

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

A report on the quality of education in

**Rhymney Comprehensive School
Abertysswg Road
Rhymney
NP22 5XF**

School number: 6764090

Date of inspection: 9 March 2009

by

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

The inspection of Rhymney Comprehensive School took place between 09/03/09 and 12/03/09. An independent team of inspectors, led by Edward Aneurin Peter Harris undertook the inspection. Estyn, a statutory body independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales, commissioned the inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

There are three types of inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

This school received a **standard** inspection.

Year groups and key stages

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

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

Primary phase:

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

Secondary phase:

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

The National Curriculum covers four key stages as follows:

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

Contents	Page
Context	1
Summary	2
Recommendations	7
Standards	8
Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?	8
The quality of education and training	12
Key Question 2: How effective are teaching, training and assessment?	12
Key Question 3: How well do the learning experiences meet the needs and interests of learners and the wider community?	14
Key Question 4: How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	16
Leadership and management	19
Key Question 5: How effective are leadership and strategic management?	19
Key Question 6: How well do leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards?	21
Key Question 7: How efficient are leaders and managers in using resources?	22
Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning	24
Welsh second language	24
Science	26
Design and technology	28
Geography	30
History	31
Physical education	32
School's response to the inspection	34
Appendices	35
1 Basic information about the school	35
2 School data and indicators	35
3 National Curriculum assessments results	36
4 Evidence base of the inspection	40
5 Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team	41

Context

The nature of the provider

- 1 Rhymney Comprehensive School is an English medium, mixed 11-18 secondary school situated in the village of Abertyswg, in Caerphilly County Borough. Pupils and students are drawn from a group of villages in the northern part of the Rhymney Valley.
- 2 There are 951 pupils and students on roll compared with 790 at the time of the previous inspection in January 2003. By September 2005, approximately 50 pupils had been added to the roll as a result of the closure of a neighbouring school. There are 100 students in the sixth form compared to 74 in 2003. Sixth form curriculum provision is made in partnership with the Mid and Upper Rhymney Valley Collegium.
- 3 The school serves a community of high unemployment and social disadvantage. Twenty-nine percent of pupils qualify for free school meals, a figure well above the national average. The vast majority of pupils come from English speaking homes. No pupil comes from a home where Welsh is the first language.
- 4 There is a full range of ability represented at the school. However, approximately 60% of pupils entering the school have a reading age which is below their chronological age. Approximately 10% of pupils are identified on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and almost 4% of pupils have a statement of special educational need.
- 5 Since the time that the school was last inspected, there have been changes to the composition of the senior leadership team (SLT). The school has had an acting headteacher since January 2004. Two assistant headteachers were appointed later in that same year and a further in 2006. The fourth assistant headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection.

The school's priorities and targets

- 6 The school's mission is to provide a challenging education which promotes learning, raises standards and prepares young people for adult life. In its development plan, the many priorities the school identifies are grouped under developments in the following areas:
 - teaching and learning;
 - the curriculum;
 - information and communication technology;
 - the school environment; and
 - inclusion.
- 7 The school's self-evaluation report is based on the seven key questions of the Common Inspection Framework.
- 8 Numerical targets are set, that in 2010:
 - between 37% and 41% of pupils should reach at least level 5 in all three subjects combined in national curriculum (NC) assessments at the end of key stage (KS) 3; and

- between 35% and 40% of pupils should achieve at least 5 grades A*-C, and between 82% and 84% at least 5 grades A*-G in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination or its equivalent.

Summary

- 9 Rhymney Comprehensive School has many good features. It also has a number of shortcomings which need attention.
- 10 Among the many good features are strengths in the way the school:
- plans its curriculum and care arrangements;
 - provides for pupils with SEN;
 - promotes good behaviour and sustainable development; and
 - makes use of its resources and accommodation.
- 11 However there are shortcomings in standards, teaching and learning and in leadership and management.
- 12 The following table shows the grades awarded in the seven key questions:

Table of grades awarded

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

- 13 Apart from key question 3, where the school awarded itself grade 2, the grades awarded by inspectors are all one grade lower than those offered by the school in its self-evaluation report.

Standards achieved

- 14 Standards in the school have good features which outweigh shortcomings.
- 15 The team inspected the standards that pupils and students achieve in six subjects. The following table shows the grades awarded at KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form.

Subject	KS3	KS4	Sixth-form
Welsh Second language	2	2	2
Science	3	3	2
Design Technology	2	1	1
Geography	3	3	N/A
History	2	1	N/A
Physical Education	2	3	2

- 16 On the whole, in comparison with the time that the school was last inspected, these figures represent a significant improvement in the standards of design technology and the maintenance of high standards in Welsh second language, history and physical education. However, the failure to raise standards in science, and the fall in standards in geography, are shortcomings.
- 17 The following table shows the percentages of grades awarded at each stage in the six subjects inspected.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	0%	54%	46%	0%	0%
KS4	19%	35%	42%	4%	0%
Sixth form	14%	57%	29%	0%	0%
Whole school	7%	48%	44%	1%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 81 lessons					

- 18 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures indicate that overall standards have not improved since that time. Inspectors awarded the two top grades for standards in 55% of lessons compared with 64% of lessons when the school was last inspected. Shortcomings were identified in 45% of lessons in comparison with 36% in 2003.
- 19 Almost all pupils achieve standards that are in line with expectations based on their prior learning and their abilities. Many pupils exceed them. Although pupils' abilities on entry are relatively low, most pupils make good progress in many subjects. Pupils with SEN make very good progress and achieve good standards.
- 20 On the whole, at KS3, in the NC teachers' assessments in 2008, results were below average when compared to similar schools. Results in English were close to the average, while results in mathematics were above average. In science, results were below average.
- 21 At KS4, though pass rates are below local and national averages, pupils make good progress when compared to targets based on prior attainment. On the whole, when compared with similar schools, GCSE pass rates are slightly below average.
- 22 Overall, in the past three years, pass rates at five or more grades A*-C and grades A*-G have been in line with the average for similar schools. In English and science, passes at grade C and above have been close to the average while passes in mathematics have been above average.
- 23 On the whole, standards of achievement in the sixth form have good features and no important shortcomings. At A Level, results at grades A-C and A-E fall close to both local and national averages.
- 24 At KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form, girls outperform boys.
- 25 Pupils and students are good listeners. They work well with one another and with their teachers. Their reading and numeracy skills are good in relation to their ability and their skills in ICT have improved significantly since the time the school was last inspected.
- 26 Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' speaking and writing skills. A minority of pupils, and a small minority of students, have a limited technical

vocabulary, need extensive encouragement to give extended answers to questions and lack confidence when speaking to an audience.

- 27 These shortcomings also extend to pupils' and students' writing, where there is a wide variety of standards. In the lessons where there were shortcomings, pupils frequently had incomplete work in their books and their writing lacked the necessary detail and depth to explain the points they wished to make.
- 28 On the whole, students in the sixth form have a good understanding of how well they are progressing and what they have to do in order to make good progress. However, with a significant minority of pupils at KS3 and KS4, this understanding is not secure.
- 29 While bilingual skills are developed well through Welsh lessons, pupils and students make limited use made of them throughout the school.
- 30 Levels of attendance have improved over recent years.
- 31 Pupils and students make good progress in their personal, moral, social and wider development. The behaviour of the vast majority is good, often very good. The way in which learners respect peers, adults and diversity in society is good.
- 32 Pupils and students respond well to the opportunities the school provides to work with other partners and to individual opportunities for involvement in the school's life. They are well prepared for effective participation in the work place and the community.

The quality of education and training

- 33 Teaching at the school has good features which outweigh shortcomings.
- 34 The following grades were awarded for teaching in the 108 lessons observed:

Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
16%	53%	27%	4%	0%

- 35 These percentages fall below the figures for all inspections in Wales 2007-2008, where 17% of lessons were judged to have good and outstanding features and 58% to have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 36 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these grades show that, while the proportion of teaching that has very good features has increased since that time, so has the proportion of lessons judged to have shortcomings.
- 37 In lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge. They plan their lessons well and establish constructive relationships with the class. They use a good range of resources to engage pupils. The school's recent investment in ICT is put to effective use.
- 38 However, in most subjects, there are shortcomings in teachers' plans to provide appropriate opportunities for learners to develop and apply bilingual skills.
- 39 In the lessons awarded the top grade, teachers had high expectations of pupils and their use of questions developed pupils' and students' ability to explore their knowledge and understanding in discussion and their written work.
- 40 In the almost one third of lessons, where there were shortcomings, teaching lacked challenge. There was often too much direction by teachers. Explanations were over-long and the pace of the lessons was slow. Teachers'

questions did not engage pupils and learners in discussion of their understanding or help them improve the quality of their work.

