

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

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

**Pontarddulais Comprehensive School  
Caecerrig Road, Pontarddulais,  
Swansea SA4 8PD**

**School Number: 6704072**

**Date of Inspection: 09/02/09**

**by**

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Pontarddulais 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 Pontarddulais Comprehensive School took place between 09/02/09 and 13/02/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Peter Guy Carter undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

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 **standard** inspection.

## Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

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## **Context**

### **The nature of the provider**

1. Pontarddulais Comprehensive School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school. It is situated in the town of Pontarddulais and maintained by the Local Education Authority (LEA), the City and County of Swansea. There are 766 pupils on roll compared to 792 at the time of the last inspection in 2003.
2. Pupils come from the town of Pontarddulais and the surrounding villages. The school believes that the area has prosperous sections but is relatively disadvantaged economically. Just over 15% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This figure is close to the national average.
3. Nearly all pupils come from English-speaking homes. Approximately one percent of pupils speak Welsh as their first language and a further one percent comes from minority ethnic backgrounds. The full range of ability is represented in the school whose local intake reflects that of the LEA.
4. Almost 20% of pupils are registered as having additional learning needs (ALN) and around three percent have statements of special educational needs (SEN). The Specialist Teaching Facility (STF), for pupils with profound multiple learning difficulties, opened in January 2007. At present, seven pupils are registered there.

### **The school's priorities and targets**

5. The school's motto is 'Live to Learn – Learn to Live' and its aim is to maximise pupils' potential. It believes that striving towards excellence is best achieved when pupils, parents and staff work in harmony. The School Evaluation and Development Plan (SEDP) identifies targets in four main areas: curriculum; community; leadership and management; and resources.

## Summary

6. Pontarddulais Comprehensive School is a very good school with many outstanding features. There are outstanding features in the standards its pupils achieve, the quality of education it provides and in its leadership and management. It has made very good progress and significant improvements since the last inspection.

### Table of grades awarded

Key Question	Inspection grade
1 How well do learners achieve?	1
2 How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	1
3 How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	1
4 How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1
5 How effective are leadership and strategic management?	1
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

### Standards

#### Grades for standards in subjects inspected

Inspection area	Key stage 3	Key stage 4
English	1	1
Science	2	1
Design and technology	1	1
History	2	1
Physical education	1	1
Religious education (including religious studies)	2	2

7. Attainment in tests, statutory assessments and examinations is very good in most cases. Pupils' results are particularly good in comparison with their ability and prior achievement. At Key Stage (KS) 4, results in many key indicators of performance have been very good for a number of years and compare very well with those of similar schools. Attainment in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations has outstanding features.
8. Standards in the six subjects inspected are at least good overall with many outstanding features, particularly at KS4. The standards achieved in English, design and technology and physical education have outstanding features at both key stages. In science and history, standards have outstanding features at KS4.
9. Standards of achievement observed in 57 lessons in the six subjects inspected are also very good as shown in the table below. The proportions of lessons where the two highest grades were awarded are significantly higher than the corresponding national figures from the most recent annual report of the Chief Inspector.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	37%	57%	6%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	46%	54%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	40%	56%	4%	0%	0%

10. Standards are good in all key skills and there are outstanding features in communication skills and numeracy. Standards are also very good in the wider key skills. The way in which pupils work together and their personal and social skills have outstanding features. Pupils' bilingual competence has good features but is at an earlier stage of development.
11. Nearly all pupils achieve very good standards whatever their ability, gender or background. Pupils with ALN and those who receive extra numeracy and literacy support make very good progress.
12. The school is an orderly and cohesive community where pupils respect their teachers, one another and the different views and beliefs held by individuals and groups. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their attendance and punctuality are good. Their behaviour is outstanding.

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

13. Overall, teaching and assessment have outstanding features in around 50% of lessons observed. There are good features and no important shortcomings in 96% of lessons. These are very impressive figures which indicate teaching and assessment of high quality.
14. In nearly all lessons teachers establish excellent working relationships with pupils. They facilitate a vibrant working atmosphere that inspires pupils to excel. Teachers have excellent knowledge of their subjects and most use this exceptionally well to engage pupils actively in learning. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and take

particular care to ensure that tasks and activities are matched well to the needs of individual pupils.

15. The consistency of marking across subjects is outstanding. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and very thoroughly. Most provide exceptional detail in the quality of their written feedback to pupils and indicate clear targets for them. As a consequence of this, pupils have a very clear awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
16. Assessment is used extremely well to promote learning. Pupils assess their own performance and that of their peers very well. This approach is embedded firmly in many subjects and impacts significantly on the standards that pupils achieve.
17. In nearly all respects the curriculum caters well for the needs of pupils. Options at KS4 provide appropriate negotiated Learning Pathways for all pupils. Academic and vocational courses are fully accredited and afford progression to further study. There is a strong emphasis on the development of key skills.
18. The school promotes pupils' bilingual skills and their knowledge of the culture of Wales well. However, for a few pupils at KS4, not enough time is provided to undertake the GCSE short course in Welsh second language. The time allocated to religious education at KS4 is barely sufficient to meet the requirements of the course.
19. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities. These enrich greatly pupils' learning experiences. Very strong emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' personal, moral and social development. This is a strength of the school. Good progress is made in promoting pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Curricular and pastoral links with partner primary schools are outstanding. Dialogue about transition is highly developed and designed to assist the progress of each pupil.
20. The school tackles social disadvantage and stereotyping in a very positive way. Teaching and support programmes encourage all pupils to succeed in their studies and develop into valued community members. There is a strong emphasis on enabling pupils to develop skills for lifelong learning.
21. Integrated programmes in Personal and Social Education (PSE) and Careers and the World of Work (CWW) are developed well. Strong links with Careers Wales and local employers provide rich advice and meaningful work placements for pupils.
22. The provision for care, guidance and support is a significant strength of the school. The school manages its care provision well through an established system which focuses on individual needs and well-being. Planned intervention and support strategies ensure that every pupil is valued and treated equally.
23. There are positive and strong links with parents. They are consulted about many initiatives and policies. The school council has a high profile and pupils respond well to opportunities to exercise responsibility and develop initiative. Pupils' active involvement in making decisions on issues that concern them is outstanding.

24. Transition procedures are well established. The induction programme is outstanding and enables new pupils to settle in smoothly. Personal support of high quality meets the needs of all pupils and particularly those with social and emotional issues. The PSE programme reinforces well the effective guidance provided by the school.
25. There are outstanding features in the monitoring of attendance, punctuality, performance and behaviour. Well-developed procedures ensure immediate effective intervention and support. These have contributed to improved standards.
26. The inclusive quality of provision for pupils with SEN is outstanding. Flexible support strategies ensure that individual needs are met and progress is made. Dedicated Learning Support Assistants (LSA) provide sensitive, appropriate support and work closely with subject teachers. Individual Education Plans (IEP) relate well to the needs of pupils. However, the monitoring of their use in lessons is underdeveloped.
27. The STF is an outstanding feature of provision. Its purpose-built accommodation succeeds in supporting the educational and social needs of pupils with profound and multiple difficulties appropriately. These pupils are integrated well into the school community. The explicit aims and values of the STF promote equality for all pupils.
28. Social inclusion is high on the school agenda and is an outstanding feature. The school recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and ensures all pupils are treated equally. Awareness of equality permeates the school and is reinforced by positive relationships and respect for each other.
29. Strategies and policies to eliminate oppressive behaviour and bullying are outstanding. The school council plays an important part in devising and implementing anti-bullying strategies. Pupils are confident that the school reacts promptly to any allegations of bullying.

