

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

A Report on the Quality of Education in

**Rhyl High School
Grange Road
Rhyl
Denbighshire
LL18 4BY**

School Number: 6634003

Date of Inspection: 17 November 2008

by

**Edward Aneurin Peter Harris
78673**

Date of Publication: 22 January 2009

Under Estyn contract number: 1200108

© Queens Printer and Controller of HMSO 2009: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The copyright in the material must be acknowledged as aforementioned and the title of the report specified.

Copies of this report are available from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide copies of the report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the cost of reproduction may be made to others requesting a copy of the report.

Rhyl High School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a six-year cycle is also designed to give parents information about the performance of their child's school.

The inspection of Rhyl High School took place between 17/11/08 and 21/11/08. An independent team of inspectors, led by Edward Aneurin Peter Harris undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **Full** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

Contents	Page
Context	1
Summary	2
Recommendations	7
Standards	7
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	7
The quality of education and training	11
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	11
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	13
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	15
Leadership and management	18
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	18
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	20
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	22
Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	23
English	23
Welsh second language	25
Mathematics	26
Science	28
Design technology	30
Information technology	31
Modern foreign languages	33
History	34
Geography	36
Art	38
Music and Performing Arts	39
Physical education	40
Religious education (including religious studies)	42
Business Studies	43
School's response to the inspection	44
Appendices	45
1 Basic information about the school	45
2 School data and indicators	45
3 National Curriculum assessments results	45
4 Evidence base of the inspection	46
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	47

Context

The nature of the provider

1. Rhyl High School is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school situated in the seaside resort of Rhyl, Denbighshire. There are 1024 pupils on roll, of whom 77 are in the sixth form. In 2002, when the school was last inspected, there were 1186 pupils on roll, 103 of whom were in the sixth form.
2. The school occupies a large site which includes a leisure centre. In 2005, a fire destroyed one of the teaching blocks, which has now been rebuilt and refurbished.
3. The school serves an area which is relatively disadvantaged economically. The town attracts a number of transient families. Seventeen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This figure is above the average for the Unitary Authority (UA) but in line with the national average.
4. According to the National Assembly indicators of multiple deprivation, one of the school's catchment areas is one of the most deprived wards in Wales. Though, in contrast, there are zones where there is relative affluence and little unemployment.
5. The attainment of pupils on entry reflects the full range of ability. A very small minority of pupils comes from ethnic backgrounds. The vast majority of pupils comes from homes where English is the first language.
6. Since the time the school was last inspected there have been several changes to the composition and roles of members of the senior leadership team (SLT). The present headteacher has been in post since September 2007. All other members of the SLT were appointed to their present posts before 2002.

The school's priorities and targets

7. The school's main aims are as to:
 - improve pupils' and students' achievement;
 - improve levels of attendance;
 - develop self-confidence and motivation, and
 - prepare pupils for later life.
8. The school's self-evaluation report is based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework (CIF).
9. Numerical targets are set, that in 2009:
 - 50% of pupils should reach at least level 5 in all three subjects combined in national curriculum (NC) assessments at the end of key stage (KS) 3; and
 - 50% of pupils should achieve at least five grades A*-C, and 88% at least five grades A*-G in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination.

Summary

10. In accordance with the School Inspection Act 2005 I am of the opinion, and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.
11. There are important shortcomings in standards, teaching and leadership and management. The school is aware of these shortcomings but has failed to resolve them.
12. As a result, while there have been slight improvements in a minority of subject areas, good practice has not been clearly identified and shared so that the whole school moves forward.

Table of grades awarded

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

13. The grades for key questions 1, 3 and 4 match those of the school in its self-evaluation report. While inspectors identified some good practice in key questions 2, 5, 6 and 7, they awarded grade 4 because of the shortcomings in important areas.

Standards achieved

14. The following table shows the grades awarded at KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form in standards in the following subjects:

Subject	KS3	KS4	Sixth Form
English	3	3	3
Welsh Second language	3	3	3
Mathematics	2	3	2
Science	4	4	3
Information technology	2	3	3
Design technology	3	3	3
Modern foreign languages	2	2	3
Geography	3	3	3
History	3	2	2
Art	2	1	2
Music and performing arts	3	2	2
Physical education	2	4	3
Religious education	2	2	2
Business studies	-	3	3

15. While this table shows that standards in the majority of subjects are broadly in line with those of the previous inspection, it also shows that there are important shortcomings in standards in physical education at KS4 and in science at KS3 and KS4.
16. The following table shows the percentages of grades awarded at each stage.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	1%	37%	51%	10%	1%
KS4	5%	33%	47%	15%	1%
Sixth form	0%	41%	56%	3%	0%
Whole school	2%	36%	50%	11%	1%
These grades are based on observations of 170 lessons					

17. The figures for lessons which had good and outstanding features are significantly below the average for Wales in 2006-2007, as recorded by HMCI.
18. Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades represent a decline in standards since that time.
19. In only just over one third of lessons observed did learners achieve standards which have good features and no important shortcomings. In over one lesson in ten, standards learners achieved had important shortcomings.
20. At KS3, in the NC teachers' assessments in 2007, results were below national averages. In spite of a slight increase from the previous year, when compared to similar schools, results were below average. Apart from English, where results were slightly better than expected, results in mathematics and science were lower than what was expected, based on prior attainment.
21. Since the previous inspection, results in all three core subjects have been consistently below national averages. In spite of gains in 2007, there has been no sustained improvement. While value-added data show English to be achieving well when compared to similar schools, mathematics and science are less successful.
22. At KS4, the percentage of pupils the school enters for GCSE is significantly less than the average for Wales as a whole as well as that for the UA. Pass rates at five or more grades A*-C and five or more grades A*-G are significantly below local and national averages. Pass rates in English, mathematics and science, and the three core subjects combined are below local and national averages. There has been little evidence of improvement in performance over the past three years and, when compared with similar schools, GCSE pass rates remain in the bottom 25%.
23. At both KS3 and KS4, girls outperform boys.
24. Results at Advanced (A) level are declining. In 2007, results at grades A-C and A-E were significantly less than both local and national averages. Only 24% of the cohort passed at grades A-C and only 68% with grades A-E.
25. In the key skills of numeracy, communication and information and communication technology (ICT) pupils' achievement has good features that outweigh shortcomings. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) make good progress towards the targets set for them.

26. Only a minority of pupils and students has a good understanding of how well they are progressing and what they have to do in order to make progress.
27. While bilingual skills are developed through Welsh lessons, there is limited use made of incidental Welsh throughout the school.
28. Many pupils are well behaved but a minority is passive in learning. In a few classes, pupils underachieve because they pay poor attention and fail to focus on the task in hand.
29. Levels of attendance fall well below UA and national averages.
30. Pupils get on well with each other and with their teachers. They show good levels of respect for other cultures and beliefs.
31. Work-related education and careers education and guidance prepare pupils well for opportunities in education, training and the world of work.

The quality of education and training

32. The following grades were awarded for teaching and assessment in the 170 lessons observed:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	3%	46%	41%	9%	1%
KS4	5%	43%	36%	16%	0%
6th form	0%	69%	28%	3%	0%
Whole school	3%	49%	36%	11%	1%

33. The quality of teaching is significantly below the current average for Wales as reported by HMCI. Fifty-one per cent of lessons were graded 1 and 2 compared to 76% in all inspections in Wales 2006-2007.
34. Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades represent a decline in the overall standards of teaching since that time.
35. In the very small minority of lessons where outstanding features were observed, lessons were characterised by high levels of challenge and pace together with a very good match of work to pupils' ability and clear pointers for improvement.
36. However, in far too many lessons teachers' expectations are too low. While overall planning is generally good, there is a lack of detail in the planning to cater for the needs of all abilities of pupils. There is insufficient rigour in the way teachers question pupils to probe their levels of understanding.
37. Though the school meets statutory requirements for assessment, pupils' work is marked in insufficient detail and with an inconsistent use of assessment criteria. Leaders and managers make ineffective use of data on pupils' progress to set and monitor pupil targets and teachers fail to exploit opportunities to involve pupils in assessing their own progress.
38. The curriculum meets the requirements of the NC together with religious education. It offers a good range of options at KS4, including vocational options. Links with primary schools are good and make for a smooth transition and continuity in the curriculum.

39. However, there are shortcomings in the way key skills are planned and co-ordinated and in the way in which bilingualism and the culture of Wales are promoted. There are shortcomings in the way the school plans to meet the curricular needs of transient pupils.
40. The support and guidance of pupils are effective in the way in which the school:
 - manages its care, guidance and support;
 - promotes good race relations; and,
 - seeks to prevent oppressive behaviour.
41. Guidance and advice on vocational and academic choices are of good quality and impartial. The school takes appropriate steps to safe-guard pupils' welfare. Attendance is monitored and child protection procedures are robust.
42. However, there are shortcomings in the way in which the school monitors pupils' academic progress and in the effectiveness of the school council as a pupil voice.
43. There is a good provision for personal and social education (PSE) which takes account of health education and careers education and guidance. It is well co-ordinated and makes effective use of outside providers.
44. Strategies are in place to identify pupils with ALN and the provision to meet their needs is carefully managed. Pupils whose behaviour impedes their progress are well supported.
45. The school makes good provision for equal opportunities and has taken reasonable action to avoid putting disabled pupils at a disadvantage.

Leadership and management

46. While the headteacher communicates a vision focussed on school improvement, his aims and values are not shared by all members of the school community and reflected in their work.
47. The school has begun to draw up a suitable range of policies which reflect these aims. However, these policies are not having a sufficient impact on practice.
48. At a senior level the leadership team is ineffective in setting the strategic direction for the school and in implementing, monitoring and evaluating school policy. Their areas of responsibility are not clearly defined and they are not held accountable for the quality of their work.
49. The school improvement plan (SIP) is not clearly focussed on increasing levels of attainment. A lack of clarity inhibits sustained and consistent progress in implementing school policy in this area and limits the school's capacity for critical self-review.
50. Appropriately high expectations are not shared by all members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders and managers and teachers.
51. As with senior leaders and managers, so with middle managers, areas of responsibility are not effectively defined. This leads to a wide variation of practice between departments.
52. The capacity of the school to review provision and outcomes critically is severely restricted by a target-setting process that is unclear. This has an adverse effect

on the school's capacity to identify its strengths and shortcomings and set the direction for future development.