- 41 While the school meets statutory requirements for assessment, marking and day-to-day assessment are of inconsistent quality. For example, while practice in design technology is strong, there are shortcomings in science and geography.
- 42 The school makes good use of reports to inform parents and carers of the learners' achievement and progress. In many cases these contain useful information about the work covered and individual performance. However, in a significant minority of subjects, advice about how to improve further is less clear.
- 43 Pupils know their targets and the criteria for achieving success in the majority of subjects. In a few subjects, there are good examples of effective peer and self-assessment. In a significant minority of subjects, assessments are used less effectively to inform planning and improve learning.
- 44 There are good features and no important shortcomings in the school's curriculum provision.
- 45 At KS3, KS4 and in the sixth form, the curriculum provided is broadly based and balanced and meets the needs of pupils and students. It has coherence and progression and enables learners to achieve qualifications at appropriate levels.
- 46 The school has good links with Rhymney College and other schools in the consortium. At KS4, learners have the opportunity of attending the college for a number of vocational courses. Participation in the consortium enables the school to offer a wide range of options in the sixth form.
- 47 The provision to develop pupils' basic skills is very good. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark. However, provision to develop pupils' key skills is variable. While the school provides many opportunities to develop learners' numeracy and ICT skills, opportunities to develop their speaking, writing and bilingual skills are more limited.
- 48 There is a good range of extra-curricular activity provided by the school, particularly in sport. The way in which the school promotes healthy eating and education for sustainable development is very good. There is a well-supported eco-committee which has secured several local and national awards.
- 49 The provision for work-related education (WRE) is of good quality. The school has good links with local employers who provide good opportunities for work experience and advice about interview techniques.
- 50 The support and guidance of pupils and students have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 51 The arrangements to plan and manage the support of learners are good. There is a fully inclusive ethos in the school that promotes the well-being of all pupils and students. The school works in effective partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies. Impartial information, of good quality, is provided to enable learners make the best choice of courses for their future.
- 52 Transition arrangements at all levels are good. The provision for personal and social education (PSE) is very good. It includes careers education and is well designed and organised.

- 53 The ways in which the school monitors the attendance and punctuality are effective. The arrangements for child protection are good and the way in which the school seeks to promote good behaviour is very good. However, there are shortcomings in the school's arrangements to monitor pupils' and students' academic progress.
- 54 The provision to support pupils with SEN is a particular strength. Individual needs are very well diagnosed. A whole-school commitment to inclusion ensures that support of individual needs is very effective. Pupils with SEN make very good progress.
- 55 The school is effective in supporting learners from all backgrounds, promoting equality and good relations and respecting diversity. However, while the school's disability accessibility plan successfully provides for access to the building, there are shortcomings in the way in which the plan addresses the question of access to the curriculum.

Leadership and management

- 56 Good features outweigh shortcomings in leadership and management.
- 57 The school development plan and the prospectus clearly identify the school's vision of providing pupils and students with a challenging education that promotes their learning, raises standards and prepares them for adult life.
- 58 The leadership provided by the acting headteacher and his assistants is very effective on a day-to-day basis. As a team, they work very well together and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. They take good account of all local and national priorities and contribute enthusiastically to consortia arrangements.
- 59 There is, however, an imbalance in the allocation of strategic responsibilities among the leadership team which sometimes impedes the effective implementation of change and inhibits its monitoring and evaluation. As a result, there is inconsistency in the degree of challenge set for pupils and the targets set by the school do not make a sufficient impact on standards.
- 60 Though the majority of departments are well managed, the quality of middle management across the school varies. While there are examples of good practice and team work, there are, also, shortcomings in the planning for improvement and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment.
- 61 Governors represent a wide range of community interests. They are very supportive of the school and have a very good relationship with staff, pupils and students. They provide a good level of help in determining the school's priorities and perform a valuable role in monitoring the quality of provision. Governors ensure that all legal and regulatory requirements are met.
- 62 There are well established systems to manage the performance of teaching and support staff. These, together with the review visits conducted by the UA, are the main ways in which the school gathers first hand evidence on the quality of classroom experiences. While there are some very good examples of sharing good practice, there is no formal system for identifying and sharing good practice in teaching and learning.
- 63 The school's self-evaluation report identifies most of its strengths and shortcomings, though some shortcomings were not given sufficient weight.

- 64 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the way the school has made progress in addressing the key issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection report.
- 65 Very good progress has been made in supporting pupils with SEN and monitoring attendance. However, there is too great a variation in the expectations teachers have of learners. Only a small minority of departments implement the assessment for learning policy consistently and use data well to refine targets for individuals and the subject.
- 66 While, on the whole, there are good features and no important shortcomings in the way in which the school uses its resources, the provision made by the school to accommodate learning and the way it matches resources to its needs are very good.
- 67 All subjects are taught by specialist teachers. There is a good range of non-teaching staff, including learning support and behaviour support assistants, who are well motivated and managed.
- 68 The provision of specialist accommodation in physical education, design technology, ICT and in science is good. The school has two large halls as well as a sports hall and uses them to good effect.
- 69 The school has invested in a very good range of ICT hardware and software and uses these resources well.
- 70 The acting headteacher and the finance manager monitor the budget regularly and with great care. The use of the budget reflects the priorities of the school development plan and, overall, the school provides good value for money.

Recommendations

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

- R1 improve standards generally at KS3 and KS4, particularly in science and geography, and in the key skills of speaking, writing and bilingual competence throughout the school.
- R2 embed the assessment for learning policy by eliminating the shortcomings in teaching and learning identified in this report.
- R3 develop further the consistency of day-to-day marking, ensuring that pupils and students are given specific guidance to improve the standard of their work.
- R4 improve subject and individual target setting and the monitoring of pupils' and students' academic performance.
- R5 review the strategic role of leaders and managers so that strategic priorities are clearly identified, inconsistencies in teaching and learning are eliminated and best practice is monitored and disseminated rigorously.

Aspects of all these recommendations are addressed in the current school development plan (SDP).

The governing body is responsible for amending its current development plan to incorporate action in response to the recommendations within 45 working days of receiving this report, showing what the school is going to do about the

recommendations. This plan, or a summary of it, will be circulated to all parents at the school.

Standards

Key Question 1: How well do learners achieve?

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

71 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report. The grade 3 was awarded because standards observed in lessons and variable trends for improvement in public examinations indicate that there is still some underachievement.

KS3 and KS4

Pupils' success in attaining agreed learning goals

72 Since the time the school was last inspected, there has been a variation in the way in which standards in the six subjects inspected have improved. Standards in design technology have improved considerably. In Welsh second language, history and physical education, standards have been maintained. Standards in science have not improved and standards in geography have declined.

73 Overall, the pupils at the school cover the full range of ability. Testing indicates that over two-thirds of the entry in the last three years have had a reading age two years or more below their actual age.

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

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
KS3	0%	54%	46%	0%	0%
KS4	19%	35%	42%	4%	0%
KS3 & KS4	7%	47%	45%	1%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 74 lessons					

75 The proportion of lessons good and outstanding features was greater at KS4 than at KS3. Inspectors awarded the two top grades for standards in 55% of lessons compared with 64% of lessons when the school was last inspected.

76 Shortcomings were identified in 45% of lessons in comparison with 36% in 2003. Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, these figures indicate that overall standards have not improved since that time.

77 Results at KS3 fall below national averages for Wales. In 2008, nearly 41% of pupils reached at least level five in the core subjects combined, compared to 60% nationally.

78 On the whole, in comparison with similar schools achievement in mathematics was in the top 50% and achievement in English was close to the average. Achievement in science and in the three subjects combined was in the bottom 25%.

79 Achievement in English and mathematics was in line with what was expected, based on prior attainment. Achievement in science and, in the three core subjects combined, was below what was expected.

- 80 At KS4, results fall below both local and national averages. In 2008, 38% of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A*-C compared to 51% locally and 56% nationally.
- 81 Eighty percent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A*-G, or their equivalent, compared to 86% locally and 87% nationally.
- 82 In comparison with similar schools, the percentage of pupils gaining grade C or above in English, mathematics and science and in the three core subjects combined, is in line with the average. In 2008, the percentage of pupils gaining grade C and above in mathematics was greater than average, when compared to similar schools.
- 83 The school agrees targets for examination attainment with the UA. In 2008, at KS4, the school met one out of the four of its targets, namely for passes at level five or above in assessments in English. At KS4, while the school missed its targets for five or more passes at GCSE or their equivalent, it missed the target for passes at grade C and above in English, mathematics and science by only 1%.
- 84 At both KS3 and KS4, girls outperform boys.
- 85 Pupils with SEN are given good support. They make good progress relative to their abilities. Increasing numbers gain a qualification before they leave school.
- 86 Standards in the key skills vary. Pupils develop their number skills across a good range of subjects and standards of have good features and no important shortcomings. Pupils' ICT skills have improved since the last inspection. The school has eliminated many of the shortcomings identified.
- 87 The vast majority of pupils throughout the school listen well. They are attentive both to teachers and fellow pupils. They respond to instructions promptly and answer questions willingly. Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups, in creative and problem-solving opportunities.
- 88 Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' speaking and writing skills. A significant minority of pupils has a limited technical vocabulary, needs extensive encouragement to give extended answers to questions and lacks confidence when speaking to an audience.
- 89 Standards of pupils' written work also vary. Pupils' narrative writing is good in relation to their ability and the more able pupils present their opinions well. Those of middle and lower ability lack confidence in structuring their writing, though drafting leads to improvement. In the lessons where there were shortcomings, pupils' writing lacked the necessary detail and depth to explain the points they wished to make. While spelling and punctuation were in line with pupils' abilities, pupils' books frequently had incomplete work.