### **Leadership and management**

30. The headteacher provides the school with outstanding, highly effective leadership. He has clear aims, extensive experience and excellent relationships with pupils, colleagues and governors.
31. The headteacher receives very good support from an able team of senior leaders. Together, they set a clear direction for the school, promote its values and ensure that daily routines operate smoothly. Senior leaders have very good links with middle managers. The consistently high quality of middle management is a particular strength of the school.
32. The governing body (GB) contributes very effectively to the school's leadership. Its members know the school well. Governors work through a very good range of committees to review and monitor performance and help take key strategic decisions. They work very well in partnership with the school and fulfil all their legal responsibilities.
33. Self-evaluation underpins all aspects of school life. Staff members and pupils reflect continually on their achievements with a real sense of purpose to facilitate

improvement. The team ethos that is nurtured through these processes and the outcomes that are achieved are outstanding features.

34. All leaders and managers have a clear awareness of their roles. There is a sense of shared responsibility amongst all staff members. This contributes significantly to making self-evaluation highly systematic and robust. Pupils play important parts in this. The vibrant school council acts on issues from year councils. Members have been very successful in making continued improvements to aspects of learning.
35. Outcomes from self-evaluation are used very well to plan further improvements. Staff teams produce very detailed action plans that reflect well those of the whole school. Priorities for improvement are identified clearly. The consistently high quality of these plans is outstanding. All key issues from the last inspection have been addressed very successfully.
36. The school is staffed well. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Nearly all teach their specialist subject. Members of the dedicated, competent and highly motivated support staff team work closely together. Together with teachers they ensure all aspects of the school operate very smoothly. Their work is co-ordinated and managed well.
37. The provision of learning resources in all departments is good. The provision of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment is excellent. Accommodation has many good features and provides a stimulating learning environment. There are sufficient classrooms, specialist rooms and facilities for the number of pupils on roll. Resource provision for pupils in the STF is outstanding. The school, however, has experienced some difficulties recently because of flooding.
38. Staff appraisal, development and training at all levels have many good and several outstanding features. All staff members have access to a carefully planned and well co-ordinated programme of personalised professional development. Financial management is systematic, rigorous and very robust and is regarded by the LEA as exemplary. Spending decisions are closely linked to priorities for development and expenditure is monitored in minute detail to ensure cost-effectiveness.
39. Overall, when measured against outcomes, the school manages the resources available to it prudently and extremely effectively to give very good value for money.

## Recommendations

In order to build on the progress made the school should implement the following recommendations.

- R1 Develop further pupils' bilingual competence.
- R2 Work with the LEA to eradicate the potential flood hazard.
- R3 Ensure all pupils at KS4 receive the recommended time for Welsh second language.
- R4 Increase the time allocated for religious education at KS4.
- R5 Develop further the monitoring of the use of IEPs in mainstream classes.

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 1: Good with outstanding features

- 40. This grade matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.
- 41. At KS3 in 2008, the percentages of pupils who achieved National Curriculum (NC) level five or above in the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, were higher than local and national averages. The percentage who achieved the Core Subject Indicator (CSI), level five or above in all three subjects, also compared favourably with local and national averages.
- 42. In most key indicators of performance at KS3, between 2004 and 2008, attainment was above the local and Welsh averages. There is an underlying trend of improving performance during this period. Performance has been good in all three core subjects with English and mathematics being strongest.
- 43. In comparison with schools where a similar proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals, attainment was consistently above average in 2006 and 2008. The percentage of pupils who achieved the KS3 CSI placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools. Compared to 2006 and 2008, attainment in 2007 was disappointing. The school believes that the 2007 figures were adversely affected by participation in

a national assessment pilot scheme. Overall, recent KS3 results suggest that pupils perform well in relation to expectations based on their abilities and backgrounds.

44. At KS4, attainment in GCSE examinations was well above local and national averages in almost all cases in the last two years. Attainment also compares very favourably to that in similar schools with performance in the top 25% in most cases.
45. In 2008, the percentage of pupils who gained five or more A\*-C GCSE grades was 11 percentage points higher than the local average and 13 points above the national average. It is 12 points higher than it was in 2006. The percentage of pupils who achieved the KS4 CSI (grade C or above in all three core subjects) increased by 20 points in the same period. This places it 12 points higher than the local average and 17 points above the Welsh average. These figures reflect outstanding attainment.
46. The percentage of pupils who gained five or more A\*-G GCSE grades in 2008 is two percentage points below both the local and national average and below the average in similar schools. At present, however, a small but significant minority of pupils follow alternative courses which lead to qualifications other than the GCSE.
47. There is little evidence of any significant difference between the standards attained by boys and girls. In most cases, the gap between boys' and girls' performance is lower than it is locally or nationally.
48. Standards have good features and no important shortcomings at both stages in all six subjects inspected. The standards achieved in English, design and technology and physical education also have outstanding features at both stages. In science and history, standards have outstanding features at KS4.
49. The standards achieved by pupils in the six subjects inspected have outstanding features in two-fifths of the 57 lessons observed. The two highest grades were awarded for standards in 96% of lessons. In a very few lessons at KS3, standards have shortcomings that are outweighed by good features. The percentages of grades awarded during this inspection are set out in the table below.

	<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	37%	57%	6%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	46%	54%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	40%	56%	4%	0%	0%

50. The percentages of lessons where the two highest grades were awarded are significantly higher than the corresponding national figures from the most recent annual report of the Chief Inspector. The percentage is 26 percentage points higher at KS3 and 33 points higher at KS4. This represents outstanding achievement at both stages but especially at KS4.
51. Although the evidence base is different, the figures in the table indicate significant improvement since the last inspection. The percentage of lessons where the highest grade was awarded has increased from 24% to 40%. The percentage of lessons in which the top two grades were awarded for standards has increased by 14 percentage points. This reflects very good progress in the last six years.

52. Standards have good features and no important shortcomings in all key skills. Pupils demonstrate outstanding skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing at both stages and in numeracy at KS4. Pupils use ICT competently in subjects across the curriculum.
53. Pupils' bilingual competence has good features but is at an earlier stage of development. Pupils show appropriate levels of understanding when listening to teachers' occasional use of incidental Welsh and reading Welsh signs and notices. They practise their speaking and writing skills mainly in Welsh lessons.
54. Pupils of all abilities, including those with ALN, make very good progress in learning. Their attainment by the end of KS4 shows very good progression in comparison with their abilities on entry. Nearly all pupils know how well they are doing and how they could improve the standards they achieve. They understand their strengths and weaknesses in different subjects and relate them to NC requirements at KS3 and the content of GCSE and vocational courses at KS4.
55. Pupils' personal, social and learning skills have many outstanding features. Pupils work collaboratively in small and larger groups very effectively. They show high levels of respect for the views and beliefs of others. They respect their teachers, get on well with each other and are polite and welcoming to visitors. Together, these factors help generate an orderly and cohesive community.
56. Pupils' personal skills and positive attitudes to learning influence their conduct. They make very good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a consequence their behaviour is outstanding. The number of temporary exclusions in the last 12 months is less than half that reported at the last inspection. Although there was an increase in permanent exclusions, this was linked to a single isolated incident and does not reflect the general situation.
57. Pupils' attendance is very good. At 93%, attendance is higher than it was at the last inspection. It is also significantly higher than the average attendance in the LEA and in similar schools across Wales. Punctuality is good. Pupils are rarely late at the start of the school day or for lessons.

## The quality of education and training

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

58. This grade matches the grade in the school's self- evaluation report.
59. The following table shows the overall grades awarded for the quality of teaching and assessment in the 57 lessons observed in the six subjects inspected.

	<b>Grade1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	40%	51%	9%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	59%	41%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	47%	48%	5%	0%	0%

60. A further 21 lessons were observed in other subjects. The following table shows the overall grades awarded for teaching and assessment in all 78 observed lessons.

