematics and science was above what was expected, based on prior attainment.
11. At KS3, boys outperform girls in mathematics, and girls outperform boys in English, Welsh first language, science and the core subject indicator.
12. At KS4, the percentage of pupils the school enters exceeds the average for Wales as a whole as well as that for the UA. Pass rates at five or more grades A\*-C are broadly in line with local averages. They exceed national averages. Pass rates at five or more grades A\*-G exceed both local and national figures.
13. When compared with similar schools, GCSE pass rates are above average. In 2007, pass rates at five or more grades A\* - C were in the top 25% of similar schools.
14. The percentage of pupils gaining a grade A\*-C in each of English, mathematics and science was above average when compared to similar schools.

15. In 2007, boys outperformed girls at five or more grades A\*-C, in mathematics and in science. However, in English and in all three core subjects combined, girls outperformed boys.
16. Results at Advanced (A) Level are outstanding. In 2007 results at grades A-C and A-E exceeded both local and national averages. In 2007 100% of the cohort completed all elements of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) compared with 86% nationally, 95% of whom were awarded the advanced diploma, compared with 70% nationally. A very high proportion gained accreditation in the six key skill areas.
17. Pupils and students acquire new knowledge and skills as they progress through the key stages. They have good levels of skill in communication, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).
18. On the whole, learners have a good understanding of how well they are progressing and what they have to do in order to make good progress. However, with a small minority, this understanding is not secure.
19. While bilingual skills are developed through Welsh lessons, there is limited use made of incidental Welsh throughout the school.
20. Standards among pupils with additional learning needs are very good.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

21. Pupils and students adopt very positive attitudes towards learning. Their motivation is evidenced by the consistency of their good behaviour and their ability to sustain appropriate levels of concentration.
22. Students in the sixth form enjoy very good relationships with staff and develop further their learning skills.
23. Levels of attendance compare favourably with those of the top 25% of similar schools in Wales.
24. The way learners progress personally and show respect for peers, adults and diversity in society is outstanding.
25. Pupils and students respond well to the opportunities the school provides to work with other partners and to individual opportunities for involvement in the school's life. The way they are prepared for higher education and employment is outstanding.

### **The quality of education and training**

26. The effectiveness of teaching, training and assessment has many outstanding features. They are the:
  - relationships between teachers and learners;
  - curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities; and
  - support for learners, including those with ALN.
27. The following grades were awarded for teaching in the 82 lessons observed:

<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
21%	61%	18%	0%	0%

28. Eighty-two per cent of lessons were graded 1 and 2 compared to 69% in all inspections in Wales 2005-2006. This figure already exceeds the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) target for 2010, that 80% of lessons be judged to be Grade 2 or better.
29. One hundred percent of lessons were graded 3 and above which is five percent higher than the all-Wales figure for the same period. The 21% of lessons judged to have outstanding features exceeds the all Wales figure of 17% for 2005-2006.
30. Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that teaching has improved even further from that time. Six years ago, 98% of lessons were graded 3 and above, and 75% graded 1 and 2.
31. There is a significant amount of teaching that is outstanding. Just over one in five lessons observed were outstanding in terms of teachers' planning, questioning technique and the variety of task provided. However, there are inconsistencies within and between departments in the way teachers assess progress.
32. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment.
33. The way in which teachers plan appropriate opportunities for learners to develop and apply bilingual skills has shortcomings.
34. The curriculum provided is broadly based and balanced and meets the needs of pupils and students. It has coherence and progression and enables learners to develop their basic and key skills. Some of its outstanding features are the:
  - wide range of options at KS4 and in the sixth form, including the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ);
  - strategies used to develop and accredit key skills;
  - integration of personal and social education (PSE) with work-related education and careers education and guidance, and
  - wide range of extra-curricular activities.
35. The support and guidance of pupils have several outstanding features. They are in the way the school:
  - monitors pupils' attendance;
  - promotes healthy eating;
  - supports pupils with ALN;
  - implements its discipline policy, and
  - supports pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress.
36. Transitional links with partner primary schools are effective. Teachers and support staff visit all primary schools to ensure appropriate pastoral and curricular support.
37. The school council is an effective way of ensuring that pupils and students have a voice in school affairs.

## **Leadership and management**

38. There are several outstanding aspects to the leadership and management in the school. They are the:
  - headteacher's leadership;
  - strategic direction provided by the governing body;
  - arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, and
  - value for money in the use of the school's resources.
39. Parents are highly supportive of the school. They share the values of the headteacher and his staff and recognise the good effect this has on their children.
40. The headteacher is ably supported by his deputy headteachers and wider SLT. They are an effective team and make sure that school policy is put into practice in such a way that focuses on learners' standards of achievement.
41. Most heads of faculty and heads of department are effective middle managers.
42. The arrangements for setting targets for individuals and teams, providing them with training and support, and monitoring their performance are effective. The governing body is committed to the WAG priorities and meets all regulatory and legal requirements.
43. The arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's performance are outstanding. Leaders and managers gain first-hand knowledge of standards of provision and of pupils' work. The views of pupils, parents, staff and governors are actively sought.
44. Governors receive regular reports from leaders and managers in the school. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and work efficiently through a range of appropriate committees. They are aware of the main challenges the school faces and its priorities in addressing them.
45. The way the school uses its resources is outstanding. The headteacher's forward-planning is exceptional. It has enabled him to increase the number and effectiveness of support staff and appoint a large number of learning support assistants (LSAs), who have had a positive impact on pupils' learning.
46. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Performance management arrangements for teaching staff are in line with national requirements. The quality and range of training of both teaching and support staff is outstanding.
47. The access pupils and students have to appropriate learning resources, and the way in which the resources are used and reviewed are good.
48. The school has invested heavily in ICT facilities in line with a growing demand.
49. On the whole, the quality of display in the classrooms and around the school is good and makes for a stimulating working environment for pupils and staff.
50. The school has opened a purpose-built sixth form centre which effectively accommodates the growing number of students.