Their progress in learning

- 90 Good features outweigh shortcomings in pupils' progress. There are inconsistencies between subject areas and ability groups.
- 91 In comparison with attainment on entry to the school, pupils' progress is good. They respond well to the encouragement provided and are effectively prepared for the next stage of education and training.

- 92 Pupils with SEN do particularly well, especially where they have learning support. Most leave school with recognised qualifications.
- 93 More able pupils are challenged in the majority of subjects, particularly where the teaching has outstanding features. In a number of classes, where there is underachievement, it is related to poor literacy skills.
- 94 Pupils' abilities to improve their own performance are limited. Where targets are set, they are not consistently reinforced by diagnostic marking. This has a detrimental effect on pupils' motivation to succeed and to do even better.
- 95 While pupils' achievement in Welsh second language has good features, their bilingual skills are not well developed outside Welsh lessons.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

- 96 The progress made by pupils in their personal, social, moral and wider development is a strong feature of the school. Pupils get on well with one another and with visitors.
- 97 Pupils' behaviour in class is generally good, though there are lapses when teaching does not challenge them or where they are not supported in their learning. Their behaviour and break and lunchtime are also good.
- 98 Attendance has improved in recent years. Attendance levels are close to the UA average and the school is close to meeting its target of 90%.
- 99 Pupils make good progress in their spiritual and cultural development. They make good use of opportunities in assemblies, PSE and other lessons to develop an understanding of diversity in society. They are aware of the importance of equality of opportunity and show respect for people from different backgrounds in school and the wider community.
- 100 Careers guidance and work-related education of good quality prepare pupils well for the world of work. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards life-long learning and develop the skills they will need for effective participation in the workplace and the community.

Sixth form

Students' success in attaining agreed learning goals

- 101 On the whole, standards in the sixth form are good. In design technology standards were judged to be good with outstanding features. In Welsh second language, science, and physical education standards were good. Geography and history are currently not offered in the sixth form.
- 102 The sixth form curriculum is provided in partnership with Rhymney College and other schools in the consortium. As two of the six subjects to be inspected had no sixth form classes and, in science, only physics and biology, the sample of lessons observed at sixth form level was small.
- 103 The following table shows the standards achieved by students in the subjects inspected.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth form	14%	57%	29%	0%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 7 lessons					

- 104 When compared with inspections of secondary schools conducted in Wales in 2007-2008, these figures fall short of the average of lessons which had good and outstanding features.
- 105 A level passes at two or more grades A-C and grades A-E fall in line with UA and all Wales averages.
- 106 As at KS3 and KS4, standards in the key skills of communication, use of number and ICT have good features and no important shortcomings.
- 107 Students listen well to the teacher and to one another. They develop a greater knowledge of subject specific vocabulary and express their views with growing confidence. A minority, generally more able students, pose probing questions and engage in extended discussion with their teachers and one another.
- 108 Students write at length, particularly when encouraged to use subject-specific vocabulary fluently and accurately. More able students write critically and justify their opinions with relevant argument.
- 109 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, "power-point" and spreadsheets to good effect.
- 110 As at KS3 and KS4, students' bilingual skills are not well developed.

Their progress in learning

- 111 Apart from mathematics where good progress is made by students, most subject areas indicate a negative overall value added based on average GCSE results.
- 112 Approximately one quarter to one third of sixth form students progresses to higher education.
- 113 In lessons, students make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills. Most maintain a steady rate of progress.
- 114 Students have a good understanding of how well they are doing. Students also make progress in areas not directly linked to their main academic programmes. They benefit from the many opportunities provided by the school to exercise leadership responsibility.

The development of their personal, social and learning skills

- 115 The progress that students make in the development of their personal, social and learning skills is a strength of the school. They collaborate well and show commitment and concentration in lessons. They develop more independent approaches to learning and take the necessary steps to review their progress and work towards improvement.
- 116 Sixth form students respond well to the opportunities to become more confident and independent. They make a good contribution to the life of the school. They act as good role models to younger pupils. They have good levels of attendance and punctuality. They collaborate well together and show competent problem solving skills.
- 117 Sixth form students benefit from 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 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

118 This is one grade below the school's self-evaluation grade. This is because the team considered the percentage of lessons with shortcomings in teaching and assessment to be significant.

KS3 and KS4

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

119 The following table shows the quality of teaching and assessment in the 74 lessons observed in the six subjects and 23 lessons in other subjects at KS3 and KS4.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
6 subjects	16%	50%	29%	5%	0%
Other subjects	17%	52%	27%	4%	0%
Total	16%	51%	28%	5%	0%
These grades are based on observations of 97 lessons					

- 120 The quality of teaching and assessment is below the average for Wales as reported by HMCI. Sixty-seven per cent of lessons were graded 1 and 2 compared to 75% in all inspections in Wales in 2007-2008.
- 121 Although the size and nature of the sample are different from those of the last inspection, the percentage of lessons with outstanding features has increased from 10% to 16%. However, the percentage of lesson graded equivalent to grades 1 and 2 is slightly lower. In the last inspection, no lessons were graded to be equivalent to grade 4, in this inspection there were 5%.
- 122 In lessons where teaching is outstanding, with the majority being in design technology, teachers use a very wide range of teaching methods to motivate pupils and ask searching questions to probe their understanding. They plan lessons very carefully to sustain pupil's motivation and consolidate learning at key points in lessons.
- 123 Teachers have good subject knowledge and in the majority of lessons they set clear learning objectives which they share with pupils.
- 124 Relationships are good and teachers know their pupils well. This enables the majority of pupils to engage effectively in their learning. Teachers manage behaviour well.
- 125 In two-thirds of lessons observed, the level of task-setting is good. These lessons proceed with pace and pupils are expected to complete their tasks to a good standard.
- 126 Many teachers make good use of the school's ICT facilities in planning and delivering lessons.

- 127 The school creates a supportive atmosphere and offers learning experiences where each pupil is respected as an individual, regardless of gender, race or disability. More able and talented pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work in a few lessons, though this is not consistent across the curriculum.
- 128 A third of the lessons observed were awarded a grade 3 or 4. Shortcomings were identified where the pace of the lesson was slow and there was insufficient challenge in the tasks set. In these lessons, teachers' expectations were too low and they were prepared to accept untidy and incomplete work. Also, too much teacher direction limited the opportunities for pupils to develop a range of skills.
- 129 The school's promotion of bilingualism has good features which outweigh shortcomings. In many lessons, registers are taken in Welsh and pupils are encouraged to write headings in their exercise books bilingually. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their bilingual skills during lessons.
- 130 Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop assessment for learning strategies. Progress has been made in some curriculum areas, however its full implementation is still variable in achieving the desired improvements in learning.

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

- 131 Good features outweigh shortcomings in the assessment of pupils' work.
- 132 Where good features were evident, teachers assessed pupils' work carefully and regularly and provided detailed written feedback to pupils.
- 133 However, the quality of the assessment of pupils' work varies too much across the school. In a minority of subjects, teachers do not mark their pupils' work regularly, or with sufficient rigour. Feedback is often superficial and fails to give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve.
- 134 The school meets the statutory requirements for assessment and reporting and satisfies examination board requirements.
- 135 The school sets targets for pupil achievement and these are recorded on the school's information system. Teachers assess and record their pupils' progress towards meeting these targets five times each year. These data are summarised to diagnose and tackle underachievement. Heads of year interview some pupils following these assessments, however form tutors are not regularly involved which limits the effectiveness of mentoring a wider cross-section of pupils.
- 136 While self and peer assessment are used as effective tools to improve the standard of pupils' work in some subjects, they are not consistently used across the curriculum.
- 137 A full academic report and some interim reports are issued to parents each year. The majority of subjects give detailed feedback of pupil progress and identify clear targets for improvement. However in other subjects, comments on the standards of pupils' work and targets for improvement lack detail.

Sixth form

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

138 In the 11 lessons observed the grades awarded for teaching and assessment were:

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Sixth Form	9%	73%	18%	0%	0%

139 The sample size was small because there were no students studying history or geography, and some groups in other subjects were taught at other establishments in the consortium. Therefore comparisons with other key stages or national figures are not reliable.

140 The good features at KS3 and KS4 were also present in sixth form lessons. These included carefully planned lessons, with clear learning objectives and in-depth teacher explanations and questioning. In lessons, teachers established strong supportive relationships and set a good pace with suitably challenging tasks. They employed a good range of teaching methods and resources, including ICT.