	<b>Grade1</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>
<b>KS3</b>	42%	52%	6%	0%	0%
<b>KS4</b>	65%	35%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Whole school</b>	50%	46%	4%	0%	0%

61. The percentage of lessons where teaching and assessment were awarded grades one or two is significantly higher than that from all secondary schools inspected in Wales in 2007-2008, as reported by the Chief Inspector. There are outstanding features in a half of lessons. This is nearly three times greater than the national figure of 17%. No lessons were awarded a grade below grade three and very few were awarded this grade. These are highly impressive figures which illustrate teaching and assessment of excellent and consistent quality across the school.
62. In the six subjects inspected, teaching has outstanding features in English, design and technology and physical education at both key stages. Teaching also has outstanding features in history and science at KS4. There are good features and no important shortcomings in teaching in religious education at both key stages, and in history and science at KS3.
63. Although the figures indicate teaching of outstanding quality at both key stages they also show that teaching is better at KS4 than at KS3. This is evident in the greater proportion of KS4 lessons judged to be grade one and in all lessons at KS4 being judged to be grade two or better.
64. There is considerable mutual respect between pupils and staff. Pupils comment very positively about the support they receive from teachers to assist their learning both within and outside of lessons. Learning support assistants work extremely well alongside teachers and are used very effectively to assist pupils. All pupils are treated equally and their views are welcomed and encouraged. This is very successful in promoting a highly conducive atmosphere for learning.

65. Teachers have excellent up-to-date subject knowledge and a very good awareness of the ways in which pupils learn. They share this regularly with their colleagues and this promotes a strong culture of continual professional development. A notable feature in many lessons is the way in which teachers use questions highly interactively to enrich pupils' thinking and communication skills. They take particular care to ensure a skilful match of questions to pupils' needs and a good range of responses from pupils of all abilities.
66. Lessons are planned extremely thoroughly. The consistency of this across the school is outstanding. In nearly all lessons, appropriately challenging objectives are made clear to pupils. Tasks and activities are matched well to the needs of individuals. Lessons are structured well and, in most cases, good attention is paid to consolidating pupils' knowledge and understanding at the end. Homework is usually used well to consolidate and extend learning.
67. In many subjects, teachers make good progress in promoting pupils' bilingual skills. There are bilingual posters in most classrooms. Many of these were designed by pupils themselves. Assemblies also contribute well to promoting the Welsh language through greetings and readings by individual pupils. Pupils are encouraged to make use of incidental Welsh in a minority of lessons and form periods but this is inconsistent across the school and remains an aspect for further development.
68. Pupils' achievements are assessed fairly each half-term in all subjects. There is a consistent format of using grades to judge performance. Achievement is recorded systematically onto a whole-school database. Progress managers oversee the process thoroughly, commending pupils who are achieving well and addressing issues relating to those who perform below expectations.
69. The consistency of marking across subjects is outstanding. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and very thoroughly. Many provide helpful annotations together with exceptionally detailed written feedback that identifies clear aspects for improvement. As a consequence of this, pupils have a very good awareness of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
70. Assessment is used extremely well to promote learning. A very notable feature of this is the extent to which pupils assess regularly their own performance and that of their peers. This is embedded firmly in most subjects and impacts significantly on the standards they achieve.
71. Virtually all subjects have well-established procedures with partner primary schools to ensure continuity of experience for pupils. These have been, and continue to be, helpful in strengthening teacher assessments at the end of KS2. In nearly all subjects teachers work very closely together to monitor the accuracy of their NC assessments throughout KS3.
72. Statutory requirements in relation to assessing and reporting on NC subjects are met at KS3. Teachers also meet the regulations of examining boards for subjects at KS4. Many have an excellent knowledge of examination requirements and share this particularly well with pupils to assist them in their examination preparation.

73. Reporting arrangements to parents and carers are good. Progress reports are issued each year and give a brief but helpful oversight of a pupil's achievement in each subject. Annual reports are of a consistent format in all years and across subjects. They are detailed and include useful information on pupils' academic and personal progress. Although subject teachers set targets for improvement, these are often too general and do not indicate clearly enough what a pupil needs to do to improve in the subject itself.

**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**

74. This grade matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.
75. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and caters for the needs of all pupils. A wide range of learning experiences is provided for all pupils at both key stages. The school delivers well-structured programmes designed to enable each pupil to achieve their maximum academic and social potential. All subjects of the NC are taught to the pupils as well as appropriate vocational courses at KS4. However, the time allocated to religious education at KS4 is barely sufficient to meet course requirements.
76. A wide range of option menus provides appropriate Learning Pathways (14-19) for pupils. Combinations of subjects and vocational courses are negotiated for each pupil at the beginning of KS4. The school has considerable successful experience in this field. It works well with other LEA partners to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. All courses are accredited and afford progression for further study. Learning Coaches provide effective support and guidance to pupils.
77. All subject departments plan well to include aspects of key skills within their schemes of work. The development of key skills features in every lesson. Particular emphasis is placed on developing communication skills. This has succeeded in enhancing pupils' confidence and self-esteem and is an outstanding feature. The use of ICT and numeracy has developed greatly since the last inspection. Key skills are co-ordinated well and provide a suitable framework to support pupils' learning effectively.
78. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities which enhance greatly pupils' learning experiences. All activities are supported well and make a major contribution to the academic and social well-being of the pupils. Older pupils are encouraged and empowered to help younger and primary school pupils in learning and sporting activities. This is an outstanding feature.
79. The provision of PSE is very good with strong emphasis placed on promoting pupils' personal, moral and social development. The school ethos is based upon equality of opportunity and consideration of the needs of others. The outstanding behaviour of pupils indicates that they have a strong understanding of honesty, fairness and respect for others. This is a feature of the school which permeates all relationships and actions.

80. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are met. Pupils are encouraged to participate actively in assemblies. These experiences contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
81. Curricular links with partner primary schools are outstanding. Dialogue about transition has developed over many years and is clearly designed to assist the progress of each pupil. All partners in the transition processes participate fully. Arrangements are exemplary. Arrangements of similar quality are in place for transfers to colleges of Further Education (FE) in the North Swansea consortium.
82. A number of employers in the community provide good work-experience placements. They help pupils establish good working practices and habits. Work-related topics feature in the PSE programme with valuable support from Careers Wales. There are outstanding links with the community, local businesses and outside agencies.
83. The school promotes pupils' bilingual skills and their knowledge of the culture of Wales. Bilingual signs and greetings, the successful well-established annual Eisteddfod and regular visits to Cardiff Urdd Centre and Glanllyn raise awareness of the Welsh language. However, for a few pupils at KS4, insufficient time is provided for the short course in Welsh second language.
84. The school tackles social disadvantage and stereotyping in a very positive way. Teaching and support programmes encourage all pupils to succeed in their studies and develop into valued community members. There is a strong emphasis on developing skills to equip pupils for lifelong learning.
85. Pupils show good levels of understanding and awareness of sustainable development. They understand the significance of recycling and the importance of healthy-eating initiatives. An active and enthusiastic school ECO group has made great strides in recent years in raising whole-school awareness of global citizenship.
86. Pupils' entrepreneurial skills are developed very well through a number of activities. Problem-solving and decision-making skills are promoted very well throughout the curriculum, particularly at KS4. Pupils' teamwork is outstanding.

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

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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87. This grade matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.
88. The quality of care, guidance and support is a significant strength and has many outstanding features. Care provision is managed and planned well through a structured "affective" system. This is well-established and focused on individual pupils. Sensitive intervention and support strategies ensure every pupil is valued and treated equally. Individual pastoral issues are reviewed in fortnightly meetings of the pastoral team. This is an outstanding feature.