51. However, there are shortcomings in the accommodation for the library, art, drama and design technology. The drainage of the lower playing fields is inadequate in wet weather.
52. The budget is very well monitored at departmental and whole-school level.
53. The way resources are managed to achieve value for money is outstanding.

### **Progress since the last inspection**

54. With regard to the key issues of the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in the key issues identified.
55. Standards in areas judged to have been satisfactory and ICT across the curriculum have improved, as have the standards of pupils with ALN.
56. In co-operation with the UA the school has effected several important improvements its accommodation.
57. The school complies with the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

## **Recommendations**

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

- R1. Raise standards in the core subject indicator at KS3 in line with similar schools.
- R2. Ensure greater consistency within and between departments in assessment policy and practice.
- R3. Continue to work with the UA to improve accommodation for the library, art, drama and design technology, and to improve the drainage of the playing fields.

*The school's planning already recognises issues identified in 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**

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

### **KS3 and KS4**

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

59. On the whole, results at KS3 exceed national averages for Wales. Fifty-nine per cent of pupils reached at least level 5 in the core subjects combined, compared to 57% nationally. Results in English were above average. In mathematics, results were significantly above average. Results in science were in line with the

all Wales average. In Welsh first language, results were below the average for Wales.

60. These results are broadly in line with those of the previous inspection.
61. In mathematics, results were higher than the top 25% of similar schools. In English, Welsh first language, science and the core subjects combined, results were below average when compared to similar schools. Achievement in the core subjects was in line with what was expected, based on prior attainment. In Welsh first language and in science, attainment was below what was expected.
62. At KS3, boys outperform girls in mathematics, and girls outperform boys in English, Welsh first language, science and the core subject indicator.
63. At KS4, two outstanding aspects of the school's GCSE performance are the percentages of pupils who gain five or more passes at grades A\*-C, and the average points score.
64. In 2007, results exceeded national averages. Sixty-four per cent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-C compared to 65% locally and 54% nationally. This figure is higher than the average of the top 25% of similar schools.
65. Ninety-one per cent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-G compared to 88% locally and 86% nationally.
66. The average points score at GCSE exceeded local and national figures as well as those of similar schools.
67. The percentage of pupils gaining grade C or above in English, science and in the core subjects combined, was higher than the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining grade C and above in mathematics was below average, when compared to similar schools.
68. At KS4, the school exceeded its target that 61% of pupils pass five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C and met its target that 91% of pupils should pass five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-G.
69. Pupils listen well to one another and to their teachers. They are confident speakers and use an appropriate range of subject vocabulary. They are ready to offer ideas in class and develop their understanding through discussion.
70. Pupils read fluently and with expression. The more able have good note-taking skills. Pupils write well in a variety of forms and style. The more able re-draft their work confidently so as to produce good levels of extended writing. Pupils with ALN develop their skills well.
71. Standards in numeracy are good. Across a range of subjects pupils apply numbers confidently, for example, in Welsh second language, responses to surveys of opinion are presented in a variety of graphical formats.
72. Standards in ICT across the curriculum have improved since the last inspection. There are examples of good practice in the use of ICT, for example in English, modern languages and design technology where interactive whiteboards and "PowerPoint" are used to good effect.
73. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups, in creative and problem-solving opportunities.

74. The percentage of pupils who gain a qualification in Welsh at GCSE is below the local average and bilingual skills are not well developed outside Welsh lessons.

### **Their progress in learning**

75. In comparison with attainment on entry to the school, pupils make good progress. They respond well to the encouragement provided by the school and are effectively prepared for the next stage of education and training.
76. They are able to recall previous work and relate it to their current study in a relevant way. They work well together to clarify and solve problems.
77. At KS4, pupils make very good progress. They acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills which they apply effectively in new and unfamiliar contexts.
78. On the whole, pupils have a good understanding of how well they are progressing and what they have to do in order to make good progress. However, there is some variation within and between subjects in terms of the benefits pupils get from peer and self-assessment.
79. Pupils with ALN respond well to in-class support and make outstanding progress over both key stages. They respond 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**

80. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their self-discipline makes an important contribution to the standards they achieve in their learning. There is an orderly atmosphere in the school and pupils understand the high expectations the school has of them.
81. The vast majority of pupils adopt very positive attitudes to learning. They join in the activities provided and work hard in lessons. The praise and support, which the school offers, motivate pupils to give of their best.
82. Pupils are courteous and tolerant. There very few incidents of bullying and aggressive behaviour.
83. The overall attendance rate for the three terms prior to the inspection was 92.8%. This figure is in line with school trends, UA averages, and almost meets the WAG target of 93%. Punctuality at the start of the school day and at the start of lessons is good.
84. Pupils' moral, social, cultural and wider development is very good. Relationships with adults in the school enable pupils to express their views openly and honestly. The knowledge and skills they acquire help them to approach social and personal issues rationally.
85. Most pupils take part in sport and in a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
86. Careers guidance and work-related education of good quality prepares pupils extremely well for the world of work. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards life-long learning.