53. Good account is taken of UA and national priorities. Working relationships with local providers at primary, secondary and further education levels are good.
54. The governing body is committed to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) priorities and meets all regulatory and legal requirements apart from the daily act of collective worship.
55. The arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's performance have shortcomings. While the school's self-evaluation report contains an accurate appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses, departmental self-evaluation reports vary considerably in this respect and in the way in which they reflect the views of all stakeholders.
56. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and work efficiently through a range of appropriate committees. While they are supportive of the school and receive regular reports from leaders and managers, they do not act as effective critical friends of the school.
57. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. However, performance management arrangements for teaching staff have only recently been brought in line with national requirements.
58. The quality and range of training of both teaching and support staff have shortcomings. The school does not monitor nor evaluate the impact on standards of professional development opportunities.
59. Pupils and students have access to an appropriate range of learning resources, and the way in which they are used and reviewed are, on the whole, good.
60. The quality of display in the classrooms and around the school is good and makes for a stimulating working environment for pupils and staff.
61. While the school monitors its budget adequately on a day-to-day basis, it does not provide good value for money. Standards are too low and too great a proportion of resources are diverted from KS3 and KS4 to support the sixth form.
62. With regard to the key issues of the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in improving the accommodation in science and physical education. It has addressed the matters of health and safety brought to the attention of the headteacher.
63. However, the school has failed to respond effectively to the key issues from the previous report that relate to standards of attainment, or to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Recommendations

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

- R1. improve standards of attainment and achievement in those subjects identified in this report to have shortcomings, particularly in science throughout the school and in physical education at KS4;
- R2. improve examination results;
- R3. improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by identifying and sharing best practice and eliminating shortcomings;
- R4. improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels;
- R5. ensure greater consistency at whole-school and department level in target - setting, assessment policy and practice;
- R6. ensure that staff accountability for the implementation of school policy is clearly understood, agreed, monitored and evaluated;
- R7. continue to work with the UA and other providers to broaden the range of option choices at 16+, and
- R8. meet all legal and statutory requirements.

These recommendations have already been recognised by the school as areas needing development.

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 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

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

KS3 and KS4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

65. There are important shortcomings in:

- standards of achievement in lessons;
- results in NC assessments at the end of KS3;
- GCSE results;
- A level results; and
- pupils' attendance.

66. The following table shows the standards that pupils achieved at KS3 and KS4.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	1%	37%	51%	10%	1%
KS4	5%	33%	47%	15%	0%
KS3 & KS4	3%	35%	49%	12%	1%

These grades are based on observations of 138 lessons

67. These figures fall short of the averages for Wales in 2006-2007, as recorded by HMCI and represent important shortcomings in standards.
68. While the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures are lower and denote a decline in standards since that time.
69. In spite of a slight increase in 2007, results at KS3 fell below national averages. Forty-eight per cent of pupils reached at least level five in the core subjects combined, compared to 57% nationally. Results in English were above average. In mathematics and science, results were below average.
70. In English, results were above average when compared to similar schools. In mathematics, science and the three core subjects combined, results were below the average for similar schools.
71. Achievement in English was above what was expected, based on prior attainment. In the three core subjects combined, and in mathematics and science, attainment was below what was expected, in science significantly so.
72. In 2007, at KS4, results fell significantly below local and national averages. Twenty-two percent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A*-C compared to 47% locally and 54% nationally.
73. Sixty-seven percent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A*-G compared to 82% locally and 86% nationally.
74. There is a continuing trend at GCSE whereby results have fallen significantly below local and national figures. GCSE results are significantly below what is expected, based on prior attainment, and are in the bottom 25% of similar schools.
75. Provisional data for 2008 shows a similar picture for both key stages.
76. At both KS3 and KS4, girls outperform boys.
77. Standards in the key skills of communication, use of number and ICT have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Standards of listening vary. Pupils speak well, though a significant minority does not engage fully in extended oral work.
78. Many pupils are confident speakers and use an appropriate range of subject vocabulary. They are ready to offer ideas in class and develop their understanding through discussion. They listen well to one another and to their teachers. However, with a significant minority, listening skills are not well developed.
79. Reading is good on the whole. Pupils who have difficulties with reading respond well to support.
80. Standards in writing vary. The more able write fluently and in a variety of forms and style. They re-draft their work confidently so as to produce good levels of extended writing. However, with a minority of pupils, there are gaps in their work.
81. Pupils with ALN develop their skills well.
82. Standards in numeracy have improved since the school was last inspected. Across a range of subjects pupils apply numbers confidently.

83. There are examples of good practice in the use of ICT, for example in English, where desk-top publishing is used to good effect.
84. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups, in creative and problem-solving opportunities. However, pupils' ability to improve their own learning has important shortcomings.
85. While all pupils at KS4 follow courses leading to recognised qualifications in Welsh second language, bilingual skills are not well developed outside Welsh lessons.

Their progress in learning

86. The extent to which pupils make progress varies. Where expectations are high, pupils do well. They listen well, sustain concentration throughout the lesson, and write at appropriate length. Where there is insufficient challenge in lessons, pupils are often reluctant to offer responses to questions, have limited recall of previous work, and often do not complete the work set.
87. Though many pupils are well behaved, a minority is passive in their learning. In a few classes, pupils underachieve because they pay poor attention and fail to focus on the task in hand.
88. There are good features with no important shortcomings in pupils' progress in mathematics, information technology and physical education at KS3. At KS4, progress made by pupils is good with no important shortcomings in history and music. At both key stages, in modern foreign languages and religious education, pupils' progress has good features with no important shortcomings. In art, at KS4, pupils' progress is outstanding.
89. However, in physical education at KS4, and in science at both key stages, there are important shortcomings in pupils' progress.
90. While pupils benefit from peer and self-assessment in mathematics and modern foreign languages, on the whole, pupils' understanding of how well they are progressing and what they have to do in order to improve their work is not well developed.
91. Pupils with ALN respond well to in-class support and make good progress over both key stages. They respond to challenge and the encouragement to work hard. They are aware of the key skills and exercise them at a level appropriate to their ability

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

92. The majority of pupils behaves well and adopts positive attitudes to school. However in a minority of classes, off-task behaviour hinders progress and exclusion rates are unacceptably high. The school recognises this problem and has revised its behaviour policy accordingly. Where the new policy is applied consistently, it has had a beneficial effect.
93. Most pupils are courteous and tolerant. There are very few incidents of bullying and aggressive behaviour.
94. The overall attendance rate for the three terms prior to the inspection was 86%. This is below the figure when the school was last inspected and falls below local and national averages. This is an important shortcoming.

95. Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and wider development. Many pupils take part in sport and in a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
96. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of diversity in society. The knowledge and skills they acquire through assemblies, PSE and religious education help them to approach social and personal issues rationally.
97. Careers guidance and work-related education of good quality prepare pupils extremely well for the world of work.

Sixth form

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

98. Standards in the sixth form have some good features, but there are shortcomings in important areas.
99. The following table shows the standards achieved by students in the inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	0%	41%	56%	3%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 32 lessons					

100. These figures fall short of the averages for Wales in 2006-2007, as recorded by HMCI and represent important shortcomings in standards.
101. While the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures are lower and denote a decline in standards since that time.
102. Results at A level have fallen since the last inspection. They are significantly below local and national averages for passes at grades A-C and A-E. Girls outperform boys at A level.
103. As at KS3 and KS4, standards in the key skills of communication and ICT have good features which outweigh shortcomings. Standards in numeracy have good features and no important shortcomings.
104. Students speak and listen well to the teacher and to one another. More able students pose questions that are probing and express their views with confidence and clarity. They write at length, using subject-specific vocabulary fluently and accurately.
105. Students engage in problem-solving activity and use ICT well to support their research and present their work. They handle files and folders confidently. Many use data bases, "PowerPoint" and spreadsheets to good effect.
106. As at KS3 and KS4, students' bilingual skills are not well developed.

Their progress in learning

107. Students' progress in the sixth form varies. Where their progress has good features which outweigh shortcomings, they have a good recall of previous work, participate confidently in classroom discussion, and write well. Where there were shortcomings, students lacked confidence in discussion and lacked detail in their written work.
108. The school provides good support to all sixth formers, particularly to those who wish to proceed to Higher Education.

109. A minority of students has a good understanding of how well they are doing. Their work is marked and commented upon and targets for improvement are set.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

110. Students enjoy good relationships with staff and develop a sense of maturity and independence. Students adopt good attitudes and work well individually and in groups. Their relationships with each other and their behaviour are good.

111. There are shortcomings in the levels of attendance in the sixth-form.

112. Sixth-form students have an appropriate programme of work-related education that enables them to become mature young people who are aware of, and respond to, the needs of others.

The quality of education and training

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

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

113. In its self-evaluation report, the school awarded itself Grade 3 for this key question. The team disagreed because there are important shortcomings in teaching and assessment.

KS3 and KS4

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

114. The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 138 lessons observed in all the subjects at KS3 and KS4 as a percentage.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	3%	46%	41%	9%	1%
KS4	5%	43%	36%	16%	0%
KS3 & KS4	4%	45%	38%	12%	1%

These grades are based on observations of 138 lessons

115. The quality of teaching is significantly below the current average for Wales as reported by HMCI. Forty-nine percent of lessons were graded 1 and 2 compared to 76% in all inspections in Wales 2006-2007.

116. While many lessons had good features, in only a few lessons were there outstanding features. In almost one in eight lessons there were important shortcomings. In science, nearly one half of the lessons observed had important shortcomings.

117. In the very small minority of lessons where outstanding features were observed, lessons were characterised by high levels of challenge and pace together with a very good match of work to pupils' ability and clear pointers for improvement.

118. Where teaching was seen to have good features, teachers set clear learning objectives that they shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons. However, around half of the lessons observed lacked sufficient challenge to engage and motivate pupils in their learning.