141 In lessons where there were shortcomings, there was excessive direction by the teacher and the pace of the lesson was rather slow.

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

142 In many of the lessons observed, teachers mark and assess students' work well. They provide useful feedback that gives students clear guidance how to improve.

143 The school sets targets for students' achievement and these are recorded on the school's information system. Teachers assess and record student's progress towards reaching these targets five times each year. All students are interviewed by their form tutors after each assessment and targets for improvement are agreed. This is a good feature.

144 As in KS3 and KS4, students receive a full academic report and two interim reports each year. Again, a majority of subjects give a detailed report with clear targets for improvement. In other subjects, these are less specific.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

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

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

146 There are many good features in the way that learning experiences meet learners' needs and interests.

147 At KS3, all the national curriculum subjects are taught to learners. Arrangements are in place for all learners to be accredited with qualifications in ICT by the end of Y9.

148 At KS4, the school offers a wide range of courses from which learners can choose their individual learning pathways. All learners follow the full GCSE

course in Welsh and either the short or full course in religious education. Vocational subjects are offered as part of the WAG Learning Pathways (14-19) options menu in partnership with the collegium.

- 149 The number of subjects available almost meets the WAG requirements as agreed by the UA and is on target to do so by September 2009. The subjects are organised into the five domains and the Learning Core is met. A few learners in KS4 follow a modified curriculum which combines study in school with attendance at college, an independent provider, and a few learners attend college for five days a week.
- 150 Sixth form students have a choice of 40 subjects at 'A' level or five vocational courses at Level 3. Students in Y12 work towards qualifications in three of the six key skills.
- 151 The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of learners. Almost all learners are able to follow their first choice of subject.
- 152 Liaison with primary schools is good. There is an extensive induction programme and transition links are effective. Learners are prepared well for entry into the sixth form, college or employment.
- 153 The school has very effective provision for the delivery of basic skills to identify learners in KS3 and has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for 2009.
- 154 The school provides for a wide range of enrichment experiences through, for example, the Welsh, Music and physical education departments. These are valued by learners and contribute well to their personal and social development.
- 155 There is a detailed, fully comprehensive PSE programme which provides well for learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It follows the national framework in full. All learners take part in a daily act of collective worship, either in morning assembly or in registration groups, where teachers foster spiritual and moral development using well prepared presentations.
- 156 There are strong and close links with parents, who are very supportive of the school. There are good links with the local community, including employers, through a range of initiatives which foster positive relationships. Through the 14-19 network, partnerships with local schools and colleges are developing very well, including links with initial teacher training establishments.
- 157 There is no plan for the delivery and co-ordinated strategic development of Key Skills across the school. Current practice within the subject areas is not monitored and this is a shortcoming.
- 158 The school curriculum complies fully with current statutory and regulatory requirements.

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

- 159 Education for sustainable development is an outstanding feature of the school. The school has had recent confirmation of the Green Flag award which is the highest level of the eco-schools' initiative. The PSE and extra-curricular programme include a wide range of activities which contribute to learners' awareness and understanding of sustainable development and aspects of global

citizenship, for example using Fair Trade goods and the building of The Breathing Place, an eco-area.

- 160 The school provides effective work-related education, which follows the national framework. There are positive links with Careers Wales and learners are well prepared for the world of work. There are good preparation and after-placement activities, courses available at the local college and developing links with the local Education Business Partnership (EBP).
- 161 The school promotes equality of access and opportunity to all. Through good pastoral provision, the PSE programme and the widening curriculum, the school tackles social disadvantage well.
- 162 The school arrangements for developing entrepreneurial skills are good. There is a programme of activities from Y7 to Y13 which emphasizes decision making and problem solving skills. Learners participate in a number of enterprise initiatives, including the compulsory Young Enterprise scheme in Y12.
- 163 There is a comprehensive policy for promoting bilingualism, but the extent to which learners develop their competence is limited and lacks progression. This is a shortcoming.
- 164 The school has good contacts with local employers and the recently established EBP, but learners are not sufficiently aware of some aspects of employers' needs, for example with respect to interview and form-filling skills.
- 165 Within the PSE programme and in developing its curriculum to suit the needs and aspirations of its learners, the school is taking good account of WAG priorities. However, not all learners are developing the skills and attitudes to make progress and to be responsible for their own learning.

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

Grade 2: Good features and no important shortcomings

The quality of care, support and guidance to learners

- 166 The inspection team awarded this key question one grade lower than the school awarded itself in its self-evaluation report. Although the inspection team identified some outstanding features they were insufficient to justify the award of a grade 1.
- 167 Arrangements for pastoral care are very good and effectively directed by a member of the SLT. Teachers know their pupils well. The Y7 tutor stays with Y7 but other form tutors move with their form from Y8 to Y11. There is a head of the sixth form and two year tutors.
- 168 The school manages all aspects of its care arrangements very effectively. Most pupils feel valued and safe. A supervised 'safe-haven' room is open every day at break and lunch times for vulnerable pupils and any other pupil who wishes to use it. An outstanding feature of the school's care arrangements is the detailed health care planning; all pupils with medical conditions have comprehensive health care plans drawn up.

- 169 There is a designated person for 'looked after children' and the school ensures that all case conferences are attended and that all personal education plans are regularly updated.
- 170 The school has very good links with support services such as Social Services, the local police, the Youth Offending Team, the Children and Adolescence Mental Health Service, speech and language therapists and the Unitary Authority's (UA) inclusion and educational psychological services.
- 171 There are strong links with parents and their views are sought and considered by the school, either through direct meetings or by questionnaire. Parents of pupils in Year 6 in the feeder primary school are invited to attend a parents' evening as part of the transition process.
- 172 The careers co-ordinator seeks the views of local employers and has forged helpful links with the EBP. All pupils in Y11 and Y12 use local employers for work experience which is effectively monitored.
- 173 There is a very effective school council elected by secret ballot. They hold regular, supervised meetings and have been instrumental in achieving beneficial changes within the school. The school has considered all recommendations put forward by the council and has acted to implement them, such as supporting a charity that provides goats for Africa and responding to the healthy eating initiative by creating a wider choice of healthy foods at lunchtime.
- 174 Effective arrangements are in place to support pupils in their option choices in Y9 and Y11. All Y9 pupils have interviews with a Careers Wales careers officer and receive impartial advice in tutorial sessions. Pupils with SEN have interviews with a specialist SEN careers officer. In addition, an options evening is held for pupils and their parents where they can discuss choices with members of staff. The Youth Mentor supports pupils who opt for vocational courses in the local college and attends with them to offer in-class support three days a week.
- 175 Good arrangements are in place for transition between Y6 and Y7. The head of pastoral care, head of Y7 and SENCO visit all feeder primary schools to talk to Y6 pupils and collect data and information from Y6 teachers including friendship groups. Year 6 pupils visit the school for two full days before admission.
- 176 When pupils arrive in Y7 the induction arrangements are very good. On their first day, only Y7 pupils and sixth form students are in school. Valuable time is spent with the form tutor who explains their rights, responsibilities and what is expected from them. Trained Y10 peer mentors assist with helping Y7 settle in. The first six lessons of the PSE programme are designed specifically to help the induction process and explore the themes of 'Getting to Know You', 'The New School' and 'Friendship and Bullying'.
- 177 An outstanding feature of provision is the very high quality personal support given by the Pupil Support Manager, the Youth Mentor and the Learning Coach. Pupils can be referred by the head of year or can self-refer. They give outstanding support to pupils and students on a rolling programme of weekly sessions dealing with self-esteem, emotions and the power to change things in their lives. They also deal with anger-management and bullies and victims. They very sensitively deal with bereavement and successfully help pupils to come to terms with it and achieve closure.

- 178 All pupils have access to the very well designed PSE programme. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 have discrete, weekly PSE lessons. Good account is taken of the new national framework for PSE and statutory elements are well covered.
- 179 In 2005, following the closure of another comprehensive school in the UA and its pupils being transferred to the school, there was a significant reduction in the attendance rate. Since then the school has done much to remedy this through its attendance monitoring systems. Rates of attendance have increased each year.
- 180 The school makes very good provision for careers education and has recently been awarded the Careers Wales Quality Award. A comprehensive programme is delivered to pupils in Y9 to Y11 and targeted Y11 pupils are involved in mock interviews. There are very strong links with Careers Wales. Students in Years 12 and 13 have the opportunity to attend a two day careers convention at the University of Glamorgan.
- 181 The school has a number of strategies in place to ensure that pupils and students are safe and encourage and enable them to have healthy lifestyles. These include the very good healthy eating initiative and various modules in the PSE programme.
- 182 Two members of the senior leadership team are designated child protection officers (one male and one female). All staff have received training in, and are aware of the school's procedures in, child protection.