## **Sixth form**

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

87. Results in the sixth form are outstanding. Numbers of students admitted to the sixth form have increased from 196 in 2002 when the school was last inspected to 316 in the current academic year. In 2007 100% of the cohort completed all elements of the WBQ compared with 86% nationally, 95% of whom were awarded the advanced diploma, compared with 70% nationally. A very high proportion gained accreditation in the six key skill areas.
88. Results at A level have improved since the last inspection. They now exceed local and national averages. An increasing number of students gain higher grades at Advanced Supplementary (AS) and A2 levels. Girls outperform boys at A level.
89. Students speak and listen well to the teacher and each other. They pose probing questions and articulate their views with confidence and clarity. The more able students engage in extended discussion with their teachers and one another.
90. Students engage in problem-solving activity and use ICT well to support their research and present their work. They handle files and folders confidently. Many use data bases and spreadsheets to good effect, while others work well with computer aided design packages. Almost all students use "*PowerPoint*" confidently to support their presentations.
91. Students write at length, using subject specific vocabulary fluently and accurately. They write critically and justify their opinions with relevant argument.
92. Their bilingual skills are not well developed.

### **Their progress in learning**

93. Students benefit from a broad range of AS and A2 courses including some vocationally-based courses. In addition to the provision for key skills, the WBQ incorporates units of study on work-related education, PSE, and Wales, Europe and the World. A significant proportion of students completes the qualification successfully and pass rates exceed the average for Wales.
94. Sixth-form students have a good understanding of how well they are doing. Their work is marked and commented upon in detail and targets for improvement are clearly set.
95. The school provides very good support to all sixth formers, particularly to those who wish to proceed to higher education. Since the introduction of the WBQ, a greater proportion of sixth-form students have secured university places of first choice.

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

96. Sixth-form students develop very good personal, social and learning skills. They are confident and articulate young adults who relate well to pupils, their peers, teachers and other adults in the school.
97. They have good levels of attendance and punctuality.

98. Students enjoy very good relationships with staff and develop a sense of maturity and independence as they respond to the many opportunities they have to take a leading role in the school.
99. They take seriously their responsibility for supporting younger pupils.
100. Sixth-form students have an appropriate programme of work-related education that enables them to become mature young people who are aware of, and respond to, the needs of others.

## The quality of education and training

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

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

101. While the school awarded itself Grade 1 for key question 2, the inspection team disagreed. Although outstanding features were identified in this key question, there were inconsistencies within and between departments in the way teachers assess progress.

102. The following grades were awarded for teaching in the 82 lessons observed:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
21%	61%	18%	0%	0%

103. These grades exceed the figures for schools inspected in Wales in 2005-2006 in terms of lessons awarded Grade 1 (17%) and are significantly higher than the figure for lessons graded 1 or 2 (69%). These figures exceed slightly the WAG target for 2010, that the quality of teaching be Grade 2 or better in 80% of lessons.

104. While the size and nature of the sample differ, these figures indicate a further improvement in the quality of teaching from the time when the school was last inspected.

### KS3 & KS4

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

105. Grades awarded in the 68 lessons observed in KS3 and KS4 were:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	16%	58%	26%	0%	0%
KS4	33%	57%	10%	0%	0%

106. Teachers at the school have relaxed but productive relationships with pupils. Teachers have extensive and secure subject knowledge and plan to meet the individual learning needs of all pupils.

107. Where teaching is outstanding, it is characterised by questions that probe for understanding and strategies that promote independent learning. It enables pupils to reflect critically on their own thinking and provides opportunities for them to comment on their progress.

108. In a majority of lessons, teaching is informed by clear objectives that are shared with pupils, a variety of methods, well-judged pace and challenge, high expectations and effective classroom management.

109. In lessons where teaching is good or better, both planning and teaching take good account of the need to develop key skills. This is particularly evident where pupils are allowed to take responsibility for their own learning or are encouraged to analyze and improve their own performance, or that of others.
110. All pupils are respected and treated equally. The way in which LSAs work with mainstream teachers to plan their lessons is outstanding. They work well with teachers to ensure pupils with ALN receive the level of support they need.
111. The school has developed a system of individual pupil review whereby pupils' progress is carefully monitored by both non-teaching year managers and subject teachers. The system is well organized to give all concerned a clear understanding of how well each pupil is doing and what he/she needs to do to improve. Targets are kept in planners and known by the pupils. Methods of recording and organising assessment information are well known, accessible and useful.
112. With the exception of lessons in Welsh first and second language, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their bilingual communication skills.
113. In the small minority of lessons where there are shortcomings, they are associated with too much teacher direction and inappropriate pace and challenge.

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

114. The quality of assessment practice is good overall. The work of pupils in all subject areas is regularly and, for the most part, accurately assessed. Assessment tasks are targeted on relevant criteria which are shared with pupils. Very good practice was evident in English, history, science, French, Welsh, physical education, and design technology.
115. All statutory requirements for assessment are met in respect of the NC and external examination boards.
116. The school's database contains prior and predictive attainment data. This data includes teacher assessment at the end of KS2, results of standardised tests, reading tests and speaking tests that enable the identification of pupils with additional learning needs.
117. Good formative assessment practice is increasingly evident across the school. Most subject departments provide written commentary on pupils' work that gives clear indications of strengths, shortcomings and strategies for improvement.
118. The emphasis on learning and assessment criteria at the start of lessons, the quality of teacher exposition and questioning and the encouragement to pupils to evaluate their own performance enables them to know their targets and how to achieve them.
119. However, in a minority of cases, particularly at KS3, pupils are not aware of their targets or are unsure of how to achieve them.
120. Good arrangements have been established for reporting pupils' progress to parents. Reports are detailed and informative. They include targets set by teachers and both pupils and their parents are invited to comment on the content of the report.