89. There are positive and strong links with parents. Parents are consulted through an active Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) on school issues and policies. They support and are involved in both extra-curricular activities and curricular initiatives.
90. Pupils feel valued and are involved effectively in making decisions on issues that concern them. The school council has a very high profile. Its members respond well to opportunities to exercise responsibility and develop initiative. They are involved in delivering school improvement initiatives and in evaluating and monitoring PSE modules. This involvement is outstanding.
91. Transition procedures and arrangements are well established. Planned pastoral links contribute well to helping new pupils settle in smoothly. A 'buddy support' system contributes towards positive experiences for new pupils. The induction programme, spread over a whole week, is an outstanding feature. It has been identified by Estyn and SWAMWAC (South Wales and Mid-Wales Consortium) as exemplary practice.
92. A structured programme of advice is provided for pupils when they make choices at the end of KS3 and KS4. This is reinforced by regular impartial advice from Careers Wales. The Learning Pathways co-ordinator supports form tutors and progress managers in advising pupils on option menus, including individual and alternate pathways. Two staff members receive learning coach training and disseminate good practice to other members of staff, including LSAs.
93. Personal support of high quality meets the needs of all pupils, particularly those with social and emotional difficulties, and is a significant strength. Well co-ordinated intervention strategies are carefully planned to meet individual needs. Nurture groups, social communication skills group and family group conferencing provide sensitive and personal support. Specialist agencies reinforce this strategy well.
94. Personal development is reinforced by a carefully-planned and relevant PSE programme. This is managed well by progress managers and delivered by enthusiastic form tutors. This is an outstanding feature. The programme takes full account of the PSE Framework.
95. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is rigorous. Very close monitoring by the attendance officer and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) has impacted significantly on raising attendance rates across the school. The systematic, selective use of rewards and sanctions has had a positive effect. Good links with progress managers reinforce these strategies. The great majority of pupils are fully aware of school policies on attendance, punctuality and behaviour.
96. Progress across the whole school is monitored effectively using grades awarded each half-term. Progress managers pursue actively underachieving pupils and use intervention and improvement strategies well. The success of these strategies is evaluated effectively in the autumn review of standards.
97. The school's very strong partnership with Careers Wales has helped pupils become actively involved in well-planned programmes of career activities at both key stages. New initiatives such as "Activating Attitudes" enable pupils to prepare well for the

world of work. School-based careers advice, strong links with Gorseinon College and local employers' contributions ensure maximum benefit for individual pupils.

98. The 'Healthy and Active Lifestyle' policy encourages pupils to make informed choices to improve their well-being by adopting a healthy diet and participating in physical activities. Cross-curricular topics, extra-curricular activities and healthy-eating opportunities contribute effectively to the promotion of a healthier lifestyle.
99. The school's child protection policy and procedures are well known to all members of staff. Recent updated training in the identification and referral of child abuse has been provided by LEA and health officers for all staff and governors.
100. There are outstanding features in the quality of provision for pupils with ALN. Very good links with partner primary schools, documentation of good quality and effective planning support a smooth transfer. Pupils with ALN have full access to the curriculum at both key stages. They are taught alongside their peers for the majority of their lessons. Curricular experiences are matched to individual needs and ability. Pupils with ALN are challenged to fulfil their potential and they make very good progress.
101. Pupils in smaller teaching groups for English and mathematics make good progress. The pupil-teacher relationship is a significant strength in these groups. Identified pupils receive carefully planned and structured literacy and numeracy support on a rolling withdrawal programme. These pupils make steady progress and are able to transfer their skills to the mainstream setting.
102. A dedicated team of LSAs provides effective sensitive support in mainstream classes. They work closely with subject teachers and regularly monitor and review all IEPs. They have been trained as learning coaches. This is an outstanding feature. Individual needs are reflected well in IEPs. Records of IEPs are stored on the SIMS (School Information Management System) network and copies are available for all members of staff. However, there are inconsistencies in the use of IEPs for lesson planning and the monitoring of the use of IEPs is underdeveloped.
103. Statutory requirements are met. Statements of ALN are reviewed effectively. The SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) ensures involvement of an LSA with knowledge of the pupil and uses progress reports from subject departments. Effective use is made of LEA support services. They are represented at annual reviews as needed. The SENCO provides very good leadership and well-organised management.
104. The STF provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is an outstanding feature. This purpose-built provision is very successful in supporting both their educational and social needs. Pupils progress well in developing their personal and social competency. Their ability to use these skills in context is assessed appropriately and leads to relevant qualifications.
105. The STF has explicit aims and values that promote equality for all pupils. It is fully inclusive. Pupils from the STF integrate appropriately with other pupils. Subject-based projects have enabled other subject departments to work with pupils in the

STF. Successful collaborative planning and cross-curricular inclusive links in English and geography have provided a range of planned relevant learning experiences.

106. There are very good resources in the STF. These include a sensory room, therapy rooms, teaching areas and specialist ICT equipment. The STF is supported well by senior leaders and by the LEA. Former and present pupils of the school provide important support to the progress of pupils in the STF.
107. Teaching and support staff in the STF are dedicated, enthusiastic and experienced. The quality of their teaching and support is a significant strength. It is based on excellent relationships and detailed knowledge of individual needs. They are supported well by a team of therapists, an educational psychologist and sensory support teachers. The STF is managed well and the head of the facility provides very good leadership. The team ethos in the STF is a very strong element in its success.
108. The school provides appropriate support for those pupils with behavioural difficulties who require specialist intervention. Pupils report on minimal disruption to their learning and the standard of behaviour during the inspection was outstanding. The behaviour policy was developed following consultation with both parents and pupils. It is applied consistently and understood by the great majority of pupils.
109. Social inclusion is very high on the school agenda and is an outstanding feature. The school fully recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and acts effectively to ensure all pupils are treated equally. A range of initiatives and strategies, including a project for Looked-After Children (LAC), provides sensitive support for pupils on coursework, career planning and achieving success.
110. An awareness of equality permeates throughout the whole school. Modules at KS4 in CWW and PSE examine effectively stereotyping in the workplace. The relative achievement of boys and girls is analysed in the school's autumn review. All areas of the curriculum are equally accessible to boys and girls.
111. Racial harmony is a recurring theme in the morning "Thought for the Day" and is included in relevant religious education and PSE modules. It is reflected in pupils' respect and understanding of diversity. Pupils support a range of local and national charities including involvement in attempts to save rainforests.
112. The strategies and policies to eliminate oppressive behaviour and bullying are outstanding. The school council plays an important part by designing and implementing anti-bullying strategies. An anti-bullying booklet "Stand Up, Speak Up" and a short film to both pupils and parents highlight effectively the main points of the school's revised policy. Pupils are confident that the school reacts promptly to any allegations of bullying.
113. The equal treatment of disabled pupils is outstanding. The supportive culture ensures all pupils are treated equally. The physical and curricular organisation of the school enables all pupils to have full access to an appropriate and relevant curriculum. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are a natural part of the school community. This ethos is reinforced by a detailed Accessibility Plan and a Disability and Equality Scheme.

## Leadership and management

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

#### Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

114. This grade matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.
115. The headteacher provides the school with outstanding and highly effective leadership. He has clear aims, extensive experience and excellent relationships with pupils, colleagues and governors. His strategic management has succeeded in promoting high attainment. This is particularly evident in pupils' GCSE results.
116. The headteacher receives outstanding support from a very able team of senior leaders, known as the Headship Team. Together, they set a clear direction for the work of the school. They promote its values and ensure that school policies and practice provide equality of opportunity for all members of the school community.
117. Members of the Headship Team have very good links with middle managers. The consistently high quality of middle management is a significant strength of the school and facilitates very good teamwork. Managers at all levels work well together enabling daily routines to operate smoothly.
118. Leaders and managers take appropriate account of the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities. They work well in partnership with other local providers of education and training. The school's involvement in Learning Pathways 14-19 has resulted in it being used by the LEA as a model of good practice.
119. Appropriate arrangements are in place and are used well to set targets for individual staff members and teams. The review each autumn term of the performance of subject departments in external examinations is central to the process of setting targets. These targets are challenging and realistic and have had a significant impact on improving performance and raising standards.
120. As part of the process of managing the performance of individual staff members, professional development needs are identified. An appropriate range of opportunities is provided to address these needs. The planning and co-ordination of professional development are very good and contribute well to improving standards and quality.
121. The GB contributes successfully to the leadership of the school. Its members have a very good range of expertise and relevant experience. They know the school very well and ensure that they are familiar with its work and performance. They also have a clear understanding of their own roles and responsibilities and very good links with the Headship Team.
122. Governors carry out much of their work through a good range of committees. They review and monitor performance thoroughly. Governors help take key strategic decisions, for example in relation to financial management and the appointment of members of staff. They work very well in partnership with the school, providing good support but also acting as critical friends. They fulfil all their legal responsibilities.