The quality of provision for additional learning needs

- 183 There are outstanding features in the school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs. The school has very good regard for the Code of Practice for Wales and the statutory framework for inclusive education.
- 184 Provision for pupils with SEN is very effectively managed by the SENCO and her assistant. Provision is rigorously evaluated and all interventions are mapped and costed in detail.
- 185 Pupils with SEN make very good progress. Individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with a statement of SEN are of very good quality and contain subject specific targets for each subject. These are reviewed regularly with parental consultation. Individual Education Plans for pupils at school action and school action plus have clear targets set for literacy and numeracy plus a pupil target and a parent target. Most teachers take account of IEPs in their planning and differentiation is a strong feature in lessons for pupils with SEN. Pupils are also well supported by an effective team of Learning Support Assistants.
- 186 Individual behaviour plans (IBPs) are drawn up for pupils with behavioural difficulties. These are drafted and reviewed in consultation with parents and monitored on a weekly basis by the Pupil Support Manager, the Youth Mentor and the Learning Coach.
- 187 The school has effectively reduced the number of exclusions over the past few years. The school has an 'Inclusion Room' which caters for pupils who would have been excluded but remain in school; work is provided for them by subject departments. The school also draws up effective pastoral support plans for pupils in danger of being excluded.
- 188 More able and talented (MAT) pupils are identified from Cognitive Ability Test scores and by subject departments. Details of these pupils are made known to

all teachers. The school has developed good links with other schools to share strategies for supporting MAT pupils in a range of activities such as drama and creative writing.

The quality of provision for equal opportunities

- 189 Overall the quality of provision for equal opportunities is good. Appropriate policies are in place and the school has effective procedures to implement them.
- 190 Progress and achievement are analysed to ensure that different groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic heritage, maintain standards.
- 191 The school addresses gender issues well. Technology, for instance, is taught on a carousel basis, so that all pupils experience all aspects of it. All courses in the school are open to both boys and girls; in the recent past, for example, boys have studied health and social care.
- 192 The school actively promotes good race relations and has formed strong links with the Valleys Racial Equality Council (VALREC). VALREC has delivered twilight training sessions to teachers on racism, honour/shame and forced marriages. The school has also carried out a racial diversity audit across all subject departments to ensure that racial equality issues are promoted.
- 193 Pupils report that issues of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The Pupil Support Manager holds mediation sessions for pupils where they are able to resolve their differences. Staff training sessions have also focused on bullying and homophobic bullying. The school keeps a record of any incidents of racial discrimination and how they were resolved; parents are always involved in this process.
- 194 The school building and site are accessible to disabled pupils and visitors. There are wheelchair ramps, wide corridors and a lift as well as disabled parking spaces. The school has a Disability Equality Scheme and an accessibility plan. However, there are important omissions from each document which detract from their effectiveness.

Leadership and management

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

- 195 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report. The grade 3 was awarded because of the shortcomings identified in standards, teaching and learning and inconsistency in the impact of leadership and management across the school.

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

- 196 Good features outweigh shortcomings in leadership and management.
- 197 The school development plan and the prospectus clearly identify the school's vision of providing pupils and students with a challenging education that promotes their learning, raises standards and prepares them for adult life. This vision has provided a common sense of purpose for the well-being of learners that is reflected throughout the school.

- 198 The SLT are totally committed to the success of the school. The leadership provided by the acting headteacher and his assistants is very effective on a day-to-day basis. As a team, they work very well together and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. These priorities, where they have been led and managed consistently, have taken the school forward.
- 199 However, an imbalance in the allocation of strategic responsibilities among the leadership team sometimes impedes the effective implementation of change and inhibits its monitoring and evaluation. As a result, there is inconsistency in the degree of challenge set by departments and the targets for subject areas and pupils do not make a sufficient impact on standards.
- 200 For the most part, heads of department and heads of year have clear roles and responsibilities. There is a strong focus on raising standards and there is a positive culture of affirming good practice and outcomes. Communication at all levels is good and members of staff at all levels feel valued and supported.
- 201 However, though the majority of departments are well managed, the quality of middle management across the school varies. In those departments where there are outstanding features, or predominantly good features, there is clear direction, shared norms about learning and teaching and a large measure of consistent practice. Where practice is less good, there are shortcomings in the planning for improvement, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment, and an absence of effective quality assurance procedures.
- 202 The management of pupil welfare is good. It is consistent in the way it addresses the pastoral needs of pupils and students. However, the enhanced role of pastoral staff in monitoring and supporting learner's academic progress is less effective.
- 203 Leaders and managers take appropriate account of WAG priorities. Work-related education is a high priority as is preparing pupils and students for life-long learning. The school works well to promote healthy lifestyles and an understanding of the importance of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.
- 204 The school is making made good progress in developing equal access to learning pathways that meet pupils' and students' individual needs. Partnerships with other providers are well developed.
- 205 There are well-established systems to manage the performance of teaching and support staff. These, together with the review visits conducted by the UA, are the main ways in which the school gathers first hand evidence on the quality of classroom experiences. While there are some very good examples of sharing good practice, for example in history and design technology, there is no formal system for identifying and sharing good practice in teaching and learning. As a result, there is an inconsistency in expectations.

How well governors or other supervisory bodies meet their responsibilities

- 206 Governors represent a wide range of community interests. They give of their time freely. They are very supportive of the school and have a very good relationship with staff, pupils and students.
- 207 Governors work through an appropriate range of committees. They provide a good level of help in determining the school's priorities and perform a valuable

role in monitoring the quality of provision through reports brought to them by leaders and managers is the school.

208 Governors ensure that all legal and regulatory requirements are met.

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

Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

209 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than that awarded by the school in its self-evaluation report for this key question.

210 The grades awarded for the six of the key questions by the inspector team were lowered by one grade apart from key question two which matched the school's grade.

How effectively the school's performance is monitored and evaluated

Good features

211 There are a number of good features within the self-evaluation process, which demonstrate how leaders and managers evaluate and improve quality and standards.

212 The SLT and governors are well informed about the school's performance based on a variety of assessment data, provided by the UA and the school's internal systems

213 The procedures for departmental self-evaluation are outlined in the school's self-evaluation policy and the school's self-evaluation report provides an overview of the school's performance evaluating progress against the seven key questions and identifying areas for development. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching contribute to this document.

214 A two year LEA monitoring cycle of department review through a formal full review in the first year followed by a short review in the second year is led by an LEA advisor and a detailed report is given to the head-teacher and leadership team. There is a whole school calendar for quality assurance monitoring.

215 Very good quality self evaluation is evidenced in the school's reports of basic skills and SEN provision.

216 The quality of department self evaluation is very good in mathematics, design technology, ICT, and history where all aspects of teaching and learning are monitored effectively and priorities for improvement are clearly identified.

217 The views of pupils and parents are sought through regular surveys and questionnaires and at parent evenings and recommendations are acted upon. In addition, the school has good partnerships with many outside organisations and their views are actively sought. Governors are regularly informed about the process and outcomes of self-evaluation.

218 However, there are a number of shortcomings that the inspection team identified.

219 There is variation across departments in the regularity and rigour in which senior managers and department managers undertake self evaluation and the quality

of departmental self-evaluation reports. Across the school, self evaluation is not sufficiently comprehensive, systematic or embedded.

- 220 Strategies by the SLT to monitor teaching and learning, pupil progress and target setting are not sufficiently robust.
- 221 Formal lesson observations are only undertaken as part of the school's performance management arrangements. Departmental lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' and students' work are inconsistent and mainly informal.
- 222 Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of self evaluation on a whole school basis is insufficiently rigorous. Consequently, systems for sharing particularly good self evaluation practice have not yet been fully utilised.
- 223 The process of self -evaluation, development planning, and setting challenging targets for improvement and monitoring progress is inconsistent across the departments

The effectiveness of planning for improvement

- 224 Whole school self evaluation informs planning for improvement at whole school and department levels. The three year school improvement plan is detailed and sets out the school's priorities, timescales, success criteria, lead people and is costed.
- 225 Departmental development plans are detailed and are clearly linked to the departmental self-evaluation report.
- 226 With regard to the key issues identified in the last report, good progress has been made in provision of support to pupils with SEN, in improving levels of attendance and in using data to set targets. However, there is still insufficient challenge in a minority of departments and assessment for learning is still not fully embedded.

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

Grade 2: Good features with no important shortcomings
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- 227 The grade awarded by the inspection team is one grade lower than that judged by the school in its self-evaluation report.

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

- 228 There are sufficient teachers to ensure the curriculum is delivered effectively. They are well qualified, and highly committed. Lessons are taught by subject specialists. There is a good balance between experienced teachers and those relatively new to the profession. Together they form an effective team.
- 229 There is a good range of capable and experienced learning support and administrative staff. All work very effectively alongside teachers to enable the school to function efficiently. The ICT technicians help to ensure that the huge investment in ICT over the last three years is utilised to maximum effectiveness.
- 230 The school has implemented effectively its strategy for the workload agreement and for teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA).