119. Where there were important shortcomings in lessons, teachers:

- lacked clear objectives;
 - provided too little opportunity for pupils to develop their understanding by discussion;
 - set work that was in-appropriately matched to pupils' abilities; and
 - gave pupils little guidance on how to improve the quality of their work.
120. Relationships in classrooms are generally good and pupils work together in groups or pairs. Teachers offer individual support to pupils and the majority gives extra support outside normal lesson times.
121. Teachers have good subject knowledge, even when teaching in more than one subject area. They ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils and take effective account of issues of gender, race and disability.
122. Teachers deal with the language needs of the pupils effectively. Pupils with language difficulties are given appropriate levels of support. However, apart from lessons in Welsh second language, opportunities to develop bilingualism are very few.
123. In the majority of lessons, homework is not used to good effect to consolidate pupils' understanding.

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

124. There are important shortcomings in the way in which the school monitors pupils' progress.
125. There is a wide variety of practice in the monitoring and assessment of pupils' work both across the school and within individual departments. Where good practice exists, it is evidenced by:
- effective marking of the work done by the pupils which includes valuable advice on how to improve;
 - valuable feedback in lessons that gives pupils a clear understanding of their ability in the subject;
 - good use made of peer and self-assessment that enables pupils to appreciate what they need to do to improve; and
 - good use made of data from tests to set targets for future progress.
126. However, target-setting is not always subject-specific. A majority of teachers gives superficial feedback that fails to give pupils worthwhile guidance on how to improve.
127. The school meets the statutory requirements for assessment and reporting and satisfies examination board requirements. Standardisation and moderation activities are carried out at the end of KS3 to improve the rigour of teacher assessment.
128. There are important shortcomings in the way in which teachers ensure pupils understand the purpose of assessment and are involved in planning their improvement. Opportunities for self-assessment are limited. While pupils' work is formally assessed at each half-term, insufficient use is made of the outcomes of this process to plan for improvement.

129. Annual reports and interim reports give parents valuable information about pupils' progress. Reports are subject-specific and give an indication of expected levels at KS3 or GCSE grades at KS4. While opportunity is given for parents to discuss the report with teachers, targets for improvement are too general.

Sixth form

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

130. The following table shows the grades awarded for the quality of teaching in the sixth form.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	0%	69%	28%	3%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 32 lessons					

131. As at KS3 and KS4, where teaching in the sixth form is good, teachers have good levels of subject knowledge. They plan their lessons well and use a good variety of techniques to engage students in their learning.

132. The shortcomings noted at KS3 and KS4 are evident in the sixth form, though to a lesser extent. For example, where lessons lack pace and challenge, teachers provide students with few opportunities to develop their understanding through discussion.

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

133. The marking and assessing of students' work are generally good. In many subjects, valuable feedback is offered to give clear indications on how to improve.

134. Assessment is not consistent in all subjects and tends to be informal in the main. This does not foster progress and targets are not always set to give students a clear indication on what to do to attain good grades in the subjects.

135. Reports issued to sixth formers are useful and give guidance on how to improve.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

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

137. The school curriculum complies with current statutory and regulatory requirements with the exception of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

138. At KS3, all the NC subjects are taught to pupils. A performing arts course has been introduced which increases breadth and balance and many pupils are entered for GCSE French and mathematics in Y9. Information and communications technology provision is cross-curricular.

139. At KS4, the school offers a range of GCSE and vocational qualifications. With the exception of sports and performing arts, vocational subjects are delivered as part of the Learning Pathways 14-19, in partnership with the local college. A few

pupils follow a modified curriculum which combines study in school with attendance at Rhyl College.

140. The school is developing the range of opportunities for accreditation. Current plans, in line with Learning Pathways 14-19, propose three routes to a package of qualifications designed to meet pupils' needs. All pupils have the opportunity to gain accreditation in Welsh second language and religious education by following either the short or the full course at GCSE. Pupils have the opportunity to gain qualifications in adult literacy and numeracy, modern foreign languages and in key skills by the end of Y9.
141. Vocational subjects are currently offered at KS4, though not in the sixth form.
142. The degree of continuity and progression experienced by pupils as they move through the school varies. Liaison with primary schools is good and programmes of study that ensure progression and continuity in the curriculum are developing well in many areas.
143. The inclusion unit caters well for its pupils and interacts flexibly with mainstream.
144. There is no policy for provision for the significant number of transient pupils in the school. Class sizes in many Y13 classes are very small and have a negative effect on standards. Provision for the gifted and talented is limited
145. The school has effective provision for the delivery of basic skills in English and mathematics to pupils identified at KS3. During their morning registration period, all pupils at KS3 have good provision for developing basic and key skills in literacy and numeracy.
146. Good provision for the delivery and accreditation of key skills at KS3 is currently based on specific input from four departments. There is no structure or coherence for the delivery and accreditation of key skills at KS4 and in the sixth form and there are no formal arrangements for monitoring of progress.
147. The school provides a range of enrichment experiences for its pupils based mainly on physical and sports-based pursuits. Although this provision is effective, the variety of opportunities is limited and lacks co-ordination.
148. On the whole, the provision for the spiritual aspect of the statutory curriculum through religious education and PSE lessons is good. There is a planned programme for assemblies and morning registration periods. However, the school does not comply with the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
149. Pupils' personal development is supported well through a comprehensive timetabled PSE programme in Y7 and in KS4. In Y8 and Y9 and in the sixth form, personal development is addressed across a number of subject areas. In KS3, contributions from a range of external agencies enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of issues.
150. Pupils' development in moral, social and cultural aspects is provided effectively through religious education, PSE and a range of other subject areas.
151. The school communicates effectively with parents through termly newsletters, the prospectus and parent questionnaires, though there is no parent/teacher association.

152. There are good links with the local community through a range of initiatives which foster positive relationships. The school is part of the Rhyl cluster of Community Focus Schools and is benefiting from the contribution of the recently appointed co-ordinator. Links with local colleges are developing well.

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

153. Careers education and work-related education are strong features of the school. There are positive links with Careers Wales and pupils are prepared well for the world of work.

154. Although all pupils at KS3 and KS4 study Welsh second language and are entered for either the short or full course at GCSE, the policy for promoting bilingualism is unapproved by governors and provision is unstructured and limited. The quality of provision for 'Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig' across subject areas varies.

155. Through good pastoral provision and through aspects of the PSE programme and the curriculum, the school tackles social disadvantage and stereotyping well.

156. The subject areas and the PSE programme include a wide range of activities which contribute to pupils' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and aspects of global citizenship. There are some recycling facilities in the school and the school is developing its eco-awareness.

157. There are good opportunities for learners to develop entrepreneurial skills, notably through activities such as Project Dynamo in Y9, Mission Enterprise in Y12 and participation in a range of enterprise and business exploration activities.

158. In developing its curriculum to suit the needs and aspirations of its learners, the school is taking good account of Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) priorities. It is giving attention to the promotion of healthy lifestyles through better provision in the tuck shop and the Grow2Eat project. Many aspects and initiatives prepare pupils for adult life.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

159. The grade awarded by the inspection team matches the grade in the school's self-evaluation report.

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

160. The school places great emphasis on the personal welfare of its learners. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the pupils. Pupils interviewed were appreciative of the support given by teachers and non-teaching staff.

161. The school has a clearly-defined pastoral care system, managed well by two assistant headteachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and heads of learning. Comprehensive records are kept and learners are very well supported. However, the mentoring of students to improve standards has not yet been secured across the curriculum.

162. Pastoral links with the primary feeder schools are good although the curricular links are not as well developed. Pupils with ALN benefit from good links with a local special school and Rhyl College.
163. The induction programme for pupils who transfer to the school during term time is good. The work is well co-ordinated by a specially trained support worker who ensures that the pupils receive support and the relevant knowledge of the school to secure a smooth transition.
164. Pupils who are looked after by the UA have good pastoral plans and the school has a very good working relationship with Social Services.
165. The parents receive regular information about the life and work of the school. They are welcomed to school to discuss any concerns and have been consulted through questionnaires at parents' evening. Few parents are actively involved in the daily life of the school.
166. Attendance is appropriately monitored by the school's administrative officer who provides regular analyses for the leadership team. Despite very good support from the Education Welfare Officer, the police, and hard work by the school, attendance figures are still low.
167. In response to the Learning Pathways recommendations the school is developing vocational courses at KS4. This has improved the attendance of some pupils. During the inspection a high percentage of pupils were missing from many lessons and pupils were often late arriving at school in the morning and to lessons during the day.
168. The school council makes a limited contribution to the life of the school and the opportunity for pupils across the school years to contribute is inconsistent.
169. The PSE programme is very supportive to most pupils. External agencies such as the police, counsellors, and members of the local community make key contributions in presenting the programme.
170. Pupils interviewed praised the guidance given when they make choices as they move to Y10, the sixth-form, or to further education. The careers education programme is well structured and effective. The Careers Wales adviser is well integrated into the programme and pupils and students value the advice they receive.
171. A recently-developed school approach to managing discipline has clear structures to respond appropriately to pupils' misbehaviour. It has had some success in that the number temporary exclusions of KS4 pupils has decreased. However, it is not always effective as it is administered inconsistently across the school. The school's reward system has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
172. Standards in relation to healthy eating are good. The school encourages pupils to eat healthy food. Many pupils show knowledge of the importance of diet and exercise.
173. All members of staff are aware of procedures and protocols to protect pupils from abuse. A member of the SLT is in charge of providing training and supervision of those arrangements. She performs the task conscientiously.