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

**Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

123. This grade matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.
124. Self evaluation is embedded very well in all aspects of school life. Leaders and managers have a very clear awareness of their roles and responsibilities. They work extremely well together to reflect continually on performance and share this enthusiastically with others to strive for improvement. This nurtures an excellent team ethos across the school amongst staff and pupils and ensures that all feel a sense of belonging and purpose.
125. Arrangements for self-evaluation are highly systematic and robust. Staff teams write documents of a very high quality which reflect purposefully on standards, learning and teaching. There is excellent use of first-hand evidence from scrutiny of pupils' performances and regular observations of teaching. The consistency of this across the school is outstanding.
126. The whole-school self-evaluation document is very detailed and links well with those from subject and aspect teams. It uses the Common Inspection Framework constructively to analyse all aspects of performance. Inspectors agree with the accuracy of its judgements in all key questions.
127. Pupils play a significant role in self-evaluation. They are encouraged to evaluate both their own performances and the learning experiences offered to them in many subjects. For example, they evaluate PSE modules continually and this has contributed to improvements to this programme. This is outstanding in terms of the impact it makes on their learning.
128. There is a thriving and well-established school council and also year councils. They work very productively together to represent the views of all pupils. They have made and continue to make improvements in the quality of school life. For example, they have been involved actively in promoting healthy eating, increasing pupils' awareness of bilingualism through constructing their own posters, and in producing anti-bullying brochures. Overall, pupils speak very enthusiastically about the opportunities given to them to voice their own opinions. This makes them feel valued and respected by all staff members.
129. There are a number of active working parties which involve both staff and pupils. They provide an excellent vehicle for reflecting continually on aspects of learning and teaching and in identifying areas for further development. They take due account of the views of parents in producing action plans to move the school forward.
130. Regular reviews are used very well to scrutinise performance in subjects and other aspects of the school's work. In a number of instances, external consultants have been involved to help give the school a broader perception of its work. The reviews are extremely thorough and play a vital part in providing objective evidence of the school's performance.

131. The outcomes from self-evaluation are used very well to plan for improvement and the consistency of this across the school is outstanding. Teams produce very detailed action plans of excellent quality that reflect well those of the whole school. Priorities for improvement are identified clearly with appropriate consideration given to time scales and resource costs. The Headship Team, working closely with the GB, ensures that, wherever appropriate, resources are allocated effectively to support priorities for development.
132. Targets for improvement nearly always focus well on improving standards, learning and teaching. There has been a strong focus on key skills which has contributed to significant improvements in both their use in lessons and in the standards achieved in them by pupils. Key skills feature prominently in all subject development plans and in whole-school planning.
133. Occasionally targets for improvement from subjects are not specific enough to be easily measurable. In these cases, they tend to be too broad and not related sufficiently to the subject itself.
134. Progress since the last inspection has been outstanding. Three of the six subjects inspected have maintained the high standards recorded in the last report and the other three have improved upon them at KS4. There have also been significant improvements in pupils' standards in key skills and striking improvements in the quality of teaching.
135. The school has made significant developments in addressing the key issues for action from the last inspection report. All issues have now been dealt with very successfully.

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

<b>Grade 1: Good with outstanding features</b>
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136. The grade matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.
137. The school is staffed well. The number of teachers is sufficient for the school to run efficiently and to enable the curriculum to be taught very effectively. Teachers are deployed appropriately. Nearly all teach their specialist subject.
138. Teachers and support staff are well-qualified, knowledgeable and experienced with a good balance of the very experienced and those relatively new to the profession. Together they are well matched to the school's identified needs.
139. The total number of teachers employed by the school is relatively generous, resulting in a favourable pupil-to-teacher ratio and a very low contact ratio. Average teaching group size is larger than LEA or national averages. Teachers' non-contact time is managed well to support and enrich provision. Much cover for absent teachers is provided internally by two permanent members of staff, ensuring greater continuity in teaching.

140. The LSAs work effectively and efficiently in activities that support and enhance targeted pupils' learning. The deployment of LSAs is planned and co-ordinated well. The EWO, who is based on-site, provides effective support.
141. The deployment of the small team of technical staff is appropriate. Its members provide very good support to their designated departments. Members of the contract catering staff provide a good service in the school restaurant.
142. The resource manager and members of the dedicated, competent and highly motivated administrative staff work closely together. They enable routine support work to function effectively. Caretaking and cleaning staff contribute very well to the maintenance of the school, keeping buildings and grounds free of litter and exceptionally clean and tidy. All staff members display commitment to the school and its aims and values. Staff teamwork is outstanding.
143. Statutory obligations for workload remodelling are fully met. Teachers are allocated appropriate time and resources for planning, preparation and assessment. These arrangements are well-established and time is used appropriately. The workforce restructuring proposals have been sensitively developed, agreed and embedded in the staffing structure.
144. Buildings and grounds provide a stimulating and conducive environment for good teaching and learning. Arrangements for site security are good. Overall, the school's accommodation has many good features and provides a stimulating learning environment. The provision of classrooms and specialised rooms is sufficient to meet the needs of the number of pupils on roll. Teaching rooms, of nearly all subjects, are clustered together enabling efficient use of departmental resources.
145. Colourful displays, prominently located in classrooms and communal areas include many examples of pupils' work and celebrate their achievements. The pupils' toilets have been redecorated recently to pupils' own designs.
146. The accommodation, however, has a few shortcomings. These include narrow corridors, worn floor tiles in corridors and damaged and broken ceiling tiles. A few classrooms are small for the numbers in some of the classes that use them. There remains a risk of the school suffering flood damage again.
147. With the exception of the two first-floor rooms in the mathematics block and the stage in the main hall, the school is fully compliant with the requirements of the Disabilities Discrimination Act. The provision for those with disabilities, including access to nearly all parts of the school and the specialised facilities, is very good. Overall, the resource provision for pupils with ALN is good. The accommodation and learning resources for pupils in the STF are outstanding.
148. Overall, learning resources, including specialist equipment in nearly all subjects, are very good. Each department operates within its allocated budget and is provided with a monthly balance sheet in order to monitor closely its expenditure. The school makes very good use of a wide range of external resources to enrich the curriculum and enhance learning.

149. Interactive whiteboards and digital projectors are available in every classroom. The extensive investment in computers and other ICT equipment throughout the school, including three fully-equipped ICT suites, a portable laptop facility and smaller departmental suites is outstanding. This has helped many teachers develop innovative teaching and learning techniques.
150. The learning resource centre is spacious and well stocked with a wide variety of good quality fiction and reference books and a small suite of computers. It is readily accessible to pupils at break times, lunch times and after school for study and research, providing additional learning opportunities.
151. There are many good and several outstanding features in the way in which the school manages its resources. Systematic and rigorous procedures are used to ensure cost-effectiveness for all expenditure. These procedures are regarded by the LEA as exemplary. Arrangements for financial resource management are outstanding. Senior leaders, including the resource manager and the governors' finance committee, monitor expenditure in minute detail to ensure cost-effectiveness is achieved. They ensure that short and longer-term spending decisions are linked meticulously to the priorities for development set out in the SEDP.
152. The school manages its budget very prudently and retains a very small contingency reserve for unforeseen circumstances and future projects. The relatively high staffing costs and low budget reserves have had no significant negative impact on the provision of learning resources. The most recent internal audit recognised the school's good practice in financial management and control. The recommendations have been addressed suitably.
153. The additional financial support frequently given to the school by the PTA is very good. This additional funding is used well to enhance learning opportunities for all pupils.
154. The school provides excellent support and guidance for trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers. Early professional development is very well structured and formalised. The personalised continued professional development is totally inclusive, carefully planned and co-ordinated very well. Every member of staff has a job description and is personally involved in annual appraisal procedures. Overall, the provision for staff appraisal, development and training is outstanding.
155. Considering the high standards pupils achieve and the quality of teaching and support provided, the school manages its available resources prudently and extremely effectively to give very good value for money.

## Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

### English

**KS3 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**KS4 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

#### KS3

##### Outstanding features

156. Nearly all pupils display exceptionally well-developed listening skills. They listen with respect to their teachers and to each other. They absorb information and respond to instructions. They are able to apply what they have heard to enhance significantly their learning in a range of situations including the writing of their own myths and non-literary texts.
157. Many pupils consistently produce very confident and sustained writing across a wide and challenging range of formats including persuasive writing and analysis of literary characters. It is often produced by very careful planning and highly effective drafting.

##### Good features

158. The majority of pupils speak confidently in lessons. Most adapt what they say well to the needs of the listener. Nearly all pupils proffer opinions. Around half of the pupils present ideas. The most able justify opinions and, in a few cases, hypothesize.
159. All pupils read an appropriately challenging range of fiction, poetry and drama, including texts which reflect the culture of Wales. They identify key features, themes and characters. They demonstrate an increasing ability to explore texts for implicit as well as explicit meanings. Pupils with reading difficulties are well supported in developing their skills and make good progress.
160. All pupils at KS3 write with enthusiasm and commitment in a range of format, style and register. Only very rarely is written work spoilt by technical inaccuracies. Pupils mostly demonstrate a good grasp of the technical skills of writing that is at least in line with their levels of ability.
161. Pupils with ALN make good progress.

##### Shortcomings

162. On a very few occasions a small number of pupils remain passive and are overly reliant upon the teacher and their peers.

#### KS4

163. Examination results in English at GCSE in the last two years have been well above national and LEA averages for passes at grades A\* to C. Passes at grades A\* and A

have been significantly above LEA and national averages. Passes at A\* to G grades have been close to those averages. These results represent very good achievement.

### **Outstanding features**

164. Many pupils across the ability range involve themselves fully in a range of group and class discussions demonstrating maturity and purpose. They make significant contributions to discussion on characters from texts such as 'Stone Cold', the decoding of non-literary texts and analysing effective openings to their own writing.
165. Most pupils are prolific writers with an excellent sense of audience and purpose. Their writing demonstrates maturity of expression and understanding, fluency and technical accuracy. It is lively and engaging and is often the product of very careful drafting and rigorous self-assessment.

### **Good features**

166. Most pupils are aware of the importance of speaking and listening to their examination performance and to their continued learning in general. They listen attentively and respond appropriately. They speak clearly and confidently when answering questions. More able pupils, in response to open-ended questioning, present their replies in an articulate and cogent manner.
167. Standards of reading are good. Many pupils demonstrate perceptive and often mature understanding of a good range of appropriately challenging texts including works by Plath, Heaney, Wells, Stoker and Shakespeare.
168. Nearly all pupils have a sound knowledge of characters, plots and themes. Many pupils demonstrate an ability to read inferentially and have the technical vocabulary to comment accurately upon the effect of stylistic choices.
169. The majority of pupils' work in their GCSE folders is of a high quality. Most pupils, including the less able, achieve good standards.

### **Shortcomings**

170. There are no significant shortcomings.

<b>Science</b>
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**KS3 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**KS4 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**KS3**

### **Good features**

171. Many pupils across the ability range possess a sound knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics.

172. A majority of pupils recall and use concepts well to solve a range of scientific problems in familiar and unfamiliar situations.
173. A majority of pupils are developing good investigational skills. They appreciate the importance of different variables and how they can influence their results.
174. A majority of pupils in Y7 apply different skills successfully in practical tasks and problem-solving exercises.
175. The majority of pupils possess a good understanding of some of the scientific principles considered in areas such as the transfer of energy, reactivity of metals and aspects of healthy life-styles.
176. Pupils with ALN make sound progress relative to their ability.

### **Shortcomings**

177. A small minority of pupils has a less secure recall and understanding of current and previous work.
178. A few pupils do not complete all homework tasks.

### **KS4**

179. Examination results in science at GCSE in the last two years have been above local and national averages for passes at grades A\* to C. They were slightly above these indicators in 2007, and significantly above them in 2008. These results represent very good achievement for pupils in 2008.

### **Outstanding features**

180. Many pupils across the ability range have a very secure understanding of a range of complex scientific principles across a range of topics.
181. Many pupils have a very good recall of previous work and apply their knowledge very well to a wide range of tasks, problems and applications of science.

### **Good features**

182. A majority of pupils develop a sound understanding of the contribution that science makes to industrial processes, the economy, ethical issues and sustainable development.
183. Many pupils undertake practical work confidently, work well together and record results with good precision. They analyse their results with appropriate graphs and well-structured conclusions.
184. A good majority completes investigational work to a good standard. A minority complete Investigative Skills Assignments (ISA) to a very high standard.

185. Pupils with ALN make good progress in the course that they are following.

### **Shortcomings**

186. A few pupils do not complete ISAs to the standard of other course components.

<b>Design and technology</b>
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**KS3    Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**KS4    Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### **KS3**

#### **Outstanding features**

187. Nearly all pupils have an outstanding knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the design process in the different areas of study. Throughout this key stage they follow this process systematically to make a wide range of interesting and often colourful products in a variety of materials.

188. In evaluating their work, nearly all pupils list their original specification points and evaluate their final product against each point. They identify and explain which skills they need to improve and suggest improvements to their final product.

189. By the end of the key stage many pupils achieve at least level five in teacher assessments. Overall many pupils demonstrate very high standards of attainment.

#### **Good features**

190. Most pupils plan well for the making stage of their work. They demonstrate good understanding of materials and components used.

191. Pupils in Y8 have an understanding of basic electronics and the purpose of each component used. They solder electronic components, design and make a casing for their moisture sensor.

192. Nearly all pupils apply health and safety measures sensibly in all areas. They consider the needs of their peers, and take care when using tools, equipment and materials or ingredients.

193. Lower ability pupils and those with ALN make very good progress and produce outcomes of a good standard.

### **Shortcomings**

194. The presentation of work is untidy in a few folios at the lower end of the ability range.

## **KS4**

195. Examination results in product design and home economics at GCSE have been well above local and national figures for passes at A\* to C grades. The number of A\* and A grades in product design has been above local and national averages. These grades represent very good achievement for these pupils.

### **Outstanding features**

196. The quality of folios and products produced by pupils for GCSE graphic products is very high. Examples include the CD rack, CD cover, packaged board game and the coaster set created using computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacture (CAM).
197. Many pupils display outstanding standards in their use of ICT to communicate and handle information, for example, in the research section of the GCSE projects in product design and home economics.
198. The drawing and annotation work includes orthographic drawing of a very good standard and there are examples of high quality work in product design folios, for example, the design development of the CD rack.
199. Many pupils reflect critically on their work throughout the project. They annotate their sketches and drawings clearly, and explain their reasons for developing their ideas to a final design.

### **Good features**

200. Many pupils make suitable use of ICT skills to present information and data. They investigate and gather information using the internet and design and make using the computer, including extensive and appropriate use of two-dimensional and three-dimensional design software. Digital cameras are used extensively to record the various stages of making and photograph final products.
201. Nearly all pupils show enthusiasm about their work, readily contribute to lessons by asking and answering questions, are willing to use the interactive white board, work well in groups and discuss appropriately with their peers.
202. Pupils with ALN make very good progress and achieve well.

### **Shortcomings**

203. There are no significant shortcomings.

## History

**KS3 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**KS4 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

### KS3

#### Good features

- 204. A majority of pupils demonstrate their understanding of chronology and organise events in correct chronological order.
- 205. A majority of pupils show progress in developing knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to their age and ability.
- 206. In Y7 a majority of pupils, with support, write an extended response to a historical question. By Y9 they do this with increasing confidence and independence.
- 207. Many pupils use historical sources to extract information and draw conclusions.
- 208. Most pupils understand that the past can be interpreted and represented in different ways.
- 209. Pupils in Y7 create their own visual representations of a castle based on a written description. Pupils in Y8 consider different interpretations of the Gunpowder Plot and most pupils accurately identify facts that might support each interpretation. Most give their own judgement with reasons.