## Sixth Form

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

121. In the 14 lessons observed in the sixth-form the grades awarded for the quality of teaching were as follows:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
7%	79%	14%	0%	0%

122. The small number of lessons observed makes comparisons with previous inspections and national averages unreliable.

123. Many of the outstanding and good features identified in lessons at KS3 and KS4 are also evident in the sixth-form. Working relationships between teachers and students are very good and learning objectives are clear. Teachers use their expert knowledge to explain, question and challenge students. They promote independent learning through collaborative group work and develop the key skills of the WBQ.

124. Where there are shortcomings in sixth form teaching there is an imbalance between teachers' exposition and opportunities for students to work for themselves.

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

125. The written work of sixth form students is regularly and rigorously marked. Teacher comments are both detailed and helpful with guidance on how to improve. In-class teacher intervention to guide and support individual students is particularly good.

126. Students are given good information on examination course requirements and are encouraged to use examination criteria to analyze the strengths and weaknesses in their own work and that of others.

127. As in other key stages, student progress is carefully monitored and formally reviewed once a year by the head or deputy head of the sixth form. Students display a good awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

128. Reports for students in the sixth form appear in the same format and are of similar quality to those issued to pupils in other key stages. As elsewhere, these are particularly informative about the courses being followed by each student and offer precise assessments of each student's current levels of knowledge and understanding. Reports indicate how well students progress in relation to their targets.

129. Occasional shortcomings occur in the quality of teacher feedback or in lost opportunities to familiarise students with examination criteria.

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

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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130. This grade matches the school's self evaluation grade.

131. The outstanding features are the:

- wide range of options at KS4 and in the sixth form offering appropriate learning pathways for pupils of different aptitudes;
- successful development of key skills at KS4 and the sixth-form;
- extensive range of extra curricular activities to broaden learners' experiences;
- very strong partnerships with parents, the community and other interested parties, and
- effective integration of PSE, work-related education and careers education and guidance.

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

132. The curriculum meets pupils' and students' learning needs and reflects the aims set out for pupils of statutory age in the Education Act of 1996. It provides an appropriate breadth, balance and progression of study and gives pupils the opportunity to achieve accreditation at all key stages. It meets legal and course requirements and provides equal opportunity and access for all learners.

133. At KS3, the curriculum includes discrete lessons for drama and ICT.

134. Appropriate learning pathways are available at KS4 which include vocational courses suitable for pupils of different aptitudes. Some of these courses are run in conjunction with local providers such as Skillstart, Ceredigion Training and Coleg Ceredigion.

135. Access to the sixth form is open to all pupils. A good choice of subject options is available and in addition to the A level and vocational courses taught at the school, students can access a course in childcare through video-conferencing activity.

136. There are outstanding features in the provision of key skills. Successful piloting of the WBQ at foundation, intermediate and advanced level has had a positive impact on this aspect of the school's work.

137. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Additional lessons at KS3 in literacy and numeracy in KS3 has improved access to the curriculum.

138. An impressive range of extra-curricular activities broaden learners' experiences. These include opportunities to represent the school in many sporting activities and gain school, county and national honours and take part in musical activities, school productions and eisteddfodau. Pupils and students are taken to theatres, galleries and museums and experience a range of visits abroad for curricular and social activities.

139. There are a number of good features in the provision for learners' moral, social and cultural development. Pupils and students are encouraged to respect one another, the staff and the environment and to have a clear sense of right and wrong. Learners are given the opportunity to show care and thoughtfulness towards others by raising money for charities.

140. Programmes of study enable learners to become aware of prejudice, racism, and the rights of the individual. They have the opportunity to learn about other cultures as well as that of Wales.
141. However, there are shortcomings in the provision for spiritual development of pupils and students across the curriculum and there is inconsistency in the quality of experience offered during class assemblies.
142. There are strong partnerships with parents and the local community. The termly newsletters and the school website are impressive and provide useful information.
143. The school has developed good curricular and pastoral links with primary schools. Pupils familiarise themselves with the new environment and induction is effective.
144. The school is fully involved in the initial training of teachers and has developed very good links with the local university.

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

145. Work related education is prominent in the curriculum. A comprehensive programme of activities has been mapped out in the learning core at all key stages and covers the nature, needs and opportunities in the work place. There are frequent visits to the school by speakers from the world of business to help learners prepare well for the world of work.
146. Vocational courses are enriched by very close collaboration with local businesses to provide relevant and practical experiences.
147. *Gyrfa Cymru* work very closely with the school and give advice to pupils at appropriate stages. All pupils use Careers Wales on Line from Y7 onwards to do work on their progress files.
148. The school meets the requirements for *Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig*.
149. All pupils study Welsh as a first language or the full course second language. However, there is limited opportunity for promoting learners' bilingual skills across the curriculum in subjects other than Welsh and the learning core programme.
150. The school tackles social disadvantage and stereotyping successfully. Emphasis on developing learners' key skills helps in improving pupils' self esteem and confidence.
151. The school is very successful in ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all learners. The modified curriculum 'Penglais at Work' support pupils at risk of disaffection.
152. Aspects of sustainable development and global citizenship are being developed. The provision is strong in geography and the 'Learning Core' programme. Whole school initiatives include recycling activities and those of the fair-trade group. However, at present, the school has not been awarded any local or national eco awards.
153. Pupils are made aware of the significance of healthy eating.
154. The school has developed links with local employers and is aware of the needs of the local economy especially in providing work placements for pupils following vocational courses in KS4 and the sixth-form.