174. The school has appropriate procedures to promote the health, safety and well-being of every pupil and student. Relevant risk assessments appertaining to the school sites and external visits are held.
175. A number of health and safety issues were reported to the headteacher during the inspection week.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

176. Overall good features outweigh shortcomings in the provision for ALN.
177. Pupils' learning needs are identified and diagnosed effectively. There is good liaison between the school and feeder primary schools with the SENCO attending all Y6 annual review meetings for pupils with statements of SEN .
178. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils that require them but to a varied effect. A minority contain pertinent targets while, in other plans, targets are too general. While departments, such as art and geography, make good use of IEPs, other departments, such as science, do not use them effectively.
179. Individual education plans are reviewed twice a year and new targets set as appropriate. Statements of SEN, including those containing a transition plan are reviewed annually. The school meets all statutory requirements in respect of statements of SEN and their reviews.
180. Pupils are supported in a variety of ways. A fast-track group of pupils who are not on the SEN register are withdrawn from some lessons at KS3 and make good progress in reading. Learning support groups, which are withdrawn for literacy and numeracy support, make good progress.
181. In addition to the Inclusion Centre's team of LSAs there is a larger general team who provide very good in-class support to pupils with ALN. They work well with class teachers in the majority of subjects enabling them to fully participate in lessons.
182. There are shortcomings in the provision for bottom set pupils taught as whole classes at KS3 and KS4. Phonics is taught as a series of repetitive exercises without reference to specific texts. While there is some gain in spelling age it is not matched by a similar gain in reading age. Year 9 pupils, studying a class text, have no opportunities to work in pairs or small groups to explore and investigate character and plot and develop thinking and communication skills. Pupils in bottom set Y10 mathematics spend too much time carrying out repetitive and mundane tasks.
183. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language is supported effectively.
184. The school has devised some initial strategies to provide for more able and talented pupils but at present they are not consistently implemented.
185. The school has recently introduced a new behaviour policy which has well-structured procedures. In addition, the school employs a trained counsellor for emotional and behavioural support to pupils. The school has a quiet room where up to 10 pupils, who have been removed from lessons, can work. Whilst these arrangements have proved successful at KS4, they are not effective for a small minority of pupils in Y7 and Y8 where the number of fixed term exclusions remains unacceptably high.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

186. The quality of provision for equal opportunities has good features and no important shortcomings.
187. The school recognises the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and provides a flexible curriculum for them. This includes special arrangements for some pupils to spend part of their course off-site.
188. At KS4, the school offers practical and vocational courses for pupils who are suited to them. There are opportunities for the more able to sit their GCSE courses in modern foreign languages and religious education at the end of Y9. However, across the curriculum, the provision for more able and talented pupils is limited.
189. The curriculum successfully provides specific opportunities for pupils to learn about and discuss issues related to racism and human rights. The few pupils from ethnic minority groups who arrive during term time at the school are well supported and settle into the daily life of the school quickly.
190. The school's policy and procedures for dealing with bullying are well understood and effectively implemented. Pupils interviewed were confident that the school reacts promptly when allegations of bullying arise.
191. A number of learners have been trained by an outside agency in counselling to help and support any pupils experiencing difficulties. Best use is not always made by the school of the expertise they have gained.
192. The school does all it can to help disabled pupils play a full part in the life of the school. However, there are a number of specialist teaching areas that are inaccessible to wheelchair users. This puts the pupils and the teachers at a disadvantage in that they are unable to use the specialist resourced rooms. The school has a relevant Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan.
193. Social inclusion measures, including additional support for those pupils considered to be at risk, are carefully managed and monitored. The quiet room, where pupils may be isolated for a period of time, is a good provision. However it is not always managed nor used consistently by staff.
194. The school works very hard to promote social inclusion. It successfully uses a wide range of outside expertise to support learners who experience difficulty in school, home or in the community.

Leadership and management

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

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

195. While the school awarded itself Grade 3 for this key question, the team disagreed because there are shortcomings in important areas which limit the school's capacity to improve. There is:
- a lack of common purpose focussed on sustained improvement;
 - ineffective leadership and management in setting the strategic direction for the school and in monitoring progress; and
 - ineffective target-setting, monitoring and evaluation.

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

196. While the headteacher communicates a vision focussed on school improvement his aims and values are not shared by all members of the school community and reflected in their work. Staff do not share a clear and focussed understanding of the purposes and priorities needed to sustain continuous improvement in levels of pupils' and students' achievement.
197. The school has begun to draw up a suitable range of policies which reflect these aims. However, these policies are not having a sufficient impact on practice. While the revised behaviour policy is beginning to have a positive impact, there is no clear and detailed understanding of how to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
198. At a senior level the leadership team is ineffective in setting the strategic direction for the school, and in implementing, monitoring and evaluating school policy. Their areas of responsibility are not clearly defined and they are not held accountable for the quality of their work.
199. Senior leaders and managers do not have effective links with departmental teams. There are shortcomings in the way they monitor their work, identify and support their professional development needs, and monitor the impact of their training on standards. There is no annual review of departmental performance.
200. The SIP is not clearly focussed on increasing levels of attainment. A lack of clarity inhibits sustained and consistent progress in implementing school policy in this area and limits the school's capacity for critical self-review.
201. The capacity of the school to review provision and outcomes critically is severely restricted by a target-setting process that is unclear. The messages contained in data on pupils' and students' attainment are not clearly spelt out by leaders and managers. This has an adverse effect on the school's capacity to identify its strengths and shortcomings and set the direction for future development.
202. As with senior leaders and managers, so with middle managers, areas of responsibility are not effectively defined. This leads to a wide variation of practice between departments. For example, there is good practice in mathematics, modern foreign languages, art and religious education. However, in science there are important shortcomings.
203. Good account is taken of many of the UA and national priorities. Working relationships with local providers at primary, secondary and further education levels are good and the school is seeking to provide Learning Pathways at KS4 and in the sixth form. The school works well to promote healthy lifestyles and is developing an understanding of the importance of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.
204. However, a number of priorities remain underdeveloped. These include bilingualism, 'Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig' and key skills. All regulatory and legal requirements are met, apart from the daily act of collective worship.
205. The arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's performance have shortcomings. While the school's self-evaluation report contains an accurate appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses, departmental self-

evaluation reports vary considerably in this respect and in the way in which they reflect the views of all stakeholders.

206. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. However, performance management arrangements for teaching staff have only recently been brought in line with national requirements. At present, they are ineffective in securing levels of accountability.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

207. Governors are supportive of the school. They have a clear understanding of their role and work efficiently through a range of appropriate committees. The reports they receive from the headteacher enable them to make an appropriate contribution to strategic planning.

208. While governors receive regular reports from leaders and managers, they do not act as effective critical friends of the school. While they are aware of the school's shortcomings, they are less aware of their extent. Governors' links with departments are tenuous.

209. Governors fulfil their regulatory and legal requirements apart from the daily act of collective worship.

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

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

210. In its self evaluation, the school awarded itself a Grade 3 for this question. The inspection team disagreed because there are important shortcomings in the way in which the school's performance is monitored and evaluated and in the way in which the school plans for improvement.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

211. There are some good features in the process of self-evaluation. Area self-evaluation reports are based on the seven key questions within the Common Inspection Framework and guide the whole-school report. The school self-evaluation report draws on the area reports, lesson observation by senior leaders, and reviews carried out by external agencies.

212. The self-evaluation report identifies many of the main areas for improvement, but its grades in four of the seven key questions differed from those of inspectors, who awarded one grade lower in key questions 2, 5, 6 and 7. The school underestimated the shortcomings in the teaching within some subject areas, as well as important deficiencies in leadership and management.

213. Self-evaluation in a number of subject areas is not fully informed by rigorous lesson observation, scrutiny of work and analysis of pupils' progress. Pupil performance and tracking data are not used consistently by area leaders as a means of self-evaluation and to identify areas for improvement in teaching and learning. A self-critical culture is not well established across the school as a whole.

214. As a consequence, the quality of area self-evaluation reports is inconsistent and shows a wide variation across subject areas, from good in modern foreign

languages, art, religious education and mathematics to inadequate in science. The link between self-evaluation and improving standards is not understood by many leaders and managers.

215. Members of the SLT are not sufficiently involved in challenging performance in the areas they manage nor in coaching their area leaders in the process of self-evaluation. Senior leaders' and heads of departments' roles in monitoring and evaluating the work of subject areas is not fully understood nor developed. There is a lack of clarity of the self-evaluation process amongst both staff and managers. This is an important shortcoming.
216. The school seeks the views of parents and asks them to complete questionnaires at each parents' evening. There is a school council, although the student voice does not inform the self-evaluation process in a formal way. Non-teaching and support staff are not fully involved in the self-evaluation process.

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

217. The SIP identifies six priorities for development for 2008-2010. Objectives, action to be taken, success criteria, completion dates and responsibilities within the plans are insufficiently detailed and do not include quantifiable numerical targets to enable leaders and managers to undertake meaningful evaluation of progress made.
218. Area improvement plans use the same format as the whole-school plan and vary in quality. They do not always address shortcomings nor quantify the expected improvement in pupils' standards. There is a lack of clarity and understanding of the link between the strategic planning cycle and the self-evaluation process, as well as of the monitoring and evaluation of improvement plans during the year to inform leaders and managers of the progress being made.
219. The setting of targets for pupils and students is inconsistent across the subject areas. Often, targets are too general to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Individual targets are set for attendance, punctuality, behaviour and achievement. Though there has been a slight increase in attendance, the monitoring and evaluating of developments in punctuality, behaviour and achievement have not been undertaken.
220. Performance management is not effective in identifying training needs linked to school and area priorities. Consequently, targeting resources and funding on appropriate training needs is not always appropriate. Performance management arrangements have only recently been brought in line with statutory requirements.
221. There are important shortcomings in the progress made in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection. Good progress has been made only in addressing the issues of health and safety.
222. Marginal improvement has taken place in pupils' and students' attendance figures which remain well below the WAG target. Standards have not improved in key skills.
223. Standards of achievement have improved in only two of the ten subjects at KS3 identified as satisfactory in the last report, in two of the eight subjects at KS4 and in one of the three subjects in the sixth form. Standards have fallen in two subjects at KS3, two subjects at KS4 and seven subjects in the sixth form.

224. Some progress has been made in improving the accommodation in science and physical education, although shortcomings remain.
225. The school still fails to meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

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

Grade 4: Some good features but shortcomings in important areas

226. The school awarded itself a Grade 3 for this key question. The team disagreed because there are important shortcomings in the efficiency with which resources are used and because the school does not provide good value for money.