- 231 Subject departments operate within a formula based allocation of funds for the majority of their essential resource needs. The process is well understood and managed by all departments. In addition there is bidding process for a further sum of money identified for national initiatives. This is a very good feature of the school's resource planning.
- 232 Most classrooms benefit from an interactive whiteboard and learners have easy access to over 500 computers. The library is well resourced and used. The specialist facilities for PE, fitness, music and dance are outstanding features of the school's provision.
- 233 Overall the accommodation provides a very good setting for teaching and learning with good use made of all aspects of the building and external areas. All departments have access to specialist subject areas and the classrooms and corridor areas have very good displays celebrating pupil achievement.
- 234 A notable feature of the school's financial planning is the way it continues to plan for improving, refurbishing and enhancing the original school buildings to match the standards in the newer areas of the school. The carpeting of classrooms and corridors is a very good example.

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

- 235 There is good use of resources and the budget is well managed and effectively controlled by the headteacher and school bursar. Expenditure on resources is monitored closely and effectively with proposed new initiatives costed and evaluated in detail before decisions are made.
- 236 Overall, teachers are very well deployed and good use is made of their expertise for the delivery of a developing and changing curriculum plan. The deployment of LSAs, technicians and support staff is effective and their contribution adds significantly to the school's provision.
- 237 The training and professional development of all staff is a strength of the school. All staff are provided with a range of opportunities to extend their own learning and development. It is well planned and based on the identification of individual, departmental and whole school needs. Individual courses are evaluated by staff and they are asked to identify whether the training met anticipated outcomes and likely impact on departmental or whole school activities.
- 238 The school is an 'Investors in People' organisation and in consequence it ensures that people are deployed, managed and developed effectively.
- 239 However, there is at present no overall evaluation made by heads of department or the assistant headteacher responsible for staff development of the impact of the whole training programme on individual, departmental and school performance. There is clear evidence that the school's resources closely match school priorities for improvement
- 240 The headteacher, senior team, bursar and governors, regularly plan, monitor and review the use of all school resources – financial, human and physical. A very good feature is the careful investigation of the value received from several service level agreements. Currently, contracts for catering, refuse collection and aspects of maintenance are organised in-house.
- 241 Overall the school provides good value for money.

Standards achieved in subjects and areas of learning

Welsh second language

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

242 All pupils study the full GCSE course. Pupils in the higher tier A*-C achieved very good grades in the 2007 and 2008 examinations. Results overall in the foundation tier in 2008 were below average.

KS3

Good features

243 Pupils enjoy their Welsh lessons and they listen well in class. They respond positively to a good range of oral and writing activities.

244 Pupils understand the target language used by teachers. They understand the contents of audio recordings and many pupils use a variety of language patterns correctly in follow-up oral tasks.

245 Pupils work very well in pairs and groups. They interact well during language games using familiar sentence patterns. They ask and answer questions correctly when discussing various class topics using structured language patterns. During these activities they convey information to one another. The more able extend their comments and express opinion when asked.

246 Most pupils read clearly. Their pronunciation and intonation are good. They understand the contents of a variety of reading passages and respond correctly in related activities.

247 The majority of pupils complete a range of written tasks correctly and with developing accuracy. The more able pupils vary the tenses and language patterns when composing paragraphs and answering questions. This cohort of pupils has good knowledge of vocabulary.

248 Many pupils improve their writing skills through self assessment and peer assessment against identified criteria.

249 Information and communications technology is a feature in many lessons and pupils respond well.

250 Pupils with SEN make sound progress in relation to ability.

Shortcomings

251 In oral work a small minority of pupils lacks the confidence to give extended oral responses.

252 In writing tasks a small minority of pupils is uncertain of correct language structures.

KS4

Good features

253 Many pupils make good progress from KS3. The majority demonstrates good standards in all language skills.

254 Most pupils interact well in pairs and small groups. They respond correctly to oral tasks in structured and set situations. The more able pupils are more confident in their oral work. They extend their vocabulary and they use appropriate language patterns when expressing opinion on a good range of class topics.

255 Most pupils read a variety of selected material linked to the course in a meaningful manner. Their expression is good. The majority understands the content and complete successfully a variety of related tasks.

256 The majority completes appropriate writing tasks correctly. The more able often compose extended passages of writing using a good range of language structures and different verb forms. The structure is good. Expression is often accurate and the content is interesting.

Shortcomings

257 A small minority of pupils lacks the confidence to use Welsh in the wider context.

258 A few pupils have difficulty recalling previously learnt work in both oral and writing work.

Sixth form

259 At A level, students' achievements are in line with expectations.

Good features

260 Students make good progress from KS4 in all aspects.

261 The majority of Y12 students has a good understanding of grammar. Students use Welsh idioms correctly in grammar tasks. They understand the content of film studied and most students participate enthusiastically in follow up examination based questions.

262 Year 13 students broaden their knowledge and understanding of literature. They understand the content of the text of the prescribed play. They discuss the various concepts and respond to oral questions.

263 Students in both year groups gain confidence in their oral work. The majority demonstrates a willingness to give extended responses in answer to questions.

264 Y13 students achieve good grades in their AS examinations.

265 Students are well motivated and develop increasing levels of oral skills.

Shortcomings

266 A small minority of students encounters difficulty in expressing opinion in oral work.

Science

Key Stage 3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

Key Stage 4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings

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

KS3

Good features

- 267 A majority of pupils acquire good scientific knowledge and an understanding of a range of science topics as they progress through the key stage. With support, they are able to recall current and previous work. They develop an understanding of how science affects everyday life and society in general.
- 268 When planning investigations, a small majority of pupils are able to make suitable predictions by drawing on their knowledge and understanding of science.
- 269 With support and guidance most pupils are able to plan investigations and the observations and measurements required. They are able to identify, select and correctly use appropriate measuring instruments.
- 270 Many pupils of all abilities including those with SEN undertake practical work enthusiastically. They use equipment competently and safely and record their results in tables usually noting the units of measurement.
- 271 A minority are able to explain the results of their investigations from their graphs. Some pupils are able to identify successful outcomes and to suggest how their investigations can be improved.

Shortcomings

- 272 A minority do not understand the work and often have difficulty remembering and applying previous work.
- 273 A minority do not always present their work neatly and logically. Their work is often disorganised, incomplete and remains unfinished.
- 274 A few pupils are content to follow instructions rather than plan for themselves. Some experience difficulties in analysing data and drawing graphs.
- 275 In some lessons a few pupils do not progress at an acceptable pace as they lose concentration and drift off task.

KS4

- 276 The slow decline in the science GCSE results since 2005 was reversed in 2008, showing an improvement on the 2007 figure. Results in the last four years have been consistently lower than those for the UA and Wales for passes at A*-C and A*-G. When compared to schools of a similar intake, results at grades A*-C have fallen steadily from above average in 2006, to the bottom 25% in 2008.

Good features

- 277 Around half the pupils have good knowledge and understanding of current and previous work and are able to apply their scientific knowledge to new or unfamiliar situations.

278 The majority listen attentively and contribute well to class discussions. A few provide extended answers to questions when given the opportunity. A majority are able to apply their understanding and develop an appreciation of the contribution made by science to modern life.

279 A majority of pupils have developed good investigative skills and are competent and careful in using apparatus and equipment. They work safely and cooperatively and have an awareness of the importance of health and safety. They record and analyse results carefully.

280 Some pupils with SEN make good progress relative to their ability.

Shortcomings

281 A minority of pupils have poor recall and do not understand the work. They often have difficulty in remembering and applying previous work.

282 A minority are inattentive and do not work at full capacity, they fail to finish tasks and make no effort to complete missing or incomplete work.

283 In class discussions some pupils are often satisfied with brief answers and are passive learners.

Sixth form

284 The small number of entries for the A-Level science subjects of biology, chemistry and physics makes meaningful comparisons with national pass rates difficult. Value added data, however, indicate that overall the results are lower than those achieved nationally by students of similar abilities.

285 Students follow an AS course in physics and an A2 course in chemistry at the school. Under the collegium arrangement, one student studies AS biology and another student studies AS chemistry elsewhere.

Good features

286 Overall, most students achieve good standards in relation to their abilities and are making good progress. They show an interest in their studies which is reflected in the care and detailed attention given to the presentation and completion of their work.

287 A majority have good recall and understanding of scientific concepts and principles and are able to apply their knowledge and understanding when solving problems from past examination papers.

Shortcomings

288 A minority of students are reluctant to contribute to classroom discussions and are passive learners. Their independent learning skills are underdeveloped and they are over dependent on their teachers.

289 A minority of students are careless when completing numerical calculations, even when using calculators.

Design and technology

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

Key Stage 4: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

Sixth form: Grade 1: Good with outstanding features

290 Over the last two years the total percentage of pupils who gained grades A* to C in design and technology was significantly higher than those for the LEA and Wales. All pupils gain A*-G grades in the subject. Girls achieve better than boys and better than girls nationally. Results in the grades A* and A are significantly higher than local and national averages for both boys and girls. These results reflect outstanding progress and achievement for the pupils involved.