155. Pupils have many opportunities to develop enterprise and entrepreneurial skills. These include the Celtic Enterprise Competition, Going for Profit, Make your Mark Challenge, Wine Bar Game, Young Enterprise and the Dynamo Project. All pupils in Y10 undertake an enterprise option as part of the 'Learning Core'.
156. The school's curriculum reflects the WAG priorities. Through a broad range of learning experiences, the curriculum successfully develops pupils' and students' skills for lifelong learning. The school has addressed many of the priorities set out in the 14–19 Learning Pathways.

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

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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157. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
158. There is outstanding practice in the quality of:
- care, support and guidance for learners, and
  - provision for pupils with ALN.

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

159. The quality of provision for PSE is outstanding. All pupils have access to the recently reorganised PSE programme which takes full account of the WAG's new framework for PSE and meets the WBQ requirements. At all key stages, care has been taken so not as to duplicate aspects of provision found in other subjects. All pupils at the end of KS4 have the opportunity to gain the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Certificate of Personal Effectiveness.
160. There are outstanding features in the monitoring of attendance, punctuality, behaviour and performance.
161. The school places a high priority on attendance and ensures that it is rigorously monitored by the deputy headteacher and heads of year. Electronic registration at the start of each lesson has been very effective in reducing 'internal' truancy. The pastoral administrative officer operates an effective first-day response system. Letters are sent to parents when pupils' attendance falls below 90% and the school nurse becomes involved when sickness is used excessively on absence notes.
162. The newly instituted non-teaching year managers' role ensures that there is always a member of the pastoral staff available to see a pupil. The year managers have received training in all aspects of their role and have become very effective members of the pastoral team. They interview all pupils in the year group, at least twice annually, using the data on the electronic tracking system to inform discussion and set targets.
163. The head of year, assistant head of year and year manager identify groups of pupils in each year who are at risk in terms of attendance, behaviour or performance and mentor them. Pupils are monitored and meet with the mentors fortnightly.
164. Good use is made of specialist services to support the work of the pastoral team, including mentoring and youth support services.

165. The school makes an outstanding contribution to the healthy development, fitness, safety and well being of pupils.
166. The school has a healthy eating coordinator who has undertaken an audit of subject provision to ensure good coverage across a range of subjects. Within the learning core, all pupils study an extensive range of topics on health education and healthy eating.
167. A 'Nutrition Action Group' has drafted a healthy food policy and liaises with the school canteen to ensure its effective implementation. Key members of staff have undertaken recognised nutrition training. Vending machines offer healthy eating options. The school has been awarded the Curiaid Calon award in recognition of its healthy eating policy and procedures.
168. A significant number of staff have been trained in first aid and twenty four staff trained in emergency life support through 'Heartstart UK'. The part-time school nurse makes a very effective contribution to the well-being of pupils, providing drop-in clinics and support on health issues.
169. The school has clear procedures for ensuring pupils' safety. All visits off site are risk assessed and documented; fire drills are conducted regularly and logged. The arrangements for the safe arrival and departure of pupils are very good. Staff supervision of buses traffic routing ensures pupil safety.
170. The school has developed very good partnerships with parents, carers and employers. This is evident in the high turnout at parents' evenings, option choice evenings and annual review meetings for pupils in receipt of a statement of special educational needs (SEN). Parents are informed when pupils' attendance, behaviour or progress gives cause for concern.
171. Parents' views are sought on a range of issues through questionnaires. Response is very good and the school considers all suggestions. Good account is taken of their views which have helped to formulate working practices in some areas such as transition arrangements.
172. There are very good arrangements for supporting and guiding pupils within and across the key stages to enable them to make informed choices about which courses to follow. The school holds two option choice evenings for pupils in Y9, one of which is dedicated to vocational courses. These are supplemented by informative option choice booklets. There is a very informative booklet for new entrants to the sixth form.
173. Careers advisors attend the option evenings to offer further guidance and advice. Careers education and guidance of good quality also helps pupils to make informed choices in Y9 and Y11.
174. There are strong pastoral links with the partner primary schools and a good induction programme for incoming pupils. This includes an informative prospectus for new pupils, an open day for both pupils and parents, visits by Y7 pastoral staff to every partner primary school, a bilingual transition booklet and visits to the school in the summer term for all transferring pupils. The transition arrangements continue in Y7 with Y12 students being assigned to tutor groups as "Buddies".
175. The school has very good arrangements for child protection. There is clear guidance for all members of staff and they are aware of the detailed procedures.

Training has been extended to cover all support and ancillary staff. There are very strong links with relevant external agencies.

176. The school has a very effective school council. It enables pupils to participate in decision making and develops their sense of responsibility. They are self-funding, undertaking a range of activities to raise money which is then spent on school facilities. They are consulted widely on such issues as the curriculum, school uniform, the school's anti-bullying policy and participate in senior staff appointments. They have been consulted by external agencies such as Ceredigion Alcohol Harm and Young Peoples' Services and participated in the production of the WAG information booklet and DVD on school councils.