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

227. The school has sufficient specialist teaching staff which it deploys well.
228. The school manages well the work of learning support assistants who make a valuable contribution to the progress made by pupils in their learning.
229. As a result of workforce re-modelling, the school has been able to employ specialist, non-teaching administrative staff, such as a site manager and cover supervisor. The school shares the services of a community support officer and has enhanced the role of the bursar.
230. On the whole the school is adequately resourced. The library is well managed and is stocked in line with recommended levels.
231. Capitation levels are adequate and subject areas have sufficient textbooks. However, ageing, specialist equipment is being used in music, geography, design technology and art.
232. Accommodation is of variable quality and parts of the school are badly in need of refurbishment. Whilst history and geography enjoy comfortable, well-appointed classrooms in a modern building, subject areas such as physical education, design technology and science have to make do with cramped, unsuitable teaching rooms.
233. The school has done its best to create a stimulating environment with clean corridors and attractive display areas. While there is a disability accessibility plan, but as yet no wheelchair access to any of the upstairs areas.
234. Shortcomings in health and safety provision were conveyed to the headteacher during the course of the inspection.

How efficiently resources are managed to achieve value for money

235. The school budget is adequately managed on a day-to-day basis. Budget headings reflect priorities in the SIP and major spending programmes are kept under review.
236. Whilst specialist administrative staff, who were recruited under the workforce re-modelling agreement, now carry out duties formerly carried out by senior teaching staff, the contribution of the SLT to the school's strategic development remains limited. This is an important shortcoming.

237. The school does its best to keep pace with refurbishment costs. The site manager is well supported by a team of pupil volunteers in regenerating the school grounds.
238. Low overall numbers and small teaching groups have a detrimental effect on the cost-effectiveness of the sixth form. This is a significant shortcoming because it deprives the main school of much-needed resources.
239. While staff development is adequately funded, its priorities are not linked to whole-school and departmental objectives and it is insufficiently monitored. These are important shortcomings.
240. Teachers provide written evaluations of courses they attended, but there is no mechanism for monitoring the impact of their training on standards. Similarly, while the school has invested substantial sums in ICT in line with a growing demand, there has been no evaluation of its impact on pupils' and students' learning.
241. The school does not provide good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

English

KS3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

KS4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

242. Examination results in English at GCSE are below local and national averages. When compared with similar schools results are below average. At A level, grades are below local and national averages.

KS3

Good features

243. Most pupils listen well to each other and to their teachers. They work together well in pairs to answer and raise questions, and most can explain and justify a point of view.
244. They read a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama. Most read aloud clearly and expressively and comment thoughtfully on their reading, and they develop an understanding of style. Most pupils read and check written instructions and use dictionaries effectively.
245. They view film and television critically considering, with some maturity, the reasons for film classification, and reflecting on the use of persuasive language.
246. Pupils with ALN consolidate their reading skills and many make good progress.
247. A majority writes fluently about personal experience and when writing imaginatively. Fewer undertake successfully a range of writing for different audiences.

Shortcomings

248. The writing of many of the pupils has important weaknesses. Presentation is generally weak. This includes sentence punctuation, spelling and handwriting. Many pupils do not organise their writing into paragraphs.

249. Few pupils are able to use precise language and structured sentences for more formal purposes.

KS4

Good features

250. Most pupils discuss effectively in small groups to share ideas, solve problems and raise questions.

251. All pupils read a range of challenging texts. Most read aloud clearly and expressively. They appreciate ways writers present character and build suspense. Many are thoughtful and precise when answering questions and discussing their reading. More able pupils can analyse persuasive language well.

252. Most pupils with ALN make good progress with reading.

253. Most pupils write confidently about personal experience or to express a straightforward point of view. A majority re-drafts their work effectively.

Shortcomings

254. Most pupils of average ability do not do well when writing persuasively or critically.

255. The written work of a minority of pupils is weak; they do not use paragraphs consistently to structure their ideas, and punctuation is insecure.

256. A few pupils do not review their work or take responsibility for improving it.

Sixth form

Good features

257. Students listen to others, and are able to modify their views. They work well in small groups and take part effectively in drama approaches to investigate character

258. They understand the social context of the novels they study.

259. Most can offer evidence and thoughtful commentary to justify their views on character and key aspects of style.

260. Most use inference and deduction, and are able to recognise and appreciate irony in their texts.

Shortcomings

261. For a significant minority, their range of critical terms and concepts, in discussion, is limited.

Welsh second language

KS3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

KS4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

262. On the whole, results at GCSE are in line with local and national averages.

KS3

Good features

263. Pupils respond well to briskly paced question and answer sessions and make good use of interactive whiteboards to learn, practise new vocabulary and language patterns and to hone their listening skills.

264. In a minority of classes, pupils naturally volunteer contributions in Welsh during whole class interactions.

265. Most pupils read aloud confidently, accurately and with good pronunciation. Pupils are able to use their skills in reading to enhance their work in speaking and writing.

266. More able pupils write extended pieces that include the use of varying language patterns and are able to express opinions and give reasons to support their contentions. They use feedback provided by the teachers to raise the standard of their work and make good use of ICT to draft and re-draft written work.

Shortcomings

267. In many classes, pupils have difficulty in communicating in the target language and have difficulty holding the most basic conversation in Welsh.

268. With a small minority of pupils, reading aloud is not well developed.

269. The writing skills of a minority of pupils are limited to the completion of closed tasks and in many cases there is much unfinished work in their books.

KS4

Good features

270. Pupils have good listening skills and in Y11 cope well with higher-level exercises.

271. Pupils use listening skills well to complement their reading comprehension, for example, when deciphering meaning using context.

272. Pupils with ALN make good effort to use Welsh as a natural medium of communication in class. They make good use of interactive whiteboards and board games to practise language patterns

273. Pupils read well in groups, for example when co-authoring scripts to be read aloud to peers. In the same groups, reading aloud is well developed with pupils able to read challenging material.

274. As at KS3, pupils write extended pieces that include the use of varying language patterns and are able to express opinions and give reasons to support their contentions. They use feedback provided by the teachers to raise the standard of their work. Sometimes, they make good use of ICT to draft and re-draft written work.

Shortcomings

275. The oral skills of significant minority of pupils are poor.
276. Only a small minority of pupils is able to hold an extended conversation. Many pupils, even in higher ability groups, find difficulty with the most basic conversations.
277. A minority of pupils does not read aloud with confidence and expression.
278. Many pupils find difficulty writing independently and are over-dependent on worksheets and teachers' intervention.

Sixth form

Good features

279. Students are able to discuss a range of topics based on texts studied and everyday life.
280. Students read texts accurately with good pronunciation.
281. The more able students produce good standards of written work.

Shortcomings

282. Students' oral contributions are limited because of lack of vocabulary.
283. Good written work is limited to recently-used vocabulary and language patterns and is, at times, over-dependent on teachers' intervention and support.

Mathematics

KS3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

KS4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Sixth-form: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

284. At KS3, results have improved since the last inspection.
285. At KS4, results in mathematics at GCSE are below UA and national averages.
286. In the sixth form results are difficult to compare because group numbers are small, but results overall are positive and reflect the ability of the students.

KS3

Good features

287. Pupils are able to deal effectively with numbers be they whole numbers, decimals or fractions and have an understanding of the interchange between the latter two. The more able can apply this knowledge in dealing with more complex questions or in determining number sequences. They are equally able to classify numbers in relation to their ability.
288. The more able pupils strengthen their understanding of the subject. They can apply previous knowledge gained in other mathematical situations to further their understanding.
289. Pupils have an acceptable understanding of place value. Pupils of lower ability can state the correct value of a number.

290. Pupils have a clear understanding of algebraic functions and can choose and apply the correct formulae to answer given questions. They can provide numerical answers when dealing with questions involving substitutions.
291. When dealing with numbers, pupils are able to determine minimum and maximum values and use them to establish the range involved.
292. Pupils deal effectively with angles. They are able to name the different types of angles and to estimate their size to a generally acceptable degree of accuracy.
293. Pupils can determine effectively the properties of individual shapes and can calculate their areas and volumes.
294. A majority of pupils answers questions orally with clarity, understanding and accuracy.

Shortcomings

295. The knowledge and understanding of a minority of pupils are insecure.

KS4

Good features

296. More able pupils complete a substantial amount of work to a good standard and show a sound understanding of the mathematical principles involved.
297. Pupils deal effectively with all equations as appropriate to their ability and can solve simultaneous and quadratic equation effectively. More able pupils can apply their knowledge to answer more complex questions.
298. Lower ability pupils can name shapes and match these correctly to given descriptors and determine the value of sides and angles as necessary.
299. Pupils are able to determine the areas and volumes of shapes, some complex, according to their ability.
300. Pupils are able to use the trial and improvement method to solve given equations to the required degree of accuracy.
301. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of statistical terms and can calculate the various averages, can create frequency tables and use these to produce graphs to help gain further information.

Shortcomings

302. Many pupils are unable to recall the work completed previously and this slows down their progress since time is lost in helping them to regain that knowledge.
303. A significant minority of pupils is insecure in basic mathematical topics to enable them to make the necessary progress at the required pace.
304. A large minority of pupils encounters difficulty in making accurate estimations.

Sixth form

Good features

305. Students overall acquire new skills quickly and are able to use their previous knowledge to understand new concepts from the information provided. This enables them to deal with the more complex situation.

306. Students study aspects of pure mathematics and mechanics at appropriate levels for the examinations for which they are entered.
307. Students have an acceptable understanding of all aspects of the course.
308. In mechanics they can deal effectively with vectors and are able to use equations of motion appropriately to solve given problems.
309. Students are able to integrate and differentiate effectively and apply these skills to determining gradients and areas under a curve. They have a clear understanding of calculus.
310. Students are generally able to express mathematical ideas clearly and are relatively confident in any method used to resolve questions.

Shortcomings

311. The knowledge of a significant minority of students to recall the correct formulae in a given topic is insecure.

Science

KS 3: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

KS4: Grade 4: Some good features, but shortcomings in important areas

Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

312. Overall, results are well below UA and Wales averages. Benchmarking data, comparing similar schools, consistently place the school in the lower quartile.
313. Advanced level results in biology, chemistry and physics cannot meaningfully be compared to national pass rates due to the small number of entries. Value - added data, however, indicate that the results are lower than achieved nationally by students of similar ability.