KS3

Good features

291 Nearly all pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the design process and principles. Making skills are good and often very good across all material areas.

292 Most pupils present their design ideas using a good standard of graphical communication and presentation skills. The level of creativity, flair and imagination in their design ideas is good and often very good as seen in the aboriginal art cushion and the hats projects in textiles.

293 Almost all pupils have good computing skills. They use their skills effectively and efficiently in computer aided design work seen in the mechanical toys or coat hook development.

294 In food technology, most pupils can evaluate the nutritional values of food well, as seen in their analysis of a healthier option breakfast. They use the computer efficiently and effectively when researching, designing and presenting their projects in food technology.

295 In electronic products nearly all pupils combine materials well and have a good standard of basic electronic knowledge seen in the electronic dice and the egg timer projects. Most pupils use computer aided manufacturing techniques to a good standard in making and embellishing their products.

296 Pupils with SEN achieve to their potential and produce good design work and product outcomes in line with their capabilities.

Shortcomings

297 Weak literacy skills are evident in the work of a few pupils, particularly in describing design ideas or processes. This is often accompanied by weak presentation and graphical communication skills.

298 In the work of a very few pupils, the evaluation of their final product does not relate rigorously enough to the design specification and evaluations are over superficial in nature.

KS4

Outstanding Features

- 299 Most pupils' knowledge and understanding of the design and making process are outstanding. They discuss and write about their design work using a very good level of technical terminology.
- 300 Most pupils make outstanding use of multi materials in their projects and produce unique product outcomes. Design ideas reflect very high levels of creative flair, imagination and innovation. Most pupils make outstanding use of computer aided manufacturing equipment to produce and enhance their products.
- 301 The outstanding quality of graphical communication skills seen in most pupils' design folios reflects the higher than average results achieved at GCSE over the last two years.

Good features

- 302 All pupils plan very efficiently and effectively for the making stage of their work. They model their design ideas in card effectively and as a result, refine and improve their designs very well.
- 303 Most pupils' design folios show good investigative work. They use a variety of sources to gather information relevant to their design task. In the best design folios pupils produce very good design drawings and annotate their work very clearly.
- 304 Nearly all pupils readily use computers for research and presentation. They also use computer aided design and manufacture equipment well to design and embellish their products.
- 305 Pupils with SEN understand the design process and apply the principles well in their designs. They produce good product outcomes in line with their capabilities.

Shortcomings

- 306 There are no important shortcomings. However computer aided manufacturing is at a basic level constrained by the availability of high-tech equipment.

Sixth form

- 307 There were no AS/A2 courses between 2006 and 2008. Thus it is not possible to make any comparison of external examination results with local or national averages.

Outstanding features

- 308 Almost all students' knowledge and understanding of the principles of designing is outstanding.
- 309 Most students design work reflects outstandingly unique, modernistic approaches that incorporate and combine a very wide variety of materials and fixings.
- 310 The design folios of all students show outstanding levels of graphical communication and presentation skills including the use of computer aided design software.

Good features

- 311 All students carry out thorough research work using a very broad range of sources. Existing products are analyzed in great detail when formulating their final design ideas.
- 312 All students produce practical outcomes of a very high standard. They use a range and combination of materials, fixings and fittings. Designs clearly meet the original design specification.

Shortcomings

- 313 There are no important shortcomings apart from computer aided manufacturing being curtailed by the availability of more sophisticated equipment such as laser cutting devices.

Geography

KS3: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

KS4: Grade 3: Good features outweigh shortcomings.

- 314 Over the past two years, pupils have not been entered for GCSE examinations in geography.

KS3

Good Features

- 315 Pupils of all abilities make appropriate use of subject terms in their work when describing and explaining the characteristics of a variety of geographical features.
- 316 Map and photographic skills are used effectively by the majority of pupils to investigate places, themes and issues. Photographic annotation and interpretation is particularly strong. Most pupils are competent in depicting and analysing a range of statistical information.
- 317 The majority of pupils can explain processes within physical and human geography and their associated features and consequences, such as population change and the action of rivers.
- 318 Most pupils know and understand well the key concepts associated with people-environment attitudes and values. They confidently debate issues relating to environmental quality within the school grounds, and the resolution of conflict in the national parks of Wales and further afield.
- 319 The majority of pupils develop a secure understanding of sustainable development and global citizenship through their studies of renewable and non-renewable resources, and the connections between developed and less developed areas of the world.
- 320 Pupils with SEN respond well to the varied approaches and make good progress in their recall and understanding, as in their work on population densities within the major natural regions of the world.

Shortcomings

- 321 Most pupils are not adequately developing their geographical investigation skills through the enquiry process.
- 322 Pupils do not use and apply their ICT skills sufficiently within their work.

323 Many pupils do not have an accurate enough knowledge and understanding of patterns of distribution and the location and character of places. More able pupils often provide explanations which lack depth and clarity.

KS4

Good features

324 The majority of pupils are able to identify features associated with weathering, upland glaciation and limestone scenery, and have a secure understanding of the processes involved in their development.

325 Most pupils have a good grasp of aspects of sustainable development. They understand the effects that tourism has within Wales and the Mediterranean, and the majority provide well reasoned explanations for the changes they have identified.

326 Many pupils use geographical vocabulary and terminology appropriately to provide succinct well constructed responses.

Shortcomings

327 Many pupils, including some more able, do not provide enough detail and depth in their answers

328 A significant minority of pupils have a superficial understanding of the distribution of geographical phenomena.

329 Since the last inspection pupils are producing more independent writing. Provision and outcomes for SEN pupils have also improved.

330 The department has yet to address fully the issues relating to the sufficient development of pupils skills in the use and interpretation of maps, diagrams and data in KS4, and the lack of challenge for pupils of higher ability. Their achievement is still less than it could be.

History

KS3: Grade 2 – Good features and no important shortcomings

KS4: Grade 1 – Good with outstanding features

331 In the past two years, results at GCSE level have been below local and national averages.

KS3

Good features

332 Pupils in Y7 can make critical inferences from, and simple evaluations of primary sources dealing with events leading to Norman invasion.

333 Pupils in Y8 can evaluate and adjudicate between sources offering competing interpretations of Henry VIII, so beginning to understand that more than one interpretation of past events is possible.

334 Pupils in Y9 make good use of local primary source material to produce explanatory accounts of recruitment for the First World War in the Rhymney area.

335 They are also beginning to produce well structured, extended written answers – for example on Luddism, factory conditions and the failure of the Newport Rising - that build on literacy developments in Y7 and Y8.

336 Pupils with SEN, in Y9, can produce their own PowerPoint presentations on the slave Trade and make particularly good progress in the basic core skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Shortcoming

337 The progress of some pupils in both Y7 and Y8, investigating, respectively, a medieval murder mystery and conditions in a civil war encampment, is hampered by an inability to distinguish evidence from information.

KS4

Outstanding features

338 Standards achieved by the Y10 Nurture Group at Entry Level, in particular their ICT work on the Cuban Missile crisis, are outstanding.

339 All members of the current Y11 class have achieved the highest grades for their coursework. This represents outstanding progress over the key stage.

Good features

340 In Y10, pupils can make critical use of primary source material to make complex inferences about the impact of hyper-inflation on different social groups in Germany in 1923.

341 Pupils in Y11 demonstrate independent learning skills when researching the long-term causes of Apartheid in South Africa.

342 Pupils in both year groups know how to sift and sort information and how to use mind- mapping to structure an argument.

Shortcomings

343 There were no significant shortcomings.

Physical education

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

344 In the past two years, results at GCSE level have been below local and national averages.

KS3

Good features

345 Pupils demonstrate knowledge and understanding of warm up and are confident in leading others through relevant aerobic and stretching activities.

346 Most pupils send and receive the ball efficiently in football and basketball. They practise their skills enthusiastically and can devise their own mini games and drills to improve performance.

347 In games, good knowledge of rules allows the most capable players to use space skilfully both on and off the ball.

348 Pupils co-operate very effectively in groups, they observe and analyse one another's performances and in the best instances provide constructive feedback.

Shortcomings

349 Pupils' targets are not always sufficiently rigorous or demanding, especially for the middle ability pupils.

350 Knowledge of playing strategies is inconsistent.

KS4

Good features

351 Able pupils take responsibility for their own learning, developing a range of technical, personal and social skills such as in officiating, leading, coaching and mentoring others.

352 Pupils respond very positively to demanding and challenging tasks, involvement in lessons is good.

353 Most pupils demonstrate good understanding of their own performance and capabilities.

354 GCSE pupils work hard to use the correct terminology and are beginning to link together different aspects of the course because of some very well constructed teaching and planning of lessons.