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

177. The quality of provision for pupils with ALN is good with outstanding features. The school is caring and inclusive with provision co-ordinated by two members of staff who work extremely effectively together to ensure that pupils make very good progress.
178. An outstanding feature of provision is the work of the Learning Support Centre (LSC) which very effectively meets the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties. This does much to enhance pupils' self-esteem and enable them to integrate into mainstream lessons appropriate to their needs. The contribution of the learning support assistants in the LSC is also outstanding.
179. The SEN coordinators (SENCOs) disseminate information on pupils through their individual education plans (IEPs), mini-statements of their needs and pupil profiles. This is complemented by a booklet outlining classroom strategies to meet a very wide range of pupils' needs.
180. The way in which mainstream subject teachers take account of this in their lesson planning and delivery is outstanding. This is reflected in the fact that no pupil on the special needs register leaves school without a qualification and the very high attainment of pupils with ALN at the end of KS4.
181. The newly instituted inclusion unit has been effective in reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions during the short time it has been in place. The rate of pupils returning to the unit is very low and can be attributed to the follow-up behaviour modification and anger management sessions which are outstanding features of this provision.
182. Good features of the provision for pupils with ALN are the identification and assessment of ALN, the school's regard to the SEN Code of Practice and the consistent support for pupils with dyslexia provided by both teachers and LSAs in the dyslexia centre.
183. The school has an effective catch-up programme for both literacy and numeracy and a flexible provision for individual learning pathways at KS4 and the sixth-form. The large team of LSAs in both the small-class provision and in mainstream classes and SEN administrative officer have good working relationships with mainstream subject teachers and work effectively together.
184. Pastoral support plans of good quality are drafted by multi-disciplinary teams which include representatives of external agencies. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported. Their progress is carefully monitored.

185. While there are some opportunities for supporting the more able and talented pupils in key stage four, provision is limited and lacks overall coordination.

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

186. The school is aware of pupils' diverse backgrounds and tailors its support and guidance appropriately. Arrangements for pupils with EAL are good. Pupils are assessed to ensure the appropriate level of support is given, and their progress is monitored regularly to ensure their grasp of language is secure. There are strong links between the school and the UA's EAL forum where good practice and resources are shared.

187. Boys and girls are treated equally. There are no restrictions on access to the curriculum for either sex, or for extra-curricular activities, except for some sports teams which represent the school and sports whose ruling body specifies otherwise. Using materials presented to pupils in the learning core programme and in religious education lessons, gender and stereotyping issues are rigorously addressed throughout the key stages.

188. The school has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy. Its co-ordinator, a member of the SLT, is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the policy and its implementation. Racial awareness is fostered through the learning core programme, religious education and assemblies. Opportunities are given to discuss ideas and practices from other cultures and beliefs and to understand unacceptable patterns of behaviour. All types of discriminatory behaviour are challenged and dealt with effectively.

189. The school has effective strategies for dealing with harassment and bullying. Specially trained pupils from Y9 are on hand to deal with problems highlighted by younger pupils, and there are clear guidelines displayed throughout the school regarding the nature of bullying and action pupils experiencing any form of bullying should take. Sixth-formers are linked to Y7 tutor groups to provide further support, and the year managers and heads of year are available to discuss any problem pupils may be experiencing.

190. The school has had due regard to its disability equality duty and has published a disability equality scheme. This is a comprehensive and detailed document which outlines clearly the aims of the scheme and responsibilities of the governing body, headteacher, staff and pupils. It includes detailed arrangements for implementing the scheme and arrangements for staff training.

191. The school ensures that disabled pupils are not treated less favourably than other pupils and appropriate support and resources are provided as appropriate.

192. The school has an accessibility plan. The plan addresses access to the site and to the curriculum. However, there are shortcomings to the plan as it is limited in scope and does not address access to the information that the school publishes.

193. The school recognises and respects diversity. Delivery of these issues is through the learning core and in specific curricular areas such as science and religious education, geography and in assemblies. Since the previous inspection all members of staff have received training in equal opportunities.

## **Leadership and management**

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

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

194. The school awarded itself grade 1 in its own evaluation. Grade 2 was awarded because there are inconsistencies in the impact of leadership and management on the quality of teaching and learning.

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

195. The school is very well led by the headteacher. He has a profound commitment to the success of each learner, which lies at the heart of the school's aims. The same purposeful focus on meeting the needs of the individual is clearly demonstrated in the positive values and high expectations shared at all levels.

196. Equality of opportunity is a strength of the school, exemplified by the breadth and balance of its curriculum. The school pays close attention to the WAG priorities and initiatives, particularly the 14-19 learning pathways where it works well with other educational establishments and with local businesses. The school is moving quickly towards Eco-School status, but the promotion of bilingualism is less firmly developed.

197. As part of a successful remodelling of the workforce, the SLT has been reduced and greater autonomy given to heads of department. There is greater delegation within departments and lines of accountability are clearly defined. New posts have been created, including those of pastoral managers. This contributes to the many strengths to be found in the areas of support, care and guidance.

198. An expanded leadership team, whose composition changes annually in rotation, brings together a good mix of middle managers and teachers from a balanced range of disciplines. This allows a wide range of staff to contribute at a senior level and, at the same time, gain leadership experience.

199. Each department undertakes a rigorous annual review of its own work. In addition, the headteacher and senior managers inspect about three departments each year, evaluating pupils' work, observing lessons, and talking to teachers and learners. These detailed systems of monitoring and appraisal are helping the school to move forward, but variations in response to information gathered means that in a few cases improvement is not as rapid as the school would prefer, and shortcomings in teaching and learning are not addressed as fully as possible.

200. Performance management is well established for staff at all levels. There are good systems for the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff new to the school. The school takes part successfully in the graduate teacher training programme. The school has received the Investors in People award for the third time in succession.

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

201. Governors make a very strong contribution to the strategic management of the school. They bring a wide range of expertise, an extensive understanding of

local and national trends in education, and a deep commitment to the aims and values of the school.

202. The work of the finance committee has had a very positive impact on the way the school achieves value for money.
203. Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher and, at times, from heads of department. They were consulted at all stages in the preparation of the school's self-evaluation report, and were confident to amend some of the proposed judgements in the light of their own perceptions.
204. In response to the latest Investors in People report, governors have conducted their first self-review and have prepared an action-plan which describes in detail how they intend to develop their roles. As well as working through an appropriate range of committees, governors are building closer links with individual subject departments.
205. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well.