KS3

Good features

314. Pupils are able to recall recent work when questioned. They show a good understanding of the contribution science makes to everyday life.
315. Many pupils undertake effective practical work. They have a good knowledge of health and safety matters. They have a good understanding of fair testing.
316. The majority of pupils is able to undertake simple observations and record their results in tables.
317. Pupils with ALN eagerly contribute to discussions and, with support, access relevant scientific information from internet sites using computers.

Shortcomings

318. Many pupils have a poor recall and understanding of current and previous work. They make limited progress during lessons.
319. The progress of many pupils is hindered by incomplete work.
320. The contribution of many pupils is limited by their lack of understanding of technical and scientific vocabulary.

321. Pupils' skills of planning investigations are insufficiently developed. Many are disorganised when they record data in tables. The presentation of their work is untidy and sometimes incomplete.
322. The pace of learning is adversely affected by the poor behaviour of a large number of pupils.

KS4

Good features

323. A minority of pupils achieves good standards. They show good knowledge and understanding of current and previous work. They listen attentively and contribute well during class discussions using appropriate scientific vocabulary. They quickly understand scientific principles which are explained to them.
324. When undertaking practical work, a majority of pupils demonstrates good practical skills. They are able to follow instructions and carry out experimental work safely.
325. With help, pupils with ALN are able to complete low-level practical tasks to a good standard.

Shortcomings

326. A large number of pupils have poor recall and understanding of their work in science. They do not understand the theory. As a result, they make very slow progress.
327. In practical tasks their skills of recording, graphs, tables and diagrams are not developed sufficiently and are often of a low standard.
328. Many pupils regularly disrupt lessons and fail to complete their work to an acceptable standard. Their behaviour slows the pace of the lessons and this adversely affects their progress and that of others.
329. The work of a significant minority of pupils is often incomplete or missing. As a result, these pupils have low standards of achievement and attainment.

Sixth form

Good features

330. The majority of students shows good recall and understanding of prior knowledge and scientific principles in the three subjects.
331. Students' learning is supported by good oral communication and ICT skills, as well as good numerical skills in chemistry and physics.
332. In practical work, students demonstrate good techniques and investigative skills. Most have a good understanding of accuracy and reliability and are able to predict the outcome of their investigations.

Shortcomings

333. A few students are unable to apply their prior knowledge to new situations and as a result do not progress at an appropriate pace.
334. A significant minority of students are reluctant to contribute to class discussions.
335. In biology, most students do not make adequate progress at an appropriate pace within the time available.

Design technology

KS3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

KS4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

336. Examination results in design technology are variable. While, in product design and food technology, they have been broadly in line with local and national averages, in resistant materials results have been below local and national figures. At A level, results have been below local and national averages.

KS3

Good features

337. The majority of pupils makes good progress in their knowledge and understanding of design principles and a range of processes in both compliant and resistant materials.

338. The most able pupils research and investigate existing products effectively and use their findings well to develop their own design ideas.

339. In the best design workbooks, the presentation of ideas has good features which outweigh shortcomings.

340. In the best work across all material areas, practical outcomes reflect good levels of creativity.

341. Most pupils with ALN achieve to their capabilities and produce good design work and product outcomes in line with their abilities.

Shortcomings

342. The presentation and graphical communication skills of a large minority of pupils are weak.

343. Too many pupils do not use a sufficient and appropriate range of sources to gather relevant research information to help formulate their design ideas. For example, too little use is made of computers to research and present their design work.

344. Most pupils do not readily use computer-aided manufacturing equipment to produce any element of their product outcomes except at a very basic level.

345. A large minority of pupils do not secure their work effectively, measure accurately and use tools properly.

KS4

Good features

346. In all the GCSE design technology courses about a half of the pupils carry out appropriate investigative work. They use a variety of sources to gather information relevant to their design task. Many of these pupils use ICT skills well to present their work.

347. In the best work, pupils produce good design drawings. They annotate their design drawings well clearly explaining their thoughts and ideas as they develop their work. This is particularly notable in textiles and food technology where the best work is of a good, and occasionally very good, standard.

348. The most able pupils use computer-aided design software well to produce good standards of design outcomes in graphics.
349. Well over a half of pupils have good practical skills which they use effectively to produce well crafted outcomes in a range of materials.
350. Pupils with ALN understand the design process and apply the principles well. They produce good product outcomes that are often comparable to those of their more able peers.

Shortcomings

351. The graphical communication skills of a small number of pupils are weak.
352. A minority of pupils cannot readily explain the design process. In their design folios, there is a lack of rigour, structure and clarity in relating outcomes to the original design criteria or specification. As a result, evaluations are superficial and basic.
353. Pupils do not readily use computer-aided manufacturing equipment to produce work.
354. A significant number of pupils have poor standards of making and finishing.

Sixth form

Good features

355. Most students have a good understanding of the principles of design work. They develop original, creative and innovative design solutions which meet the criteria set. They carry out appropriate research work using a range of sources.
356. All students make varied and effective use of ICT, including the use of computer-aided design software to produce some aspects of their design drawings. In the best design folios, graphical and presentation skills are good, most notably so in textiles design folios.
357. Students' practical work is of a good standard. They combine a range of materials, fittings and fixings well in their ideas as seen for example in the drinks dispenser and cooling system.

Shortcomings

358. Weak presentation and graphical communication skills detract from the quality of the design work.
359. Students' quick developmental drawing skills are weak.

Information technology

KS3: Grade 2: good features with no serious shortcomings

KS4: Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

Sixth form: Grade 3: good features outweigh shortcomings

360. GCSE and A level results are below local and national averages.

KS3

Good features

361. Pupils use a range of applications confidently and effectively. They can combine information from a variety of sources with a good sense of audience and purpose

362. Good standards are achieved in the communicating information, modelling and data handling strands of the curriculum. Pupils create documents and presentations using presentation software, word-processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets and databases. They can also use sources from the Internet to good effect.

363. A significant minority of pupils displays high-level skills in modelling and data handling.

Shortcomings

364. There are no significant shortcomings.

KS4

Good features

365. Pupils display a good understanding of the basic concepts of the subject. They can identify and explain the specific characteristics of various software packages

366. Pupils are able to find and select information from a wide range of sources – they can explore, develop and interpret this to produce appropriate solutions to problems

367. Most pupils demonstrate a good grasp of technical vocabulary.

Shortcomings

368. A significant minority of pupils make very poor progress in their knowledge and understanding. They are unable to apply their knowledge and understanding in new and unfamiliar situations.

369. The coursework of a significant minority of pupils is not sufficiently developed.

Sixth form

Good features

370. Students display a methodical and analytical approach to problem-solving

371. They can apply their knowledge and understanding to familiar problems

372. They can use a range of software packages and are able to design and produce solutions to problems and clearly communicate these solutions

373. Most of the students are able to work independently, are self motivated and interested, and demonstrate that they understand what is expected by the course.

Shortcomings

374. Students' knowledge and understanding of the basic concepts and principles of the subject are not sufficiently developed at present. As at KS4, they are unable to apply their knowledge and understanding in new and unfamiliar situations.

375. Poor attendance hampers the progress of a minority of students.

Modern foreign languages

KS3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

KS4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

376. On the whole, examination results are broadly in line with local and national averages. At the end of KS3, approximately half the cohort sits GCSE. Around half of those entered gain a grade C or above.

377. Examination entries at A level are too small for valid comparisons to be made.

KS3

Good features

378. Most pupils listen or read well for detail. A few, by applying their earlier learning well, skilfully work out what new language in authentic recordings or word-processed text is likely to mean.

379. Most pupils respond well orally in short sentences or phrases. These include pupils with ALN, who take a full part in question and answer sessions thanks often to the use of visual prompts. Many pupils offer longer responses, and by Y9 a minority of pupils confidently takes the initiative to start conversations.

380. Many pupils keep up conversation well, making reference to past, present and future time. A few make a clear distinction between what they want, intend, or ought to do. Many have good pronunciation.

381. In Y7, many pupils follow patterns well to write their own sentences, making reference to past as well as present time.

382. Over the key stage, pupils' writing develops well alongside their speaking so that by Y9, many write well at length, and a minority writes creatively, using what they have learned to produce original letters or essays according to their own intentions.

Shortcomings

383. A small minority of pupils does not listen well enough to identify the details they need, or to build up a good level of accuracy when using the language. They make mistakes in simple grammar so what they write is hard to follow.

384. A small minority of pupils does not speak independently nor takes the initiative in conversation.

KS4

Good features

385. Most pupils listen well, so they build up vocabulary well, for example in German about different hotel facilities, and then re-use this competently in their own work.

386. Most pupils understand a good amount of detail in what they read, such as in Italian about a wide range of different styles of clothing they might like to buy.

387. Many pupils speak with confidence. They are usually quick to reply to questions and are careful to copy good pronunciation.

388. When practising structures to make hotel bookings, for example, most pupils include a good level of detail in their own questions.
389. Many pupils write short pieces well, and use different tenses appropriately.
390. Many pupils demonstrate a good understanding of relevant grammar and apply this well to improve the quality of their speaking and writing.
391. Around two thirds of the cohort takes a foreign language in Y11; when in Y10 around two thirds of these candidates already gained sufficient points in the writing component of the Asset Languages Ladder to equate to that found at grade C of GCSE.

Shortcomings

392. A few pupils are prone to making errors in spelling and grammar when writing at length.
393. A few make similar errors, although less obviously, when they speak.

Sixth form

Good features

394. Many students listen and read with good understanding.
395. They identify salient details and can often make deductions or inferences from the context.
396. They also translate short texts clearly into English.
397. Most students write notes, memos, or paragraphs well.
398. A majority reads aloud and makes brief replies to questions with good pronunciation.

Shortcomings

399. Many students lack confidence in speaking, especially independently and at length.
400. Many do not write accurately at length, or with well-developed ideas.
401. A few students do not confidently attempt to work out the meaning of unfamiliar spoken language or text.

History

KS3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

KS4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Sixth form: Grade 2: good features and no important shortcomings

402. Examination results at GCSE are below local and national averages. At A level, the number of students entered is too small to make valid comparisons.