355 Discussions in GCSE theory lessons are often lively. Boys are keen to respond to questioning with the most able providing some detail in extended answers. Results for the upper and lower ability pupils are in line with their capabilities.

Shortcomings

356 Within the very large groups for GCSE, pupils of middle ability and the small number of girls in the groups make limited contributions to whole class discussions.

357 Written work is very variable relying too much on copied notes.

358 The progress of a minority of pupils is limited by their lack of fitness.

Sixth form

Good features

359 The small groups of students work hard to understand complex issues and to apply what they know to a range of different sporting examples.

360 In their work on information processing and memory, the majority of students are beginning to recognise themes from different aspects of the course, linking together ideas and research effectively.

361 Listening skills are good and a few students are developing confidence in their use of technical vocabulary.

Shortcomings

362 Discussion and debate is limited by small groups and the very wide range of abilities. Some students struggle to make the transition to higher level study.

363 Written work is difficult to follow due, in part, to lack of headings. There are very few examples of extended writing, following and developing ideas and concepts beyond a glossary of terminology.

School's response to the inspection

We are particularly pleased with the inspection team's very positive comments about the general ethos of the school and that the care, support and guidance provided for our pupils and students is a strong feature. The behaviour of the pupils and students in class and around the school is also duly recognised as a strength. The report is testimony to the fact that the school is an inclusive community for all learners with a curriculum which is broad, balanced, flexible and appropriate to the needs of our pupils and students.

It is pleasing that the inspection team were impressed with the widening of the pupils and students' learning pathways, particularly in the sixth form. Support structures which are recognized as outstanding ensure pupils feel safe and secure and encourage them to participate fully in the life of the school. The recognition of the outstanding work undertaken by the school with regards to eco-schools and sustainability was also pleasing and deserved.

The school will tackle the recommendations made in the report by addressing issues of boys' underachievement, more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, improving the SDP process using the school self-evaluation report as its guide and issues centred around assessment.

The report enables the school to evaluate its current position and the recommendations will enable the school to continue to move forward. The inspection process has identified the many strengths of Rhymney Comprehensive School but has also highlighted areas for improvement or modification. Several of those areas included in the report have been incorporated into the school development plan, and measures have already been introduced to address these issues prior to the inspection.

Even though we have achieved many targets agreed with the LEA for exam results, we will develop and put in place strategies to improve standards at KS3 and KS4. Also, we will embed further the assessment for learning policy, develop further the consistency of day-to-day marking, improve subject and individual target setting and the monitoring of pupils' and students' academic performance.

The next governors annual report to parents will report on the progress made towards addressing the recommendations as set out in the May 2009 inspection report.

Appendix 1

Basic information about the school

Name of school	Rhymney Comprehensive School
School type	Secondary
Age range of pupils	11-18
Address of school	Abertysswg Road Rhymney
Postcode	NP22 5XF
Telephone number	01685 846900
Headteacher	Mr M D James (acting)
Date of appointment	January 1 st 2004
Chair of governors / Appropriate authority	Cllr. John Bevan
Reporting inspector	Mr Peter Harris
Dates of inspection	09.03.09 – 12.03.09

Appendix 2

School data and indicators

Year group	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Total
Number of pupils	169	163	179	172	168	64	36	951

Total number of teachers			
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time equivalent (fte)
Number of teachers	57	6	54.8

Staffing information	
Pupil: teacher (fte) ratio (excluding special classes)	17.35:1
Pupil: adult (fte) ratio in special classes	-
Average teaching group size	24.15
Overall contact ratio (percentage)	72.99%

Percentage attendance for three complete terms prior to the inspection								
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13	Whole school
Term 1	90.2	88.9	86.45	87.9	87.3	86.6	86.4	85.06
Term 2	89.0	86.4	83.6	82.9	89.7	83.05	80.9	85.08
Term 3	91.0	90.0	89.4	89.3	90.4	90.0	86.75	88.48

Percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals	29
Number of pupils excluded during 12 months prior to inspection	57(t) 1(p)

Appendix 3

National Curriculum Assessment Results End of key stage 3:

National Curriculum Assessment KS3 results 2008																
Total number of pupils in Y9:174																
Percentage of pupils at each level																
			D	A	F	W	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	EP	
English	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	0	0	0	2	9	30	41	15	2	0	0	
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	7	21	36	24	9	0	0	
Mathematics	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	0	0	1	3	8	21	26	29	10	0	0	
		National	0	1	0	0	1	1	8	20	28	27	14	1	0	
Science	Teacher assessment	School	0	2	0	0	0	0	6	33	40	19	0	0	0	
		National	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	21	35	26	10	0	0	

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

Percentage of pupils attaining at least level 5 in mathematics, science and either English or Welsh (first language) by teacher assessment			
In the school:	41.4	In Wales:	60.0

**Public Examination Results:
Rhymney Comprehensive School**

SSSP

Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

LEA/School No. 676/4090

Pupils aged 15

Number of pupils aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 176

Percentage of pupils aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	94	80	38	34	31	273
LEA Area 2007/08	98	86	52	41	39	332
Wales 2007/08	98	87	58	46	44	356
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	11	287
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	27	294

Number of boys aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 90

Percentage of boys aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	92	72	30	24	24	236
LEA Area 2007/08	98	82	46	37	35	304
Wales 2007/08	98	84	53	42	41	334
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	8	260
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	24	270

Number of girls aged 15 who were on roll in January 2008: 86

Percentage of girls aged 15 who :

	entered at least one qualification	achieved the Level 1 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold	achieved the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE pass in English or Welsh first language and mathematics	Core Subject Indicator (2)	Average wider points score per pupil
School 2007/08	97	87	45	43	37	312
LEA Area 2007/08	99	90	58	45	43	359
Wales 2007/08	99	90	63	50	48	379
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	13	315
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	30	320

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

(2) For information about which syllabuses are included in each subject area see Notes for Guidance. For the provisional SSSP this will be the traditional GCSE definition. In the final SSSP, this definition will include a wider range of qualifications.

.. Data not available

Rhymney Comprehensive School,
Summary of Secondary School Performance (1)

SSSP
LEA/School No. 676/4090

Pupils aged 15

	Percentage of pupils aged 15 who :		Percentage of boys aged 15 who :		Percentage of girls aged 15 who :	
	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)	achieved one or more ELQ (2) only	Left full time education without a qualification (3)
School 2007/08	1.1	1.7	2.2	3.3	0	0
LEA Area 2007/08	2	1.6	2.4	2.2	1.5	1
Wales 2007/08	2.6	1.5	3.4	1.9	1.7	1.2
School 06/07/08	1	..	1.9	..	0	..
School 05/06/07	1.7	..	2.8	..	0.4	..

Pupils aged 17

	Number of pupils aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 30		Number of boys aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 10		Number of girls aged 17 who were on roll in January 2008: 20	
	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Percentage of 17 year old pupils entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
School 2007/08	93	643	89	574	94	677
LEA Area 2007/08	96	620	94	606	98	629
Wales 2007/08	94	631	93	596	95	659
School 06/07/08	..	..	..	..	..	..
School 05/06/07	..	..	..	..	..	..

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

SECONDARY EXAMINATION DATA, 2006 - 2008

Rhymney Comprehensive School

676

4090

Free School Meals, 2006 - 2008	2006	2007	2008
% of pupils entitled to Free School Meals	27.5	28.0	28.8
Free School Meal band	20%<FSM<=30%	20%<FSM<=30%	20%<FSM<=30%

Key Stage 4, 2006 - 2008	2006	2007	2008
% achieving the Level 1 threshold	..	82.1	79.5
Benchmark Quartile	..	3	4
% achieving the Level 2 threshold	..	41.6	37.5
Benchmark Quartile	..	3	4
% achieving the Level 2 threshold including a GCSE at grade A*-C in English or Welsh first language and Maths	33.5
Benchmark Quartile	2
% achieving the Level 2 threshold in the core subjects	30.7
Benchmark Quartile	3
Average wider points score	288.1	299.3	273.1
Benchmark Quartile	2	2	4

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

.. the data item is not available

Appendix 4

Evidence base of the inspection

Inspectors spent a total of 51 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:

- 108 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;
- 254 replies to the parents' questionnaire;
- comprehensive documentation provided by the school before and during the inspection;
- samples of pupils' reports; and
- a range of pupils' work.

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

Appendix 5

Composition and responsibilities of the inspection team

Team member	Responsibilities
Peter Harris	Rgl, KQ1, KQ5
Glyn Davies	KQ2, Science
Delyth Williams	KQ3, Science
Paul Donovan	KQ4, SEN
Susan Gwyer-Roberts	KQ6
Gwynoro Jones	KQ7, Lay inspector
Clive Rowlands	Welsh second language
Keith Davies	Science
Keith Hopkins	Design technology
Andrew Herdman	Geography
Alan Kelly	History
Debra Makin	Physical education
Carl Jones	Nominee
Eluned Griffiths	Peer assessor

Acknowledgement

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

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