#### Shortcomings

- 210. A small minority of pupils fail to complete tasks.
- 211. A small minority of pupils are unable to organise and evaluate information in order to answer a question.

### KS4

- 212. Examination results in history at GCSE in 2007 were above local and national averages for passes at grades A\* to C and A\* and A. Results in 2008 were slightly below local and national averages but in line with pupils' ability in all but a few instances.

#### Outstanding features

- 213. Pupils' assessment of their own work and of others and their identification of ways to improve their performance in history is outstanding.
- 214. All pupils write well-structured responses displaying their knowledge and understanding of historical topics. Many responses are outstanding.

### **Good features**

215. Nearly all pupils display good skills in selecting relevant information in their use of evidence. They identify key messages and use these to answer key questions.
216. Many pupils assess sources for reliability and usefulness. During a task about propaganda in Nazi Germany pupils study and analyse a series of sources, identify conflicting messages and suggest reasons for these. They make links between ideas in the sources and modern ideas.
217. Nearly all pupils apply prior learning to questions and have good chronological awareness. Pupils use information from earlier lessons on the history of surgery and new information from sources about anaesthesia to answer a question about the importance of anaesthesia. All pupils produce well-written structured responses with developments organised chronologically.
218. Many pupils undertake independent research and report their findings clearly. Pupils make effective use of a variety of research materials including ICT.

### **Shortcomings**

219. There are no significant shortcomings.

<b>Physical education</b>
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**KS3 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

**KS4 Grade 1: Good with outstanding features**

220. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities. There has been a positive impact of the 5/60 scheme and the Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) initiative in the school. Many pupils have both enjoyed, and participated in, a range of new activities. Standards in extra-curricular activities are good, and often excellent, for both individual performers and school teams. A number of pupils and teams reach the highest standards at county, national and international level. The school is justifiably proud of these achievements.

### **KS3**

#### **Outstanding features**

221. In creative activities, pupils' work in gymnastics is exceptional. Pupils are able to demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge and understanding in movement requirements. Technical execution of balance positions, either as individuals, or with a partner, is of a very high standard.
222. In competitive activities, pupils perform rugby football skills to an excellent level. Pupils' passing, receiving, and support play is particularly good. Footwork skills and tactical awareness are also very good.

223. In health, fitness and well-being activities, pupils are able to sustain high intensity, variable speed running, for long periods. Pupils' understanding of health, fitness and well-being is very good. Individuals participate enthusiastically in challenging fitness exercises, monitor the resulting physiological changes, and then discuss the effect of activities on their personal fitness.
224. Pupils with ALN, work exceptionally well in activities which promote health and physical skills. Their personal and social development is outstanding.
225. Pupils respond extremely well to a variety of challenges, carefully designed to enhance their movement and co-ordination skills.

### **Good features**

226. Pupils show good standards in planning their own work, performing complex skills with confidence and evaluating their own work and the work of others.
227. In competitive activities, pupils demonstrate good standards in badminton skills. They are able to sustain rallies, perform a range of effective shots and score matches competently.
228. Pupils understand and implement safe and approved practice in physical education. They observe this practice for their own safety and the safety of others.

### **Shortcomings**

229. The physical condition of a few pupils restricts their levels of achievement.
230. The acquisition of fine motor skills is underdeveloped in very few pupils.

### **KS4**

231. Examination results in physical education at GCSE in the past two years have been excellent. Results are above both local and national averages for passes at A\* to C grades. These results represent very good achievement for these pupils.

### **Outstanding features**

232. Pupils' work in health, fitness and well-being activities is outstanding. Pupils analyse complex training methods and plan their own exercise schedules effectively. Knowledge of interval training, rest and recovery and the importance of diet in relation to performance are extremely good. Pupils are able to sustain demanding training activities, monitor their own pulse and then confidently debate the effects with their peers.
233. In theory lessons, pupils demonstrate considerable knowledge and understanding in the various concepts and methods used in physical conditioning. Using the knowledge gained, pupils lead whole-class warm-up activities with confidence, plan exercise circuits effectively and critically analyse physical and psychological responses to various activities

### **Good features**

234. Pupils demonstrate very good standards in planning, performing and evaluating their own work and the work of others.
235. Pupils' participation in fitness activities that develop strength, endurance and flexibility is very good. Pupils sustain activity with correct technique, and understand the importance of rest and recovery time.
236. The majority of pupils following the GCSE examination course demonstrate very good levels of knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content. Pupils are confident and knowledgeable when discussing muscle groups and how they work together when performing certain movements. Pupils debate and reach agreement about how certain methods of training are effective, and the correct amount of recovery time required for athletes.
237. Pupils understand and implement safe and approved practice in physical education. They observe this practice for their own safety and the safety of others.

### **Shortcomings**

238. The physical condition of a few pupils restricts their levels of achievement.
239. The acquisition of fine motor skills is underdeveloped in a few pupils.

<b>Religious education (including religious studies)</b>
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**KS3 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

**KS4 Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

### **KS3**

#### **Good features**

240. Most pupils, including those with ALN, make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and other major faiths.
241. In their study of leaders, all pupils understand the importance of leadership and explore effectively the qualities necessary to be a good leader. In the context of Christianity, all pupils appreciate the inspiration provided by Mother Teresa and the impact her life has had on others.
242. In the context of Buddhism and the early experiences of the Buddha, most pupils understand how personal faith and belief affect the way in which people choose to live.

243. Most pupils identify successfully the main features of the synagogue and the church. They use terminology accurately and understand the purpose and significance of the features and their importance for those who worship there.
244. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the symbolic nature of some of the items which are used in worship in the synagogue and church or are features of the building. In their group discussions they express their views confidently about the most important aspects of life and worship in Christian and Jewish faith communities.
245. In their study of racism and prejudice, most pupils have a sound understanding of the impact of Christian beliefs and values on events in the civil rights movement. They are able to empathise with the feelings of Rosa Parks, express their response to her actions and express their opinions about the Christian teaching about non-violence.

### **Shortcomings**

246. A few pupils have an insecure understanding of the use of symbolism in the synagogue and the church.
247. A few pupils are unable to recognise the link between believers' faith and behaviour.

### **KS4**

#### **Good features**

248. Most pupils, including those with ALN, are developing well their ability to engage with a number of fundamental questions. They explore the religious teachings and practices which inform their understanding and express their personal responses in a variety of ways.
249. All pupils show a clear understanding of the principles of a just war, are able to analyse their implications and recognise the Christian origins of the theory. In skilful computerised presentations many pupils creatively portray their investigation of Christian attitudes to war and violence.
250. Most pupils express their views confidently about the principles of a just war. They are able to give reasons for those views while appreciating the opinions of others. Many evaluate the usefulness of the theory in today's political and religious climate.
251. Most pupils, through their study of religion and the media, investigate and explore successfully how aspects of religious practice and belief are portrayed in television, film and art. They identify issues, for example, of stereotyping, sexism and hypocrisy as well as moral and social dilemmas. They succeed in analysing and interpreting the portrayals and relating them to a range of religious attitudes and viewpoints.

### **Shortcomings**

252. A small minority of pupils find it difficult to organise and express their views about the fundamental questions being discussed.

## **Religious studies**

### **KS4      Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings**

253. Examination results in religious studies at GCSE in 2007 were below local and national averages for passes at A\* to C grades. However, a considerable improvement in 2008 meant that passes were well above local and national averages, and these results represent very good achievement for these pupils.

#### **Good features**

254. In their studies at GCSE all pupils are making good progress in developing their understanding of Christian beliefs and values, and in appreciating religious responses to a number of moral issues.

255. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the concept of the sanctity of life and its relevance to thinking about the moral issues surrounding abortion. They recognise that there are different views within Christianity that are linked to different church traditions. Most pupils successfully identify how believers within these traditions would respond to the various situations in which people might consider abortion.