KS3

Good features

403. A majority of pupils in Y7 shows a good understanding of the significance of events associated with the Norman Conquest.
404. Pupils in Y8 show a developing understanding of the causes of change in religious policy during the 16th century.

405. Pupils in Y9 studying major topics on slavery and the working conditions of children in 19th century factories can evaluate source material as evidence for an enquiry, combine evidence from more than one source and, on the basis of this, produce simple interpretations of the past.
406. There is also good development of literacy skills in Y9, where nearly all pupils can sort information into mind maps and use these to produce well-ordered extended accounts.

Shortcomings

407. Whilst pupils in Y7 show appreciation of the significance of events, they do not know how to measure their relative significance – to assess why one event may have been more or less significant than another.
408. Many pupils in Y7 are unsure of the nature and use of historical sources, interpret them at face value and treat them as sources of information rather than of evidence.
409. This problem persists with a small minority of Y9 pupils, who use sources with no critical sense - as though they are additional information supplied by the writer of the text book.

KS4

Good features

410. Most pupils make good critical use of source material for an enquiry.
411. Most pupils understand the value of historical interpretations and how and why they differ.
412. The more able pupils understand what historical significance is and how to measure it.
413. Most pupils appreciate tensions that exist between historical study and the marketing of the past.
414. The more able pupils explain why they are approaching particular problems in particular ways.

Shortcomings

415. A small minority of pupils has an insecure understanding of how the heritage industry interprets history.

Sixth form

Good features

416. Students in Y12 show good skills of analysis in identifying, and assessing the relative importance of the causes of the Pilgrimage of Grace. They are able to establish generalizations about the nature, purposes and effectiveness of 16th century protest and rebellion.
417. Students in Y13 can take a long view of the relationship between military success and material resources during the 19th century, in order to determine whether the side with the most resources always won. They also show confidence in interpreting and deploying historians' views to support both sides of an argument about the effectiveness of the Elizabethan Church Settlement.

Shortcomings

418. While students' written work is well structured, in a minority of cases it falls short of the higher-order skills of analysis and of causal explanation.

Geography

KS3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

KS4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

419. Overall the examination results in this subject at GCSE and at A level are below national averages.

KS3

Good features

420. The majority of pupils makes competent use of, and interprets, a variety of maps, diagrams, statistical information and photographic images when studying geographical topics and themes.

421. Most pupils have a secure grasp of geographical vocabulary and terminology. Key words and terms are applied accurately in a range of contexts.

422. They understand the geographical processes involved in physical and human phenomena, such as population change and migration.

423. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the relationships between people and the environment, particularly when studying issues within National Parks and the impact of mass tourism in the Mediterranean.

424. A minority begins to acquire effective enquiry-based techniques, using ICT well to research and present information on the physical and human features of Kenya and Majorca.

425. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship through their studies of conflicting land use and economic development.

Shortcomings

426. Pupils knowledge of the location, character and interdependence of places, including Wales, is underdeveloped.

427. The majority of pupils has limited geographical enquiry skills.

428. Pupils, particularly more able pupils, have poor skills of description, analysis and understanding of the patterns of distribution.

429. Incomplete or missing work, accompanied by poor presentation of completed tasks, are shortcomings in the standards of a significant minority of pupils.

KS4

Good features

430. Most pupils use geographical terminology accurately and with understanding.

431. The majority of pupils has a good understanding of geographical processes and their associated features when studying the formation of upland glaciation landforms and population change and its consequences.

- 432. Many pupils can describe and explain the distribution of geographical phenomena within a range of appropriate case studies.
- 433. The majority applies geographical skills and understanding successfully when carrying out their individual fieldwork investigations within the local region. They use ICT throughout their enquiries to analyse and present well-structured coursework.
- 434. Most pupils have a secure knowledge of the concepts relating to sustainable development and global citizenship and the significance of human action.
- 435. Pupils recognize the causes, consequences and the complex nature of providing solutions to issues concerning global economic development.

Shortcomings

- 436. The communication, graphical and mapping skills of a significant minority of pupils are weak. Many present incomplete and untidy records of work, and are reticent in oral contributions.
- 437. Most pupils have weak locational knowledge. This limits their ability to apply their learning to new situations and to provide sufficient detail and depth to their work.
- 438. Many pupils display weaknesses in the skills and knowledge required to successfully complete individual coursework investigations.

Sixth form

Good features

- 439. A number of students effectively analyse, interpret and evaluate information from a variety of sources and formats. They write succinctly, and present well-reasoned arguments.
- 440. The majority accurately recalls and uses geographical terms correctly, with a number readily contributing to discussions on processes, patterns and interrelationships.
- 441. They recognize the causes and consequences of major natural hazards within specific case studies.
- 442. They understand the issues relating to sustainable development, and economic and environmental change.

Shortcomings

- 443. The work of a large minority of students demonstrates limited understanding and superficial explanation.
- 444. A minority of students find difficulty in articulating their reasoning when engaged in discussion.
- 445. Many students lack the required level of independent study and enquiry.

Art

KS3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

KS4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Sixth form: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

446. In recent GCSE examinations, overall results at grades A*-C match the national average. In the fine art course results at the higher grades are well above the national average. Pupils regularly achieve better in art than in their other subjects. At A level, results match the national average.

KS3

Good features

447. By the end of Y9, the majority of students work at the nationally expected level. They make very good progress.

448. Pupils develop a good knowledge of art and artists. They learn how to experiment with a variety of media and demonstrate creative and problem-solving aptitude.

449. They develop good skills in the essential visual language of line, tone, colour, pattern, shape and form, in both two- and three-dimensional elements. Their observational drawing is a strong feature.

450. They develop a better than average understanding and application of the principles of perspective.

451. They show a growing understanding of the art of Wales and an appreciation of the distinctive nature of the arts of other cultures.

452. In their group work, they show good skill and understanding of creative computer animation.

Shortcomings

453. A small minority of pupils does not use ICT creatively and lacks the skills of discussing their artwork.

KS4

Outstanding features

454. Pupils with ALN regularly achieve better in art than in their other examination subjects.

455. Standards achieved in the use of digital photography are often of a very high calibre.

Good features

456. Observational drawing is often well done. Pupils understand the research and design process, and they know how to support their work with useful annotation.

457. Pupils have a good understanding of the work of a range of artists and designers, and successfully produce lively three-dimensional reinterpretation of their work. They have an understanding of contemporary art practice in Wales by working with visiting artists.

458. Pupils make very good progress in lessons. They have an accurate understanding of how well they are doing and know what to do in order to improve their work.

Shortcomings

459. Many pupils are unaccustomed to using the appropriate art vocabulary when discussing their work.

Sixth form

Good features

460. In examinations, students consistently meet or exceed their individual estimated potential grade.

461. Students are developing well as independent creative artists.

462. They know how to explore and select from new media and techniques. They understand the research and design process well and are beginning to understand work-related aspects of a design brief.

463. Their observational drawing is good and often makes effective use of the local environment. Pattern and colour are frequently used with verve. Standards of creative photography and computer manipulation of images are high.

464. Their creative sketchbook work shows much imagination. Presentation is often done with flair.

465. Students support their practical work with informative annotation. Their extended writing about art and artists is thorough, descriptive and informative.

466. By visiting art galleries students have a growing knowledge of contemporary and historical art.

467. They have a good understanding of examination requirements. They know how to improve their work through regularly applying the assessment processes.

Shortcomings

468. A small minority of students experience difficulty when speaking about art do not express critical or comparative judgement in their writing.

Music and performing arts

KS3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

KS4: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

Sixth form: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

469. On the whole, examination results are below local and national averages.

KS3

Good features

470. Pupils demonstrate sound knowledge of the musical elements and are able to use the appropriate terminology to appraise music.

471. Pupils use percussion instruments effectively to develop their knowledge of rhythms and are able to combine and synchronise a variety of rhythms and timbres for performance in groups.

472. Pupils in drama develop a good range of acting skills, perform enthusiastically and work together very well in groups.

473. In dance, most pupils develop a wide range of expressive movements based on contemporary dance style.

474. Across the three areas of study, most pupils are able to evaluate their work in order to improve and are aware of the criteria used for assessment.

475. Most pupils plan and develop simple musical compositions, dramatic activities and dance movements to good effect.

Shortcomings

476. Pupils have poor musical composition skills.

477. In music and dance, a large minority of pupils is inattentive. They fail to focus on the given task and make slow progress.

KS4

Good features

478. Pupils show a good understanding of the musical elements and use musical terminology confidently to appraise music.

479. Most pupils have a good understanding of how to compose music. They are able to evaluate their work and have an understanding of the assessment criteria.

480. In drama, pupils demonstrate good acting skills in an uninhibited fashion and develop effective use of the voice to express a variety of emotions.

481. Pupils are able to discuss and answer questions related to acting techniques in an informed and mature manner.

Shortcomings

482. A small minority of pupils has poor musical composition skills.

Sixth form

Good features

483. In drama, students use a wide range of appropriate dramatic techniques and show good audience awareness.

484. Students are able to analyse and evaluate their performances well and can identify key areas for improvement.

485. In music, students develop a good understanding of musical devices used in compositions and begin to apply these in their own work.

Shortcomings

486. The understanding of musical composition of a small minority of students is insecure.

Physical education

KS3: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

KS4: Grade 4: Some good features but shortcomings in important areas

Sixth form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

KS3

Good features

487. The majority of pupils work with diligence and make good progress. They respond well to the challenge of working with others and solving physical problems.

488. In gymnastics there is good attention to the quality of movement. Many pupils of all abilities are confident performers and are keen to include complex skills in their creative work.

489. Pupils show an appropriate and developing knowledge of the effects of exercise on their bodies.

490. In tasks designed to improve fitness, the majority of girls works together in teams to support one another in solving physical challenges effectively. The most able can sustain activity without tiring.

491. In games, the most able boys demonstrate versatility and control. They follow instructions accurately and can sustain performance alone and in contested situations.

Shortcomings

492. Boys are less effective in transferring skills learned elsewhere into their play on the badminton court. Knowledge of rules is weak and basic errors affect continuity in play.