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

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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206. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.

207. The outstanding features are the:

- thorough knowledge that the headteacher, senior staff, middle managers and governors have of the quality of teaching, learning and standards across the school;
- exceptional role of the headteacher in ensuring a clear focus on improving standards as the main priority within all improvement plans;
- first hand evidence gathered by leaders and managers which lay the foundations for all self-evaluation reviews and development plans;
- participation of all staff in a comprehensive, detailed and rigorous annual self-evaluation process which is firmly embedded within the school;
- way the school actively seeks out, and acts upon, the views of the many interested parties involved with the school, and
- financial planning and management which ensures that resources are targeted to support improvements identified.

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

208. The findings of the inspection team agree with those of the school for five of the seven key questions. The team awarded Grade 2 rather than Grade 1, for key question 1 and key question 5.
209. The culture of self-evaluation identified in the previous inspection has been developed further and strengthened. All staff contribute to departmental self-evaluation. This detailed and rigorous annual self-evaluation is applied to all areas of the school.

210. All the school's self-evaluation reports use a standard format based on Estyn's seven key questions and are produced annually. A common format is also used by all leaders and managers to analyse examination results and to evaluate in-service training activities.
211. Information on the quality of classroom experiences is obtained through Performance Management which is well established and effective. A common format has been adopted for the observation of lessons and for the monitoring of pupils' work.
212. The self-evaluation process is well informed and draws evidence from a wide variety of sources. Regular lesson observations and departmental inspections are carried out by the headteacher and subject leaders.
213. Pupils' and students' work is scrutinised. Parents, including parents of Y6 pupils are consulted via questionnaires. Pupils and students are consulted via the school council. External perspectives on the school are sought from the UA, Investors in People and examination boards.
214. The full governing body receives annual reports of development plans and self-evaluation within the school. It recently undertook its own self-evaluation and identified areas for improvement in its action plan.
215. An extended leadership group has been established to focus on aspects for development identified in the school's self-evaluation report. The group is currently developing a whole-school policy on teaching and learning, identifying and promoting good practice across the school.
216. Following the recent restructuring for the new teaching and learning responsibilities, self-evaluation has been delegated to subject leaders and middle managers. Most have embraced this responsibility well, involve all staff in the process and work together effectively to bring about improvements.
217. The quality of some of the self-evaluation reports is outstanding and around half are good. A small minority are descriptive rather than evaluative and lack clarity when identifying strengths and weaknesses.
218. Teachers do not observe regularly their departmental colleagues teaching in order to share good practice.

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

219. There is a well established cycle of improvement planning. The departmental and area self-evaluations identify shortcomings where further development is most needed. Areas for improvement identified reflect the priorities within the school development plan (SDP) as well as departmental priorities.
220. The main priority within the SDP is to raise pupil achievement. The remaining five priorities support and enhance this overriding aim. The school improvement plan is of good quality. It sets out a timetable for each development, names the person responsible for leading it, and identifies the professional development needs, the success indicators and the funding implications. The quality of many departmental plans is at least good and follows a similar pattern to the school development plan.
221. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and actions taken have resulted in measurable improvements. The learning skills group identified

appropriate teaching and learning strategies to improve the standards achieved by below average ability pupils. As a consequence, standards of achievement for these pupils have improved since the last inspection.

222. Most of the school's accommodation needs have been improved, including those for physical education. Further improvements are required in areas identified within this report.
223. Procedures have been introduced and resources developed to improve the provision of collective acts of daily worship. The school now satisfies the statutory requirement in this respect.

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

#### **Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

224. This grade matches the school's self-evaluation grade.
225. The headteacher's vision and forward-planning is outstanding. He has secured very good value for money through a re-structuring of the school's workforce that has financed increasing levels of resources to support pupils' and students' learning.
226. The outstanding features are the:
- use made of the very large number of LSAs and their contribution to pupils' learning;
  - availability of a very wide range of specialist support staff;
  - training opportunities available for the support staff;
  - expansion of sixth-form provision, in a period of demographic downturn, at an economic cost, and
  - opening of a new sixth-form centre.

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

227. The 35 LSAs work very effectively with teachers and a very diverse range of pupils. They make a significant impact upon pupils' learning.
228. The school employs a wide variety of very able support staff, which includes finance, clerical and site staff. There is an ICT network manager and ICT training officer, a school counsellor, and librarian. The school also employs learning managers, cover supervisors and technicians. Their contribution made by these people to the quality of provision is significant.
229. There is an adequate number of teachers to deliver the broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers are well qualified with a significant number holding higher degrees and/or additional qualifications. There is a good balance between those who are in the first ten years of their careers and those with more experience.
230. There are sufficient classroom resources. ICT resources are good and continue to improve. Approximately 6% of the total budget is spent in these areas. All pupils now benefit from the provision and all teaching staff have their own laptop.

231. Resources are well used to ensure that there is wide provision for a very diverse range of special needs. Pupils who have Welsh as a first language are catered for through specific teaching groups in Welsh, the learning core and in form groups. There is developing provision for the able and talented. This occurs through extension work, extra-curricular and early entry opportunities.
232. An active parents' association raises additional sums for curricular and site provision.
233. Health and safety regulations are in place. These are correctly adhered to and include risk assessments and fire safety precautions. A nurse, offering a high level of service, is available part time and significant numbers of staff are first aid trained. Child protection measures are understood and implemented.
234. There have been significant improvements in accommodation since the last inspection. This includes the renovation of the sports hall and canteen and the remodelling of the LSC.
235. The provision made for sixth-form accommodation is outstanding. The sixth-form centre has a generous ICT provision, a video conferencing suite, offices, a large common room and a kitchen.
236. On the whole, the quality of display in the classrooms and around the school is good and makes for a stimulating working environment for pupils and staff.
237. The library is very well led and is effective in supporting pupils' independent learning. It is attractive and popular with pupils. Fiction borrowing is running at 700 books per month. However, the library accommodation is too limited for pupil demand. Space limits the number of ICT work stations and levels of capitation mean that there are insufficient newspapers, magazines, DVDs and non-fiction works.
238. Accommodation in art is cramped and the kiln is not located nearby. Facilities for design technology are spread out across the site and drama does not have its own studio. Three of the four games pitches suffer from inadequate drainage, which impacts upon the physical education curriculum.