256. Most pupils are developing the skills necessary to explore and respond to sensitive moral issues and are able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the arguments brought forward. They are also developing well their ability to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and express their own opinions and attitudes.

257. When considering Christian teaching about the planet and creation, most pupils have substantial insight into environmental problems and their causes. They discuss with confidence such issues as the greenhouse effect and deforestation and are aware of the impact upon the environment.

258. Most pupils understand the concept of stewardship as it is represented in a number of Christian denominations and recognise the implications for belief and practice. They identify and evaluate a range of actions in which Christian believers and others can act as stewards of the planet.

#### **Shortcomings**

259. A few pupils find difficulty in linking religious concepts to people's lifestyles.

## School's response to the inspection

260. The pupils, staff and governors of Pontarddulais Comprehensive are delighted that the inspection report confirms Pontarddulais as a very good school with many outstanding features. The report awards the school the highest grade in each of the seven key areas of performance and recognises the very good progress and significant improvement since the last inspection. The report identifies standards of pupils' achievement, quality of education and leadership and management as cornerstones of the school's success. We would wish to recognise the hard work of staff, guidance given by the GB and the support and interest of parents, all of which contributes so much to the success of our pupils.
261. We are particularly pleased that the report recognises the excellent relationship which exists between staff and pupils. This relationship creates an ethos of mutual respect which impacts positively on high expectations of staff and pupils. The report consistently praises the positive attitudes of our pupils towards their education. We are heartened by the positive comments about the behaviour and courtesy of our pupils and their contribution to and enthusiasm for the range of activities they are engaged in within school.
262. The school's focus on teaching, learning and standards is positively reflected within the report. The exceptionally high grades awarded for standards and teaching within lessons reflect the high quality of education provided for pupils of all ages and ability. The support and guidance provided for learners is judged to be outstanding. This reflects the strong emphasis we place on meeting individual needs and on providing timely and effective support wherever it is required.
263. The report recognises that our curriculum enables each child to achieve their maximum academic and social potential. It consistently praises the school's social inclusion activities. This outstanding feature is exemplified by the work of the school council and the success of the STF. Inspectors recognise the collective, supportive ethos of the school which allows each pupil to feel valued and part of the school community.
264. Pontarddulais Comprehensive would wish to thank the Registered Inspector and his team for the professional manner in which they conducted the inspection. The school is proud of the achievements recorded in this report, welcomes the recommendations and looks forward to continually improving the quality of provision available to our pupils. Copies of our school improvements plan will be made available to parents and the governors' annual report to parents will outline the progress we are making in respect of the inspectors' recommendations.

## Appendix 1

### Basic information about the school

Name of school	Pontarddulais Comprehensive School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-16
Address of school	Caecerrig Road, Pontarddulais Swansea
Postcode	SA4 8PD
Telephone number	01792 884556

Headteacher	Mr John Radford
Date of appointment	1 <sup>st</sup> March 1994
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority	Mr Haydn Beynon
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Carter
Dates of inspection	9 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2009

## Appendix 2

### School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y100 00	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	161	160	142	150	153	-	-	766

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	44	8	49.07

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.6 : 1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	
Average teaching group size	25.5
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	61.2%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	92.4	91.2	93.1	92.7	97.3	-	-	93.4
Term 2	93	92	94	92	91	-	-	92
Term 3	95	92	93	91	94	-	-	93

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	15.2%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	26 (temporary) 4 (permanent)

## Appendix 3

### National Curriculum assessment results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008															
Total number of pupils in Y9: 151															
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	2.6	-	0.0	0.0	0.7	7.9	12.6	47.7	20.5	7.9	0.0	0.0
		National	0.1	0.6	-	0.5	0.4	1.5	6.1	21.3	37.1	24.2	7.9	0.3	-
Mathematics	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	2.6	-	0.0	0.0	1.3	6.6	15.2	23.2	31.1	19.9	0.0	0.0
		National	0.1	0.5	-	0.5	0.4	1.3	6.7	18.1	28.9	27.5	14.8	1.2	0.1
Science	Teacher Assessment	School	0.0	2.6	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	16.6	35.8	33.1	6.0	0.0	0.0
		National	0.1	0.6	-	0.5	0.2	0.7	5.1	19.0	35.6	27.2	10.8	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		by test	
In the school	67.5	In the school	
In Wales	59.6	In Wales	

**Public examination results:**

**PONTARDDULAIS COMPREHENSIVE**

**SSSP**

**Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)**

LEA/School No. 670/4072

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**Pupils aged 15**

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**Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 160**

**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	98	84	69	63	61	347
LEA Area 2007/08	98	87	58	50	49	343
Wales 2007/08	98	87	58	46	44	356
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	21	321
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	46	304

**Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 84**

**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	96	82	62	54	55	324
LEA Area 2007/08	97	84	53	47	47	321
Wales 2007/08	98	84	53	42	41	334
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	19	307
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	45	297

**Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 76**

**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	87	76	72	68	373
LEA Area 2007/08	98	89	63	54	52	365
Wales 2007/08	99	90	63	50	48	379
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	22	334
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	48	311

**PONTARDDULAIS COMPREHENSIVE**

**SSSP**

**Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)**

LEA/School No. 670/4072

**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	4.4	0	6	0	2.6	0
LEA Area 2007/08	2.4	2.7	3.2	3	1.7	2.4
Wales 2007/08	2.6	1.5	3.4	1.9	1.7	1.2
School 06/07/08	2.7	..	2.9	..	2.5	..
School 05/06/07	3.2	..	3.9	..	2.5	..

**Pupils aged 17**

	Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 0		Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 0		Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 0	
	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
School 2007/08	0	0	0	0	0	0
LEA Area 2007/08	93	569	93	520	94	618
Wales 2007/08	94	631	93	596	95	659
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	..	..
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	..	..

# SSSP

**PONTARDDULAIS COMPREHENSIVE**  
**School Type: Secondary**  
**Linguistic Delivery: Bilingual or English**

LEA/School No. 670/4072

**Number of SEN Unit/Special Classes: 2**

**Number of Pupils on Roll in NCY 11: 160**

**Percentage of compulsory school age pupils eligible for FSM 2007/08: 15.2**

**Percentage of compulsory school age pupils eligible for FSM 06/07/08: 17.6**

**Percentage of compulsory school age pupils on SEN register: 19.8**

**Percentage of 15 year old pupils on SEN register: 12.5**

## **Level of Welsh Baccalaureate offered:**

Post-16 Pupils

Advanced Intermediate Pilot  
Foundation

Pre-16 Pupils

Pilot Pilot  
Intermediate Foundation

**Welsh Baccalaureate Offered: No**

. Data not applicable

.. Data not available

## Appendix 4

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

A team of 13 inspectors, including the school's nominee and a peer assessor spent the equivalent of 48 days in the school. The team held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 78 lessons or part lessons;
- assemblies and registration periods; and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

- staff, parents, carers and governors before the inspection;
- senior leaders, middle managers, teachers, LSAs and administrative staff;
- representatives of the LEA;
- groups of learners from each year group; and
- representatives of the school council.

The inspection team considered:

- the school's self-evaluation report;
- 265 responses from parents and carers to a questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before, and during the inspection;
- samples of reports to parents and carers; and
- samples of pupils' work across the curriculum.

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

## Appendix 5

### Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Peter Carter (Registered Inspector)	KQ1, KQ5, Context Summary, Appendices
David Williams	KQ2, KQ6
Ronald Graham	KQ3
Gwyn Griffiths	KQ4 (including ALN)
Kerry Jones (Lay Inspector)	KQ7
Tony Sparks	English
Glyn Davies	Science
Margaret Griffith-Williams	Design and technology
Suzanne Halliwell	History
Stephen Lloyd	Physical education
Graham Davies	Religious education (including religious studies)
Janet Waldron	School's nominee
Stephen Peers	Peer Assessor

### Acknowledgement

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

### Contractor

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