493. The behaviour of a small minority of pupils affects the progress of others.

KS4

Good features

494. In football, the most able boys show considerable skill and understanding in their use of space, and in their awareness and anticipation of game play. They move effectively on and off the ball supporting and encouraging their teammates.

495. Girls make good progress in improving their skills in netball.

496. In aerobics, sequences performed to music are rhythmical, energetic and lively with some inventive choreography devised by the pupils.

497. Written work for GCSE examination is very well presented. Pupils' oral contribution to lessons demonstrates their growing knowledge.

Shortcomings

498. Pupils have poor skills of analysis and evaluation.

499. The more able pupils, particularly those in lower sets, are not always challenged sufficiently by the tasks and underachieve.

500. A lack of subject vocabulary limits the progress of many pupils on examination courses.

501. Pupils do not know how well they are doing nor what to do in order to improve their work.

Sixth form

Good features

502. Students make progress in line with their capabilities.

503. Written work is well presented often using ICT and, in the best examples, is detailed and thorough.

504. Oral responses indicate some understanding by the more able students of the topics studied.

Shortcomings

505. Lack of knowledge and confidence in using the subject vocabulary limits the breadth and depth of responses to questions and, wider discussion.

Religious education (including religious studies)

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

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

Sixth-form: Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

506. The percentages of pupils that have gained GCSE grades A* to C over the last two years have been higher than the figures for the UA. However, the numbers of pupils who sat the examination course have been low

KS 3

Good features

507. Most pupils have secure factual knowledge of the units of work studied, which reflect the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus.

508. Pupils can recognise the main aspects of worship and the main features of the Holy Books of the major religions.

509. They can recognise the distinctive features of religious traditions and know and understand the myths associated with different stories in the Holy Books.

510. Low ability pupils are confident when they talk about how believers of different faiths worship and the meaning of the artefacts and symbols used.

511. By Y9, pupils know how believers of the main faiths worship and celebrate their faith and know that people have different beliefs and values based on religious traditions.

512. The more able have a very good understanding of what belonging to a religious community means and recognise the contribution that religion makes to their personal and local life.

513. Good use is made of a range of religious vocabulary when pupils discuss their own and others' responses to questions about life and religion.

Shortcomings

514. Pupils are not developing as independent learners and are not making enough progress in expanding their range of skills to explore and evaluate religions.

515. A small minority of pupils do not complete pieces of work.

KS4

Good features

516. Less able pupils show maturity in whole-class discussions when offering an opinion on questions raised by the natural world and human issues. On the basis of their knowledge they can generalise and form an opinion.

517. Pupils have good factual knowledge, and are developing the ability to relate moral and social issues to religious beliefs.

518. They build successfully upon knowledge acquired in Y9 and apply a good range of religious concepts in response to teachers' questions on a variety of religious interpretations of moral and social issues.

519. They make good progress in their ability to participate in discussions; the higher achievers provide good reasons for their viewpoints on religious lifestyles.

520. Pupils are acquiring the relevant skills to interpret beliefs and practices as a means of making sense of different human experiences and traditions.

521. Most pupils make a positive contribution to lessons and show initiative and confidence in expressing opinions on religious issues. Some give thoughtful answers, drawing on their own experience within their community.

Shortcomings

522. Poor attendance seriously hinders the achievement of a minority of pupils.

Sixth form

Good features

523. Students recall earlier work well and present ideas and arguments on religious traditions and beliefs.

524. Students recognise the experiences which they share with people of different faiths, and they use their information well to further understand how other people worship and live.

Shortcomings

525. Students are reluctant at times to offer extended comments to deepen their understanding of the influence of religious beliefs on moral and social issues.

Business Studies

Key Stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Sixth-form: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

526. Examination results in business studies at GCSE are broadly in line with local and national averages. Examination results in business studies at A level fall below local and national averages.

KS4

Good features

527. Many pupils have a good understanding of business terminology and can apply a range of business concepts to a range of tasks.

528. In Y10, a small minority of pupils has a secure understanding of the factors of production and the importance of enterprise.

529. In Y11, most pupils have a good understanding of business terms. A small minority of pupils have a secure grasp of the factors that influence business profits.

530. A small minority of pupils is able to identify the main issues in planning a business and can carry out research and analyse their findings.

Shortcomings

531. A significant minority of pupils has an insecure grasp of key words and concepts. They are unable to apply these concepts in unfamiliar situations.

532. A large minority of pupils have an insecure understanding of fixed and variable costs.

Sixth form

Good features

533. Students make good progress in their depth of understanding of the wide variety of sources of business finance. They have a basic knowledge of the impact of variations in interest rates, inflation and levels of taxation on business performance.
534. Most students have a good understanding of the way business plans incorporate human, financial and physical resources. They have a clear understanding of the importance of enterprise in business development.
535. A small minority of students is confident in applying a range of business principles to unfamiliar situations.

Shortcomings

536. A small minority of students lacks an adequate awareness of current business developments.
537. A small minority of students has an insecure understanding of business terminology.

School's response to the inspection

On my appointment in September 2007, I was aware that the performance of the school had been in need of improvement for some time, especially in terms of examination results.

The report recognises some of the positive changes that have been made in the school, but it highlights very important areas where major improvements are required. The governors and the school accept that we need to make these improvements and we are determined to make sure that the school better serves the community of Rhyl in the future. The school will produce a detailed action plan to target, monitor and attain improvement.

In order to ensure our school improves as quickly as possible, we will need the full support of all members of our community. The UA is already supporting the school in its efforts to secure improvement and we will also seek the full backing of parents for the plans we must put in place to move the school forward.

As a school we are proud of the many achievements of our students, especially in terms of the arts, sport and the community. We must now press on to have the highest possible expectations of them in academic terms also so that they can all go on to achieve their true potential.

The school will take serious note of the findings of the inspection report and act upon them to ensure a positive future for Rhyl High School. With the support and help of our community, we will move purposefully forward to achieving success for all of our students.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Rhyl High School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Grange Road Rhyl Denbighshire
Postcode	LL18 4BY
Telephone number	01745 343533

Headteacher	Mr Mark Edwards
Date of appointment	1 September 2007
Chair of governors	Canon John Glover
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Harris
Dates of inspection	17–21 November 2008

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	151	181	176	211	228	51	26	1024

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	63	8	67.9

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	15.01:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	6:1
Average teaching group size	21
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	71.93%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	92.3	88.4	86.9	86.7	82.6	82.7	92.5	87.1
Term 2	92.2	89.1	85.8	85.8	82.4	75.6	85.1	86.3
Term 3	88.1	87.1	84.6	83.5	93.0	71.4	87.2	86.9

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	17%
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	451

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008													
Total number of pupils in Y9: 176													
Percentage of pupils at each level													
			N	D	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
English	Teacher assessment	School	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	21.8	9.6	44.1	21.0	2.6	0.0
		National	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.3	1.5	7.4	21.6	35.8	23.9	8.0	0.2
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.5	25.3	30.6	22.7	10.9	0.0
		National	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.3	1.1	7.4	18.4	25.0	30.4	15.7	0.8
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.8	25.8	37.1	20.5	4.8	0.0
		National	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.5	6.0	18.8	34.1	27.6	11.5	0.0

- N Pupils not awarded a level for reasons other than disapplication
D Disapplied under Section 364-367 of the Education Act 1996
W Pupils who are working towards level 1

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) according to teacher assessment			
In the school	47.6%	In Wales	58%

Public Examination Results:

For pupils aged 15, results in GCSE, Entry Level Qualification, GNVQ and NVQ	
Number of pupils aged 15 on the school roll in January 2007	235
Average GCSE or GNVQ points score per pupil	27

The percentage of 15 year old pupils who in 2007:	School	UA	Wales
entered for 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent	70	84	87
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to C, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	22	47	54
attained at least 5 GCSE grades A* to G, the equivalent vocational qualifications or a combination of both	67	82	86
attained GCSE grades A*-C in each of mathematics, science, English or Welsh first language (the core subject indicator)	11	34	40
entered at least one Entry level qualification, GCSE short course or GCSE	99	98	98
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-C or the vocational qualification equivalent	55	73	77
attained one or more GCSE grades A*-G or the vocational qualification equivalent	83	91	93
attained no graded GCSE or the vocational qualification equivalent	17	9	7
attained one or more Entry level qualification only	14	6	3
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Foundation level or NVQ level 1	n/a	n/a	n/a
attained a GNVQ Part 1, a GNVQ at Intermediate level or NVQ level 2	n/a	n/a	n/a

For pupils aged 17, results in A/AS, GNVQs and NVQs	
Number of pupils aged 17 in January 2007	88
Number of pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A level examinations or equivalent in 2007	32
Number of pupils entered for fewer than 2 GCE A levels or equivalent in 2007	6

	School	UA	Wales
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-C	34	66	67
Percentage of pupils entered who achieved 2 or more grades A-E	91	94	94
Average points score per candidate entering 2 or more subjects	12	18	20
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Intermediate or NVQ at level 2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of pupils who achieved a GNVQ Advanced or NVQ at level 3	n/a	n/a	n/a

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 71 days in the school and were joined by a member of the school's senior leadership team as nominee. They held a meeting before the inspection.

During the inspection, inspectors visited:

- 170 lessons;
- registrations and assemblies, and
- some extra-curricular activities.

Members of the inspection team met with:

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

The team also considered:

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

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

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Peter Harris Registered Inspector	KQ1, KQ5, Business studies
Gwynoro Jones	Lay inspector
Peredur Francis	KQ2 & mathematics
Delyth Williams	KQ3 & science
Heddwyn Evans	KQ4 & religious education
Keith Davies	KQ6 & science
Alan Kelly	KQ7 & history
Richard Roberts	Welsh second language
Elizabeth Hinkley	English
Keith Hopkins	Design technology
David Charles	Information technology
Eric Foster	Art
Hywel Lewis	Music & performing arts
Martyn S Williams	Modern foreign languages
Debra Makin	Physical education
Andrew Herdman	Geography
Paul Donovan	Special needs
James Roberts	Peer assessor
Ian Fawcett	Nominee

Acknowledgement

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

Contractor: EPPC/Severn Crossing Ltd
Suite H
Britannic House
Llandarcy
Neath SA10 6JQ