### **How effectively resources are managed to achieve value for money**

239. An outstanding feature is the way in which the school plans for the short, medium and long-term. This is brought about through the;
- vision of the headteacher;
  - active involvement of governors in taking strategic decisions;
  - clarity of financial plans;
  - thoroughness in which they are implemented and monitored, and
  - training provided for the large number of support staff.
240. The workload agreement has been fully implemented and staff re-structuring has been introduced in phases. These have made gains for teachers in giving them planning, preparation and assessment time. A wider distributed leadership has been established with middle managers and support staff.
241. Continuing professional development is strong. Priorities reflect school, departmental and individual need. In-service training is tracked and evaluated.

Performance management is carried out by and for all staff. The school was recently awarded Investors in People status for the third time.

242. The school has increased in size since the last inspection. This is against a demographic downturn in the UA. The main reason has been the increased numbers in the sixth-form, which reflects the range and quality of opportunities on offer. This provision has been made at an economic cost.
243. In a period of financial constraint the school has had a great deal of success in moving resources into learning and in restructuring the workforce. Teaching budgets have been reduced to 66% of available expenditure, whilst support staffing budgets have been expanded. Classroom equipment and materials budgets have been maintained and the maintenance budget increased.
244. The school provides outstanding value for money.

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

Penglais welcomes the report which confirms that this is “a very good school with many outstanding features”. The inspection team’s findings are very similar to our own assessment which shows that our self-evaluation procedures are robust and the direction in which we are taking the school is the right one.

It is pleasing to see that achievements at Key Stage Four and in the Sixth Form are regarded as outstanding. The quality of the curriculum throughout the school is praised, in particular the wide range of options at Key Stage Four and in the Sixth Form was particularly commended. Support for learners of all abilities is described as outstanding. Pupils are praised for the consistency of their good behaviour – their personal progress and respect for peers, adults and diversity is also described as outstanding.

At a time when funding for secondary schools in Ceredigion is under pressure it was pleasing to note that “the way the school uses its resources is outstanding” and that “the school provides outstanding value for money”. There are recommendations in the report to improve our accommodation, in particular facilities for drama, music, art, food technology, the library and drainage of the school fields. These can only be achieved with significant capital investment from the local education authority into its largest school.

The school thanks the inspection team for the professional manner in which it conducted the inspection. The school welcomes the recommendations contained in the report, all of which are contained in the school development plan.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Penglais Comprehensive School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Waunfawr Aberystwyth Ceredigion
Postcode	SY23 3AW
Telephone number	01970-624811
Headteacher	Mr H Davey
Date of appointment	1 September 1992
Chair of governors	Mr J Evershed
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Harris
Dates of inspection	25-28 February 2008

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	189	209	225	216	210	194	122	1365

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	72	20	81.6

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	16.7:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	22.21
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	76%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	93.3	93.1	92.7	91.4	91.7	90.3	88.9	91.9
Term 2	93.2	93	92.1	91.3	97	90.3	95.6	93
Term 3	94.8	93.1	93.1	91.7	91.7	92.4	90.1	92.8

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	12.2%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	77 temporary and 5 permanent

## Appendix 3

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

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2007													
Total number of pupils in Y9: 182													
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			D	N	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	1	9	18	35	26	10	0
		National	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.4	1.4	6.8	21.4	35.7	24.1	8.5	0.2
Welsh	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	0	2	47	27	22	2	0
		National	0	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.4	6.3	20	37	26.2	8.8	0.5
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	2	6	13	32	37	10	0
		National	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.3	1.1	7.8	19.7	27.8	27.1	14.4	0.8
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	0	0	0	1	8	21	28	31	11	0
		National	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.8	6.5	20.9	34.7	25.7	10.0	0.1

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment			
In the school	59	In Wales	56.7

### Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2007	215
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	49

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2007:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	92	89	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	64	65	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	91	88	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	45	46	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	97	98	96
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	87	85	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	97	95	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	3	5	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	0	2	2
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	n/a	n/a	n/a
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	n/a	n/a	n/a

<b>For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs</b>	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2007	107
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2007	107
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2007	10

	<b>School</b>	<b>UA</b>	<b>Wales</b>
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	71	70	68
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	95	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	21	21	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	n/a	n/a	n/a

## **Appendix 4**

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

Inspectors spent a total of 44 inspection days in the school and were joined by the school's assistant headteacher as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 82 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;
- 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

<b>Team member</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Peter Harris	Registered Inspector and Key Question 1
Gwynoro Jones	Lay Inspector. Contributions to all Key Questions
Alan Kelly	Key Question 2
Hefina Thomas	Key Question 3
Paul Donovan	Key Question 4 including SEN
Martyn Williams	Key Question 5
Keith Davies	Key Question 6
Angus Dunphy	Key Question 7
Anna Williams	Assistance with Key Question 2
Bethan Whittal	Assistance with Key Question 4
Alun Harries	Peer Assessor
Adrian Wells	Nominee

### *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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